THE PROBLEM OF DISARMAMENT IN BRITISH DIPLOMACY 1932-1934

by

RICHARD CALAM RICHARDSON

B.Sc.(Econ.), London (England), 1968

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department of
History

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard.

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

September, 1969
In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the Head of my Department or by his representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of History

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver 8, Canada

Date 29-9-70
The problem of disarmament is the problem of the effective management of power within international society. Force cannot be eliminated as a factor in international relations, but it can be controlled. And a disarmament convention — an agreement to limit and perhaps reduce national armaments — can secure this control by stabilizing the configuration of world power.

The obstacles to the negotiation of a disarmament convention are political rather than technical, and at the World Disarmament Conference of 1932–4, the major problem was the reconciliation of French and German claims. Germany, disarmed by the Peace Treaty of 1919, demanded "equality of rights" with other nations while France demanded additional security guarantees before she would agree to limit her arms.

The reconciliation of French and German claims was in Britain's interest, because her security depended, in part at least, on a stable and peaceful Continent. Yet the British Government followed a policy that was not conducive to a reconciliation. British Ministers refused to offer France security guarantees to compensate for the inevitable increase in German power accompanying a grant of equality of rights and this refusal was the major factor leading to the breakdown of the Disarmament Conference in 1934.

The main reason for the refusal was that British Ministers subscribed to the putative existence of an international "harmony of interests". They assumed that each state had a common interest in peace and that this common interest was compatible with the pursuit of the national interest, and they therefore hoped that international problems could
be settled without recourse to force or threat of force. This was a delusion. Although professing a desire to achieve their objectives by peaceful means, "revisionist" states — including Germany — were not averse to using or threatening force if it would lead to the fulfilment of their national ambitions.

"Harmony of interests" was a very self-serving doctrine. It permitted Britain to exert a large measure of influence on the Continent with very few commitments and at little cost, allowing the Government to concentrate on defending Britain's more immediate interests — the security of the Empire and the protection of her trade routes. Thus, the various disarmament schemes put forward by the Government at Geneva were based almost solely on Britain's immediate interests and made little attempt at trying to reconcile the interests of France and Germany — the main problem facing the Disarmament Conference.

The British public came to believe in the premise of a "harmony of interests" and in consequence, despite its overwhelming majority in the Commons, the Government found it difficult — or chose to find it difficult — to deviate from its policy of "no commitments".

Britain was even averse to mediating between France and Germany. Although the two Continental Powers looked to Britain for help in solving their problems, the British Government refused to play the role of "honest broker" — except when the role was inescapable — and thus failed to take advantage of many excellent opportunities for concluding a Franco-German settlement.

By adopting a policy which offered short-term advantages but little hope of a long-term settlement of European problems, Britain was instrumental in causing the failure of the Geneva Disarmament Conference.
This study is based on the records of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments and the published diplomatic documents of Britain, France, Germany, America and Belgium. Memoir sources, in general, were unhelpful, but did provide some useful information, as did a few unpublished documents from the Public Record Office, London provided by Dr. F. Marzari.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER I. THE DISARMAMENT PROBLEM</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER II. THE FIRST PHASE OF THE DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER III. THE GERMAN CLAIM TO EQUALITY OF RIGHTS</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER IV. THE ADVENT OF HITLER AND THE SECOND PHASE OF</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER V. DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATIONS AND THE SECOND GERMAN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WITHDRAWAL FROM THE DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER VI. LAST ATTEMPTS AT A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER VII. CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOOTNOTES</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I
THE DISARMAMENT PROBLEM
1919-1932

The widespread support gained by movements for disarmament during the 1920s and early 1930s became a major factor in the formulation of British foreign policy. Disarmament was seen by its protagonists as the one sure way of avoiding a recurrence of the catastrophe of the Great War and of establishing a firm foundation for peace; war would be eliminated by the removal of the means to fight. It was an appealing doctrine and one which required serious consideration.

A sophisticated theory of disarmament was developed. Armaments, it was claimed, not only made war possible but made it much more probable. Once one nation possessed arms, so must others as no nation would tempt others into aggression by remaining defenceless. Measures taken by one nation to increase security caused counter-measures by others, producing feelings of fear and insecurity. Further measures caused further counter-measures, and the consequent increase of suspicion and distrust among nations led governments to believe that every precaution should be taken against possible opponents and that "precautions" taken by any other country were evidence of hostile intent. An arms race would develop and eventually, by accident or design, break down into war. The final spark might occur when one party utilized a temporary ascendancy in armaments to strike an opponent; it might come with an over-reaction to a minor incident; or it might just "happen". It did not matter which.

This was not the only critique of the balance of power system that disarmament protagonists offered. They also emphasised that armaments,
especially substantial armaments, necessarily led to the establishment of a professional military class and a sizeable armaments industry, both of which, in their own interests, continually pressed for the expansion of war potential. This tended to spread feelings of fear and insecurity. Moreover, these "military-industrial complexes" tended to gain an inordinate amount of power within each state and encouraged governments to follow unnecessarily intransigent and bellicose policies. If a state had (or was thought to have) military superiority over an opponent and relations between the two were uneasy, the military establishment would advise the government to take the military path, and in the absence of superiority it would wield its influence to demand increases in armaments.

General disarmament, it was claimed, would eliminate these scourges of international society. In the event of disputes, states would be provided with an automatic cooling-off period during which they would be unable to go to war or mount a successful offensive because the arms that they retained would be insufficient for the purpose. Moreover, the influence of the military-industrial complex would be weakened and states induced to follow more conciliatory policies. The power factor in international relations could be controlled by an effective system of collective security rather than the mechanism of the balance of power, thus allowing national resources used in the manufacture of armaments to be channelled into more productive and socially acceptable projects.

Opponents of disarmament countered that armaments were the product rather than the cause of tension. Peace was a political problem requiring a political solution, and though security might lead to
disarmament, it could not result from disarmament. The idea of the
overpowering influence of a military-industrial complex was ridiculed
and it was suggested that any influence brought to bear by the military
would breed a rising consciousness of the total destructiveness of
modern warfare. Statesmen, it was argued, would not allow the military
to gain the upper hand in decisions of state.

The sceptics also suggested that even if these political objections
were overcome, technical objections alone would nullify attempts to
reach a disarmament convention. Reductions of armaments to a level
necessary for purposes of police and legitimate defence were "impossible"
because some countries had a far greater productive capacity or
potential which could be utilized for war purposes than others.
Moreover, developments in military technology would make it impracticable
to freeze the distribution of power within international society. The
power factor could not be taken away from international relations – and
it was "impossible" to measure this factor. How could a battleship be
compared to a tank or a bomber? How could one distinguish between an
"offensive" and a "defensive" weapon? What, if any, account should be
taken of geographical and industrial factors? And surely there were no
adequate means of supervising a disarmament agreement? Even with the
strictest agreements regarding control, it was argued, states would be
able to build up stocks of matériel in secret.

The more appealing of these arguments are those of the disarmament
protagonists. Certainly the competitive massing of national power tends
to exacerbate rather than diminish frictions and to heighten the
tensions of insecurity.¹ There is also little doubt that powerful
military-industrial complexes tend to encourage intransigent rather than pacific courses of policy. A disarmament agreement would overcome these problems and provide states with an automatic cooling-off period for their disputes. To be successful, however, such an agreement must take the factors of power and power potential into consideration; total disarmament, advocated by some, is impracticable because it ignores these factors. A degree of armament is inevitable, and as no country would willingly remain disarmed if its neighbours were not, it follows that a vicious circle of arms and tension is inherent in the structure of international society. The problem facing statesmen therefore is how to control power within the international system, and the problem of disarmament is how to reduce and more especially, limit and control armaments and yet establish an adequate system of international security.

Military establishments are related in the first instance to the problem of the status quo. The function of national power is to uphold or challenge the existing pattern of relationships, and a scheme for the regulation of armaments must therefore involve either a freezing of the configuration of power (at, above or below existing quantitative levels) or its alteration through differential degrees of disarmament. Governments attempting to uphold the status quo will accept a scheme of arms control if it will not interfere with the adequacy of their power position, while "revisionist" states will accept if they are convinced that the distribution of national power will be irrelevant in the future organization of international relations. Consequently, the urge to avoid the worsening of the national power position is the passion of most participants in disarmament conferences rather than enthusiasm for disarmament itself. A scheme which freezes the status quo by stabilizing
the power situation is frustrating to ambitious states; one which promises to undermine the status quo is alarming to the beneficiaries of the established order. A practical scheme is one which takes these factors - power potential and political motivation - into account. This can only be done by giving additional security guarantees to states that otherwise would be disadvantaged by the scheme. There are three alternatives: collective security, regional security agreements or alliances.

Alliances are based on the theory that a state can best guarantee its security by aligning itself with other states having the same common enemy and by the allied states maintaining a reserve of military power to deter their enemy from aggression. Such arrangements may be considered inconsistent with the spirit of general disarmament - for they tend to divide international society into opposing groups - but even opposing groups may agree to limit their respective armaments. Such "arms control" agreements may be unusual, especially when military technology is not at an advanced stage and new developments can cause profound changes in the distribution of power within international society, but, at least in theory, they are a practicable possibility. Provided there is an effective method of supervising its arrangements, an arms control convention is far more likely to produce feelings of security between the Powers concerned than no agreement.

A collective security agreement recognizes that peace is "indivisible" and provides for a guarantee of national security, the maintenance of the territorial status quo, the pacific settlement of international disputes - and disarmament. Disarmament and the machinery for pacific settlement provide a first line of defence against international
conflict, and a further line of defence is provided by moral, diplomatic, economic and military sanctions, which can be used to deter any aggressor. Eventually, it might be possible to dispense with national forces and replace them by international forces.

Before a collective security system can be implemented, however, certain conditions have to be met. Subjectively, states must accept that peace is indivisible and that loyalty to the world community is an absolute necessity, even in conflicts affecting their immediate national interest. They must also agree to sacrifice a certain amount of their freedom and bind themselves in the future by renouncing the use of force except under international authorization and by agreeing not to withhold support from any collective action. Aggressor states must always be confronted with the certainty of collective action. And the system must function impartially and be seen to function impartially; states must be flexible in their policies and agree to defend their traditional enemies as well as their traditional friends. Only then can confidence in the system be fostered.

Objectively, a considerable diffusion of power is fundamental to such a system, as is the need for universal or near-universal membership of the international organization established to implement the system. Great Powers must be roughly equal in size or potential and endorse the collective arrangements, while naval Powers must be effective members in order that sanctions can be applied efficiently. States must also be vulnerable to the application of sanctions. "Potentially criminal" states might be omitted from the international organization, but notwithstanding the difficulty of choosing them, it would be better to have them within the collective framework for this would ensure their theoretical
acceptance of the system and might ameliorate their future policy once they discovered that working within the international community offered advantages.

The successful operation of a system of collective security also depends on military technology having reached a stage of development where defence has an advantage over offence, because if states possess weapons that can break through fixed fortifications and entrenched positions, the collective agency may be unable to act quickly enough to prevent an aggressor being successful.

Provided these conditions are met, collective security is a practicable possibility. Opponents have argued that the margin of power of a collective agency over an aggressor is always less than its theoretical value and that collective forces might be divided and slow to act; but although this may be true, a collective system is based on the prevention of war by partial disarmament. If the military forces of each state are reduced to a level necessary for police purposes and a small, lightly-armed defence contingent while international forces are equipped with heavier matériel, no aggressor will be strong enough to resist the forces of a collective agency, even if the agency is slow to react to initial aggression. A state could build up a "citizen army" within a comparatively short time, but such an army would be unable to break through fixed fortifications and entrenched positions and would be ineffective against the professional soldiers and heavier matériel of the international forces. Moreover, as the armaments of each state would be supervised by the international agency, states would not be in a position to build up armaments and prepare for an aggressive war; aggressive weapons such as heavy matériel, tanks and bombers would be prohibited from national
armies, and it would not be difficult to detect states producing such weapons. Although it is relatively easy to conceal light weapons such as machine guns, under an effective system of supervision it would be almost impossible to conceal heavy weapons; German rearmament in the early 1930s was soon detected by Britain and France. Thus, an international agency would have ample time in which to prepare plans to counteract aggressors.

A more serious objection to collective security is the claim that it is impossible to define aggression since aggression can take many forms, such as the infiltration of guerillas, subversion, the support of armed bands or even propaganda. It is also argued that aggression might be justifiable in certain circumstances - to rectify an injustice or take preventive action. But these arguments miss the point. Collective security is a legal rather than a moral system and is based on the idea that disturbers of the peace - states taking forcible measures to alter the status quo - should be penalized and that international "law and order" will provide a stable context in which the quest for substantive justice can be pursued. Moreover, the disarmament provisions of a collective system would ensure detection of any state making preparations for an attack or attempting to supply arms to support a rebellion in another country. Furthermore, the international organization would formulate specific rules regarding the peaceful settlement of international disputes, and states violating these rules would be looked on as aggressors and would be subject to the application of sanctions.
Even if the conditions necessary for the implementation and operation of a collective security system are not met in the world as a whole, it is still conceivable that these conditions may exist within a clearly defined region. Consequently, it may be possible to negotiate one or more regional security pacts based on "collective" principles. Security in regions not covered by these pacts could be provided by alliances and the balance of power mechanism. It would still be possible under these arrangements to negotiate a general disarmament convention.

Before the Great War, international security depended to a large extent on the successful operation of the balance of power mechanism. But the outbreak of hostilities led a great number of intellectuals (and others) to re-examine the efficacy of the mechanism, as many believed that the pre-1914 arms race and system of alliances were major causes of the War. Modern research has shown that these conclusions were, at best, inadequate, but intellectuals and respected statesmen of the time were convinced that it was necessary to find a more effective method of controlling power within international relations than the balance of power mechanism. By the end of the War, the doctrine of collective security had won general acceptance (at least among the Allied Powers), and the foundation of an international security organization became one of the chief goals of Allied policy. Practical suggestions were worked out, and on April 28 1919 the Covenant of the League of Nations was adopted by the
Powers represented at the Versailles Peace Conference.

Members of the new organization recognized that peace was indivisible (Article 11 of the Covenant) and undertook to respect and preserve each other's political independence and territorial integrity against external aggression (Article 10). They also agreed to submit their differences to arbitration, judicial settlement at the Permanent Court or inquiry by the Council (Articles 12, 13 and 15), though in the event of decisions not being unanimous, the parties concerned reserved the right to go to war after a period of three months - the so-called "gap in the Covenant". Article 19 gave the League Assembly the power to advise the reconsideration of treaties that had become "inapplicable" and whose continuance "might endanger" world peace, otherwise there was no provision in the Covenant for "peaceful change". If a member resorted to war in violation of its obligations, the other members were to impose an absolute and immediate economic and diplomatic boycott on the Covenant-breaking state and respect the decisions of the League Council if it was found necessary to employ military sanctions (Article 16). But members retained the right to abstain from participating in military measures, and there was no provision for an international army and general staff.

The Covenant did not establish a perfect system of collective security; its provisions for sanctions were somewhat weak and it imposed inadequate legal restrictions upon potential aggressors. There was no guarantee that the combined resources of the international community would be available to thwart aggressors, and there was no positive obligation for states to participate in military sanctions.
The provisions of the Covenant for disarmament were also somewhat deficient. Article 8 stipulated that the maintenance of peace required the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations, and the Council, taking geographical and other factors into account, was to formulate plans for arms reductions and limitation for "the consideration and action" of member governments. The Council would also advise how the "evil effects" of the private manufacture of arms could be mitigated. Definitive measures of disarmament were restricted to the provisions of the Peace Treaties negotiated with the former Central Powers.

By Part V of the Treaty of Versailles, Germany's armed forces were reduced to "the lowest limit consistent with the maintenance of order and the control of her frontiers" — 100,000 men in the colours, including no more than 4,000 officers. Servicemen were to serve for twelve years and officers for twenty-five. The General Staff was abolished and conscription and the military training of civilians in governmental and administrative service such as coastguards, customs officers and forest guards prohibited. The possession of "aggressive weapons" — tanks, heavy guns over 105mm, armoured cars, military aviation, submarines, battleships over 10,000 tons and poisonous and asphyxiating gases — was forbidden, and severe quantitative restrictions were placed on permitted arms. Reserve stocks of arms and ammunition were limited and strict regulations applied to all military establishments. But the enforcement of these provisions was left to the Germans themselves; an Allied Control Commission was set up, but it merely had supervisory duties.
Because of German protests, the Allies inserted a clause in the Peace Treaty stipulating that the reductions in German armaments were to "render possible the initiation of a general limitation of armaments of all nations". And on June 16 1919, after being asked to clarify this clause, the Allies handed a Note to the German delegation at the Peace Conference declaring that

"The Allied and Associated Powers wish to make it clear that their requirements in regard to German armaments were not made solely with the object of rendering it impossible for Germany to resume her policy of military aggression. They are also the first steps towards that general reduction and limitation of armaments which they seek to bring about as one of the most fruitful preventives of war, and which it will be one of the first duties of the League of Nations to promote."

Thus the Allies were under a moral obligation (if such a thing exists in international politics) to disarm – if not a legal one. And it seemed that negotiations for a general disarmament convention could proceed smoothly provided that the League proved adequate as an organ of security.

The main cause of insecurity within the international system was the "German problem". The Treaty of Versailles left Germany united, a country with the greatest industrial (and therefore war) potential of any European state with the exception of Russia. Moreover, despite her reparations obligations, Germany was in a position to make a rapid recovery from her post-war situation. The Soviet Union, on the other
hand, was in a state of chaos after more than five years of civil and international conflict. Thus, with the "Russian check" gone, sooner or later Germany would resume her preponderant position among the European Powers – unless the Allies chose to maintain the restrictions imposed on her at Versailles. The problem facing Britain and France was whether to let Germany regain her "natural" preponderance and, if they did, under what provisions for security.

Anglo-French strategies towards the German problem were completely different. The French felt that the Peace Treaty did not provide them with enough security against a revived Germany and therefore insisted that the Germans be made to comply rigidly with the Treaty. The British believed that some German grievances were justified and thought it necessary to redress these grievances in order to attain security. France wanted to solve the German problem by treating Germany as a second-class Power; Britain wanted to solve the problem by making concessions to "legitimate" German demands.

There was some justification for French fears. Except for the fifteen year occupation of the demilitarized Rhineland and, more remotely, the threat of sanctions under the League, no machinery for the enforcement of the Peace Treaty had been established. The German army was not allowed to possess "offensive" weapons and had been reduced to 100,000 long-service volunteers – but it was the Germans themselves who arranged the disarmament; the Allied Control Commission merely had supervisory powers. Similarly, the Allies provided no machinery to enforce the payment of reparations; the German government
was responsible for discharging its admitted obligations. Before 1914, Germany had been held in check by the Franco-Russian alliance, but a resuscitation of the alliance in 1920 was inconceivable because of French hostility to the Soviet regime and the destruction of Russian power during the Great War and the Bolshevik revolution. France did gain allies among the East European successor states, notably Poland and Czechoslovakia, but these alliances did not provide the same degree of security as the old Franco-Russian alliance. French security was weakened even further when the American Senate rejected the Treaty of Versailles and the projected Anglo-American guarantee of the French frontier, for it became extremely doubtful whether the United States would co-operate with the League in frustrating aggression. Consequently, successive French governments sought to strengthen the League as an organ of security and to make Germany comply rigidly with the provisions of the Peace Treaty.

In the long run, the French "solution" to the German problem was impracticable. Germany would not condescend to become a second-class Power. In January 1923, using a default in reparations deliveries as the pretext, French troops occupied the Ruhr in an attempt to cause such inconvenience in the economic and political organization of Germany that the German government would prefer to "fulfil" its obligations under the Treaty of Versailles. The attempt was unsuccessful. Germany organized a "passive resistance" to the occupation and, in continuing their campaign, the French found that they were hurting their own economy almost as much as the German. On May 11 1924, French voters rejected the policy of
intransigence and returned a liberal government under Edouard Herriot.

Britain felt that French security was adequately guaranteed by the Peace Treaty and that the German problem should be solved by a policy of pacification rather than coercion. Since the scuttling of the German fleet at Scapa Flow, Germany posed no immediate threat to British security and, consequently, successive British governments sought to "wipe out the past" and promote the cause of European reconciliation. Peace and economic recovery were the ultimate goals of British policy and neither could be established while the Continent remained unsettled. The chief threat to European peace seemed to be German grievances against the Peace Treaty, so Britain favoured a gradual and peaceful revision of the more controversial provisions of the Treaty.

Although Britain was willing to appease German grievances, the Government did not anticipate restoring Germany to the preponderant position she had held in 1914, as this might prove dangerous to British security. Because of developments in military technology - particularly in aviation - Britain was now more vulnerable to attack than previously; her military frontier was no longer the Strait of Dover - it was the River Rhine. The Government looked on France as a friendly Power - Britain's "guardian on the Rhine". In theory, therefore, Britain was faced with the problem of reconciling the "Rhine dogma" with that of appeasing Germany. But in practice, not anticipating a major war for at least ten years (the so-called "ten year rule", repudiated in 1932), the Government based its policy on the conciliation of Germany.
Unlike the policy of coercion, conciliation offered the hope that a lasting solution to the German problem might be obtained. But at the same time, the policy could be successful only if it took power factors into consideration. Britain and France had to ensure that Germany did not gain sufficient strength to be a menace to European security, more particularly West European security; and, in practice, France had to be assured of her own security before she would make concessions to Germany. If the power factor was not taken into account, there was a danger that appeasement would merely encourage Germany to demand more concessions and, eventually, lead to Germany becoming dangerously overpowered.

Until Britain and France reached a *modus vivendi* on a security system for Europe, a disarmament convention was unlikely. In 1920, the First Assembly of the League had established a Temporary Mixed Commission for the Reduction of Armaments, but after early attempts to conclude a convention based on quantitative reductions (notably the Esher plan), it became evident that the establishment of security was a precondition of any agreement.

The most significant result of the occupation of the Ruhr was that Britain and France became more willing to compose their differences on the security question. France, under Herriot, reduced her demands on Germany; Britain began to consider giving France additional security guarantees, if only because the new Premier, Ramsay MacDonald, was confident they would not need to be implemented. Thus, at the
beginning of 1924, it seemed that a European security settlement was possible.

A scheme for such a settlement had been drawn up in the Temporary Mixed Commission in September 1923 – the Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance, which would have obliged each signatory state to give military support to any other in the same continent that had been the subject of aggression. The League Council would designate an aggressor within four days of an outbreak of international hostilities, decide on the application of economic sanctions, determine and organize the military forces required to frustrate the aggressor and furnish financial help to the victim. Local alliances would be permitted if "approved" by the Council and could be implemented without necessarily waiting for an aggressor to be defined. The security guarantees would not apply to any signatory that had not reduced its armaments according to plans prepared by the Council.

The major defect of the Draft Treaty was its universality. It presumed that conditions on each continent would enable the same security system to be applied to each. Clearly this was not the case. Security in the Americas and the Far East depended to a large extent on the role of the United States, a non-member of the League. Consequently, a number of countries opposed the Draft Treaty for fear that it bring them into conflict with the American colossus. And a large body of opinion in Britain and the Dominions opposed it in case the apportionment of liability on continental lines would place a disproportionate share of the burden of resisting aggression on the Empire.
The merit of the Treaty was that although it did not purport to establish a European security system based on collective principles — it lacked a definition of aggression — it was acceptable to France and her allies. This went to the heart of the disarmament problem. France and her East European satellites would agree to disarm if they were granted additional security guarantees, which in practice could be provided only by Britain because Russia had been excluded from the ranks of the Great Powers and the United States refused to become involved in European disputes.

Despite his readiness to give some additional security guarantees to France, Ramsay MacDonald was unwilling to accept the Draft Treaty; he was afraid that its concrete commitments would necessitate an increase in British armaments and restrict the freedom of British policy. Yet Britain could prevent the operation of the Treaty's military guarantees by using her veto in the Council.

MacDonald's action in rejecting the Treaty typified British policy under the Conservative and National Governments in the next ten years. The refusal to give France specific guarantees of support made French governments less willing to make concessions to Germany, thus frustrating the British Government's aim of conciliating Germany. Unfortunately, few British statesmen understood that security was a necessary precondition of disarmament. Consciously or unconsciously, they based their policy on the nineteenth-century liberal theory of the "harmony of interests". They assumed that each nation had a common interest in peace, that the common interest was compatible with the pursuit of the national interest and that wars arose from
misunderstandings. They assumed that the experiences of 1914-18 had demonstrated the futility of war and believed that an intellectual grasp of this fact was all that was necessary to induce nations to keep the peace in future.\textsuperscript{14} This was a misconception. Not all states believed that war brought no advantages. Germans attributed their sufferings to their defeat in the War rather than the War itself; and the East European successor states owed their very existence to the War. Some states wanted to maintain the status quo; others wanted to change it. Thus, the premise on which successive British governments based their policy regarding the German problem was untenable. They postulated that an international harmony of interests existed; in reality, it was necessary to create such a harmony.

In national politics, it is the function of the government to create harmony; in international politics there is no similar body to carry out the task. Yet just as governments must adjust to change within society, so must states adjust to changes within international society. The British Government understood this. But it did not understand that power was an essential element in the process of "peaceful change" within international society. In trying to induce France to make concessions to Germany without offering equivalent compensation, Britain failed to take the power factor into consideration.

In September 1924, at the Fifth Assembly of the League, MacDonald and Herriot made new efforts to reach a security agreement. The outcome of their endeavours was the Geneva Protocol. States were to
settle their disputes by submitting them to the Council, the Permanent Court or arbitration, and states refusing to submit their disputes or accept an award would be designated aggressors. The procedure for pacific settlement would not apply to "political" disputes such as a demand for treaty revision. There was no modification of Article 16 of the Covenant, but states were to co-operate "loyally and effectively" against aggressors. The Protocol would become operative only after the conclusion of a disarmament convention, and a conference for this purpose would convene in Geneva on June 16 1925.

Apart from the provision for compulsory arbitration and the definition of an aggressor, the Protocol did not impose any new obligations on Members of the League. But it had the great merit of closing the "gap in the Covenant" and providing France with an additional juridical prop to her security — it might even have provided a nucleus around which a European security system based on collective principles could be built. Herriot accepted the scheme as providing sufficient security to allow the convening of a disarmament conference at which France would make concessions to Germany. But despite this, the new Conservative administration in Britain rejected the scheme on the grounds that it involved Britain in extensive new commitments and that security could best be attained by making "special arrangements to meet special needs". Actually, the only additional obligation devolving on Britain was an undertaking to refer certain non-political disputes to arbitration. Article 16 of the Covenant was not strengthened, and in any case, Britain could prevent the League imposing military sanctions by using her veto in the Council.
The Conservative "solution" to the French security problem was the Treaty of Locarno, initialled on October 16, 1925. Germany, Belgium and France accepted their coterminous frontiers and the demilitarized Rhineland as inviolable and pledged themselves not to attack, invade or resort to war against each other. Britain and Italy guaranteed these arrangements and in a case of "flagrant aggression" they were to come to the aid of the victim immediately. There were no similar agreements guaranteeing the inviolability of Germany's eastern frontiers, but the British rather grudgingly agreed that French action in fulfilment of her alliances with Poland and Czechoslovakia would not constitute aggression against Germany. Germany agreed to apply for admission to the League.

Although the Locarno agreements inaugurated a period of relative calm in European relationships, the French Government continued to press for additional security guarantees. Unlike the Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance and the Geneva Protocol, the Locarno Treaty gave no assurance that Britain would stand by France in conflicts resulting from German revisionist ambitions in Eastern Europe. Moreover, the Locarno guarantees would come into operation only in a case of "flagrant aggression", giving Britain an excuse for withholding her support in the event of a Franco-German dispute. Indeed the nature of the guarantees was such that Britain retained complete freedom to decide how to fulfil her pledges. Thus, although the Parties to the Locarno Treaty undertook to negotiate a general disarmament agreement, the prospects of such an agreement effecting substantial measures of disarmament were not great; France would not make extensive
concessions to German demands until Britain gave more concrete assurances of support.

Even so, the Locarno Treaty was a first step towards solving the German problem. It represented an adjustment to a new configuration of power within Europe and gave France some assurance of British support and insured Germany against a renewed occupation of the Ruhr. If Britain and France would make similar adjustments to future changes in the configuration of power - and a redistribution of power in favour of Germany was inevitable - a peaceful solution of the German and disarmament problems was possible.

The Locarno Treaty represented a considerable success for Britain. Her treaty obligations were moral rather than military in character, were limited to Western Europe, where her main interests lay, and thus were in line with the "harmony of interests" premise, which permitted Britain to exert a great deal of influence on the Continent with few commitments and minimum cost. The Government could hardly make detailed preparations for intervening against an aggressor in Western Europe when the aggressor was unspecified.

Austen Chamberlain apparently failed to realize that the negotiation of the Locarno Treaty had been possible because, at that time, French fears of a revived Germany were counterbalanced by German fears of a Ruhr-type invasion, and he seemed unaware that, at some time in the future, it might be necessary to adjust to changes in the distribution of European power by involving Britain more directly in the European security system. He thus began to follow a policy of "comparative detachment" from European affairs, concerning himself with defending
Britain's more immediate interests - the security of the Empire and the protection of her trade routes.

The period of calm following the conclusion of the Locarno Treaty induced the League Council to establish a Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference, and in effect, discussion of the German problem was "transferred" to the new body.

Even in 1926, when the Commission began its deliberations, it was evident that unless an international disarmament agreement was negotiated, Germany would begin to rearm. Basing their arguments on Article 8 of the Covenant and the Allied Note of June 16 1919, the German delegation claimed that a contractual relationship existed between German disarmament and the contemplated general disarmament and demanded that the other Powers disarm to the German level. If a general treaty was not concluded, Germany would consider herself freed from the obligations imposed by the Treaty of Versailles.

Most Ministers in the British Government, including the Premier, Stanley Baldwin, and the Foreign Secretary, were unconvinced of the need for disarmament and believed French fears of a revived Germany to be exaggerated. The fighting services were also opposed to disarmament and resisted any suggestions that Britain should reduce her own armaments. Neither Ministers nor Services appeared to appreciate that failure to conclude a general disarmament convention would lead to German rearmament and probably frustrate peaceful settlement of the German problem. Early in 1927, a Government Committee was established to consider British policy at the
Preparatory Commission, but it rejected Lord Cecil's contention that further security was prerequisite of disarmament. The Committee drew up a skeleton convention setting out general principles and machinery by which disarmament might be pursued, but the document was little more than a demand for the disarmament of France and her allies.

In the immediate post-war years, Britain had reduced her own armaments considerably because there was no imminent threat to her security — though the British delegation in the Preparatory Commission suggested that the reductions had taken place to set an example to other Powers. France and her allies, less secure than Britain, were not deceived by this claim and demanded further security guarantees. The British refused to undertake additional Continental commitments and, as a result, discussions in the Commission became academic and sterile, bogged down in a morass of technical difficulties — difficulties which reflected the political position of each of the Powers.

Each proposal put before the Commission was based on the strategical considerations of the Power concerned. Britain, a naval Power with a small standing army, was vulnerable to a force capable of delivering a "knockout blow" before her own vast reserves of industrial power could be mobilized in defence, so she advocated the limitation of "aggressive" forces — effectives and matériel available immediately on mobilization. France, a land Power, with no great reserves of manpower or industrial potential, considered it necessary to maintain a striking force that could mount an overwhelming attack on an enemy (Germany) before the enemy could mobilize its resources. Britain advocated that the number of effectives for each country be fixed in a relative ratio on the basis of requirements for the
maintenance of order and the policing of frontiers; France suggested that the ratio had been fixed by the Treaty of Versailles and that she could reduce her armaments only if this ratio was maintained, preferably through the establishment of a security system based on the Geneva Protocol. Britain favoured the direct limitation of matériel in service and reserve; France believed that direct limitation was dangerous to the effectiveness of national defence and so suggested indirect limitation through a control of budgetary expenditures. Britain proposed that military aircraft be limited quantitatively; France favoured limitation by total horse-power.

The Anglo-French controversies resulted in two draft conventions, one British, one French, being placed before the Commission in March 1927 - though they were little more than restatements of the policies the two Powers had followed since the Commission had opened. The task of the delegates thereafter became the reconciliation of these two policies though, in reality, they were irreconcilable unless they were discussed in conjunction with new security proposals.

The British Government was not convinced of the need for additional security guarantees and continued to believe that disarmament could best be obtained by each state vigorously pursuing its own national interest. Austen Chamberlain was especially eager to uphold the British interest - at least, his own conception of it - and the British representatives at the Geneva Naval Conference of 1927 were instructed to break up the Conference because America would not accept the British demand for seventy cruisers. This number was claimed to be the minimum Britain required to meet normal service requirements, though in fact she only possessed fifty. At the 1927
Assembly, the Foreign Secretary frustrated an attempt to revive the Geneva Protocol and asserted that Britain was not prepared to extend the guarantees given at Locarno; it was "for other countries to complete the work". Chamberlain was even reluctant to accept proposals involving no commitments; he accepted the Kellogg Pact for the renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy grudgingly and only on condition that it did not apply to wars of self-defence or in "certain regions of the world the welfare and integrity of which constitute a special and vital interest for [British] peace and safety".

In May 1929, when the Tories fell from power, negotiations for a settlement of the disarmament and German problems had almost come to a standstill. Little progress was being made in the Preparatory Commission. Chamberlain had contributed to European appeasement by assisting in the negotiation of the Locarno agreements, but he hindered the future development of appeasement — and disarmament — by following a policy of "comparative detachment" from European affairs and the defence of Britain's immediate national interests.

Chamberlain's successor at the Foreign Office, Arthur Henderson, was one of the few British statesmen who believed in collective security. He was convinced that nations would disarm "in proportion to the measure of their confidence in the constructive machinery of peace", and sought to prepare the ground for the convening of the Disarmament Conference by strengthening the provisions of the League
Covenant and promoting the cause of European appeasement. He believed that a collective system based on the League could facilitate a peaceful solution of the German problem and provide a juridical framework in which states could pursue their political objectives.

Henderson's ideal was an international system based on the Geneva Protocol, and he was particularly keen to develop machinery for the pacific settlement of disputes. On September 19 1929, he signed the "Optional Clause" of the Statute of the Permanent Court, pledging Britain to resolve her judicial disputes by submitting them to compulsory jurisdiction at the Court. Ten days later, he persuaded the League Assembly to adopt the Convention for Financial Assistance to States Victims of Aggression on condition that it came into operation simultaneously with the first general disarmament treaty. And on March 9 1931, Britain acceded to the General Act, which, like the Geneva Protocol, purported to provide for the settlement of international disputes — justiciable and non-justiciable — by means of compulsory arbitration.

Although Henderson recognized that provisions for sanctions were essential in a collective system, he believed that "true security" could be obtained only by international co-operation. He was a firm believer in European reconciliation, and at the Hague Conference of August 1929 he promoted a Franco-German agreement linking the evacuation of French troops from the Rhineland with a "final" settlement of the reparations problem. France agreed to evacuate the Rhineland before June 1930 — five years ahead of the schedule laid down at Versailles — and Germany, in return, accepted the "Young Plan" for reparations, even though it involved a higher scale of payments.
than the "Dawes" settlement of 1924. Appeasement and British mediation between France and Germany were Henderson's solution to the German problem.

In preparation for the Disarmament Conference, the Foreign Secretary speeded up the work of the Preparatory Commission by making concessions to France regarding budgetary limitation and exclusion of trained reserves in the calculation of effectives. He also helped to negotiate the London naval Treaty of April 22 1930, by which Britain, America and Japan agreed to limit their cruisers in a ratio of 5:5:3 and destroyers in a ratio of 10:10:7 and to construct an equal number of submarines. A total tonnage limit was imposed for each category of vessel. The agreement was made possible by Britain reducing her demand for cruisers from seventy (the 1927 demand) to fifty. But the two smaller naval Powers, France and Italy, were unable to come to an agreement as the French, with their extra commitments, would agree to the Italian demand for parity in cruisers, destroyers and submarines only if they received further guarantees of security such as a "Mediterranean Locarno". Henderson was disturbed by the position taken by France and hoped to bring about a Franco-Italian rapprochement on the naval question before the Disarmament Conference was held. In March 1931, when the two Continental Powers drafted the so-called "Bases of an Agreement", he appeared to have succeeded.

Disarmament was the foremost element in Henderson's policy. Like most of his contemporaries in Britain, he had been appalled by the slaughter of the Great War, and he believed that disarmament within a system of collective security would make another war unthinkable. He hoped to strike at "militarism" and improve security by promoting an
agreement that would lead, eventually, to each state reducing its forces to a level necessary for the maintenance of internal order and the policing of frontiers, the agreement to be enforced by collective sanctions if necessary.

Unfortunately, collective security had been made impracticable by America's refusal to join the League, and though the implementation of the provisions of the Covenant within Europe might still have been possible, the combined forces of the European Powers were barely sufficient to deter an aggressor — especially Germany. In such conditions, the Powers applying sanctions might be hurt almost as much as the aggressor against whom the sanctions were invoked. The occupation of the Ruhr had shown the limitations of a security system based on a narrow margin of power. A European security system based on collective principles was practicable, in the long run, only in conjunction with the appeasement of Germany — and appeasement was practicable only if France was compensated for the concessions she would be asked to make.

Henderson had a better conception of the political realities of Europe than most British statesmen of his time, for he realized that Germany would rearm if a disarmament convention was not negotiated and that it might be necessary to use force to deter her from violating her international obligations. But even he thought that French fears of insecurity were somewhat exaggerated, thus his emphasis on appeasement and the development of machinery for the pacific settlement of disputes rather than sanctions. At least in 1930, he was unwilling to make specific military commitments to France — except maybe in conjunction with a disarmament convention — though he considered
entering some kind of "Mediterranean Locarno". Like the Tories before him, he based his policy on the "harmony of interests" theory. He believed that the horrors of a future war made it inconceivable that a disarmament convention would not be negotiated, and he never quite understood that a Franco-Italian naval agreement was frustrated by a clash of national interest rather than a desire on the part of France to effect a rapid and substantial increase in her naval armaments. But he did understand that it might be necessary for Britain to involve herself more actively in European affairs if solutions to the German and disarmament problems were to be found.

In the autumn of 1929, the prospects for disarmament seemed good. Henderson, Briand and Stresemann, the Foreign Ministers of Britain, France and Germany, appeared to be working in harmony, and criticism of the slowness of the work of the Preparatory Commission came from the British delegate, Lord Cecil, rather than from the Germans.

But the years 1930 and 1931 witnessed a deterioration in European relations, mainly because of the effects of the economic depression resulting from the "Wall Street crash" of October 1929. In Germany, the "Grand Coalition" of Social Democrats, Democrats, Centre and German Peoples Party fell from office in March 1930, and the new Chancellor, Heinrich Brüning, had to resort to rule by presidential decree under Article 48 of the Constitution as he had no consistent majority in the Reichstag. President Hindenburg and General Schleicher, head of the Reichswehr, assumed greater powers and moved Germany more
to the Right. Faith in democratic government, never particularly strong among the German people, began to decline, and militant nationalists took advantage of the economic distress and the authoritarian nature of the German mind to blame the situation on the Peace Treaty. In September 1930, the extremist parties — the Nazis and the Communists — made substantial gains in the Reichstag elections, and the Nazis became the second largest party in the House.

The new militancy of the German people was reflected in the Preparatory Commission. Count Bernstorff, the German delegate, made numerous reservations to the draft convention in course of preparation, and on December 9 he voted against the adoption of the completed document.

Certainly the Draft Convention had many defects. Part I was unacceptable to Germany and the other non-conscriptionist countries because it provided for the limitation of effectives but not the limitation of trained reserves. Germany, with her long-service army and no reserves, could hardly be expected to accept permanent inferiority in effectives relative to her conscriptionist neighbours.

Another serious defect of the Draft Convention was its provision for indirect rather than direct limitation of matériel. The Germans found it impossible to accept because it limited the future acquisition of matériel while leaving existing stocks untouched. The main threat to German security lay in a "knockout blow" from a nation possessing large forces capable of immediate mobilization, and it was in Germany's interest to restrict the matériel available to the armies of France and her allies. Direct limitation applied equally to all the major
Powers would reduce French preponderance in Europe and thus improve Germany's bargaining power in European politics.

Germany was not the only Power dissatisfied at the provisions for effectives and matériel. Britain was basically in favour of limiting trained reserves, though Cecil abstained from voting on this proposal in the Commission because he realized that Japan, Italy and France would not abandon conscription and that it was necessary for Britain to keep on good terms with France. Similar reasons accounted for his acceptance of budgetary limitation. Other Powers took their dislike of the provisions for effectives and matériel further; Italy, America and the Soviet Union, for example, voted against budgetary limitation.

A further weakness of the Draft Convention was its provisions for air disarmament, as the states disarmed by the Peace Treaties were forbidden to own military aircraft while the other Powers were allowed to retain their air arms - though they were required to limit the number of aircraft in service and "immediate reserve" by number and total horse-power. Bernstorff proposed the abolition of bombing, but this was rejected by the other Powers. There was no provision for control over civil aviation except that states agreed to "refrain from prescribing" the embodiment of military features in civilian aircraft and make no preparations for the conversion of such machines to military use in time of peace. France had suggested the internationalization of civil aviation, but Britain, Germany and America rejected the proposal.

In contrast, there was some measure of agreement over the limitation of naval arms, as the Washington and London Treaties provided a solid
basis for further limitations. Each naval Power was to be allotted a total tonnage limit for each category of vessel, and rules were to be formulated allowing a "transfer of tonnage" between categories. At the same time, it was evident that disputes were almost certain to arise when the time came for inserting figures in the blank tables of the convention.

The most satisfactory section of the convention was that in which each Party was to undertake to "abstain unreservedly" from using bacteriological weapons and, subject to reciprocity, from using asphyxiating, poisonous or "similar" gases and analogous "liquids, substances or processes".

Only slightly less satisfactory was a provision for the establishment of a Permanent Disarmament Commission to supervise the execution of the convention and deal with any complaints concerning violations or "attempted violations". Its members were to be appointed by their governments but were not to represent them and could not be removed by them. On receiving a complaint, they would draw up a report so that the Parties to the convention could advise on any action to be taken, and in the case of a dispute between members of the League, any action would be taken in accordance with the Covenant.

In contrast to the general harmony regarding the Permanent Disarmament Commission, a clause stating that the Draft Convention would in no way affect the provisions of previous disarmament treaties aroused intense bitterness, for Germany, Bulgaria and Turkey saw it as an attempt to secure a reaffirmation of the conditions imposed by the Peace Treaties. The British delegation had inserted the clause to ensure that the Washington and London Treaties would not be weakened, but this seemed
irrelevant to the delegates of the ex-Central Powers.

There was no real surprise when Germany rejected the Draft Convention on the ground that it would not provide equality of rights and equality of security for all nations. The criticism was justified. The convention had been formulated at a time when France was the preponderant Power in Europe and Germany was feeling the effects of the occupation of the Ruhr, but by 1930 the German people were more aware of their national strength than they had been five years previously and they sought to use this strength to gain concessions from the other Powers. The distribution of power within Europe was changing in Germany's favour, and it was necessary for the other Powers to adjust to this change. The Draft Convention could not facilitate such an adjustment and therefore could not provide a basis for the solution of the disarmament or German problems.

During 1931, as the world depression became worse, European relations became exacerbated. On March 21, Austria and Germany announced their intention to establish a customs union, and though they claimed that the motives behind the proposal were economic, there is little doubt that they were political; the German leaders trusted that their public would regard the Zollverein as a first step towards Anschluss, whilst hoping that the European Powers would regard the proposal as non-political. Brüning's hopes were soon disappointed. France, Italy and Czechoslovakia believed that the customs union was a portent of Anschluss, and to protect their interests they made démarches in Berlin claiming that a customs union was prohibited by the Austrian
Reconstruction Protocol of 1922 and Article 8 of the Treaty of St. Germain. Thus the Zollverein proposal did little more than aggravate European tensions.

Henderson's attitude towards the Zollverein proposal was governed by his desire to ensure that the Disarmament Conference was held under the most favourable conditions. He was concerned at the apprehension caused by the proposal and sought to promote a Franco-German compromise by suggesting that the League Council examine the legality of the proposal. Eventually, both France and Germany accepted this course.

In a further attempt to ease the prevailing tension in Europe, Henderson supported France in demanding concessions from Germany in return for French aid to "save" the German economy. His proposals, including a suggestion that Germany agree to a five-year "political moratorium", were somewhat unrealistic, but they did demonstrate that he recognized that good Anglo-French relations were an essential preliminary to disarmament and the appeasement of Germany.

Unfortunately, the British Chancellor (Philip Snowden), the Governor of the Bank of England (Montagu Norman) and Ramsay MacDonald opposed Henderson's policy and tried to persuade the French to make concessions to Germany in order to consolidate Brüning's position in relation to the German extremists. This aroused the bitterness of the French, who began to withdraw their short-term credits from London, causing a financial crisis that led to the downfall of the Labour Government on August 24.

In his two years in office, Henderson had taken a more realistic
attitude towards the problems confronting him than his predecessor at the Foreign Office and had done his best to bring France and Germany together. He was the first, if not the only, Foreign Secretary between the two World Wars who gained the confidence of both French and German leaders, and for this reason he was appointed President of the Disarmament Conference on May 22. Because of his belief in an international "harmony of interests", interests which he thought could be pursued within the framework of a system of collective security, he may have been over-optimistic about the chances of a Franco-German reconciliation, but unlike most British statesmen, he recognized that Britain would have to play an active role if there was to be any chance of improving relations between the two Continental Powers. Thus, although he appeared to regard disarmament as an end in itself rather than as a method for facilitating a solution of the German problem, his policy offered some hope that an agreement might be reached at the Disarmament Conference.

The fall of the Labour Government had serious consequences. Henderson's personal influence as President of the Disarmament Conference was weakened by his loss of office, and the new British Government — a Conservative (in the guise of National) administration with MacDonald as Premier — was more concerned with solving Britain's economic problems than discussing disarmament. Not until the general election of October 27 had given the "National Coalition" a convincing majority of over 400 seats in the Commons did the Cabinet consider its policy towards the disarmament and German problems.
Foreign Secretary in the new Government was Sir John Simon - an unfortunate choice. A gifted lawyer, he had little interest in foreign affairs, was reluctant to take a strong line on any problem confronting him and tended to look on other countries' policies as opposing briefs. His appointment was criticized by many leading Conservatives, including Sir Austen Chamberlain, and it is possible that MacDonald, who was intensely interested in foreign affairs wanted to enhance his own prestige by having an indifferent performer at the Foreign Office. It was suggested that the allocation of offices within the government coalition necessitated a Liberal Foreign Secretary, but other high-ranking Liberals, notably Sir Herbert Samuel, had better qualifications for the post than Simon.

The Government abandoned Henderson's policy of "active mediation" between France and Germany and reverted to Austen Chamberlain's policy of "comparative detachment" and the defence of Britain's immediate interests. Neither MacDonald nor Simon seemed to appreciate the role played by power in international relations, and the Premier remained convinced that goodwill was all that was necessary to resolve international disputes. Apparently, he did not recognize that the German problem could not be solved unless Britain took a more active part in European affairs and assumed additional Continental commitments. His own solution to both the German and disarmament problems was for France and Germany to "put their demands in such a way that Britain could say that she supported both sides".

The Government's refusal to play an active part in reconciling Franco-German differences was a serious blow to the Disarmament
Conference. Germany would no longer tolerate being treated as a second-class Power, and unless an agreement was reached at Geneva, it was certain that she would begin to rearm unilaterally, thus causing an arms race. To meet this danger, the other Powers had three courses open to them. They could uphold the provisions of the Peace Treaty by force; but this was unrealistic, the occupation of the Ruhr having demonstrated that a policy of force hurt the other Powers almost as much as Germany. They could fall back on their own military resources; but this would precipitate an arms race rather than avoid one. Or they could appease German grievances and adjust peacefully to the new configuration of power within Europe. Only this last course offered any real hope that a peaceful solution of the German and disarmament problems could be achieved; and in practice it meant reconciling the French claim for security with the German claim for equality of rights by means of a Franco-German agreement or through British mediation between the two Continental Powers. The latter was the most efficacious method, though for mediation to be successful it would be necessary for Britain to offer France compensations for the increase in German power accompanying a grant of equality.
CHAPTER II  THE FIRST PHASE OF THE DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE

February 2 – July 23 1932

The belief that goodwill alone was sufficient to settle major international problems led the Government to adopt a non-committal policy at the Disarmament Conference. MacDonald wrote to Lord Londonderry, the Air Minister, "We need at Geneva a policy quietly pursued without turning off our way to right or left", and the instructions sent to the British delegation in Geneva were somewhat nebulous on questions likely to cause difficulty. Moreover, the British Cabinet was still arguing about the substance of the British disarmament programme. The Government originally intended to follow a similar policy to that advocated in the Preparatory Commission – the direct limitation of matériel and effectives— but in January 1932 the Cabinet began to study a scheme for qualitative disarmament drawn up by Capt. B. H. Liddell Hart, a retired army officer and one of the foremost military strategists of the time.

The Preparatory Commission had revealed that France and Germany were unlikely to agree upon a scheme of quantitative disarmament because of their differing strategical needs and the difficulty of imposing numerical restrictions. A successful agreement had to prevent squabbles over numbers and ratios of armaments and satisfy each state that its security was not impaired. Liddell Hart believed that this could be achieved by reducing the offensive power of armies and rendering them incapable of invading a neighbour's territory with any prospect of success. He therefore suggested the abolition of heavy guns of over 4" (105 mm) calibre and tanks of over five, eight or ten tons, as
these were the only land weapons capable of making any impression on modern fortifications or entrenched positions. Lighter weapons such as machine guns and automatic weapons were unable to break through modern fortifications or entrenchments; and in any case they were difficult to limit as they could easily be concealed – unlike heavy guns and tanks.

At least two members of the Cabinet, Simon and Sir Samuel Hoare, gave Liddell Hart's ideas a favourable reception. MacDonald and Baldwin (the Conservative leader and Lord President of the Council) also seem to have viewed them sympathetically, but the Service Ministers apparently opposed them and pressed for increases in British armaments. The conflict had not been resolved when the Disarmament Conference assembled on February 2.

At the opening of the "general discussion" on February 8, Simon asserted that Britain was in favour of both quantitative and qualitative disarmament, and he went on to suggest that submarines and other weapons whose character was primarily offensive could be abolished or reduced in size and that restrictions could be placed on permissible weapons. "Uncivilized" or offensive methods of warfare such as aerial bombardment and the use of gas and chemical weapons could be prohibited and a Permanent Disarmament Commission could be established to supervise the convention.

Simon's suggestions were rather vague and more an outline of the methods by which disarmament should be pursued rather than definite proposals for limitation. The proposals for qualitative limitation represented a possible line of advance, but in their existing form they were insufficient to give an effective lead to the deliberations of the Conference.
Most delegations restated the position that they had taken in the Preparatory Commission or set out their maximum demands. The French Premier, André Tardieu, repeated the familiar argument that peace and disarmament depended on security and that security depended on each state being willing to fulfil its obligations under the Covenant. He accepted the Draft Convention as a basis of an agreement, and suggested that it could be complemented by the creation of an international force, the prohibition of bombing, the internationalization of civil aviation, the protection of civilian populations, compulsory arbitration, the strengthening of the League and international control of the execution of all agreements concerning armaments. Countries owning heavy artillery, submarines over an agreed tonnage, capital ships over 10,000 tons or with guns over 8" calibre, and bombers exceeding a weight to be specified, would be permitted to use these weapons only in self-defence or on orders from the League. The use of poison gas and incendiary and bacteriological weapons would be forbidden.9

The French were not so unrealistic as to believe that their scheme would gain general acceptance; the discussions in the Preparatory Commission had revealed that many countries, Britain included, would refuse to strengthen the League as an organ of security. The real objectives of the "Tardieu plan" were to enable the French demand for security to dominate the Geneva discussions10 and to postpone the question of concessions to Germany until after the May elections in France. When Simon pointed out that British opinion prevented the Government from entering new Continental commitments ans suggested
that it was rather doubtful whether the "French thesis" could be usefully discussed, Tardieu did not insist that his proposals be given full consideration. The proposals were useful election propaganda and a valuable bargaining counter at Geneva - but little else.

Most speakers in the "general discussion" seem to have recognized that the Tardieu plan was little more than an exercise in propaganda and omitted to mention the French proposals in their own speeches.

Hugh Gibson, the chief American delegate, suggested the abolition of submarines, lethal gases and bacteriological warfare and the restriction of "primarily offensive" weapons such as tanks and heavy mobile guns. Armies would be divided into forces necessary for the maintenance of internal order and "some suitable contingent for defence" and the London naval Treaty extended to include France and Italy.

Dino Grandi, the Italian Foreign Minister, advocated an agreement based on equality of rights and the "proportionate adjustment" of armed forces at the lowest possible level, and he advanced concrete suggestions for the qualitative limitation of the most powerful and deadly weapons. Aircraft-carriers, heavy artillery, tanks, bombers and chemical and bacteriological weapons would be abolished and capital ships and submarines were to be disposed of "simultaneously". Other armaments would be limited quantitatively and the laws of war revised to assure a more complete protection of civilian populations.

The Soviet delegate, Maxim Litvinov, repeated his familiar demands for general and total disarmament or the "complete destruction" of the most aggressive types of armaments - tanks, super-heavy long-range artillery, naval artillery over 12" calibre, ships over 10,000 tons,
aircraft-carriers, military dirigibles, heavy bombers and "all means and apparatus" for chemical, incendiary and bacteriological warfare. Litvinov poured scorn on the French proposals, suggesting that they would not lead to arms reduction and that the proposed international army would not be large enough to deter an aggressor even if states were willing to join in coercive action.¹⁴

On February 18, Rudolf Nadolny, the German delegate, laid a new set of proposals before the Conference. Aerial bombardment, "fortresses constituting a direct menace to other nations" and the use and manufacture of chemical and bacteriological weapons would be prohibited, tanks and heavy artillery abolished and stocks of arms limited in quantity and by category, excess matériel being destroyed. Conscription would be abolished or, if this proved impossible, trained reserves would be limited. Forces such as police and gendarmerie would be placed under severe restrictions. And capital ships would be limited to 10,000 tons, the size of cruisers and destroyers redefined and submarines abolished.¹⁵

By February 24, when the "general discussion" ended, it was evident that all delegations were in favour of the abolition of chemical and bacteriological warfare and the great majority in favour of the abolition of bombers and bombing. And as regards the crucial issue of land disarmament, most states had accepted the principle of qualitative limitation; Germany, Italy and Russia had put forward specific proposals and both Britain and America had suggested the limitation of the most offensive weapons. France, on the other hand, wanted to retain her heavy weapons, though the plan to deposit them with the League was an
implicit recognition of the qualitative principle.

Despite French hesitations, it did seem that progress towards a disarmament convention might be made if Britain was willing to give an effective lead to the deliberations of the Conference. Members of the French delegation feared that the relatively conciliatory Brüning might be replaced as Chancellor by a militant nationalist and so were considering the recognition in principle of the German claim to equality of status coupled with an agreement that limited German armaments to a figure well below that of France and her allies.\(^{16}\) And as insurance against German bad faith, the French desired some material pledge of support — possibly a promise of aircraft.\(^{17}\) But although Simon appreciated that the possibility of an agreement existed, he was unwilling to give any additional assurances of support either to France alone or to both France and Germany\(^{18}\) and was reluctant to take the lead in bringing the two Continental Powers together. He sounded Tardieu on March 12, but apparently did not follow up the enquiry.\(^{19}\) Thus the chance of arriving at a Franco-German settlement outside the Conference was temporarily lost.

Work within the Conference proceeded in the General Commission (the Conference sitting as a commission) consisting of one member from each delegation. Its first task was to co-ordinate the proposals of the various delegations and lay down a mode of procedure, and it adopted Simon's suggestion of carrying on its discussions within the framework of the Draft Convention while reserving full liberty for all delegations to develop their own proposals and move amendments. The General Commission was to make all decisions regarding principles of disarmament,
and five technical commissions (Land, Naval, Air, National Defence Expenditure and Political) were established to advise the best means of applying the principles.

These procedural matters caused progress to be slow, and it soon became apparent that major decisions of principle could not be settled before the Easter recess on March 19. Election campaigns in France and Germany were a further impediment to progress, and the sum total of the General Commission's labours before the break was a resolution stating that a major attempt would be made to tackle "the most difficult problems" when the Conference reconvened on April 11.  

Simon might have utilized the three-week break to try to bring France and Germany together, but instead he sat back and hoped that they would come to an agreement by themselves. When Nadolny suggested that problems such as Germany's claim to equality of status should be tackled more speedily, the Foreign Secretary merely advised that Britain was working for "an approximation of views towards a greater equality of treatment" and that in the meantime "everybody must exercise patience."  

No agreement was reached during the recess regarding the future procedure of the Conference and thus the resumption of the General Commission was characterized by a series of sterile discussions. Two attempts were made to speed matters. On April 11, the Americans put forward a proposal for qualitative disarmament suggesting that the Land Commission be charged with formulating plans for the abolition of tanks, heavy mobile guns over 155mm calibre and poison gas.  And on April 12, Litvinov put forward a plan for "progressive-proportional"
disarmament, a refurbishing of his scheme of 1928 whereby states with armies over 200,000 men would be reduced by half and those from 30-200,000 men from 0-50%\(^{23}\). But both these schemes were objectionable to France and her allies because they divorced the discussion of disarmament from discussion of security.\(^{24}\) Progress might have been possible on the basis of either of these two schemes if Britain had been willing to increase her security commitments on the Continent, but the Government refused to alter its stance on this question.

After much discussion, the American and Soviet proposals were passed to the Bureau of the Conference "for consideration in light of the discussion that had taken place, especially with regard to the remarks of M. Tardieu." But the Bureau dodged the issues involved by recommending that the General Commission decide whether its goal should be a reduction of armaments to the lowest possible level or a "definitive reduction" and whether to arrive at the goal by means of a single disarmament convention or a number of successive agreements.

Simon had taken little part in the procedural discussions in the hope that British intervention would not be necessary to secure an agreement. But the failure of the Powers to reach agreement led him to play an active role in securing a compromise between the Germans, Italians and Soviets on the one hand and the French and their allies on the other. The outcome was the adoption (on April 19, 20 and 22 respectively) of three resolutions whose astute drafting enabled them to be accepted unanimously. The first declared that after the Conference had taken "the first decisive step of general reduction to the lowest possible level", disarmament would be achieved by means of "successive
revisions at appropriate intervals". The second was little more than a recasting of Article 8 of the Covenant, on which all members of the League based their policy in any case. The third approved the principle of qualitative disarmament - "the selection of certain classes or description of weapons the possession or use of which should be absolutely prohibited to all states or internationalized by means of a general convention".

The third resolution was the most important as it opened the way for the technical commissions to examine the range of land, sea and air armaments "with a view to selecting those weapons whose character was the most specifically offensive or ... most efficacious against national defence or most threatening to civilians". Yet, as Litvinov pointed out, the resolution was so general and could be interpreted in so many different ways that it delayed a decision regarding the weapons concerned and the method of reducing them. The Preparatory Commission had demonstrated that military "experts" were unable to agree on a classification of aggressive weapons because each state assumed that its own armaments were defensive and its neighbours' offensive.

In formulating the three procedural resolutions, Simon was probably inspired by a desire to initiate private discussions between leaders of the Great Powers during the American Secretary of State Stimson's visit to Geneva at the end of April. Hitherto, the British had adopted a policy of "wait and see" as regards the Franco-German dispute, but they now seemed to realize the necessity of bringing government
leaders together outside the Conference. Accordingly, it was arranged that Stimson, MacDonald, Tardieu and Brüning should meet for a semi-official exchange of views at Stimson's villa at Bessinge on April 29.30

On April 24, at provincial elections in Prussia, Bavaria, Württemburg, Anhalt and Hamburg (an area representing four-fifths of Germany) the Nazis made considerable gains. Brüning's position as Chancellor was seriously weakened by the results, and he determined to steal the Nazi thunder by returning to Berlin with an agreement securing equality of rights for Germany.

Three days before the proposed four-Power meeting, Brüning put his plan to the British and American Ministers. He demanded equality of treatment — not equality of armaments — and insisted that he would be satisfied with a reduction in the period of service of the Reichswehr from twelve years to six, the transfer of Germany's obligations under Part V of the Treaty of Versailles to the Disarmament Convention, and a reduction in the armed forces of France — though not to Germany's level — through the abolition or restriction of "particularly aggressive" weapons. In return, the Chancellor would consider an agreement along the lines of the Tardieu plan for an international force, with the ultimate objective of abolishing the weapons under its control. The convention might last for ten years.31

Brüning's proposals were very moderate and might well have formed the basis of a disarmament convention. They satisfied Germany's demand for equality — temporarily at least — yet also assured France of military superiority in Europe for a considerable length of time.
Prospects for a settlement seemed good, particularly as the French delegation at Geneva had been considering a scheme that closely resembled Brüning's, except for a provision for increased security pledges by Britain. MacDonald and Stimson, while not accepting Brüning's plan, agreed that the discussions of April 26 had helped "towards immediately clearing away some of the fundamental obstacles towards ultimate agreement."^33

Unfortunately, the meeting planned for April 29 did not take place as Tardieu was unable to journey to Geneva because of an attack of laryngitis. Two days later, he was defeated in the first round of the French general elections and the convening of a four-Power meeting became impracticable.

It is often claimed that Tardieu's illness was diplomatic rather than physical and that he refused to go to Geneva because he had been informed by Andre Francois-Poncet, the French Ambassador in Berlin, that Brüning was about to be displaced and that his successor would be more amenable to French demands. But the evidence available does not substantiate these claims. Francois-Poncet admits having advised the French Premier that Brüning's days were numbered but denies having suggested that the Chancellor's successor would be more amenable. Moreover, it seems unlikely that the anti-German Tardieu would accept assurances from General Schleicher (Francois-Poncet's informant) regarding the amenability or otherwise of a new German leader.

At the same time, apart from Brüning's claim that the French had agreed to his disarmament plan on May 31, the day after his dismissal,
there is little evidence to suggest that Tardieu would have agreed to the German proposals as they stood. Although the French Premier had come to realize that continued French domination on the Continent was impracticable and that a prostrate Germany was as dangerous to France as a militaristic one, he seems to have considered it necessary to gain security compensations from Britain (and maybe America) if he was to agree to a settlement on the basis of Brüning's demands. Tardieu was worried lest concessions on the German claim to equality might cause his defeat in the French elections, and he seems to have been angling for a consultative pact with Britain and an assurance from the Americans that they would not interfere with a course of action determined by the League. If Britain had been willing to give Tardieu the guarantees he required or give similar guarantees to both France and Germany, an agreed solution to the disarmament problem might well have been possible.

Britain's attitude to the Brüning proposals is uncertain because of a lack of documentary evidence. No record appears to have been made of the conversations of April 26. The Germans claimed subsequently that MacDonald had agreed to their claim for equality of rights, but this was denied by the Foreign Office. At the same time, it is evident that the Prime Minister regarded the German plan as a basis of a settlement. It is astonishing, therefore, that he made no real effort to press Tardieu into returning to Genéva. He must have recognized that to send Brüning back to Berlin with no agreement regarding equality of status was tantamount to ensuring the Chancellor's downfall. Possibly his lack of initiative in trying
to arrange another four-Power meeting was due to a realization that agreement was improbable unless Britain increased her Continental commitments. 44

Whatever the cause, the chance of securing a disarmament convention at Bessinge was missed. Tardieu's defeat in the French elections of May 1 and 8 made a resumption of four-Power conversations difficult, and an American attempt to call a four-Power meeting before the Lausanne Conference in June was frustrated by the dismissal of Brüning on May 30.

Meanwhile, the technical commissions had begun their attempts to define aggressive weapons. But the lack of political agreement among the states represented at the Conference ensured that the military "experts" were unlikely to reach an agreement. Each state claimed that its own armaments were defensive and opponents' armaments offensive. There was little pretence of objectivity. 45

In the Land Commission, Germany, the other former Central Powers and Italy maintained that the weapons denied to Germany by the Treaty of Versailles were specifically offensive and that guns over 100–105mm and all tanks should be abolished. France, anxious to maintain her military superiority over Germany, claimed that guns of 240mm and tanks of 70 tons were unable to breach permanent fortifications and were necessary to launch successful counter-offensives. 46 Britain, represented by Brigadier Temperley and Lord Stanhope, took an intermediate position, maintaining that guns up to 155mm and tanks up to 20–25 tons were not offensive and that "medium tanks" were
necessary to compensate Powers such as Britain for reductions in
effectives already made. The vast majority of the delegations
supported the complete abolition of tanks and most believed that
heavy guns should be limited to a calibre of either 105mm or 155mm.
Only Japan, who was consolidating her new conquests in Manchuria,
supported France. On June 7 the Commission reported that no agreement
could be reached on a classification of offensive weapons. The
conclusion was not unexpected.

The position taken by the British representatives reflected the
growing influence of the fighting services on government policy. The
War Office, Air Ministry and Admiralty were opposed to reductions in
British armaments, and the Air Minister Lord Londonderry, and the
Minister for War, Lord Hailsham were against the whole concept of
qualitative disarmament. The Government had intended to advocate
the restriction of tanks to ten tons, but the General Staff, prompted
by the Assistant Director of Mechanization in the War Office, Tim
Pile, apparently convinced the Cabinet that Britain led the world
in the development of "medium tanks" and that the Army could not
give them up; in fact, Britain possessed only a few experimental
models of 16-20 tons.

There was as little agreement in the Naval Commission as in the
Land Commission, each state basing its definition of an aggressive
weapon on its own strategical needs. Britain and America, both Great
naval Powers argued that no single type of warship was offensive but
that submarines should be abolished on "humanitarian and financial"
grounds, while Japan, the third Great naval Power, claimed that
battleships and submarines were defensive but aircraft-carriers offensive. France maintained that all warships, but especially submarines, were defensive. The lesser naval Powers and those who could not afford capital ships suggested that submarines were defensive and battleships offensive, and Germany and Italy argued that ships denied to Germany by the Treaty of Versailles were offensive. On May 28, after a month of sterile discussion, the Commission was compelled to report that no agreement was possible. 51

The Air Commission was also unsuccessful. France supported a Spanish scheme for the internationalization of civil aviation on the lines of the Universal Postal Union while Germany and Italy suggested that stringent international control would retard the development of civil aviation. Britain was basically in favour of the German position but attempted to devise a plan preventing the use of civil aircraft for military purposes. America declared that the problem was a European one. Germany, Italy and Russia advocated the complete abolition of bombing and military aviation, while France favoured the creation of an international air force and the British delegation opposed a complete ban on bombing. Not surprisingly, the report of the Air Commission of June 8 was merely platitudinous, containing such observations as "All air armaments can be used to some extent for offensive purposes", "Civil aircraft ... can in varying degrees subserve military ends" and "All aircraft ... may constitute a danger to civilians". 52

Britain's policy in the Air Commission again reflected the growing influence of the Service Departments on the Government. Many members
of the Cabinet, including Simon and Baldwin, favoured the complete abolition of bombing together with some control — though not the internationalization of — civil aviation to prevent civil aircraft being used for military purposes. But the Air Staff suggested that Britain should retain bombers for deterrent purposes and that bombing was an efficient and humane method of policing outlying districts of the British Empire such as the North West Frontier of India. Lord Londonderry feared the abolition of bombing might lead to the extinction of the R.A.F. and he vigorously expounded the Air Staff view in the Cabinet.

The inability of the technical commissions to define aggressive weapons was not surprising. States had been unable to compose their political differences, and their divergent viewpoints had been reflected in the commissions. Lord Cecil complained that the military "experts" were preventing agreement by losing themselves in a maze of technicalities, but the fault lay with the politicians, who failed to come to grips with the main problems facing the Conference — the French demand for security and the German demand for equality of rights.

Baldwin was apprehensive at the lack of progress in the technical commissions, and on May 13 he put forward specific proposals to Andrew Mellon, the American Ambassador in London, in the hope that Britain and America could unite in presenting a radical programme to the Conference at Geneva. Closely resembling the Italian proposals,
and to be accepted or rejected as a whole, the Baldwin plan envisaged the abolition of capital ships, submarines, aircraft-carriers, tanks, heavy mobile guns and all military aviation (including pursuit and observation planes), the prohibition of subsidies to civil aviation and a "drastic reduction" of effectives.\(^{57}\)

There was little chance of Baldwin's scheme being accepted in its original form. Although it provided for German equality, it offered no corresponding concessions to French security; there were no provisions for either the supervision or the enforcement of the convention. Baldwin gave no indication that Britain was willing to increase her Continental commitments, though he did suggest that America might agree to some form of co-operation with the League in the case of sanctions being applied.\(^{58}\) But it was unlikely that President Hoover would risk his political future - it was an election year - by undertaking further commitments in matters not directly involving his country.

The Baldwin plan represented a considerable departure in British policy - if it was a serious proposal. There is some doubt about this. Mellon described the Conservative leader's attitude towards the scheme as resigned rather than hopeful, "almost apologetic",\(^{59}\) and Baldwin himself was convinced that the air proposals were impracticable and would not be accepted by the other Powers.\(^{60}\) Moreover, after Stimson had rejected the plan, Baldwin began to insist that it was a purely personal initiative that should be kept secret.\(^{61}\) This was untrue; the Cabinet had discussed the proposals at least twice with a view to presenting them at Geneva.\(^{62}\) Baldwin's real reason for wanting the
scheme to remain secret was fear lest the Labour Party learn of it and place the Government in an embarrassing position. 63

A further reason for doubting Baldwin's sincerity is that abolition of capital ships, submarines and aircraft-carriers would have increased the strength of the Royal Navy, whose main strength was in cruisers and destroyers, at the expense of America and Japan, whose main strength was in the classes of ship to be abolished. The American Under-Secretary of State, W. R. Castle Jnr., believed, probably correctly, that the naval proposals were an attempt to appeal to the Tories, who had a philosophical aversion to disarmament unless it was the disarmament of others. 64

Stimson was seriously concerned by the Baldwin plan, especially the proposed abolition of capital ships and aircraft-carriers. America needed battleships and aircraft-carriers to protect her interests in the Far East and he would not even agree to "relative and proportional" reductions in them. 65 He wanted, above all, to prevent Britain from presenting Baldwin's proposals at Geneva in case they reveal the Anglo-American differences on naval questions. 66 Apparently, he feared that Hoover might support the Baldwin plan, and he began to formulate counter-proposals which eventually formed the basis of the "Hoover plan" of June 22. 67 After a démarche by Mellon on June 8, Baldwin quietly dropped his disarmament scheme.

While the Anglo-American conversations were taking place, Herriot had succeeded Tardieu as French Président du Conseil. The change in personnel did not lead to any great change in French policy. Although
Herriot sincerely hoped for a Franco-German reconciliation and was under pressure from the Socialists for a 25% cut in the military budget as part of their price for co-operation with the Government, he was "deeply under the impression of the Stresemann letters" published in "L'Illustration" and "Revue de Paris" in March. Conversing with Norman Davis, one of the American delegates at Geneva, he even remarked that "Briand's body is not yet cold before they the Germans lay on his tomb the Stresemann insults!".

In Germany, President Hindenburg had dismissed Brüning and replaced him with a "Government of Barons" under Franz von Papen, a relative nonentity who owed his position to his personal relationship with Hindenburg and General Schleicher. Baron von Neurath was appointed Foreign Minister. Yet despite the more conservative nature of the new Cabinet, German disarmament policy remained fundamentally the same. Apart from Papen's insistence that the negotiations at Geneva be speeded up and that Germany pursue a more active policy there, the main difference between him and Brüning was his vigorous espousal of a Franco-German rapprochement. Schleicher, who became Minister of Defence in the new Cabinet, hoped that a deal might be arranged with the French, lifting some of the restrictions on German disarmament.

Provided that public opinion on either side of the Rhine was not aroused, there seemed to be a distinct possibility that the new French and German leaders would come to an agreement.

It was the British who made the first new suggestion for improving European relations. Simon took up Francois-Poncet's old idea of a "political truce", an agreement by which European states would not
raise political issues or pursue policies likely to disturb their good relations with each other for fifteen years. It would entail a periodic exchange of views on matters of common importance and Simon hoped that it might cajole the French into accepting the cancellation of German reparations. But neither the French nor German Governments favoured the scheme. Herriot believed it might be another "scrap of paper" similar to the Covenant and Kellogg Pact and that the political questions it was hoped to sweep under the carpet would be raised automatically at the end of fifteen years; to him, a political truce was certainly no *quid pro quo* for the cancellation of German reparations. The Germans, who in any case were determined not to pay any more reparations, preferred a direct Franco-German settlement. The proposal, in fact, would only have benefited Britain, who wanted a period of calm on the Continent (without herself having to undertake any additional commitments) and the cancellation of reparations (so that she could renege on her war debts to the United States).

Thus, on June 16, when the Lausanne Conference on reparations opened, the ground had been cleared of all political proposals and the way was open for Papen to reveal his plan for a Franco-German rapprochement privately to Herriot. He demanded that reparations be cancelled and, in return, offered an accord directed against communism (in effect against Russia), political guarantees (for example, in Eastern Europe) and contacts between the two General Staffs. On June 18, Bernhard von Bülow, one of the German Secretaries of State, in conversation with M. de Laboulay, one of Herriot's Secretaries of State, offered to reaffirm the provisions of Locarno relative to Germany's Eastern frontier and suggested a four-Power consultative pact
between France, Germany, Britain and Italy.\textsuperscript{74} Two days later he added that in return for a recognition of equality of treatment and the replacement of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles by a freely-negotiated disarmament convention, Germany would be willing to fix definite ratios between the two armed forces and to forgo her claim to parity in both men and armaments.\textsuperscript{75} On the following day, Papen informed MacDonald that he was prepared to enter a five-year consultative pact with France, Britain and Italy "for the purpose of ensuring French security" and added that, in return for a recognition of her equality of rights, Germany would refrain from increasing her armaments to the maximum which would be permitted her and would limit her military expenditure to the existing level.\textsuperscript{76} On June 24 he repeated his previous proposals to Herriot and promised not to raise the Anschluss or the revision of Germany's Eastern frontier without prior consultation.\textsuperscript{77}

Herriot was attracted by the scheme, though he was suspicious of the proposed accord between the General Staffs and the prospect of co-operation against Soviet Russia. De Laboulay composed a draft formula and the French Premier returned to Paris to gain Cabinet approval for continuing the negotiations.\textsuperscript{78} However, when he came back to Lausanne, he found Papen in a more guarded frame of mind because of attacks in the German nationalist press.\textsuperscript{79} The German Chancellor now proposed a more comprehensive settlement, including a customs union, the cancellation of reparations, the recognition of German equality of rights, a military entente (if not an alliance) between the General Staffs and an accord to eliminate credits to Russia.\textsuperscript{80}
Despite the underlying French distrust of German motives, Papen's plan might well have formed the basis of a Franco-German accord on disarmament. It offered Germany equality of rights and the cancellation of reparations, while France would have retained her superiority in armaments and would have been given access to all departments of the German General Staff, thus providing her with greater security. An agreement to co-operate against Russia would have been unthinkable since France desired to improve relations with the Soviets, but the proposed customs union would have benefitted both France and Germany, especially in the depressed circumstances of the time.

However, the auspicious opening of the Franco-German talks did not continue and negotiations soon broke down. The attacks on Papen by the nationalist press caused the Chancellor to assume a more cautious attitude, but the main factor in the breakdown was the attitude of the British. MacDonald put pressure on both Papen and Herriot to desist from further negotiations because he was haunted by the spectre of a Franco-German alliance which would "upset the balance of European power." On June 28, when all three countries came together to discuss the question of a Franco-German understanding, both Papen and Herriot were decidedly reticent. Papen made no mention of his proposal for a military entente, and Herriot began to maintain that reparations and disarmament should be treated separately and that a consultative pact would have to be "real and efficacious" to induce him to give up the French claim to reparations. An entente or, at least, good relations with Britain had always been a cornerstone of the French statesman's policy, and it soon became apparent that this
appealed to him more than an uncertain agreement with Germany. Although Papen offered a customs union, a very attractive proposition, he decided to discontinue the conversations.

The British attitude was very shortsighted. A Franco-German agreement such as Papen anticipated would have improved the political atmosphere on the Continent considerably and would have enabled a more concerted attack to have been made on the disarmament problem. MacDonald's fears of an adverse change in the European balance of power were exaggerated; as the precedent of 1883–5 had shown, a Franco-German rapprochement did not necessarily entail an anti-British policy as the French would ensure that any anti-British tendencies were not carried to an extreme. Similarly, the new grouping would not have followed an extreme anti-Russian course — because of French objections — though even if it had, the British would have been the last to object; the Government had little sympathy for the Bolshevik regime.

Another factor in the breakdown of the Papen-Herriot talks was the intervention of President Hoover, who presented a comprehensive scheme for general disarmament to the General Commission at Geneva on June 22. The new American proposal complicated the negotiations at Lausanne by raising new issues before old ones had been settled. The proposal was welcomed by German opinion, and this undermined Papen's position in advocating a Franco-German rapprochement. Hoover's intervention also made Herriot's position difficult. The French Premier was in favour of improving relations with the Americans, but if he accepted the Papen plan he would incur their wrath. Not only were the
Americans opposed to the old-style diplomacy of the European Powers, they were opposed to the cancellation of reparations — they believed that any such action would be used as an excuse by the former Allied Powers to renege on their war debts.

But if nothing else, the Papen-Herriot talks caused the British to realize that they had lost the initiative in directing European affairs. On July 5, therefore, they proposed a consultative pact among the six Inviting Powers at the Lausanne Conference — Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and Belgium; the governments concerned would refuse to discuss political questions affecting interests of two or more of them arising from treaties or instruments to which they were parties without a preliminary friendly consultation. But any possibility of an agreement was prevented by the Franco-German differences over reparations; Germany wanted to pay only 2.6 milliards of Reichsmarks as a "forfait" for the termination of reparations and to include a renunciation of the "war guilt" clause of the Treaty of Versailles and the recognition of equality of rights in a final settlement, while France insisted on a "forfait" of 4 milliards and the exclusion of references to "war guilt" and disarmament.

The British were alarmed when their proposal foundered since they feared that it might revive the negotiations for a Franco-German entente. They therefore offered to sign a consultative accord with France alone. Herriot promptly agreed and on July 13, four days after the Final Act of the Lausanne Conference, the Anglo-French Declaration was announced in London and Paris. It stated that the two Powers intended to exchange views and information on "any questions
... similar in origin to that ... settled at Lausanne" and to work together to find a solution of the disarmament question which would be "beneficial and equitable" to all Powers concerned; it was hoped that other governments would join them in adopting the same procedure. 89 But it was not these innocuous platitudes that attracted the French to the scheme; it was Britain's secret interpretation of them. On all points raised by Germany in connection with her "liberation" from the Treaty of Versailles, MacDonald promised to give no definite answer to the German Government until he had first consulted with the French and come to some kind of agreement with them on the policy to be followed. France was to give a reciprocal undertaking, thus "protecting" both Governments against "the dangers of piecemeal approaches by Germany". 90 Herriot accepted willingly; in the 1920s the French had suffered considerably from "piecemeal approaches" by the German Government to London.

The Anglo–French Declaration represented no great change in the British policy of "no further commitments" on the Continent. The desire to move closer to France seems to have been a temporary phenomenon, the objectives being to hinder a resumption of Franco–German negotiations on disarmament, to prevent the conclusion of an agreement behind Britain's back and to gain an ally against the "Hoover plan" for disarmament. 91 MacDonald was careful to insist that the Declaration was not a renewal of the entente cordiale, 92 and he willingly agreed to invite other Powers to adhere to the agreement when it became clear that they were suspicious of a purely Anglo–French accord. The main object of his policy had been secured by the secret interpretation of the agreement.
On June 22, President Hoover had advanced a new set of proposals in an attempt to break the deadlock in the private negotiations of the Powers at Geneva. He suggested a reduction in world armaments of nearly one third based on five main principles – the Kellogg Pact, an increase in the comparative power of defence by a reduction in the power of attack, the preservation "in a general sense" of the existing relativity in armaments, "real and positive" reductions and the interdependence of all arms. 

The terms of the Hoover scheme were clear and comprehensive. Land forces in excess of a "police component" necessary for the maintenance of internal order (to be determined on the basis of the forces allowed to Germany by the Treaty of Versailles – 100,000 men per 65,000,000 population) would be reduced by one third and the offensive power of the forces remaining decreased by the abolition of tanks, large mobile guns and chemical warfare. Fixed fortifications would be tolerated as they were defensive in character. "Adjustments" to the formula would be made for colonial Powers who needed additional forces because of their extra commitments. Bombers and air bombardment would be abolished, though reconnaiss ance planes would be allowed. The total tonnage of battleships would be reduced by one third and destroyers and cruisers by one quarter, the reductions being based on the Washington and London naval Treaties and the Franco-Italian "Bases of an Agreement" of March 1, 1931. Submarine tonnage would be reduced by one third.

These proposals placed Britain in an embarrassing position. The naval provisions were unacceptable because they reduced British cruiser strength below the number of units necessary for the control of her trade routes yet failed to abolish submarines, the chief threat to
her maritime commerce. Moreover, the land and air terms included the abolition of bombers, tanks and air bombardment, all of which Britain was unwilling to give up - if the Baldwin plan is considered as a serious disarmament proposal - except in return for the abolition of capital ships and submarines. Yet the Government could not reject the American plan outright as this would jeopardize the good relations between the two countries and give the impression to both British and world opinion that Britain was not in favour of disarmament.

This dilemma was the direct result of Britain's own policy. Her unwillingness to come to grips with the main problems facing the Conference had caused her to lose the diplomatic initiative to the Germans at Lausanne and the Americans at Geneva. At Lausanne, she was faced with the possibility of a Franco-German agreement negotiated behind her back; at Geneva, she was faced with a plan for disarmament that was quickly accepted in its entirety by Italy and as a basis of agreement by Germany and the Soviet Union.94

Faced with these circumstances, the Government played for time and, while welcoming the "breadth of view taken of the disarmament problem in President Hoover's declaration", took action to delay consideration of the American proposals. When Henderson attempted to use his position as President of the Conference to speed matters - he suggested that the Hoover proposals might be discussed in the private conversations of the Powers that had been proceeding intermittently since June 14 - Simon declared that this was impossible. Similarly, when the Labour Party tried to speed matters by attempting to draw a statement from the Government, both Simon and Baldwin claimed that it was necessary to have prior consultation with the Dominions.95
Fortunately for the Government, after the major Powers had made their initial observations the Conference decided to postpone consideration of the American scheme so that the various governments could examine it more carefully. This gave Britain time to formulate counter-proposals and look for allies, and approaches were made to Japan, whom the Government hoped would support their objections to Hoover's naval proposals. This was a significant move for at the same time Britain was working closely with the Americans against Japanese policy in Manchuria; but it was a move that promised (and achieved) success because the Japanese military were in effective control of the country. More important was the British move towards France – the secret interpretation of the Anglo-French Declaration.

On July 7, the Government presented a disarmament plan of its own to the Conference in Geneva in the guise of a "Statement of Views" on the Hoover proposals. The presentation coincided with the resumption of the discussion of the Hoover plan in the General Commission, and there can be little doubt that the British move was a deliberate attempt to diminish the effect of the warm approval that the smaller Powers were expected to give to the American scheme. In order to preserve appearances, the British plan was claimed to be a series of proposals for "implementing the general principles of the Hoover Plan" but, in fact, it was the negation of it. Britain claimed that she had already reduced her forces to the lowest level consistent with national safety and that, in consequence, the proposed division of land forces between "defence" and "police components" would require "very careful examination". The Government rejected the abolition of tanks except for those over twenty tons on
the grounds that lighter tanks "could not be regarded as aggressive weapons" and in small voluntarily-enlisted armies like the British were "an essential compensation for lack of numbers". The only parts of the Hoover land proposals which the British accepted were the abolition of chemical and bacteriological warfare (which had already been outlawed in 1925) and the abolition of heavy mobile guns.

The British naval proposals differed considerably from those of the Americans and revealed the same divergences of opinion that had been apparent in the Naval Commission. The number and widespread nature of her commitments led Britain to advocate qualitative rather than quantitative disarmament and, in contrast to the Hoover proposals, she envisaged reductions in the size rather than the number of naval craft. She suggested a reduction in the maximum size of all future capital ships and aircraft-carriers to 22,000 tons, the former to be allowed 11" guns, the latter 6.1" guns, while cruisers would be limited to 7,000 tons with 6.1" guns; if agreement on cruisers proved impossible, capital ships would be allowed 12" guns. Submarines would be abolished, failing which they would be limited in both number and total tonnage, with a maximum tonnage per individual unit of 250 tons. The only measure of quantitative limitation in the proposals was a suggestion that destroyer tonnage be reduced by one third - though this was made dependent on the abolition of submarines.

The air proposals differed considerably from the American air proposals. Whereas Hoover had proposed the abolition of bombers and aerial bombardment, Britain suggested that both be allowed "within limits to be laid down as precisely as possible" for police and control purposes in "outlying and underdeveloped" regions. Londonderry
had won his battle in the Cabinet - at least temporarily.

The British disarmament proposals were doomed to failure because they avoided the real issues facing the Disarmament Conference - the French claim for security and the German claim for equality. Germany would not be released from her obligations under Part V of the Treaty of Versailles - even in theory - and there was no provision for additional guarantees to France. The British plan was based on Britain's own security requirements and did not take the requirements of the other Powers into consideration; it presumed that an international "harmony of interests" existed and that a disarmament plan that satisfied British requirements would satisfy the requirements of other countries. It was no solution to the disarmament problem.

Neither was the Hoover plan a solution to the disarmament problem, for like the British proposals it attempted to divorce disarmament from security. But it did offer some hope for the future. The Americans had come to realize that their participation in the work of the proposed Permanent Disarmament Commission would involve them - whether they liked it or not - in consultations with the other Powers in the event of breaches of a convention, and Stimson intimated that at some time in the future - presumably after the presidential elections - America might be willing to enter into a consultative accord with the other Powers. Such a step would ease French anxieties about security and might induce Britain to enter into further commitments in the general interest, thus facilitating the conclusion of a disarmament convention based on equality of rights for all nations. But in June 1932 neither Britain nor America were willing to undertake new commitments.
Simon was worried about the warm welcome given to the Hoover plan by the great majority of Powers at Geneva and so determined to sidetrack the plan — though without making it too apparent — and bring the first phase of the Conference to an end by inducing the General Commission to pass a resolution summarizing the results that had been achieved. The French were quick to agree to this course. But the Americans, who wanted such a resolution to contain explicit references to the Hoover plan and concrete measures of disarmament, were hesitant and only concurred because they could see no better alternative in the circumstances.

On July 5, Britain, France and America reported to the Bureau that as a result of private negotiations "a certain measure of agreement was possible" on various points — the abolition of chemical and bacteriological warfare, the restriction of air bombardment to certain colonial areas and zones within specified limits of battlefields, the prohibition of the bombardment of civilian populations, the restriction of military aircraft by weight, some kind of international control over civil aviation and budgetary limitation. And the three Governments suggested that the General Commission pass a resolution declaring that agreement had been reached on these points and expressing the hope that more substantial measures of disarmament could be agreed upon in the future.

Some members of the Bureau demurred at the scheme, claiming (correctly) that it was an admission that the Conference's progress had been negligible. The abolition of chemical and bacteriological warfare had already been accepted by the majority of Powers in the Geneva Protocol of June 17, 1925; the proposals for the international control
of civil aviation were sure to be resisted by both Germany and Italy; and the provisions regarding bombing were no more than rules of war that could easily be broken in the eventuality of hostilities. In the absence of any better suggestion, however, the Bureau decided to adopt the scheme and requested Simon to draft a resolution. He did this without delay and handed his draft to Edouard Benes, the Rapporteur of the Conference, who was charged with the difficult task of composing it into a formula acceptable to the Conference as a whole.

The resolution, which Benes presented to the General Commission on July 20, represented a considerable victory for British policy as it avoided all reference to the major problems facing the Conference. The preamble was platitudinous; it repeated the various bases and principles on which a convention was to be negotiated (Article 8 of the Covenant, the Kellogg Pact and the resolutions of April 19 and 20), welcomed the initiative taken by President Hoover and concluded with a declaration that "a substantial reduction of world armaments should be effected", a primary objective being to reduce the means of attack.

Part II of the resolution, summarizing the "results" obtained in the first five months of the Conference's work, was of similarly negligible value. There were to be maximum and minimum calibre limits for heavy artillery (subject to an effective method being established to prevent the rapid transformation of guns on fixed mountings into mobile guns), different limits for guns in permanent frontier or fortress defensive systems, mobile guns and coastal guns, tanks were to be limited in individual tonnage. Air attack against civilian
populations was to be forbidden unconditionally, and all air bombardment prohibited subject to an "agreement with regard to measures to be adopted for the purpose of rendering effective the observance of this rule". This was to include a limitation by number and restriction by "characteristics" of all military aircraft, the submission of civil aircraft to "regulation and full publicity" and the subjection of aircraft not conforming with specified restrictions to an international regime. Chemical, bacteriological and incendiary warfare were to be prohibited under the conditions recommended by the Special Committee on the problem, and a Permanent Disarmament Commission was to be established to supervise the eventual convention. No provisions for naval disarmament were included — neither the British and Americans nor French and Italians had been able to resolve their disputes.

Part III of the draft resolution ("Preparation of the Second Phase of the Conference") was even more vague. The Bureau was to continue working during the adjournment of the General Commission "with a view to framing draft texts concerning the questions on which agreement had already been reached". It would also make a "detailed examination" of such questions as Hoover's proposals relating to effectives and the regulations to be applied to the trade in and manufacture of arms and implements of war and to set up a Special Committee to formulate rules of international law in connection with the prohibition of chemical and bacteriological weapons and aerial bombardment. The Parties to the Washington and London Treaties were to undertake conversations and report to the General Commission on the feasibility of further naval limitation, and the Committee on National Defence Expenditure was
requested to report as soon as possible so that the Bureau could draw up a specific plan for budgetary limitation. It was hoped that, on the resumption of its labours, the Conference would be in a position to decide as to which system of limitation and publicity of national defence expenditure would provide "the best guarantee of an alleviation of financial burdens" and prevent the convention from being neutralized by increases or improvements in authorized armaments.

Both in part and in whole, the resolution was little more than a confession that no real progress had been achieved by the Conference in the five months of its existence. The provisions for land disarmament were so vague that they were unlikely to lead to any more agreement than had been obtained in the Land Commission. The proposals for the abolition of air bombardment were surrounded by so many qualifications as to be of questionable importance. The abolition of chemical, bacteriological and incendiary warfare went little further than the provisions of the Geneva Protocol of June 17, 1925. And the establishment of a Permanent Disarmament Commission was one of the few points on which the Powers had been able to agree unanimously in the Preparatory Commission.

The vagueness of the draft resolution reflected the inability of the Powers to negotiate a political settlement that would facilitate an arms agreement. Limitation of armaments is a political rather than a technical matter, and there was no possibility of concluding a general convention unless the German claim to equality was reconciled with the French claim for security.
Two attempts at reconciling the claims had been made during the first five months of the Conference - Brüning's proposals at Bessinge and Papen's at Lausanne. But the attempts had failed, mainly because of the negative attitude of the British towards both sets of proposals. Tardieu would probably have accepted the Brüning plan if Britain had been willing to undertake relatively minor commitments on the Continent - a consultative pact, or maybe a pledge to supply aircraft to a victim of aggression.\textsuperscript{105} And Herriot might have accepted the Papen plan if Britain had not been so resolutely opposed to it.\textsuperscript{106} Britain's unwillingness to enter into new commitments was very shortsighted. In the long run, European security depended on a peaceful solution of the German problem, and this could be achieved only through the appeasing of German grievances over the Peace Treaty. Germany would not condescend to remain a second-class Power, and it was certain that if a disarmament convention was not concluded she would denounce Part V of the Treaty of Versailles and start to rearm. The other Powers were faced with the inevitability of a redistribution of European power in favour of Germany, and it was in their interests to control the extent and speed of this redistribution of power. France, quite naturally, wanted to ensure that an increase in German power was offset by increased assurances of support from Britain and possibly America. But the British Government believed that a disarmed Germany posed no threat to European security and so refused to undertake additional Continental commitments.

The Government's adoption of "a quiet policy, turning neither right nor left" and its failure to act as mediator between France and
Germany was the chief cause of the lack of progress at Geneva. The refusal to take the lead in trying to reconcile the French demand for security with the German claim for equality resulted in the Conference becoming bogged down in a maze of technicalities. The outcome was the draft resolution of July 20, which the acting Italian delegate, Marshal Balbo, justly described as a "formulation of general principles" contributing nothing to disarmament. 107

Intrinsically, the draft resolution had little value. Its importance was that it provoked a crisis at Geneva. The Germans, who had followed a moderate policy since the opening of the Conference and had put forward two realistic suggestions for a definitive agreement, demanded that the resolution contain a definite acceptance of their claim to equality of rights. On July 20, Nadolny informed the British and American delegations that Germany would oppose the resolution in its existing form, and on the following day he warned that failure to meet his demands would lead to a German withdrawal from the Conference. 108

Germany was not the only Power that criticized the vagueness and generality of the draft resolution, but during the debate of the General Commission of July 21-23 most delegations declared themselves in favour of it in the absence of anything better. Forty-one states voted in favour of the resolution and two against - Germany and the Soviet Union. Eight states abstained - Afghanistan, Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, China, Hungary, Italy and Turkey.

Germany proceeded to walk out of the Conference.
Almost immediately after withdrawing from the Disarmament Conference, the German Government began to put forward specific demands. In a broadcast to the nation on July 26, General Schleicher stated that if the other Powers refused to disarm to the German level, Germany would increase her security by reconstructing — though not expanding — her defence forces, and on August 23, Bülow clarified the German position. In conversation with Francois–Poncet, he denied that Germany wanted to rearm but suggested that his country might be allowed a militia; military instruction would be given for three months at a time to 40,000 men, who thereafter would return to civilian life. He further demanded that his country be permitted to own "samples" of any weapons not prohibited by international convention and that a disarmament convention replace Part V of the Treaty of Versailles. As regards security, he indicated that Germany would welcome "perfection" of the existing regime and would accept the control of an international armaments commission. He proposed that the question of equality be settled in private between Germany and France before the reunion of the Bureau on September 20 and promised to formulate a memorandum summarizing the German position.

The promised memorandum was handed to Francois–Poncet on August 29. It was almost an ultimatum, stating that if Germany did not receive satisfaction she would not return to the Disarmament Conference. The demands themselves were very similar to those outlined by Bülow on August 23 — though it was suggested that implementation of them might
be delayed until a second disarmament convention had been negotiated. It was also indicated that Germany would be prepared to discuss any new security proposals provided they made for equal security for all nations.\(^3\)

Herriot's initial reaction to the German memorandum was reticent yet hopeful. He believed that satisfaction of the claim to equality of rights might be coupled with a recognition of "equality of duties" and thought that the problem as to whether a disarmament convention should replace Part V of the Treaty of Versailles was "not insoluble". He held that difficulties could be overcome more easily if Germany helped institute an "international regime of security" of equal advantage to all Powers and maintained that France would not avoid her obligation to disarm. He was unwilling, however, to agree to any demands for German rearmament, whether for "samples" of weapons, increased effectives, a militia or a "violation" of the demilitarized Rhineland.\(^4\)

Sir Horace Rumbold, the British Ambassador in Berlin, and R. H. Campbell, the British Minister in Paris, both believed that a Franco-German agreement was possible on the basis of the German memorandum.\(^5\) So did Francois-Poncet, who pressed Herriot to come to a settlement.\(^6\) The French Ambassador considered that a direct Franco-German accord would give France new guarantees of security without compromising her relations with her former allies or with the great majority of neutral states and, if concluded for ten or twenty years, would put France in a strong position to oppose new German claims.\(^7\) The Quai d'Orsay took a similar stance, believing that as neither Britain nor
America were willing to commit themselves further towards France, an agreement with Germany based on an accord between the two General Staffs and concessions on disarmament — including recognition of the principle of German equality — would increase French security.  

Unfortunately, information concerning the German aims was leaked to the French press, which began to suggest that under the cloak of equality the Germans were wanting to rearm. Herriot himself was suspicious of this, and he was also anxious about the manner in which the German claims had been presented and about nationalist demonstrations and police activities in the demilitarized Rhineland. Consequently, his attitude to the German demands hardened, and though there was no question of his refusing them outright (as this would have given Germany an excuse to proceed openly with rearmament), his reply to the memorandum of August 29 was stiffer than it might otherwise have been.

Presented on September 11, the French Note rejected the (legal) claim, based on the League Covenant and the Allied Note of June 16, 1919, that the Disarmament Convention should replace Part V of the Treaty of Versailles. It avoided a direct answer to the claim for equality of rights but reiterated French willingness to take part in discussions on the disarmament problem and to arrive at a solution which would provide for the maximum security and disarmament for all nations. On the other hand, it saw the German memorandum as a "clear demand" for aircraft, tanks, heavy and anti-aircraft artillery, submarines, aircraft-carriers and battleships — a demand for rearmament. A reduction in the period of service in the Reichswehr would
"immeasurably increase the number of highly-trained reservists", while the possession of "sample" arms would "greatly facilitate their manufacture and accustom men to their use."

In making such a stiff reply, Herriot certainly quietened French opinion, but at the same time he reduced the chances of a quick agreement with Germany. There was little surprise, therefore, when Neurath informed Henderson on September 14 that, as the problem of equality of rights had not been settled, Germany would refuse to participate in the proceedings of the Bureau when it reopened on September 21.¹²

Britain's immediate reaction to the renewed German claim was one of concern lest France and Germany start negotiating behind her back as they had done at Lausanne, and Simon therefore invoked the Anglo-French Declaration to try to ensure that Britain was informed of any direct negotiations between the two Continental Powers.¹³ He was still concerned on September 9 and suggested that discussion of the German claim should include Britain and Italy as well as France and Germany.¹⁴ He was reassured when the French memorandum of September 11 discounted the possibility of direct Franco-German negotiations.

On the German claim itself, the Government seems to have been somewhat divided. MacDonald, apparently, was in favour of accepting the claim, while Simon was rather reluctant to take such a step because of its possible effect on France. Certainly the Quai d'Orsay was convinced that MacDonald had assured Papen that the German demands would be met with approval - at least in principle - but that Simon and the Foreign Office were reticent towards granting them.¹⁵ The
Germans acted on a similar assumption, hoping that the moral justice of their demands would overcome the practical objections put forward by the Foreign Office. The German hope was fulfilled; the British Cabinet decided to accept the claim to equality.

Accordingly, on September 19, the Government published a "Statement of Views" concerning the German claim. The first part regretted the raising of the question of equality of rights so soon after the Lausanne Conference and contained an incisive rejection of the German claim on legal grounds; although accepting that one of the objectives of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles was "to render possible the initiation of a general limitation of the armaments of all nations", it maintained that the statement of this objective was "very different from making its successful fulfilment the condition of the original stipulation". But the second part of the British statement admitted that Germany had a strong claim to equality on moral grounds. The Government therefore hoped that a convention might be framed on the principle that each state adopted, in agreement with others, a limitation of armaments that was "self-imposed and freely entered into, as part of the mutual obligations of the signatories to one another", and this document would be "binding on all" and contain "measures of qualitative and quantitative disarmament which would tend in the direction of greater equalization". Questions of status might be settled by "friendly negotiation and agreed adjustment" involving neither disregard for treaty obligations nor the increase in the sum total of armed force. The armaments of heavily-armed states should be reduced as much as possible, while those of lightly-armed states should undergo "no material increase" - though "this desirable
"consummation" could only be attained through patient discussion in the Disarmament Conference and not by withdrawal from its deliberations. As Simon explained to Grandi, now the Italian Ambassador in London, Britain would recognize the German claim to equality in principle but refuse any demands for rearmament.  

The effect of the impasse in the Disarmament Conference and the subsequent renewal of the German claim to equality was thus to force Britain into assuming a more prominent role in the disarmament discussions. Previously she had been reluctant to take the lead, but the new crisis had obliged her to give a fuller exposition of her aims to the public, which was anxious at the lack of progress made at Geneva, and to take up a more active mediatory position between France and Germany. Although the British memorandum held no practical suggestion for resolving the problems confronting the Powers, it did offer the hope that further negotiations might find a solution.

After an initial outcry of the German press against the British "Statement of Views" because of its legalistic tone, Simon decided to utilize the meeting of the League Assembly to take soundings as to whether a settlement could be reached on the basis of the British position. The main difficulties in achieving such a settlement were that, logically, recognition of the principle of equality would enable Germany to claim the right to possess any type of weapon permitted to the other Powers, and that such a right would be opposed by the French, who believed that it was equivalent to a demand for rearmament. On September 23, therefore, Simon approached Neurath with the suggestion that Germany might agree to make reductions in other types of arms if she were allowed to possess "samples" of weapons
which were not generally forbidden but which Germany had been prohibited from owning by the Treaty of Versailles. Baron Aloisi, who had succeeded Grandi as the chief Italian delegate to the Disarmament Conference, had been carrying out similar soundings and in conversation on September 25, both he and Simon agreed that a Franco-German compromise was possible on the basis of three principles: that equality of rights should be recognized in principle; that there should be no rearmament of Germany; and that the other Powers should disarm to the greatest extent possible.

Paul-Boncour, the French Minister of War and Permanent Delegate to the League of Nations, acquiesced in the first of Simon's three principles, agreeing that, under certain conditions, the Disarmament Convention should replace Part V of the Treaty of Versailles. He accepted the second principle in its entirety, and also agreed to the third - provided that the "disarmament of other Powers" was measured from 1919. For Germany, Neurath welcomed the first principle (which recognized equality of rights) and intimated that he would consent to the second provided that his country would be allowed to "adjust" its land forces by "mechanizing the cavalry", by purchasing specimens of hitherto-forbidden weapons and by halving the period of service in the Reichswehr. He also agreed to the third principle, though he stipulated that Germany's willingness to limit her demands would depend on the extent of the disarmament of the other Powers. The main obstacle to a Franco-German agreement, therefore, was the German demand for "samples", though it seemed that a four-Power Declaration enabling the Germans to return to the Disarmament Conference was perfectly feasible provided that it was judiciously worded.
The immediate objective of British policy was to coax the Germans into returning to the Conference. On October 3, Simon proposed a four-Power meeting of British, French, German and Italian Ministers in London; it would take place on October 11, and the United States would be invited to allow Norman Davis to take part in the discussions. The conversations would be based on the recognition of the principle of equality of rights, no rearmament, the "progressive" disarmament of the heavily-armed Powers and the granting to Germany of the right to possess all categories of arms, though not to the extent of the former Allied Powers. In the meantime, France would be invited to take part in preliminary consultations. Originally, the Foreign Secretary had also hoped that the reunion of the Bureau might be postponed until the proposed negotiations were held, but the French had objected and this aspect of British policy had been discontinued.

Italy quickly accepted the invitation to the four-Power meeting as her policy was similar to that of Britain, recognizing the German claim to equality but refusing any claims to rearmament. Moreover, the proposal was in line with her traditional policy of advocating four-Power discussions as the best way to settle European problems. Germany and France, on the other hand, were reticent about accepting the proposal. The former desired the prior recognition of her claims, while the latter put forward a number of objections on the grounds that a four-Power meeting in London would be considered a success for Germany and a defeat for France. Eventually, on October 7, the Germans accepted the British proposal unconditionally and even added that their claim for "adjustments" of their forces "afforded scope for negotiation". The problem facing Britain, therefore, was how to cajole France into accepting.
Herriot had become more and more concerned at the machinations of German diplomacy, especially the periodic outbursts of General Schleicher, and he believed, rightly, that the claim for "samples" would mean rearmament. It would not have seemed so menacing if he had been able to count on British support, but since September the British had given priority to securing Germany's return to the Disarmament Conference. 31 Although the Foreign Office had informed the Quai d'Orsay scrupulously of "piecemeal approaches" by Germany, in compliance with the Anglo-French Declaration, the Government had not changed its basic policy – French disarmament, the satisfaction of "legitimate" German demands and a refusal to enter into any further commitments in Europe. As far as Britain was concerned, the Anglo-French Declaration had been a temporary expedient to prevent a possible Franco-German entente and to gain an ally against the Hoover plan; it had not been signed as the forerunner of an alliance. 32 Certainly the secret interpretation of the Declaration had referred to "a general desire to come to an agreement", but it had also asserted that "it was not a question of an agreement to agree", rather it was an agreement to consult and hold "preliminary exchanges of views". 33 The German withdrawal from the Disarmament Conference and claim for equality of rights had thus exposed the true nature of the Declaration.

Even so, the French Premier decided to continue his policy of rapprochement with Britain (and America) even if it entailed concessions on disarmament, and as immediate objectives he hoped to secure a postponement of the proposed four-Power meeting in London and to ensure that any such conference should be held at Geneva. On October 5, he stated his position to Simon, and after some hesitation
the British Government decided to accept the French demands for a postponement of the "London Conference" and to "consider" its transfer to Geneva. They also invited Herriot to take part in "preliminary consultations" in London on October 13 and 14.34

During the London discussions, Herriot demanded that Germany be made to set out her demands in writing. He believed that equality of rights – a phrase which seemed eminently fair to many sections of public opinion in most countries – was, in fact, an abstract term that had been intentionally ill-defined by the Germans. Consequently, he was unwilling to enter into negotiations on the subject until the ambiguity of the phrase had been resolved by means of a written definition. This would expose the true nature of the German claims and determine whether they involved rearmament. MacDonald and Simon agreed that the German aims were unclear, but suggested that if Britain and France asked for written clarification, the Wilhelmstrasse would reply that the claims had already been elucidated sufficiently in the memorandum of August 29; or they would keep producing documents which defeated the purpose of the inquiry. The British Ministers therefore considered that the best means of resolving the issue was a four-Power conference, where the chairman's duty would be to see that the conversations were as precise as possible. Eventually, a compromise between the French and British views was reached; France agreed to take part in a four-Power conference rather than seek a written definition of German aims, and Britain agreed to transfer the deliberations of the conference to Geneva.35

An even more important aspect of these discussions was their revelation of the motives behind British policy. Speaking privately to Herriot,
MacDonald admitted that he was concerned "not so much by the disarmament situation, as by the handling of it". As the subsequent discussion revealed, he was less concerned about a possible breakdown of the Disarmament Conference than whether his government would be held responsible for the breakdown. Germany held the diplomatic initiative, the apparent fairness of her demands having ingratiated her with British opinion, and therefore the task of British diplomacy was "to dislodge her from her strong psychological position into her weak disarmament position." Simon, who was apt to be more pro-French than his Prime Minister, endorsed this line. Indeed he had advocated it for some time, having told Fleuriau, the French Ambassador in London, on September 15 that if Britain and France could "preserve appearances", "the persistence of Germany's present attitude would reduce the Disarmament Conference to nothing". It was a clear indication that the Government's "support" of disarmament was not entirely genuine. In his meeting with Herriot on October 5, the Foreign Secretary had maintained a similar position, and he admitted that the only preoccupation of British diplomacy was to ensure that the proposed four-Power meeting took place, if possible with American aid.

This attitude on the part of the British Ministers was irresponsible. Without the genuine support of the British Government, disarmament was probably impossible. In June there had been the possibility of a direct Franco-German accord, but such an understanding had now become unlikely because of the growth of ultra-nationalism in Germany and Papen's aggressive pursuit of equality of rights. The best chance of reaching a disarmament agreement, therefore, was the active mediation
of Britain in the Franco-German dispute. If the Government had been willing to give greater guarantees of security to France — and to Germany too, if she complained that guarantees to France were incompatible with a grant of equality — a convention might still have been attained. Herriot consistently declared that he was in favour of disarmament, while the German "Government of Barons" was conservative at heart and unwilling to press its demands too far for fear that it might be blamed for frustrating the Disarmament Conference and lose the support of opinion in countries such as Britain and America.

The nucleus of a settlement might well have been the German Note of August 29. Despite professions that Britain was against German rearmament, it had soon become apparent that the Government was willing to accept the German Note as the basis of talks and to consider, if not accede to, the demands for "samples". This being the case, it would have been difficult for the Germans to raise their claims without losing the support of opinion in other countries. But it was difficult for France to make the large concessions that the Germans demanded, particularly on the claim for "specimen" weapons, and until October 14 Herriot refused to discuss even the possibility of accepting them. Yet on this date, he promised to submit the question of "samples" to his Government, and it seems likely that, if Britain had offered greater security guarantees, he would have agreed to accept the German Note as the basis of a settlement. But although the British Government was in favour of moving closer to France, there was little likelihood of their agreeing to offer the guarantees which would have allowed France to follow a more conciliatory policy.
The divergences of view between Britain and France had been a major factor in encouraging the Germans to press their claims to equality so strongly, for they believed they could drive a wedge between the two former allies. This also seems to have been the motivation behind their next move, which was to refuse to accept Geneva as the venue of the proposed four-Power conference. After an earlier indication that they would not object to Geneva, on October 14 they refused to agree, and they continued to do so despite British pressure.

On October 28, Herriot outlined a new French disarmament plan in the Chamber of Deputies and declared that the success of the Disarmament Conference was the best practicable way to prevent German rearmament; even if the proposals were rejected, his Government would "continue to co-operate with the other Powers to find an alternative solution". Answering M. Franklin-Bouillon, the chief Opposition speaker, he insisted that, in a trial of strength with Germany, the balance of forces might not favour France and that, this being so, the friendship of the Anglo-Saxon Powers should not be jeopardized by a policy of relying solely on force. France could not afford to find herself isolated in the face of a "free" Germany, and the best way of overcoming a "new German menace" was by a further effort to organize peace. Moreover, it was necessary to show that France was not responsible for the crisis at Geneva.
On 4 November, further details of the French project were communicated to the Bureau of the Disarmament Conference by Paul-Boncour, the main author of the scheme. Security would be maintained through the "organization" of the states of the world into three concentric "circles". The outermost would consist of all Powers represented at the Disarmament Conference, and its members would agree to enter into consultation in the event of a breach of the Kellogg Pact. The second would be comprised of all members of the League, who would reaffirm the obligations they had assumed under the Covenant (especially Article 16) and all other treaties, such as Locarno, that had been concluded in conformity with the Covenant. The third and innermost circle would include the nations of continental Europe, who would enter into a Pact of Mutual Assistance. Within this pact, each of the Powers would organize their "permanent defensive forces" on a standardized model based on universal short-term service and limited effectives, and this would permit "equitable, mutual and equal reductions in armaments to be made, capable of ensuring equality of security". "Aggressive" weapons would be limited to fixed fortifications for frontier and coastal defence and to "specialized contingents", constantly ready for service but strictly limited in number, which each of the Powers would place permanently at the disposal of the League. An international air force (based on the Tardieu plan of February 1932) would also be placed at the disposal of the League and to make this possible, civil aviation would be internationalized. Overseas forces would be organized separately under conditions to be laid down in the Convention.
This outline seemed to indicate a considerable change in French policy, but as the full plan had not been published, no immediate discussion of the proposals took place. The impasse at the Disarmament Conference remained.

Because of the seemingly endless delays at Geneva, British opinion had become aroused. For some time, the liberal press had urged the Government to play a more active role in bringing about a settlement, and now even "The Times" was demanding action; in a leading article of September 30, it declared that the Disarmament Conference was threatened with complete breakdown unless the problem of equality was solved and reproached the Government for following a policy that was "neither consistent nor clear".\footnote{51}

On November 10, the Labour Party tabled a censure motion in the Commons exhorting the Government to give "clear and unequivocal support to an immediate, universal and substantial reduction of armaments on the basis of equality for all nations".\footnote{52} Clement Attlee led the attack in masterly fashion and came very near the truth when suggesting that the attitude of the Government was "like the Pharisee who said 'Lord, I thank thee, that I am not as other men' — French, German or even Russians. I have reduced my armaments more than anyone else. I am ready to give up submarines, which I do not want, and tanks over 20 tons, which I have not got. But when it comes to action, when we pass from general declarations and come down to business, we are like the other Powers, we always "Compound for sins we are inclined to By damning those we have no mind to."\footnote{53}
Attlee also likened the retinue of military and naval experts accompanying the British delegation in Geneva to a group of licensed victuallers, brewers and distillers advising the Government on how to reduce the consumption of liquor. Britain, he believed, should advocate the reduction of armaments to the level permitted to Germany under Part V of the Treaty of Versailles and, in particular, should propose the abolition of aerial bombardment and the internationalization of civil aviation. Other Labour speakers made similar suggestions.

Although these proposals would certainly have asserted German equality and made for a substantial reduction of arms, they would have been unacceptable to France for, like the Government's own proposals, they envisaged no changes in the existing security system. The Labour Party was hostile to new Continental commitments because of its belief that one of the prime causes of the Great War had been the "system" of secret alliances and agreements, and the Parliamentary Leader of the Party, George Lansbury, was a pacifist; a considerable change in the Party's outlook on international affairs had occurred since Henderson was defeated in the elections of 1931.

The Government was concerned at the support the Opposition's policy received in the country. In general, it was believed that wars started by mistake or were caused by grievances and that, consequently, existing international grievances — predominantly German — should be redressed. Socialists attributed wars to capitalism, substantial armaments and the influence of arms manufacturers. Like the Government, the British people apparently accepted that an international "harmony
of interests" existed - possibly a result of the Government's own propaganda during the 1920s - and they believed that peace should be sought through general disarmament. They were convinced that disarmament would lead to security and were opposed to new Continental commitments.

But even the dilemma caused by a pro-disarmament (and, in many cases, pro-German) public opinion on the one hand and the crisis caused by the rise of German ultra-nationalism on the other was barely sufficient to explain the pessimism of Baldwin's speech in the disarmament debate of November 10. He prophesied a war that would destroy European civilization and refused to believe that disarmament could prevent it.

The chief menace would come from bombing:

"I think it is well also for the man in the street to realise that there is no power on earth that can protect him from being bombed. Whatever people may tell him, the bomber will always get through. The only defence is in offence, which means that you have to kill more women and children more quickly than the enemy if you want to save yourselves."56

Baldwin argued that neither the internationalization of civil aviation and the total abolition of bombing nor the restriction of aircraft by size and weight would be of any use as preventive measures, for scientists would develop "bombs the size of peanuts". Yet the Lord President of the Council neither could nor would offer a solution which might prevent the future war. He was pessimistic as to the results to be expected from Geneva, yet he did not even mention the more traditional remedies for meeting an international crisis - an increase in armaments and an entente or alliance with France. He was content to make the extraordinary remark that, if war came, the youth of the world would be to blame for not forcing older men into the path of peace.57
Compared with such utterances, Simon's statement of British policy was unremarkable. He welcomed the outline of the French proposals given by Paul-Boncour as "a definite effort to meet the German claim to equality of treatment" and a "tacit admission that the clauses of the Treaty of Versailles were not sacrosanct", but refused to comment any further until the full plan was published. As regards the claim to equality, he merely reiterated the British view that Germany's armaments should be regulated by the same disarmament convention and by "the same sort of process" as the armaments of the other Powers; the convention would replace Part V of the Treaty of Versailles, last for a specific number of years and be applicable to all Parties. The Foreign Secretary acknowledged that, provided there was no rearmament, "the kind of arms permitted to other countries ought not to be prohibited to Germany" and he welcomed the French proposal for a "European non-aggression pact" which did not involve Britain in further commitments. He also added a new proposal for a "Declaration of No Resort to Force" to "mobilize world and domestic opinion" against disturbers of the peace.

On the surface, Simon's statement represented a move towards Germany, for it accepted the basic demands of the memorandum of August 29. Yet, fundamentally, British policy remained unchanged. The statement revealed no greater willingness to enter into new Continental commitments, the proposed "no-force pact" being little more than a "declaration of intent" similar to the Kellogg Pact. Although Simon declared that the pact would be an important assurance because any disregard of it would mobilize world and domestic opinion,
the Japanese invasion of Manchuria and the creation of the puppet state of Manchukuo had already shown that words and public opinion would not deter a potential aggressor. But the Government still did not realize this.

On November 14, four days after Simon's statement, the French published the full text of their disarmament plan. In the event of a breach or threat of breach of the Kellogg Pact, those Powers in the outermost of the three concentric "circles" would concert "with a view to appealing to public opinion and agreeing upon steps to be taken" and would "prohibit direct or indirect economic or financial relations with the aggressor country". They would also refuse to recognize "any de facto situation brought about in consequence of the violation of an international undertaking". Those in the second "circle" would be required to reaffirm their obligations under the Covenant, especially under Article 16, while those in the innermost "circle" would participate in a mutual assistance pact involving specific political and military obligations.

The political arrangements contemplated would establish a right to assistance when a territory under the authority of one of the signatory Powers was attacked by foreign forces, except in cases where an agreement to the contrary existed, in self-defence or under authorization from the League. The League Council would be charged with determining whether an attack or invasion had taken place and, to facilitate its decisions — which would be taken by majority vote — it was to establish a commission consisting of diplomatic agents and military, naval and
air attachés in each signatory state. Disputes between these states would be resolved by resort to the General Act.

The military arrangements for the mutual assistance pact envisaged a division of the land forces of the contracting Powers between a "national army" (a force assigned for "the defence of home frontiers") and a "specialized contingent". The national armies would be standardized on the basis of short-term service, limited effectives and uniform matériel. The period of training would include time spent in "pre-regimental" training and training received in political organizations, and the number of effectives would be fixed so as to overcome "inequalities in the resources of recruitment" — to ensure that France would be allowed a similar number of men in the colours as Germany. The possession of powerful mobile artillery and tanks would be prohibited. The specialized units would consist of troops serving a relatively long term and would be provided with the powerful weapons prohibited to the national armies. These contingents would be placed permanently at the disposal of the League, kept "constantly ready for action" and would be formed along similar lines in each state. No one state would have sufficient of these forces to menace a neighbour, but the combined force at the disposal of the League would be "sufficiently powerful to give pause to an aggressor". Inventories of mobile land matériel would be stored in each of the contracting states under international supervision. The diminution of the power of offence would thus be attained through the reduction of effectives rather than the reduction of matériel. At least once a year, there would be an international investigation to ensure that the provisions for land disarmament as a whole were being executed.
This continental system of organization would not be extended to overseas, naval or air forces. Forces overseas would be "calculated and specialized for the particular tasks incumbent on them", and air armaments would be regulated on similar lines to those envisaged in the "Tardieu plan" of February except that the internationalization of civil aviation would only be applicable to Europe. Navies whose aggregate tonnage in 1931 exceeded 100,000 tons would be subject to both quantitative and qualitative reductions.

The French plan was probably the most efficacious to be laid before the Powers. Despite its somewhat doubtful proviso that disputes should be settled peacefully by resort to the General Act, it was a practicable proposal for the organization of peace. It was also an ingenious plan, skilfully drafted to avoid the features of previous French plans that had been unacceptable to the Anglo-Saxon Powers. In particular, it did not require the accession of either Britain or America to the provisions for automatic mutual assistance and sanctions against an aggressor. America was included in only the outermost of the three "circles", and three out of the four principles that states in this "circle" were asked to accept had been enunciated by Stimson in a speech on August 8, when he had declared that the existence of the Kellogg Pact implied the "abolition" of neutrality and an obligation to consult in the event of a breach of the international peace; 61 the only principle he had not accepted was that involving the prohibition of "direct or indirect economic and financial relations" with an aggressor. In a further attempt to conciliate America, the French plan was presented as a complément to the Hoover proposals,
especially the provisions for land disarmament based on "police and
defence components" and substantial arms reductions. Moreover, the
internationalization of civil aviation would not extend to America,
where it was deemed to be incompatible with private enterprise. As:
far as Britain was concerned, the Plan required neither the adoption
of conscription nor the pledge of new security guarantees; the
British Government would merely be requested to reaffirm its
obligations under the Covenant and the Locarno Treaty and to enter
the general consultative pact.

The French plan also made an effort to meet the German claim for
equality. Its provisions for land disarmament envisaged a kind of
militia and the reduction in the term of service in the Reichswehr,
while it implicitly accepted the demand that Part V of the Treaty of
Versailles be replaced by an disarmament convention. Its careful
drafting also opened the way for a discussion of the "samples"
issue; privately, the French were willing to acknowledge that Germany
should have the same right to possess all types of matériel as the
other Powers, though they hoped that she would restrict her claims
voluntarily, allowing "full realization of equality" to be reached
by stages over a period of years.62

The German reaction to the Plan was favourable at first and on
November 8, Papen told the foreign press that it constituted a
"basis for useful discussion".63 But it came under greater criticism
when the full text was released. A semi-official Note published in
the Berlin papers on November 15 suggested that the Plan was "a
resurrection of the Geneva Protocol designed to ensure the territorial
status quo" and that it avoided a direct answer to the claim for equality of status and, more especially, the demand for "samples".  

Although the German Government had no objection in principle to either a "militia" or an international force, it believed that the provisions for stocking heavy matériel together with the equivocal references to colonial forces and the proposed mutual assistance pact would tend to perpetuate French hegemony in Europe.

Nevertheless, it is probable that the Germans would have revised their attitude if the British had accepted the French plan as the basis of a convention. Certainly Francois-Poncet was convinced that this was the case, and Norman Davis and his fellow delegate at Geneva, Hugh Wilson, suspected it also. For though the Wilhelmstrasse considered the proposals for colonial armies and inventories of heavy matériel to be unacceptable, Billow insisted that other parts of the Plan offered scope for negotiation and even intimated that a previous levelling down of armaments and "equalization of military statutes" might enable his country to accept the political reorganization proposed for Europe. Thus, if Britain had offered further security guarantees to France - and perhaps Germany - it is probable that an agreement might have been reached on the basis of the French plan.

If the British had been willing to assume new commitments, it is probable that the Americans would have reconsidered their decision to reject a formalization of their own "commitment" of August 8 to enter into consultations in the event of a breach of the Kellogg Pact; certainly Stimson was in favour of an Executive Declaration on the subject. The Americans hoped to find a "thesis" on which
the European states could agree and were relatively unconcerned about its details. Thus, although the French plan "contravened their conception of how the machinery of peace should be organized", they were willing to regard it benevolently if it proved acceptable to the European Powers. 69

The combined pressure of Britain and France - and also the Soviet Union, as became clear in February 1933 - would have made it difficult for Germany to reject a convention based on the French plan; Germany was in no position to risk a confrontation with the major Powers. The German leaders based their policy on exploiting the divergences of opinion between France and the Anglo-Saxon Powers, and if they were unable to this they would have had to make the best deal possible in the circumstances or risk a confrontation.

Thus, a disarmament agreement was possible if Britain was willing to accept the French plan as a basis. But apparently, Simon was not attracted by the possibility. Despite his claim that he could not comment at such short notice, his speech in the Bureau on November 17 amounted to an emphatic rejection of the majority of the French proposals. 70 His statement was little more than a recapitulation of British policy based on the memorandum of September 19 and his own speech to the Commons of November 10. He accepted the German demands of August 29 provided that there was no rearmament and repeated his proposal for a "no-force pact" in the hope that it might entice France into adhering to the British position. He then outlined a possible programme for the first stage of disarmament. "Heavy" tanks would be abolished and new large mobile guns limited to a calibre of
"about 105mm" – the maximum permitted to Germany by the Treaty of Versailles. The size of the air forces of the leading Powers would be reduced to that of Britain pending a more comprehensive agreement prohibiting bombers and aerial bombardment except for "police purposes in outlying places" and establishing "effective international control" over civil aviation. Submarines would be abolished and cruisers limited to 7,000 tons with 6" guns. And a Permanent Disarmament Commission would be set up to supervise the execution of the convention.

These proposals went a long way towards meeting Germany's demands for the practical application of equality of rights. Although the reorganization of her forces was to involve "no increase in her powers of aggression", she would be permitted to own "samples" of "light tanks". She would also be allowed to build capital ships of the same types as the Great naval Powers provided that "subject to minor adjustments" she did not increase the total tonnage of ships in any specific category of vessel in her navy.

But the Simon proposals were no answer to the disarmament problem. The provisions regarding tanks and military aviation were designed almost solely to increase British strength at the expense of the other Powers and France was offered no more than a "no-force pact" to compensate for material concessions to Germany.

Simon's implicit rejection of the French plan was unfortunate, for Britain would not have been affected adversely by its implementation. Her position in the second of the three concentric "circles" required her to assume no new commitments, only to reaffirm those she had undertaken already. Certainly she would be expected to participate in
a general consultative pact, but if a European crisis broke out at any
time, Britain was certain to be involved in negotiations to settle it. Moreover, the successful implementation of the European mutual assistance pact would have assured her of a considerable period of peace on the Continent and, this being so, it was unlikely that the Royal Navy would be called on by the League to supply emergency assistance to a victim of aggression within Europe. And Britain would have been allowed to organize her army on any lines she wished and to equip it with any weapons not generally forbidden. Thus the French land proposals would not have weakened British security.

Neither would the French air proposals have weakened British security. If anything, they would have strengthened it, as Britain would have been allowed "specialized air units" on the same basis as the Powers in the European pact whereas her existing air force was merely the fourth largest in Europe. Thus the French proposals might have secured London and the South-East from the horrors of bombing portrayed by Baldwin in his speech of November 10.

Considering that British policy was based in part on the thesis that the River Rhine was Britain's military frontier, the Government's attitude to the French disarmament plan is the more remarkable. Certainly British Ministers believed that it was impossible to treat Germany as a second-class Power for all time and that it was best to "defend the Rhine frontier" by redressing Germany's "legitimate" grievances, but it was unrealistic to pursue a policy of appeasement without taking factors of power into consideration - for if appeasement proved unsuccessful, it would be necessary for Britain to defend the
Rhine frontier by force. The military arrangements of the French plan offered some hope of doing this successfully; Simon's proposals of November 17 offered less.

As Simon had indicated in his speech to the Bureau, Britain's initial objective remained that of composing a formula that would facilitate Germany's return to the Disarmament Conference. And, to accomplish this, the Government was willing to accept the major German demands and put pressure on France to adhere to the British point of view. There was little surprise, therefore, when Neurath agreed that Germany could return to the Conference on the basis of Simon's speech of November 17; if he had not agreed, he would have given the impression that Germany was being intransigent and caused Britain to move closer to France.

Having gained Germany's acceptance in principle, Simon began to press France to take part in five-Power conversations at Geneva. But Herriot was reticent, anticipating that the objective of German policy would be to isolate France and portray her as the main obstacle to disarmament.73 Speaking with Norman Davis on November 26, he declared that, once, he "had honestly believed in" a Franco-German entente but that he no longer held that belief."74 The Président du Conseil was disappointed at the British reaction to the French disarmament plan, and it seemed to Davis that France "was walking in the darkness towards a goal which she could not clearly ascertain".75
Events in Germany alarmed the French Premier. General Schleicher, who hoped to "harness the better elements of" the Nazi Party, turned against Papen and caused the downfall of the Government on November 17. A political crisis occurred and, on December 2, Schleicher himself was entrusted with forming another "Presidial Government". Neurath remained Foreign Minister, but Herriot continued to be apprehensive about the forthcoming conversations in Geneva, maintaining that he could not discuss the German claim to equality except in conjunction with the French claim to security. 76

Thus, when MacDonald and Simon arrived in Geneva on December 22, the prospects of an agreement were not very good. Britain's immediate objective was to facilitate Germany's return to the Disarmament Conference, while France desired an agreement on security including a general consultative pact, a reaffirmation or reinforcement of Article 16 of the Covenant and a reaffirmation of the Locarno Treaty. Britain was willing to accede to the German claim for "samples"; France wanted a further definition of "equality". Britain wanted the nature of the German claims to be revealed in five-Power conversations; France wanted them revealed in a written document. Britain was unwilling to assume further obligations unless America entered a general consultative pact; France was unwilling to make far-reaching arms reductions until she received new security assurances. 77

Britain did suggest a compromise by which she would refuse to discuss equality in abstracto from security if France would agree to the British position on equality, but the French refused because the British also suggested that Germany should be allowed to undertake
"certain measures of qualitative rearmament" by means of stages. Two days of conversations in Geneva failed to produce a change in either the French or British attitude.

The Americans were anxious to achieve positive results before the Christmas break, but believed that neither the British nor French disarmament proposals would lead to substantial progress being made. Consequently, Davis and Wilson proposed an immediate preliminary convention based on the resolution of July 23; it would last for about three years and incorporate all the points on which agreement was possible. Britain and France indicated that they would welcome such a proposal and Davis drew up a memorandum putting forward a number of points for consideration.

MacDonald and Simon doubted the feasibility of the American scheme but gave it their "warm support" as they were willing to consider almost anything which might facilitate Germany's return to the Disarmament Conference. They were also anxious to assure America's continued participation in the Conference — for it had been suggested that Congress might refuse to vote the necessary funds if the deadlock at Geneva was not broken. Baron Aloisi, the acting Italian delegate at Geneva, and Herriot also favoured the plan, though the latter made his support conditional on no German rearmament, for in the absence of new security guarantees the French Premier was reluctant to commit himself to certain provisions of the scheme allowing Germany to "improve her means of defence".
Neurath's reaction to the American plan was unfavourable, for he believed that it implied the postponement of disarmament for at least three years and that it was a regression from the proposals that Simon had outlined in the Commons on November 10 and in the Bureau on November 17. Although he did not reject it outright, he came forward with a new plan of his own. Delegates of the five countries participating in the Geneva conversations would be charged with formulating "the general lines along which the principle of equality of status could be put into effect" and with examining "the possibilities of creating further contractual degrees of security". The former would be based on the German memorandum of August 29, the latter on the French plan of November 14 and the British proposals of November 10 and 17. The work of the delegates would be completed by January 1 1933 and would form the basis of the first disarmament convention.

Herriot disliked the German scheme because France was asked to make considerable concessions regarding the practical application of German equality while Germany was not required to make similar concessions regarding French security. Thus, on the same day, December 6, the French Premier put forward a counter-proposal of his own. Britain, France, Italy and the United States would declare that "one of the aims of the Disarmament Conference was to accord to Germany ... equality of rights in a system which would provide security for all nations". This, he believed, would allow Germany to return to the Conference, and, once this had been effected, a preliminary convention on the lines of the American plan might be
formulated. Britain and Italy quickly agreed to the Herriot proposal and Neurath referred it to Berlin. Two days later, he declared that his country could agree provided he received assurances that equality of status would be "put into practical effect in every respect" and that the "system of security for all nations" would include "the element of security which lay in general disarmament".  

Britain's immediate objective remained that of facilitating Germany's return to the Conference, though by now, MacDonald and Simon had come to believe that it was the Germans who were preventing an agreement. Britain, Italy and France were now willing to accept Germany's claim to equality, and if the Germans insisted on demanding specific pledges, MacDonald believed it would be impossible to attain an agreement before Christmas and this would have severe repercussions. To prevent this, he wanted both France and Germany "to put their demands in such a way that Britain could say that she supported both sides" - and they could do this by adhering to the Herriot formula by which Germany would be accorded equality within a system providing security for all nations.

Norman Davis, whose own proposal for an interim convention had been shelved, placed America firmly on the side of Britain and, on December 10, the representatives of the five Powers agreed upon the text of a declaration - Neurath having dropped his demand for a more precise definition of "equality". Both Paris and Berlin accepted the formula and on the following day it was announced that Britain, France and Italy had agreed that Germany and the other Powers disarmed by treaty should be accorded equality of rights in a system which
would provide security for all nations and that this principle
would be "embodied in the convention containing the conclusions of
the Disarmament Conference". The methods of application of this
principle would be discussed by the Conference and all states would
have their armaments regulated by the same convention. Britain,
France, Italy and Germany declared that they were ready, along with
the other European states, to enter into a no-force pact "without
prejudice to fuller discussions on security" and together with the
United States, they announced that they would co-operate in the
Conference "to work out a convention which shall effect a substantial
reduction and limitation of armaments with provision for future
revision with a view to further reduction." 86

Although it enabled Germany to return to the Conference, the
Declaration of December 11 concealed many important differences between
France and Germany regarding the implementation of both security and
equality. France wanted a security system based on the plan of
November 14; Germany wanted a more flexible system which did not
commit her to the maintenance of the territorial status quo. The
French were prepared to concede no more than "qualitative equality"
to Germany; Germany, having extracted this concession from the British,
was now intent on securing "quantitative equality" as well. France
wanted the Conference to work out a practical formula for disarmament;
Germany hoped that it might be done through five-Power discussions. 87
Thus the real struggle over armaments was still to come. 88

The main importance of the discussions leading to the Declaration
of December 11 was their demonstration that if Britain (possibly in
conjunction with America) combined with France to put pressure on
Germany, then the joint pressure would be successful, for the Germans were very worried about a possible rapprochement between France and the Anglo-Saxon Powers. And it would be logical to assume that if Britain had given more support to France at an earlier stage, both France and Germany could have been coaxed into a definitive disarmament agreement. Certainly this would have been possible at Bessinge in April. But although the British Government desired better relations with the French - a noticeable rapprochement between the two countries had taken place during the Geneva discussions - British Ministers were still unwilling to enter into new Continental commitments unless the Americans gave certain assurances to Britain.

Despite Papen's truculence, the British Government still believed that Germany offered no real threat - or at least no immediate threat - to European security. Ministers were convinced that European Powers could resolve their disputes without recourse to force - the "harmony of interests" premise - thus their "no-force" proposal and their unwillingness to enter into new commitments. MacDonald had typified the Government's convictions when he suggested that France and Germany "put their demands in such a way that Britain could say that she supported both sides".

A belief in an international "harmony of interests" was not the only reason for the Government's reluctance to enter into new Continental commitments. The British people had been shocked by the horrors of the Great War and the diktat of Versailles and were opposed to new commitments for fear that Britain might be drawn into another European war; even the Anglo-French Declaration of July 13 had caused
a considerable outcry in the press. The Government, alarmed by the rifts in society produced by the events of August 1931 (the financial crisis and the fall of the Labour Government), did not want to widen the rifts and cause new ones by adopting such an unpopular policy as offering new security guarantees to the Continental Powers. But even so, MacDonald's concern over public opinion was probably exaggerated; the Government had a majority of over 400 seats in the Commons and was in no danger of losing it.

Britain's refusal to increase her commitments was the main reason for the continuing lack of progress towards a disarmament convention. By accepting the moral justice of Germany's claim to equality of rights (in the "Statement of Views" of September 19) and by agreeing to "qualitative equality", if not a certain amount of "quantitative equality" (in Simon's speeches of November 10 and 17), the Government made the serious mistake of allowing the Germans to drive a wedge between Britain and France. The policy of appeasing German grievances without offering France security guarantees in return had the opposite effect to that intended; the Germans increased their demands from "equality in principle" in July to "quantitative equality" in December, while the French became more anxious about their security. If Britain had maintained a closer relationship with France, it is probable that Papen and Neurath would have reduced their claims, because the German Ministers were afraid of a possible resuscitation of the entente cordiale or, worse, the old wartime alliance. As Rumbold pointed out, the best way of dealing with the Germans was to be firm, for they understood a policy based on force whereas they interpreted a policy based on conciliation as a sign of weakness.
If Britain had accepted the French plan of November 14 as the basis of a disarmament agreement, there is little doubt that the Germans would have accepted it also; even in February 1933 Neurath and Bülow declared that a solution on this basis was possible. But MacDonald and Simon opposed the plan and thus frustrated any chance of an agreement.

Britain's own disarmament proposals of November 17 were little more than a recapitulation of previous proposals that had been rejected, such as the retention of "police bombing in outlying districts" and medium tanks but the abolition of heavy tanks and submarines. Although going some way towards meeting Germany's demand for the practical application of equality of status, the proposals offered few compensations for France. To the French, a "no-force pact" to "mobilize world opinion" was of no more value than the "paper guarantees" of the Kellogg Pact. The British plan was no solution to the disarmament problem.
December 11 1932 - June 8 1933

Between the Declaration of December 11 1932 and the reconvening of the General Commission on February 2 1933, a number of political changes occurred within Europe, the most significant being the appointment of Hitler as German Chancellor on January 30. Yet there was no indication that German foreign policy would change, for Neurath had been reappointed Foreign Minister to ensure continuity. Moreover, the new Chancellor's aims appeared to be little different from those of the conservative politicians of the Weimar Republic - to free Germany from the shackles of the Treaty of Versailles and to secure a revision of the Eastern frontier. He probably hoped to make Germany the dominant Power in Europe, but he had no clearly-defined master scheme by which to accomplish his aims; he had outlined a number of ideas in "Mein Kampf" - but he did not adhere to them rigidly in practice. Like Bismarck, he was an opportunist rather than a planner. Probably the principal difference between him and the German conservatives was his willingness to take greater risks in pursuit of his aims.

A change in government had also taken place in France. Herriot had been defeated in the Chamber on December 14 and, after a short ministry headed by Paul-Boncour, Edouard Daladier became Président du Conseil with Paul-Boncour at the Quai d'Orsay. The new Premier was the leader of the left wing of Herriot's party, and his approach to the German problem was similar to, though more flexible than, that of his predecessor. He was sympathetic to the idea of an understanding with
Germany - even a Germany under Hitler - and rejected a policy of uncompromising nationalism, no concessions to Germany and total reliance on the French alliance system. He placed more emphasis on the conciliatory aspect of Radical-Socialist foreign policy than did Herriot, though he was aware of the possible dangers to France of a Nazi government in Berlin and wanted to move closer to Britain, Russia and Italy.

Paul-Boncour still hoped that a disarmament convention might be negotiated on the basis of the French plan of November 14, and this seemed possible when Neurath intimated that he also was in favour of such a settlement. But it became clear during the debate in the General Commission from February 2–8 that there were considerable differences between the French and German points of view regarding the application of the plan. Massigli, the acting French delegate, maintained that disarmament was dependent on security; Nadolny suggested that security was dependent on disarmament. France believed that a mutual assistance pact and an international force were a precondition for the attainment of German equality; Germany refused to discuss them on this basis. France wanted the problem of effectives to be dealt with before that of matériel; Germany wanted matériel to be reduced before the problem of effectives was tackled.

The reaction of the other Powers to the French plan was mixed. Aloisi criticised the proposals on the grounds that the mutual assistance pact would not include Britain, thus intimating that Italy desired any European "directorate" to be based on the four Western Powers - Britain, France, Germany and Italy. Support for
France came from Litvinov, who suggested a concrete definition of aggression and declared that the Soviet Union was ready to be included in the outermost of the three concentric "circles". The Soviet delegate still maintained that Germany should be accorded equality, but his speech in general reflected the growing Franco-Soviet rapprochement. Belgium, Greece and the Little Entente also supported France, but other states raised objections to at least some of the French proposals.6

As had been apparent before Christmas, any agreement on the basis of the French plan was dependent on British support. If Britain had been willing to increase her Continental commitments, possibly through adhesion to the mutual assistance pact (as Aloisi seemed to advocate), an agreement have been attained. Britain was the one Power acceptable to both France and Germany as mediator; she could assure France of additional guarantees of support and she could assure Germany that she would use her influence to make French policy more conciliatory. It had always been clear that France wanted Britain to engage herself more actively in European politics, while the Germans had maintained for some time that they preferred to enter into a European Pact if it had a British signature.7 Moreover, if Britain was successful in her mediation, she would automatically strengthen her own security.

But in a speech to the General Commission on February 3, Anthony Eden, Under-Secretary of State and acting British delegate at Geneva, declared that Britain could undertake no fresh commitments in Europe. He made no allusion to a general consultative pact and suggested that existing guarantees of security were sufficient to justify a "real and immediate" reduction in armaments.8 Thus his speech amounted to
a rejection of the French proposals — though he denied it to Paul-Boncour. 9

To ensure that the Conference did not grind to a halt, Britain put forward a "programme of work". 10 Drafted on January 30, it suggested that the future convention should replace Part V of the Treaty of Versailles and should last for the same period of time and be subject to the same methods of revision for all Powers. All European states would enter into a "no-force" pact, the details of which were to be discussed by the Political Commission, and the continental European states were to study the possibility of their entering into a mutual assistance pact. The Bureau would be charged with drawing up a formula for the standardization of European armies and with securing an interim solution to the problem of air disarmament. Subsequently, a committee representing the principal air Powers would report on the possibility of abolishing military aviation and aerial bombardment and of securing the effective international control of civil aviation. Qualitative equality would be applied to matériel either immediately or in stages, and the Bureau would fix limits for the tonnage and number of tanks and the gun calibre and number of heavy mobile guns. It would also set limits for the tonnage and gun calibre of capital ships, aircraft-carriers, cruisers, destroyers and submarines.

This programme was an attempt to mediate between France and Germany on the procedure to be adopted in the Conference, but it was unsatisfactory as its proposals for disarmament were far more
definite than those for security. Moreover, disarmament was to be discussed in the Bureau, a smaller and more effective body than the Political Commission, in which security was to be discussed. Consequently, on February 9 and 10, when the programme was discussed in the Bureau, Paul-Boncour proposed (and secured) several amendments, the most important being that all security questions should be discussed by the Political Commission and those relating to disarmament by the General Commission. 11

Together with the Declaration of December 11, the "programme of work" marked a definite stage in the development of British policy. Previously, the Government had tended to remain in the background of the disarmament discussions, hoping that France and Germany would come to an agreement on terms acceptable to Britain, but now, whilst still hoping that the two continental Powers would "put their demands in such a way that Britain could say that she supported both sides", the Government was trying to ensure that practical negotiations between the two Powers took place as soon as possible. The draft programme was not an offer of mediation - but it was an intermediate stage to it. The programme was also an intermediate stage in the development of British policy on the German problem. Simon's speeches of November 10 and 17, had been almost exclusively pro-German in character, but the new British proposal reflected a slight move towards France because it envisaged a full discussion of security as well as disarmament; moreover, Eden made no objections when Paul-Boncour sought to transfer the discussions on disarmament from the Bureau to the General Commission.
The Government had reappraised its disarmament policy to take into account the circumstances arising from the German claim to equality of rights, but as Hitler was now German Chancellor it was clear that a further reappraisal might be necessary. Although they tried to conceal their anxiety over the Nazi leader's appointment, British Ministers were very concerned lest it lead to a deterioration in international relations and consequently, they began to hasten the rapprochement with France. On February 17, Ralf Wigram, First Secretary to the British Embassy in Paris and a close confidant of MacDonald, told Louis Aubert, one of the French delegates to the League of Nations, that Britain wanted to collaborate "intimately and actively" with France and that a suitable basis for this collaboration might be the French Plan of November 14. The British diplomat indicated that Britain hoped that security would be based on a "no-force" pact and that Europe should "draw the inference" as regards a mutual assistance pact. He also hoped that a definition of aggression could be formulated so that world opinion would be mobilized in cases where aggression took place. As for disarmament, Britain would support the French proposals concerning overseas forces and the Cabinet "might overcome" the opposition of Lord Londonderry and agree to the total abolition of military aviation. But Britain would not accept the French naval proposals — especially that for a "Mediterranean Locarno" — or the proposals for "specialized contingents", which would be opposed because they required the rearming of Germany. This was an unusual argument, for Britain had already agreed to German "qualitative equality", though possibly the British Ministers feared
a "continental alliance" similar to that advocated by Papen at Lausanne. But even so, their desire to improve relations with France was genuine.

Further evidence of this came in the discussions of the General and Political Commissions after the completion of the general debate on the French plan, for Britain tended to support France on major questions of procedure. But little progress towards disarmament was made. The various Powers did little more than manoeuvre for position in order to place their own proposals in the best light and to ensure that they themselves would not be held responsible for any checks in the work of the Conference. In the General Commission, Nadolny urged that reduction of matériel be discussed first and that questions relating to effectives should be referred to the Effectives Committee, while Paul-Boncour suggested that the latter committee could not be expected to do useful work until questions of principle had first been settled by the General Commission. The Commission decided in favour of France - though when it proceeded to a discussion of proposals for the standardization of Continental armies, Nadolny reserved his Government's attitude and abstained from voting on the proposals. The Germans were now convinced of the advantages of a professional army and wanted to retain the Reichswehr in a modified form and to supplement it with a militia. Thus, though they had no objection in principle to a standardized army based on conscription, they refused to support it in the Commission. Similarly, they opposed many other proposals regarding the application of standardization, and by the end of the debate on effectives little progress had been
made. Other inconclusive debates took place concerning the abolition of military aviation, the internationalization of civil aviation, a "no-force" pact and the proposed European mutual assistance pact. By the first week in March, the Conference was in almost complete deadlock. Henderson was so worried that he drafted a convention which he hoped would lead to a Franco-German compromise, even though he was a private individual and could not count on the support of any government - least of all his own.

To a great extent, the impasse was the result of a serious deterioration in international relations. On February 24, Japan had withdrawn from the special session of the League Assembly considering the Sino-Japanese dispute, and though on March 6 the delegation to the Disarmament Conference confirmed that they would continue to participate they also announced that their government found it necessary to make "various important modifications" in national defence. As early as December 1932, Japan had laid naval proposals before the Conference to increase the ratios allowed to her by the Washington and London Treaties, and it was now evident that the level of all Japanese armaments was to be raised. The possibility of a naval agreement at Geneva, already endangered by the Anglo-American and Franco-Italian disputes, seemed even more remote.

More important was the crisis sparked off by events in Germany, where Hitler had used the election campaign and the Reichstag fire to induce President Hindenburg into signing an emergency decree to suppress civil liberties and curb the activities of the opposition parties. The Chancellor enforced the decree by a reign of terror and
began to enrol members of the S.A. and Stahlhelm as auxiliary police equipped with guns - a clear breach of Germany's treaty obligations. Then, after his Nazi-Nationalist coalition had gained a majority in the Reichstag in the elections of March 5, he set about centralizing the administration and suppressing opposition completely. A further breach of Germany's treaty obligations occurred on March 9, when a detachment of Nazis occupied the disused barracks at Kehl in the demilitarized Rhineland, and on March 11, in a speech at Essen, the Air Minister, Hermann Göring, declared that the time had come to restore the German air force.

The reaction to events in Germany was swift. The Poles seem to have considered a preventive war, possibly in conjunction with France, and even offered an alliance to Czechoslovakia, with whom they had been on bad terms. Benes refused the offer on the grounds that the Germans would cry "encirclement" and use it as an excuse to press their claims, but he did facilitate the creation of the Permanent Council of the Little Entente in an attempt to co-ordinate the policy of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Rumania - though this new organization was directed more against Hungary than any other Power. The Soviet Union reacted to Hitler's accession by insisting on the ratification of the Franco-Soviet non-aggression pact of November 29 1932 and the exchange of ratifications duly took place on February 15 1933. France herself took an uncompromising position at the Disarmament Conference, where Massigli declared that his country could not agree to make arms reductions unless the proposals for a European mutual assistance pact and the standardization of
Continental armies were accepted.

Most delegations believed that the best chance of averting a breakdown of the Conference was for Britain to put forward a definite plan to facilitate a Franco-German compromise, and certainly the conditions for such a settlement existed. Germany hoped that an agreement according her equality might still be reached at Geneva and was reluctant to withdraw from the Conference unless France could be blamed for the withdrawal, while France, under Daladier, was adopting a more conciliatory policy. The debate in the General Commission had shown that there was little or no chance of the French plan of November 14 being accepted, and so the Daladier government was ready to fall back on its minimum proposals - the standardization of European armies and the adequate supervision of the disarmament convention. The French Premier was even ready to consider German equality in matériel at a later date. But though Britain had the chance to procure a Franco-German agreement, MacDonald and Simon, as usual, had no positive programme and only vague intentions of arbitrating between the two Continental Powers and a desire that Britain should not be held responsible for the breakdown of the Conference.

But it was clear to Sir Alexander Cadogan, chief diplomatic adviser to the British delegation in Geneva, and Eden, chief British delegate at the time, that a British initiative was necessary if the Conference was to be saved. Assisted by their Service advisers, Temperley in particular, Eden and Cadogan prepared a draft convention during the weekend of February 25-26, and on March 2 they returned to England to put their case to the Prime Minister. The Cabinet Committee on
Disarmament met twice, Baldwin backing the plan and MacDonald expressing his willingness to go to Geneva. On March 3, it was announced that the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary would journey to Geneva as soon as possible, and by March 7 the Cabinet had agreed that the two British Ministers should have discretion to use the Eden-Cadogan plan "as they saw fit".  

Actually, MacDonald and Simon were sceptical about the draft convention and had not made the final decision to present it to the Conference. Indeed, they were considering other possibilities of improving the situation at Geneva - an adjournment of the Conference, five-Power exchanges of views, a declaration of intent or an interim convention based on the Davis proposal of December 1932. They arrived in Geneva on March 11, after preliminary discussions in Paris, but after three days of talks they were on the point of abandoning the draft convention and proceeding to Rome for talks with Mussolini. Eventually, after talking to Eden, the Prime Minister decided to present the convention to the Conference. On March 16, he outlined it to the General Commission.

Unlike previous British plans, the "MacDonald plan" contained a provision for a consultative pact. In the event of a breach or threatened breach of the Kellogg Pact, a conference could be called at the request of any five of the parties to the convention provided that one of them was a Great Power. The object of the conference would be to "agree upon steps to be taken" to prevent a breach of the Pact or, if the breach had occurred, to define the aggressor. To be valid, decisions of the conference had to be concurred in by all
the Great Powers and by a majority of the other participating
governments.

The most important section of the British plan was that relating
to disarmament, especially the land proposals. The armies of Continental
Europe were to be standardized on the basis of eight-month service and
each country limited to a definite number of "average daily effectives";
France, Germany, Italy and Poland were each allotted 200,000, the
U.S.S.R. 500,000. The calculation of effectives was to take pre-military
and para-military training into account, doubtful cases being referred
to the Permanent Disarmament Commission. Overseas forces would be
treated separately, but limits would again be set for effectives—
France was allotted 200,000, Italy 50,000. The maximum calibre of
mobile land guns was to be 105mm (4.1"), but states would be allowed
to retain existing guns up to 155mm (6.1"); the limit for coastal
defence guns would be 406mm (16"), the size of the largest naval gun.
Tanks with an unladen weight of over 16 tons would be prohibited
and all prohibited matériel destroyed within three years of the coming
into force of the convention.

There were to be no alterations in the London and Washington naval
Treaties until the projected naval conference of 1935, though in the
meantime France and Italy were to adhere to the London Treaty. No
Power was to build capital ships except Italy, who could lay down one
ship of 26,500 tons (in answer to one already laid down by the French),
and there was to be no construction of 8" cruisers except as allowed
in previous treaties; all other construction would be for replacement
purposes. Germany would be freed from the limitations imposed on her
at Versailles, but in the period before the expiry of the London and Washington Treaties she would be allowed to build only replacement vessels.

Aerial bombardment would be prohibited "except for police purposes in outlying districts" and military planes restricted in number (each Great Power would be allowed 500) until the Permanent Disarmament Commission prepared a scheme for the complete abolition of military aviation and the "effective supervision" of civil aviation. If no effective method of supervision could be devised, the Commission would determine the minimum number of machines required by each contracting party. All warplanes except troop-carriers and flying-boats would be limited to an unladen weight of three tons, and at least half of the aircraft exceeding the qualitative and quantitative restrictions imposed were to be disposed of by June 30 1936. Germany and other states without military aviation would not be allowed warplanes during the period of the convention.

Chemical, incendiary and bacteriological warfare were to be prohibited in accordance with the proposals already accepted by the Conference, and a Permanent Disarmament Commission would be established to supervise the execution of the convention as a whole. The Commission would be composed of representatives from each signatory state, and on request from one or more of the contracting parties it could conduct investigations in the territory of any state suspected of breaching the convention. Its reports were to be communicated to the League Council. The convention itself would replace the disarmament chapters of the Peace Treaties and would last for five years, after which it
would be replaced by a new convention.

The MacDonald plan was a good one in that it attempted to meet the German demand for the practical application of equality of rights. European armies were to be standardized and Germany allowed the same number of home-based effectives as France. Moreover, although France could retain her existing matériel of 105-155mm, Germany would be allowed to build up to the same limit as France in all future construction. She would also be permitted tanks of 16 tons — a measure of rearmament — though she would not be accorded equality in air armaments.

But although the MacDonald plan made substantial concessions to Germany's demands for equality, it did not make corresponding concessions to French demands for security. The consultative pact was less efficacious than that of the French plan of November 14 and the reference to the possibility of a European mutual assistance pact was included more for courtesy than hope. The suggested powers of the Permanent Disarmament Commission were weaker than France desired, and there was no provision for sanctions in case the convention was breached. Nevertheless, Daladier had shown himself to be more conciliatory than Herriot, and it seemed that if Britain was willing to assume additional — though relatively minor — Continental commitments then a convention based on the MacDonald plan was a distinct possibility.

But once they had laid the draft convention before the Conference, neither MacDonald nor Simon had any clear idea as to what they should do next. 32 A debate on the British plan was postponed so that
governments could study it more closely, and in the meantime the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary accepted an invitation from Mussolini to visit Rome. On March 14, Aloisi had intimated that the Duce wanted to discuss the possibility of an agreement between Britain, France, Italy and Germany on political questions such as equality of rights, security, the Disarmament Conference and the "method of approaching treaty revision", and, professing interest in such an agreement, the British Ministers journeyed to Rome, where they arrived on March 18.

Immediately upon their arrival, they were handed a draft "Political Agreement of Understanding and Co-operation Between the Four Western Powers" envisaging the establishment of a four-Power European "directorate" which would maintain the peace and "induce" other states to follow its lead. A second article reaffirmed the principle of the revision of peace treaties "given the existence of conditions which might lead to a conflict" and a third affirmed that if the Disarmament Conference should lead to partial results only, Germany would be accorded equality of rights in stages by an agreement between the four Western Powers. The Pact would last for ten years.

Mussolini's basic objective for suggesting the Pact was his uneasiness at the new German government. Publicly, he stressed the similarities of Fascism and National Socialism, but in private he was afraid of a possible Anschluss between Germany and Austria. He was also worried about the possible failure of the Disarmament Conference and wanted to ensure that any German rearmament was controlled. He wanted a balance of French and German power so that Italy could revert to her
traditional policy of "balancing between Paris and Berlin" in order to gain advantages for herself. The Duce's plan was to divert Germany's revisionist ambitions from Austria to the Polish Corridor, leaving Italy free to pursue her own ambitions in the Balkans by means of agreements with Austria and an enlarged Hungary. This "Danubian bloc" would be a buffer against Germany, and Mussolini hoped that France would accept it in return for co-operation against Germany on the Anschluss question. He also hoped for colonial compensations in North Africa.

The disarmament provisions of Mussolini's draft Pact were very important. If the Disarmament Conference failed, Britain, France and Italy would be able to control German rearmament, whereas under the provisions of the Covenant, Germany had an excellent moral, if not judicial, case for being freed from the disarmament clauses of the Peace Treaty. Moreover, the Pact would have limited Germany's armaments for ten years whereas the MacDonald plan envisaged a convention lasting five years. The Wilhelmstrasse was quick to note this, and though welcoming the clauses of the Italian project concerning treaty revision, Neurath and Bülow were reluctant to commit themselves to the clauses concerning disarmament and equality.

MacDonald and Simon did not perceive the true nature of the Duce's scheme. They were convinced that its most important aspect was treaty revision, and whilst agreeing that revision was inevitable in the long run, they suggested an amendment confirming the sanctity of existing treaties to make the Pact more palatable to France and public opinion. They also put forward an amendment to the disarmament
clause, as they believed that the original implied the failure of the Conference at Geneva. Yet even though these amendments drastically altered the meaning of the Pact, Mussolini accepted them — he was more concerned with the four-Power formula of the Pact than with its contents.43

Whilst disliking the references to revision, MacDonald and Simon were very impressed by the four-Power concept. Their immediate objective was to ensure that the British draft convention was accepted as the basis of all future discussion at Geneva, and they knew that the support of the four Western Powers was essential for this. They were also concerned lest Europe be divided into opposing blocs and were anxious to prevent Mussolini from allying himself with Hitler.45 Consequently, they supported the principle of the Pact to appease the Duce but opposed the provisions for treaty revision and a four-Power "directorate" to make it acceptable to France.

In many ways, Mussolini's proposal was put forward at an inauspicious moment. Poland and the Little Entente suspected that it was a "plot to dish the League" and they put pressure on France and Britain to oppose it.46 France had similar suspicions, and as Simon pointed out, the promotion of the Pact "did not provide an inducement for her to support the MacDonald Plan".47 He was concerned lest France be held responsible for a breakdown of negotiations for either the MacDonald plan or the Four-Power Pact because "intransigence" on the part of the French would react in favour of Germany.

Between March 24 and 27, the first discussions of the British draft convention took place in the General Commission.48 The Marquis di
Soragna, the acting Italian delegate, announced that his country adhered to the plan unconditionally, but Massigli and Nadelmy were more reserved. The former emphasized the relationship between security and disarmament and declared that the reduction and abolition of armaments had to be governed by the situation likely to arise after the expiry of the first convention; the latter accepted the provisions regarding the implementation of the Kellogg Pact only on condition that the heavily-armed states disarmed. The German delegate also accepted the principle of a transitional period before the implementation of equality of rights, but he indicated that his country would desire modifications consistent with her dignity and need for security. The American delegate did not join in the discussion since the new President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, had taken office only at the beginning of the month and was still formulating his policy. Dovgalevsy, for the U.S.S.R., regretted that the figures inserted in the draft convention applied only to European states, but he did not oppose the convention as a whole. Several speakers disapproved of the retention of bombing in outlying regions, and the proposals for the implementation of the Kellogg Pact were criticized on the grounds that they ignored the machinery of the League. But on March 27, despite the differences of opinion, the General Commission decided to accept the British plan as the basis of its future discussions. The Commission then adjourned for the Easter holiday.

British policy was to proceed as quickly as possible to a detailed examination of the MacDonald plan, but during the adjournment few
discussions concerning disarmament took place except in connection with the proposal for a Four-Power Pact. British Ministers were particularly anxious to ensure that the French did not reject the Pact (as this would enable Germany to claim that France was being intransigent) and so on March 31 they produced a counter-draft of the Italian project, weakening the "treaty revision" clauses considerably; in any negotiations for revision, governments directly concerned would be placed "on an equal footing with" the four Great Powers. A new disarmament clause stipulated that the four Powers would recommend acceptance of the MacDonald plan to the Disarmament Conference. But, as both France and Germany had objections to the MacDonald plan, neither of them would accept the British version of the Four-Power Pact.

At the same time, British pressure on France not to reject the Pact was successful, for on April 10 the French produced a draft of their own which replaced the reference to treaty revision by a reaffirmation of Articles 10, 16 and 19 of the Covenant and suggested that any four-Power consultations should be pursued within the framework of the League. It recognized the MacDonald plan only as a basis for discussion and asserted that German equality of rights should be realized in stages in a system affording security to all nations. Mussolini, more concerned about the concept of the Pact than its contents, accepted it as a basis of discussion, leaving the onus for a refusal on Germany.

At this point, there appears to have been a struggle for control of German policy between the Wilhelmstrasse and certain sections of
the Nazi Party. The career diplomats, in general, continued to be sceptical as to the value of the Four-Power Pact,\(^{52}\) while the Party wanted closer relations with Italy. Göring, who visited Mussolini between April 10 and 18, advocated a "gentleman's agreement" by which Germany would support Italy's colonial claims in exchange for Italian support on the question of equality of rights;\(^{53}\) he believed that such an agreement would allow a softer line to be taken on the Pact. Vice-Chancellor Papen, who himself visited Rome between April 9 and 18, adopted Göring's policy, possibly to ensure that the latter could not claim sole credit for a successful German-Italian agreement.\(^{54}\) Eventually, though somewhat reluctantly, the Wilhelmstrasse followed suit.\(^{55}\)

Mussolini was attracted by the suggestion of a "gentleman's agreement" but made it conditional on the conclusion of the Four-Power Pact.\(^{56}\) He still hoped the Germans would agree to implement equality of rights over a period of ten years rather than five,\(^{57}\) and when the Wilhelmstrasse produced a draft Pact based on the French draft but suggesting only a five-year control of Germany's armaments, he saw "the greatest difficulty" in its being accepted.\(^{58}\) His pressure was successful; on May 4, the Germans produced a revised draft specifying no time limit for German rearmament.\(^{59}\)

Although Mussolini's allusion to a future "gentleman's agreement" must have been a major factor in changing German policy regarding the disarmament provisions of the Four-Power Pact, it is probable that other factors were equally important. Germany was isolated politically and diplomatically, and her leaders were afraid of a
renewed Anglo-French entente, especially if Italy looked on it benevolently. Moreover, there were renewed fears that the Poles were planning a preventive war. Neurath was so worried about the situation that he suggested to Francois-Poncet that Germany might be willing to discuss an "improvement" in the European security system and examine the possibility of a mutual assistance pact.

The British attitude to the new German government was shown very clearly in the Commons debate of April 13, when Members on both sides of the House criticized the revival of German militarism and the political repression and anti-Semitism of the Hitler regime. Attlee declared that the country "would not countenance for a moment the yielding to Hitler and force what was denied to Stresemann and reason", while Austen Chamberlain deplored the "new spirit of German nationalism" and demanded that the Government refuse to entertain suggestions of revision. Even MacDonald raised the question as to whether the new German regime could be trusted to carry out its undertakings:

"It is no use talking about disarming by agreement, it is no use talking about treaties, it is no use talking about pacts, it is no use talking about co-operation for peace unless you have had some experience which justifies you in accepting the word of those with whom you are to co-operate."

At the same time, German aggressiveness enabled Britain to pursue her policy at Geneva more energetically. MacDonald had launched his disarmament plan in an effort to ensure that Germany would be held responsible for a breakdown of the Disarmament Conference rather
than in any great hope that the plan might be successful, and any German intransigence at Geneva would enable him to blame Germany if a convention was not agreed upon. Thus, when the General Commission resumed its labours on April 25, British policy was to secure the adoption of the MacDonald plan with as few amendments as possible, even if it meant breaking up the Conference. Confronted by a grave crisis, it seemed that Britain had at last decided to mediate between France and Germany.

British mediation would have stood a far better chance of being successful at almost any other time in the fifteen-month existence of the Conference. But there was still a possibility it might succeed. It was certain that both France and Germany would put forward their maximum demands at the outset of the first reading of the draft convention in the General Commission, but provided that Britain followed a consistent line, refused to give way on essential points such as the standardization of Continental armies and was willing to strengthen the security provisions of the convention, a negotiated solution of the disarmament problem was possible.

On April 26, the day after the General Commission reassembled, discussion of Part I (Security) of the MacDonald plan came to a standstill because Norman Davis announced that the new American government was still discussing the question of consultation. Privately, Roosevelt had told MacDonald that he was "in full general sympathy" with the British on the question of consultation and that he contemplated making a presidential declaration announcing that America would "refrain from any action tending to defeat" a collective
effort against an aggressor, but Davis had not yet received instructions to this effect. Unsure of American policy, many delegations— including France—were unwilling to commit themselves on the security provisions of the British plan, and on April 27 the Bureau decided that the General Commission should proceed to the first reading of Part II (Effectives and Matériel).

The discussion of Part II produced a Franco-German confrontation. Nadolny urged that the standardization of European armies be considered by the Permanent Disarmament Commission, proposed amendments so as to include trained reserves as effectives and limit overseas forces stationed near the home country and demanded that Germany be authorized to own all arms permitted to other states. And in the Effectives Committee, the German delegate opposed the inclusion of the Schutzpolizei in effectives. Massigli and Eden opposed the German amendments vigorously, and, significantly, no delegation supported Nadolny.

Nadolny's aim was to put forward Germany's maximum demands in the hope that concessions might be gained on the section of the British plan relating to matériel. Although the Germans wanted to retain a modified Reichswehr if possible, they had no objection in principle to a standardized army based on conscription. Their amendments were put forward almost solely as a bargaining counter.

The proposal for the standardization of Continental armies was one of the essential pillars of the MacDonald plan, and both Britain and France regarded it as a sine qua non of any convention. Consequently, the British Cabinet reacted to the German demands by demanding a
"reasonable" agreement on effectives and the withdrawal of the amendments. On May 5, after the British delegation in Geneva had tried, unsuccessfully, to reason with the Germans, Eden was instructed to maintain the British position even if it meant breaking up the Conference — for if a break occurred, Germany would be blamed and Britain would not have to disclose her own demands for a twenty percent increase in effectives.  

Indeed, it appears that the Government believed that disarmament was an impossibility, for in a meeting on May 5 the Cabinet Committee on Disarmament acceded to the demands of the Service Departments rather than the advice of the Foreign Office and decided to press at Geneva for a considerable expansion in British armaments. Additional tanks were to be constructed in accordance with a programme devised by the War Office, and the number of effectives was to be increased from 180,000 to 230,000 men — excluding the 60,000 based in India. The demands were sure to raise an outcry at Geneva, especially as British troops were long-service professionals whereas the standardized armies of Europe would be formed of conscripts. And in air armaments, the Government adhered to Lord Londonderry's arguments and continued to oppose the complete abolition of bombing and advocate reductions in the air strength of the other Great Powers to the British level — or sixty per cent below it if the demands of the Dominions were taken into account.

At Geneva, a provisional compromise concerning militarized police was concluded on May 3, allowing every state a fixed quota of such police, the number being proportionate to the size of the country's effectives. But no agreement was reached on reservists, overseas
forces and the standardization of Continental armies as the Germans refused to withdraw their amendments to the draft convention. On May 5, in a manoeuvre for position at the Conference, the German Ambassadors in London, Washington and Rome made démarches suggesting that Germany would consider the question of standardization if the General Commission continued the first reading of the other sections of the draft convention, and three days later, General Blomberg, the Reichswehr Minister, made a similar suggestion. On May 8 and 9, the German demand for a discussion of matériel was opposed by Eden and Massigli, who pressed for an immediate decision on effectives.

Hugh Wilson proposed that Nadolny should make a general reservation on effectives or propose definite amendments on standardization, but the German delegate refused. The Bureau of the Conference could only agree that private discussions between the Great Powers should take place.

Between May 9 and 11, Eden and Nadolny held a number of conversations to try to break the deadlock. On May 9, the German delegate agreed in principle to the "transformation" of the Reichswehr over a period of time if Germany received concessions on reservists and colonial troops and was accorded immediate and complete equality in matériel. Eden refused to consider such a scheme, and by May 11 Nadolny had reduced his demands for matériel to "samples" and equality in principle. On May 10, the British Cabinet instructed Eden to continue opposing a postponement of a decision on effectives and to reveal Germany's demands to the other Powers so that the Reich could be blamed for any break in the Conference.
The British Ministers were unsure of German intentions and almost as unsure of the correct course to follow, except that they hoped to keep the Reich on the defensive. Simon even deigned to ask Temperley's advice on the situation, receiving the reply that Britain should "reoccupy" the Rhine bridgeheads in conjunction with France and Belgium. 81 Lord Hailsham, in a Lords debate of May 11, suggested that if Germany refused the offers made to her and left the Disarmament Conference, the Treaty of Versailles would remain in force and any contravention of its disarmament provisions would bring sanctions into operation. 82 But whatever the indecisions of the various Ministers, the Cabinet Committee on Disarmament came to the conclusion that Germany's demands were basically a manoeuvre for position and that Eden's instructions of May 10 should remain unchanged, except for a few additions, telegraphed to Geneva on May 12. 83 The British Government had decided to call Germany's bluff — though they were in a quandry as to the next step if Germany withdrew from the Conference rather than accede to Britain's demands regarding effective; they were astonished by Hailsham's outburst in the Lords, and Simon gave an evasive answer when asked in the Commons whether the Minister for War's speech represented Cabinet policy. 84

On May 11, Germany made a last attempt to break the opposing front of Britain, France, Italy and America. The German Ambassadors in London and Washington made further démarches suggesting that agreement had practically been reached at Geneva and that a final settlement could be arrived at if Germany was allowed "samples" of hitherto-forbidden matériel, but the démarches came to nothing as
only the Italians would agree to the demand for "samples". In a further attempt to exert pressure on the other Powers, Neurath published an article in the German press demanding complete and practical application of equality of rights including the right to build an air force if the other Powers were allowed to keep theirs.

But, like the démarches in London and Washington, this move was unsuccessful and had the reverse effect to that intended, for on the following day Paul-Boncour published a statement in the French press on similar lines to Hailsham's speech in the Lords. Eden informed Henderson that his talks with Nadolny had broken down, and on May 12 the Bureau decided to call a meeting of the General Commission for May 15, when the British proposals regarding matériel would be discussed "in a very broad sense" and no amendments allowed. Later, the meeting of the General Commission was postponed for two days, because the German Cabinet decided to call a special meeting of the Reichstag for May 17 so that Hitler could make an official statement of policy.

On May 16, in an attempt to ease the tension in international relations, Roosevelt addressed an appeal to the Heads of State of the nations represented at the Disarmament Conference. The ultimate object of the Conference, he declared, was the complete elimination of all offensive weapons, especially warplanes, heavy mobile artillery, tanks and poison gas, while the immediate objective was a convention based on the MacDonald plan providing for immediate and substantial arms reductions. As an interim measure, he suggested that all states
should limit their armaments strictly to the levels stipulated in existing treaties and enter into a "solemn and definite" non-aggression pact by which they would reaffirm their obligations to reduce and limit arms and agree to send no armed forces across their frontiers. If "any strong nation" refused to join in these concerted efforts for peace – if Germany began to rearm – "the Civilised World would know where the responsibility lay". 89

Although Britain was pleased that the Americans were exerting pressure on Germany to refrain from rearming and accept the MacDonald plan as the basis of the first disarmament convention, the Foreign Office disliked the clause forbidding the sending of armed forces across frontiers for fear that it might interfere with "police measures" in Aden and India and with steps such as the sending of troops to Shanghai. Even after the Americans explained that the contemplated arrangements applied only to neighbouring countries and were subject to existing treaty rights, the British reply to the Roosevelt message was non-committal. More pleasing to the British Government was the fact that the Americans now intended to consult with other Powers if the agreements suggested by the American President were violated. 90

The day after the Roosevelt message, Hitler made his statement of policy in the Reichstag, discussing the international crisis in a rational manner and proclaiming his "earnest desire" to avoid war. At the same time, his speech indicated little change in German policy, for he continued to demand "at least qualitative" equality and oppose the inclusion of para-military organizations and the exclusion of
trained reserves in the calculation of effectives. He wanted equality to be attained through the disarmament of other Powers rather than the rearmament of Germany and accepted the MacDonald plan as "a possible basis for the solution of" the disarmament question and agreed in principle to the transitional period of five years for implementing it provided that any changes in the Reichswehr took place at the same time and to the same degree as the disarmament of the heavily-armed states. As regards security, Germany was willing to undertake any further obligations generally agreed upon, provided they benefitted all nations, and the Chancellor "warmly welcomed" Roosevelt's suggestion of "bringing the United States into European relations as a guarantor of peace". On the other hand, any attempt to force Germany into signing another diktat on the disarmament issue would be countered by a withdrawal from the League.91

On May 22, further developments seemed to indicate that British policy had been successful on two counts. Henderson announced that Nadolny had withdrawn his proposal for referring the standardization of Continental armies to the Permanent Disarmament Commission, and Norman Davis, in a full statement of American policy, declared to the General Commission that his country "would consult with other states in case of a threat to peace, with a view to averting conflict," and "would refrain from any action tending to defeat a collective effort against states which had violated their international obligations" provided that the American Government agreed that the aggressor had been defined correctly. Then, after reiterating the
disarmament aims outlined in the Roosevelt message the American delegate accepted the MacDonald Plan "wholeheartedly", pledged American support for it and proposed an amendment to make for "effective, automatic and continuous" supervision of the convention.\textsuperscript{92}

The withdrawal of the German proposal on the standardization of Continental armies and the declaration by Davis had important consequences. Germany's acceptance of the principle of standardization meant that Britain would be forced to reveal her own demands for rearmament, while America's acceptance of the principle of consultation made it difficult for Britain to plead that American policy made it impossible for her to enter into new commitments or carry out her obligations under Article 16 of the Covenant. Moreover, it was evident that France would ask Britain to increase her commitments or reaffirm Article 16 of the Covenant for although Roosevelt had renounced America's traditional policy of isolation from European political affairs, French Ministers still believed that France needed more positive and more automatic guarantees of security. As Tyrrell pointed out, unless France felt confident that Britain and America would join in setting a definite limit to German ambitions, she would base her policy on the fact that in the last resort she had to be prepared to defend herself alone.\textsuperscript{93}

There was still a possibility of reconciling French and German claims. French policy, as decided at a Cabinet meeting of May 2 and reaffirmed on May 20, was to implement the MacDonald Plan in two stages, each lasting four years. During the first stage, France would stop all construction of matériels over 155 mm calibre, limit her tanks
to a global tonnage of 3,000 tons (the existing figure being 12,000 tons), and reduce her naval and military aircraft by fifty per cent - on condition that agreement could be reached on budgetary control, the abolition or "strict supervision" of the private trade in and manufacture of arms and the application of sanctions if the convention was violated. The supervisory mechanism would be continuous and automatic, and provided it proved satisfactory, in the second period France would either destroy her prohibited materiel or hand it over to the League. French Ministers were concerned lest Germany might regain complete freedom to rearm if the MacDonald plan was implemented without amendment, but it seems that a reaffirmation of Article 16 of the Covenant would have rallied them to the British draft convention. Certainly the Foreign Office suspected this.

There were no adequate reasons why Britain should not take this course. There was little possibility of a European war in the immediate future, despite anxiety at the rise of Hitler, while the American statements of May 16 and 22 had freed Britain from the worry that enforcement of sanctions by the Royal Navy would have led to an Anglo-American breach. Outside Europe, there was no real danger that sanctions would be applied; the security of the Americas, for good or bad, was ensured by the Monroe Doctrine and had never been dependent on the League; most of Africa and Asia were colonial territories, where security was ensured by the Colonial Power; and the Manchurian crisis had shown that it was impossible for the League to act in the Far East without the active co-operation of America, which was not forthcoming. In these circumstances, it was unreasonable
for Britain to claim that her navy would be used continually for averting conflict round the world, neglecting its imperial role and causing expense. Certainly Mussolini had colonial ambitions in North Africa, especially in Abyssinia, but in 1933 he was more concerned about the Hitler government than his own ambitions, and Britain and France might well have negotiated an agreement with the Duce, exchanging support for Italy in North Africa for support of a disarmament convention controlling Germany.

A reaffirmation of Article 16 also offered positive advantages to Britain. New assurances of support were necessary if France was to adopt a more flexible policy towards disarmament and the German problem - the Locarno Treaty struck French opinion more for the safeguards and delays which it afforded the guarantor Powers against the immediate fulfilment of their military obligations than for the distinctness of the guarantee to defend France. A new assurance to France would also be a logical development of the policy of the "Rhine frontier", while the efficacy of a close Anglo-French relationship had been shown by the success of their joint pressure on Germany during the crisis concerning the standardization of Continental armies. Moreover, if Britain intended to appease German grievances, the best method of doing so was to ensure that Germany's armaments were controlled so that the Reich would be in no position to threaten other states militarily if her revisionist demands were not accepted; and the most desirable, if not the only, way of arriving at a satisfactory convention was for Britain to give new assurances to France.

The British Government was still unwilling to give these assurances. MacDonald and Simon continued to base their policy on the "harmony of
interests" premise, and they also feared the effects that additional guarantees would have on public opinion. Thus, in renewed discussions on the Four-Power Pact, Simon refused to accept a French amendment requiring an examination by the four Powers of proposals "tending to give full efficacy to Articles 10, 16 and 19 of the Covenant with a view to their ultimate application." The Foreign Secretary would agree only to examine "all proposals relative to the methods and procedures calculated, in case of need, to give due effect to these articles." Yet even this he believed to be "a great effort to meet French sentiment." Speaking to the General Commission on May 22, he disappointed the French by failing to respond to the abandonment of the traditional American policy regarding neutrality. Then, on May 26, he told the Commons that Britain had no intention of joining "the innermost circle of security", and while emphasizing the importance of Davis' pronouncement of May 22, he gave no indication that Britain would enter into any further commitments in Europe or would be willing to take part in an application of economic sanctions.

The French suspected that Roosevelt's policy might be unacceptable to Congress, and the failure of Britain to respond to the American statements of May 16 and 22 made them more anxious for their security. Consequently, they upheld the decisions of the Council of Ministers of May 2, and on May 23 Paul-Boncour outlined this policy to the General Commission — except for the possibility of dividing the convention into two four-year periods. French policy hardened even more in the following week, for on May 28 the American Senate Committee on Foreign
Relations secured an amendment to a resolution empowering the President to declare an embargo on the export of arms or munitions of war to the effect that any prohibition of export or sale of arms would apply to all parties in a dispute or conflict. Moreover, by June 1, it had become clear that Britain wanted to avoid a discussion of the French amendments for continuous and automatic supervision of the disarmament. Thus, because Britain failed to give adequate support to France, the gap between the French and German points of view failed to narrow, making the conclusion of a disarmament convention even more difficult.

After the withdrawal of the German amendments on the standardization of Continental armies, many delegations hoped that a convention might be negotiated before the World Economic Conference opened on June 12, but it soon became clear that negotiation of a convention in such a short time was improbable. Progress in the General Commission was slow, and to a great extent the responsibility lay with Britain. On May 25 and 29, Britain, along with Italy opposed the definition of aggression drawn up by Nicholas Politis, the Greek delegate and Vice-President of the Conference. Based on Litvinov's suggestion of February 6, Politis' proposal defined an aggressor as the first state to commit any of a number of actions — a declaration of war, an invasion or attack by armed forces (with or without a declaration of war) on another state's territory, vessels or aircraft, a naval blockade, the support of armed bands invading another state, or a refusal to take measures to deprive such armed bands of all assistance or protection. Eden opposed this definition because it was "too rigid" and did not take "other circumstances" into account — in reality because America had
not agreed to it, and because, legally, Britain would be prevented from defending her imperial interests by means of expeditions such as the despatch of a "defence force" to Shanghai in January 1927.\textsuperscript{106} In the end, Eden, Dovgalevsky, Madariaga (the Spanish delegate to the Disarmament Conference) and Politis were charged with formulating a more elastic definition (using the Politis proposal as a basis) before the second reading of the convention. Certainly this was essential if agreement was to be reached, as both America and Italy, and to a lesser extent Germany, supported Britain, but even when Davis produced, in Eden's words, an "innocuous" definition, Simon refused to accept it, merely referring it to the Cabinet Committee on Disarmament.\textsuperscript{107} The British attitude on this question disappointed France, because an inelastic definition of aggression facilitated the prompt application of Article 16 of the Covenant against "guilty" parties.

On the question of air armaments, Britain was even more responsible for the lack of progress. The debate in the General Commission on May 27 showed that most delegates were in favour of the total abolition of military aviation, possibly in conjunction with the internationalization of civil aviation, and opinion was almost unanimously in favour of the immediate abolition of bombing.\textsuperscript{108} The main obstacle to progress was the provision of the draft convention for the retention of bombing "for police purposes in outlying districts". Britain's insistence on this clause was sure to lead to similar claims by France and Italy, and, if these two Powers were allowed bombers, Germany would claim bombers. Britain's claim was little more than an attempt by the Air Staff to prevent the "abolition" of the Royal Air Force, despite Eden's argument that bombing was a more
economic, if not a more humane, method of policing "inaccessible mountain districts, sparsely inhabited, where wild and armed hill tribes had sometimes a passionate appetite for disturbing the tranquillity of their neighbours". France had similar problems in her empire — and a larger air force to deal with them — yet she was willing to accept the complete abolition of both bombing and military aviation. The delegates at Geneva must have wondered how Britain had kept the peace in her empire before the development of aviation and also why the British Government considered bombing to be rather less inhumane if the sufferers of bombing raids were hill tribesmen rather than Europeans. Britain's claim was so spurious that when Eden arrived in Geneva, he had no idea how to justify it and had to refer back to Simon for instructions. Only Iraq, Persia and Siam supported Britain in the General Commission, but Eden refused to withdraw the British claims. This was especially unfortunate because Nadolny modified his opposition to the internationalization of civil aviation in the event of the complete abolition of military aviation, declaring that "Germany was prepared to go as far as possible to prevent the use of civil aircraft for military purposes". It was evident that Japan wanted to retain bombing, but it was probable that she would alter her position if her sphere of influence in Manchukuo and North China was recognized. Thus, because of the British refusal to accept the complete prohibition of bombing and agree to the immediate abolition of military aviation, the discussion of the air chapter of the draft convention was inconclusive.

Britain also hindered progress on the "no-force" declaration, which was discussed as part of the draft European security pact formulated
by the Security Committee of the Conference and proposed in the General Commission on May 30. Persia, Turkey and Afghanistan urged that the obligation not to resort to force should apply to all countries, and Russia and France accepted the suggestion. Norman Davis declared that it was "not incompatible" with Roosevelt's suggestion for a universal non-aggression pact, and agreement on this point seemed possible. But the British Cabinet had already decided (on February 17) that a universal "no-force" declaration might interfere with operations such as the despatch of troops to Shanghai in 1927, and Eden was instructed to assert that a universal declaration would "destroy the entire usefulness" of the "no-force" proposal. As this would have given the impression of intransigence, Eden eventually suggested to the General Commission that, in view of Davis' statement and the fact that a "no-force" pact was to some extent dependent on the definition of aggression, the whole question of a pact should be reconsidered and left open until the second reading of the draft convention.

To a great extent, therefore, Britain was holding up progress towards a disarmament convention, and Eden came near to admitting it on May 31, when he telegraphed to Simon that one of the major arguments for accepting a proposal by Davis to hold five-Power discussions before the second reading of the convention was that such discussions would postpone "the embarrassments" of a second reading. British policy on the definition of aggression, air armaments and the "no-force" pact had slowed down the work of the Conference considerably, and the Government's plans for increases in the number of tanks and effectives were sure to retard progress even further when (or if) they were
revealed. Another question on which Britain retarded progress was that of the supervision of the convention. France had long maintained that strict supervision was a sine qua non of a convention, and on June 1, supported by America, she proposed amendments to the MacDonald plan making supervision "continuous and automatic". But Londonderry reserved Britain's opinion on them. Britain had always opposed automatic and continuous supervision in the past - for no adequate reason - and Simon saw no merit in changing British policy on this point.

The Government's fear that a universal "no-force" pact would make it illegal to carry out certain measures of "imperial defence" was incomprehensible. Other imperial states - notably France and America - were willing to accept such a pact, believing that the formula proposed offered no real hindrances to imperial action in cases of necessity. In any case, it was unlikely that an international body would define Britain as an aggressor for undertaking operations such as the despatch of troops to Shanghai in 1927, even though operations of this type were incompatible with both the letter and the spirit of a "no-force" pact.

The Government's anxiety to ensure the legality of its international actions was hypocritical, for in December 1932 it had been announced that Britain would not fulfil her war debt obligations to the United States. British Ministers were also hypocritical in expecting France and America to make concessions regarding German equality and European security respectively while they themselves refused to make similar concessions in the general interest.
Progress towards a convention was negligible during the last week of May, and on June 1 the General Commission decided to adjourn as soon as the first reading of the British draft convention had ended. Henderson was invited to undertake "any necessary private negotiations" to overcome the main difficulties facing the Conference before the second reading of the convention and the delegates decided to reconvene on July 3 at the latest. Once they had settled future procedure, they continued the first reading of the convention, the discussions revealing a considerable amount of agreement on the abolition of chemical warfare and the publicity of national defence expenditure but disagreement on the regulation of the trade in and manufacture of arms and the possibility of introducing a global limitation of defence expenditure. On June 7, the MacDonald plan was accepted as the basis of a convention, and on June 8 the Conference adjourned.\(^\text{117}\)

In the four months since the General Commission had reconvened in February, little practical progress had been made. A disarmament convention on the basis of the French plan of November 14 1932 was a possibility until Britain failed to support it on the grounds that the Government could not assume further Continental commitments. Although Ralph Wigram suggested that Britain wanted to collaborate "intimately and actively" with France on the basis of the French plan, the policy of entering into no new commitments negated the suggestion in the eyes of the French. Professions of goodwill and a desire to mobilize world opinion against an aggressor were of little use to the French, who needed to control the might of Germany by gaining new allies, strengthening the "organization of peace" or\(^\text{117}\)
maintaining superior military forces.

Although Britain had already guaranteed the Franco-German frontier by the Locarno Treaty and had adhered to the Covenant of the League, the French were suspicious of British policy and were worried about their security because the Locarno guarantees were not automatic and the British Government would not reaffirm Article 16 of the Covenant. To keep Germany in check, therefore, the French Government thought it necessary to maintain military superiority until Britain gave increased assurances of support or agreed to a strengthening of the organization of peace. If Britain had been willing to reaffirm Article 16 and enter into a general consultative pact, France would have been more willing to reduce her armaments and a disarmament convention based on the French plan might well have been negotiated.

Britain's refusal to give additional guarantees — or reaffirm those she had already given — was incomprehensible, if not illogical, as the Government disliked the new German régime and wanted to move closer to France to maintain the "Rhine frontier". Moreover, the extra guarantees suggested by France were acceptable to Germany since they were applicable in the event of a French attack upon Germany as well as a German attack on France. One factor in the Government's decision was that Britain might find herself involved in East European troubles originating in the "unsatisfactory" territorial arrangements of the Versailles Treaty, but in the event of an East European crisis, Britain was certain to be involved in negotiations for a settlement — and a close accord with France would have enabled the Government to press France and her allies into a more conciliatory policy. Moreover, if a peaceful solution to
the German problem was to be found, it was necessary for Britain to participate more directly in the European security system. A British alignment with France could force the Reich into accepting a disarmament agreement imposing limits on German power - as the question of the standardization of Continental armies demonstrated - but if France and Britain could not agree on the conditions to be imposed on Germany, the Germans would merely increase their demands and attempt to play off the two Western Powers against each other.

But the British Government was reluctant to accept that additional and more effective security guarantees were necessary for a solution of the disarmament problem. The consultative pact proposed in the British draft convention of March 16 was less efficacious than the one proposed in the French plan, and even after Roosevelt had discarded the traditional American policy regarding the neutrality of the seas and declared himself in favour of consultations if the Kellogg Pact was breached, the Prime Minister refused to reaffirm Article 16 of the Covenant or consider automatic and continuous supervision of a disarmament convention.

The best, if not only, method of facilitating disarmament was for Britain to mediate between France and Germany. But the Government's main aim was to avoid responsibility for a breakdown of the Conference. MacDonald and Simon were reluctant to place a draft convention before the General Commission, and even when they did decide to take this step, they had little idea as to what to do next. They might have tried to initiate immediate negotiations on the basis of the draft convention - as Temperley and Eden suggested - but during the
Easter adjournment of the Conference they held few conversations with other Powers, except in connection with Mussolini's proposal for a Four-Power Pact.

After the Easter adjournment, the Government did follow a more positive policy for a time and forced Germany into accepting the standardization of Continental armies. But despite this success, the British Ministers failed to draw the inference that a similar policy could achieve similar results on other problems. Instead, they rested on their laurels, concealed their rearmament plans and refused to make concessions on the questions of bombing, the "no-force" pact, the supervision of the convention and the definition of aggression. To a large extent, therefore, the British were responsible for the slow progress of the Conference during the four months since February, and progress would continue to be slow until the Government changed its policy.
At the end of May, to facilitate the rapid conclusion of a convention, Norman Davis had suggested five-Power conversations similar to those of December 1932. But Paul-Boncour had objected, ostensibly because such conversations would usurp the position of the General Commission, in reality because France would be subjected to considerable pressure to disarm. Nevertheless, the French Foreign Minister did agree to conversations with Britain and America, and on June 8 Londonderry, Eden and Davis had extensive discussions with Paul-Boncour, Daladier and Nassigli at the Quai d'Orsay, clarifying the problems facing the Conference. Daladier agreed to "consider" the destruction of a stipulated amount of matériel in three years time on condition that the system of supervision and the transformation of the Reichswehr had both been implemented satisfactorily, while Londonderry and Eden acceded to the French demand that matériel should not be destroyed until the efficacy of the system of supervision had been proved and agreed to ask the Cabinet to reconsider its attitude towards continuous and automatic supervision.

But Franco-German differences remained unsettled, and it was unlikely that they could be resolved unless Britain took the lead in producing a settlement at Geneva. Realizing this, Eden urged his superiors to reconsider their policy, especially regarding supervision of the convention and the abolition of bombing, and he suggested that they initiate private discussions between the Powers during the World
Economic Conference in London. But MacDonald and Simon were more concerned with the Economic Conference than disarmament and were unwilling to adopt Eden's suggestions. MacDonald was so unconcerned about the disarmament situation that he refused to let Henderson use a room in the building where the Economic Conference was being held. The refusal placed Henderson in the invidious position of having to roam around the lobbies of the Economic Conference in his attempts to initiate discussions with the leaders of the major Powers. Consequently, he accomplished little of importance and the Disarmament Conference was again faced with the problem of procedure.

The British Government considered three main courses of action - immediate negotiations between the Powers (in effect, British mediation between France and Germany), an adjournment of the Conference until the Autumn, and the reconvening of the General Commission to deal with secondary problems coupled with private negotiations on the major problems. Eden favoured the first course, Henderson the third, and either of these two courses offered a reasonable chance of a disarmament settlement. But Simon's mistrust of Germany led him to seek an adjournment of the Conference until October and he refused to modify the draft convention until the "acute differences" between France and Germany had been removed; he also believed that Henderson should initiate the conversations which had not taken place during the Economic Conference.

The French Government feared that a delay in reconvening the General Commission might lead Germany to proclaim her freedom of action and undertake a programme of rearmament. Consequently, Paul-Boncour
advocated private negotiations between his Government, the British, Henderson, Politis and Benes, and the new French Ambassador in London, Charles Corbin, made a démarche to this effect on June 23. But, after some discussion, the French came round to the British point of view regarding procedure, and on June 29 the General Commission adjourned until October 16, when the second reading of the MacDonald plan was to begin. In the meantime, Henderson was charged with continuing his efforts to reconcile the differing points of view. The only opposition came from Hungary and Germany, Nadolny suggesting that the Conference was evading decisions on the problems before it and that the best method of procedure was for the Bureau to prepare the way for the second reading of the convention and for the various delegations at Geneva to enter into private negotiations whenever a difficult point arose.

Nadolny's criticism of the decision to adjourn until October was justified, for the Conference had been in progress for seventeen months yet had produced few results. The Powers had avoided taking decisions of real importance - to a great extent because of the ambiguous and negative attitude of the British Government - and the adjournment merely delayed matters. The most realistic method of resolving the disarmament problem was British mediation between France and Germany and the holding of immediate negotiations between the Great Powers, while the alternative policies suggested by Henderson and Nadolny might also have facilitated a settlement.

But MacDonald and Simon, still believing that France and Germany should "put their demands in such a way that Britain could say that
she supported both sides", continued to follow their old policy of "wait and see" which had failed to produce results in the past and offered little prospect for the future. It was certain that Germany would rearm if an agreement was not concluded at Geneva, and it was better that any rearmament was controlled and supervised by means of an international convention — and for a convention to be negotiated, it was imperative that Britain give new assurances of support to France to compensate her for the increase in German power resulting from the concession of equality of rights. But although they realized that failure to conclude a disarmament agreement would lead to German rearmament, the British Ministers failed to understand that additional assurances to France were a sine qua non of any convention — the result of their basing their policy on the existence of an international "harmony of interests".

Although private negotiations between the Powers had been "vetoed" by the General Commission on June 1, there was nothing to prevent such negotiations taking place through diplomatic channels. But Simon insisted that Henderson should be allowed to undertake his "disarmament tour" — though he must have known that there was little chance of the tour being a success; Henderson was under the disadvantage of not representing a government, and despite his extraordinary skills as a mediator, skills which had enabled the Conference to overcome several crises, the leaders of the Powers did not confide in him as freely as they did with government representatives. Moreover, the British Government itself had failed to establish a rapport with the President
of the Conference, mainly because MacDonald had had disagreements with him during the second Labour Government and because the Conservative and Labour parties were so irrevocably opposed to each other on British internal policy. Indeed, considering the hostile attitude of the Prime Minister and most of his colleagues towards the former Foreign Secretary (an attitude that was not reciprocated) it is even plausible to suggest that the Government was motivated, partially at least, by the hope that Henderson might be blamed for a failure at Geneva.

In preparation for his visits to the various European capitals, Henderson had formulated a list of the principal questions still dividing the Conference. These were the "no-force" pact, the definition of aggression, supervision and control, sanctions against violators of the convention, air bombardment, military and naval aviation, the abolition and destruction of aggressive land matériel, the size of tanks and artillery, the period of training for short-term effective, colonial forces, budgetary limitation and the manufacture of and trade in arms. But though at first sight the list appeared rather formidable, if Britain put her mind to securing solutions, agreement on most — if not all — of these points was still possible.

On July 10, Henderson departed from London in pursuance of his disarmament mission, and in the next fortnight he visited Paris, Rome, Berlin, Prague, Munich and Paris again before returning to England. Little of importance emerged from his discussions. In Paris, he was handed an aide-mémoire, but it was little more than a recapitulation of the policy outlined to Londonderry and Eden on June 8 together with some of the amendments to the British draft convention that France
had put forward in the General Commission. During the first four years of the convention, the "période d'épreuve", the manufacture of arms would be limited by means of fixed quotas and there would be yearly inspections of the armaments of each contracting state. National defence expenditure would be publicized, in preparation for full budgetary limitation in the second four-year period, and the most powerful matériel would be stocked on national territory under the control of the League. During the second four-year period, this matériel would be handed over to the League, which would decide either to destroy it in part or in full or keep it for use against aggressors. The French were refusing to commit themselves either to the destruction of matériel or to a definition of the matériel that might be destroyed.

In Rome, Henderson found that Mussolini was adopting a non-committal attitude towards disarmament questions until the results of the President's mission could be evaluated, though Henri de Jouvenel, the French Ambassador, noted that the Duce's opposition to the proposed période d'épreuve was less strong than expected. In Berlin, Henderson was handed a memorandum summarizing German disarmament policy, and though it differed little from a memorandum given to Londonderry on June 2, it did suggest that progress was possible on some points. Germany would agree to a universal "no-force" pact and accept the definition of aggression drafted by the Committee on Security Questions. More important, the Reich agreed to periodic and automatic supervision and also to a system of national licences for arms factories and state supervision of them provided these arrangements were accepted generally. On other points, German policy remained the
the standardization of Continental armies and the progressive destruction of aggressive matériel within five years, publicity (but not limitation) of military expenditure, the complete abolition of bombing and military and naval aviation, "samples" of defensive weapons permitted to other states, and the inclusion of trained reserves and overseas troops stationed in or near the Metropole in the calculation of effectives. The Germans were willing to forgo their right to replace oarege capital ships with the exception of one keel, to be laid down in replacement before December 31 1936.

A meeting between Henderson and Hitler in Munich on July 21 brought few results; Hitler insisted that Germany could not accept a période d'épreuve and the division of the convention into two four-year periods. Then, after further talks with Benes and Paul-Boncour, Henderson returned to London.

The main result of the President's mission was a clarification of the issues facing the Conference, though some progress towards disarmament had been achieved - the Germans had accepted continuous and automatic supervision and had not excluded control over arms factories. And in London, the British had intimated that they intended to withdraw their opposition to a universal "no-force" pact and to withdraw their claim to police bombing in outlying districts. But the main questions facing the Conference - the German demand for a five-year convention and the destruction of aggressive weapons and the French demand for a période d'épreuve and an eight-year convention - remained unresolved, though Massigli intimated to Oliver Harvey, First Secretary to the
British Embassy in Paris, that France "had not made her final concessions". Another result of Henderson's mission was that France began to insist that private negotiations take place between Britain, France and America before the reconvening of the Conference after the summer vacation; Britain agreed, and conversations were scheduled for September 18.

The French Government's proposal for talks with Britain reflected a desire for an Anglo-French rapprochement in the face of renewed German stridency in both internal and external policy. On March 23, the Reichstag had passed an Enabling Act conferring virtually dictatorial powers on the government for four years, and in the next four months all opposition to the Hitler regime was crushed. The trade unions, political parties and their subsidiary organizations (including the Nationalists and Centre) were dissolved and their property expropriated, and central government was imposed over the whole of Germany. Opponents of the regime, Marxists, Socialists, Jews, liberals and pacifists were either jailed or put in concentration camps. The "Nazi revolution" had been so complete and swift that on July 11, Dr. Frick, the Minister of the Interior, declared its end.

Even more alarming to the French were German pressure on Austria and renewed reports of German rearmament. Austro-German relations had deteriorated almost continuously since Hitler had come to power, and by July they were on the point of breaking down completely. The Nazis attempted to undermine Austrian independence by economic pressure, encouraging the terrorism of the Austrian Nazis, dropping seditious
leaflets from German planes over Austrian territory and by persistent subversive broadcasting, inciting Austrians to resist the Dollfuss government. The situation became so strained that on July 24, the Austrian Minister in London asked Britain to join with France and Italy to make representations in Berlin demanding an end to the campaign against Austria. At the beginning of August, after démarches by the three Western Powers, the crisis was settled temporarily, Hitler agreeing to halt radio propaganda, air flights and subversive - though not economic - pressure against Austria. But European relations had been exacerbated, and consequently the chances of a disarmament settlement were not improved.

Another simultaneous development adversely affected the disarmament problem - German rearmament, especially in the air. On June 24, the Prussian Minister of the Interior issued a press communiqué stating that unidentified foreign aircraft had flown over Berlin and dropped leaflets insulting the German Government, and later in the same day the German Air Ministry demanded "police aircraft" to prevent a recurrence of such attacks and put forward a claim for equality in air armaments. Three days later, Rumbold reported to Simon that the Germans had already started building military aircraft in contravention of the Treaty of Versailles and that certain German officials had admitted this to Group-Captain Herring, the British air attaché. On July 14, the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, Sir Robert Vansittart, composed a memorandum on the extent of German rearmament, suggesting that Britain, France and Italy
should make representations in Berlin, and on July 29 a British
démarche was made, asking for assurances about German air armaments. 24
Meanwhile, on July 15, Göring had asked Britain to supply "twenty-five
or fifty police aircraft similar to those sold to Austria". 25 Actually,
no such sale had taken place, and Britain refused to supply any
aircraft or parts of aircraft unless Germany would guarantee that they
would not be used in contravention of the Paris Air Agreement of
1926. 26 The Wilhelmstrasse claimed that Group-Captain Herring had not
been told about plans for rearmament and that Göring had not requested
police aircraft — but these claims were not convincing.

The effect of militant German policies in June, July and August
was to draw Britain, France and Italy much closer together than they
had been for some time. Britain and France had co-operated in
presenting a démarche against German subversion in Austria and
Britain had kept France and Italy informed when making representations
about German rearmament. The two latter Powers had agreed to refuse
any German requests for aircraft contravening the Paris Agreement of
1926, and France had renewed her feelers for a Franco-Italian entente.
Despite differences concerning the organization of "Danubia", relations
between the two Latin Powers improved considerably. 27

The British reaction to German militancy was significant. Since
the Treaty of Versailles, the Government had urged the appeasing of
German grievances, and as recently as April 10 1933 British Ministers
had put pressure on France to refrain from making representations
about alleged infractions of the Peace Treaties, 28 but now, the same
British Ministers had gone ahead and made their own representations concerning German rearmament. British policy regarding both the German and disarmament problems was thus becoming markedly intransigent.

Even more significant was the fact that French policy in Europe had become more susceptible to British leadership. France was becoming progressively weaker in effectives — she had agreed to parity with Germany — and maintained military superiority over her former enemy by means of more powerful matériel. Consequently, she would consent to reduce this superiority only if she was convinced that Britain would support her in putting forward a firm offer of disarmament to Germany and face the consequences of a possible German refusal. If Britain did not align herself with France, it was unlikely that any French government could resist the pressure of public opinion for a preliminary inspection of Germany's existing armaments. And a demand for such an inspection was sure to meet with a German refusal and probably cause the breakdown of the Disarmament Conference, forcing France to rely on her own resources to maintain her security.²⁹

But although Britain was sure to play the decisive role at Geneva, Italy was the first country to put forward a solution to the disarmament problem. On September 5, Mussolini presented a ten-point proposal to the new French Ambassador in Rome, the Comte de Chambrun.³⁰ Based on the MacDonald plan and the French amendments, it proposed the destruction within two years of stockpiled chemical and bacteriological weapons and the factories where these weapons were made and envisaged the immediate abolition of chemical and bacteriological warfare and air bombardment against civilian populations. There would be a période d'essai of
not less than four years, during which states would not increase their land or air armaments or exceed their present military budgets, and after this period had elapsed, the highly-armed states would agree to reduce their offensive weapons. Armies would be standardized on the basis of the British draft convention, and disarmed Powers would be allowed to have quotas of "purely defensive" weapons by stages. A Permanent Disarmament Commission would be established and control would be periodic, permanent and automatic. Naval problems would be resolved when the Washington Treaty expired and the Disarmament Conference would reconvene on January 1, 1938 to fix the provisions for the second period of the convention.

These suggestions offered a realistic compromise between the French and German points of view. France would be accorded her période d'épreuve and continuous, automatic supervision of the convention, while Germany was assured of a reduction in the armaments of the highly-armed states after four years and would be allowed to obtain quotas of hitherto-forbidden weapons. Politically, it was difficult for France to concede "samples", but as Mussolini pointed out, it was certain that Germany was rearming and it was possible that she already possessed "forbidden" weapons. Control over German armaments was advantageous to Britain, France and Italy, the concession of "samples" would ingratiate the three Western Powers with liberal opinion, and even if Germany violated her obligations during the période d'épreuve, or later, the wartime allies would still maintain a considerable superiority of matériel over the Reich.
Mussolini's proposals reflected a considerable change in his disarmament policy. Previously, he had favoured the German point of view, but the manifestations of German nationalism during the summer of 1933 had modified his outlook considerably, especially regarding automatic control, budgetary limitation and the provisions for overseas forces. Daladier and Paul-Boncour were pleased with the Italian volte-face and responded favourably to Mussolini's suggestions. In an aide-memoire transmitted to the Duce on September 15, they declared themselves to be in agreement on the majority of points, the significant exception being that of "samples". While Daladier was willing to let Germany increase her numbers of light arms proportionate to the doubling of her effectives, he thought it impossible to allow her any heavy weapons because an unlimited number of men could be trained to use them. On the other hand, the French Premier went further than Mussolini in suggesting that bombers as well as bombing could be abolished if effective international control were exercised over civil aviation.

Italy's rapprochement with France simplified the problems facing the British Government, for it seemed that that the three Western Powers would be able to join in exerting pressure on Germany. Daladier and Paul-Boncour informed Eden of the rapprochement during conversations at the Quai d'Orsay on September 18 and suggested that it might facilitate an Anglo-French accord. Eden was impressed, and though the Paris discussions were of a preliminary nature, they proved very satisfactory. No definite decisions were made, but
Daladier consented to specify the reduction in armaments that France would make during the second period of the convention provided the system of control had worked satisfactorily during the first period. The French Premier agreed to surrender all matériel exceeding 155mm and transfer it to the League during the second period for possible destruction; he also abandoned the idea of a preliminary investigation of German armaments. But there were still divergences of view between Britain and France on the size of tanks to be permitted, the number of aircraft to be retained and the question of sanctions.  

On September 20, a Cabinet meeting took place to redefine British policy in the light of the new circumstances. The Government accepted in principle the division of the convention into two four-year periods, in the first of which the Reichswehr would be transformed and the effective of Continental armies standardized, and, more important, it was agreed that if the only barrier to a convention was the method of supervision, then Britain would consider the proposal for automatic and continuous supervision "sympathetically". But the Cabinet maintained its opposition to the automatic application of sanctions against violators of the convention.  

On September 22, Simon, Baldwin and Eden met Daladier, Paul-Boncour and Massigli at the British Embassy in Paris and declared their adherence in principle to the Franco-Italian disarmament plan. In the following week, further discussions took place between Britain, France, Italy and the United States to formulate an "offer of disarmament" that Germany could be induced to accept, and by September 29 the most important details of the offer had been outlined.
Britain accepted permanent and automatic supervision and agreed to a four-year période d'épreuve during which there would be no increases in arms and European armies standardized, while France agreed to specify the amount of disarmament she would carry out during the ensuing four-year period if the system of supervision proved satisfactory in operation. During the second period, France would reduce her matériel to either 155 or 105mm and Germany would be allowed matériel of the same calibre as the French. The tonnage of tanks to be permitted still presented problems, though France appeared more willing to reduce her heavy tanks, and an agreement seemed possible on air forces based on Eden's suggestion that each Great Power should retain 800 units, France, Britain and other colonial Powers being granted an additional number. During the période d'épreuve, Germany would be allowed an increase in the arms permitted by the Treaty of Versailles, but she would not be allowed prototypes of heavier matériel retained by the other Powers until the second period. Naval problems would be shelved until the Naval Conference of 1935.

A new situation was thus created. Britain, France, Italy and the United States had agreed to amend the MacDonald plan considerably, making it far less favourable to Germany. The duration of the convention was extended from five years to eight and the disarmament of the highly-armed Powers and the concession of "samples" were delayed for four years. Although Germany was to gain equality in effectives within four years, she would not gain equality in matériel for at least eight years. Moreover, there was always the possibility that at the end of the période d'épreuve, when the Reichswehr had been
abolished and Germany had been saddled with an army of raw recruits, the French might say the system of supervision had proved unsatisfactory, freeing them from their obligations to disarm.

Thus the main question in international politics at the end of September was whether four-Power pressure would be sufficient to induce Germany to accept a convention considerably less favourable than the MacDonald plan. In May, similar pressure had gained agreement on the standardization of Continental armies. At first, the prospects of German agreement seemed bright, for on September 23 Neurath told Simon that he accepted the principle of a two-period convention provided the provisions for disarmament during the second period were specified.  

By September 29, when Neurath returned to Berlin for talks with Hitler, the main divergence between Germany and the other Powers seemed to be the German demand for "samples" during the période d'essai, and the Italians, who had closer links with the Germans than the other Western Powers, believed it would be necessary to concede only a few light tanks and fighter aircraft for Germany to accept a convention. Another obstacle to an agreement, Germany's demand for a shorter période d'essai, was likely to be overcome by dividing the convention into three and five year periods.

Neurath's talks in Berlin were crucial, for Simon's repeated requests for a definition of "samples" and a clearer statement of German policy could not remain unanswered if Germany was to avoid appearing responsible for a breakdown of the Conference. Actually, in face of the united pressure of Britain, France, Italy and America, the German leaders were divided. Neurath insisted on Germany being
permitted "samples" during the période d'epreuve in the knowledge that this might break up the Conference, while Hitler was more conciliatory, maintaining that a disarmament convention would be desirable even if it did not fulfil Germany's wishes completely and that, with regard to equality in matériel, it would be wrong to demand more than Germany could procure by her own limited resources in the coming years.44

The outcome of the debate in Berlin was apparently decided by a despatch concerning British policy from Prince Bismarck, the Charge d'Affaires in London, on October 4. A close confidant of Simon had informed the Prince that on the previous day, the Foreign Secretary had revised the MacDonald plan along the lines of the Geneva conversations of the previous week and that Britain would reject the demand for "samples" during the période d'epreuve and withdraw from the Disarmament Conference if the "new draft convention" was not accepted.45 Hitler, Bülow and Blomberg held a conference later on October 4 and decided to demand a "return" to the MacDonald plan and threaten to withdraw from the League and the Conference if the "new draft" was brought up for debate.46 Hitler reserved for himself the decision as to whether the threat should be carried out.47 On October 6, Bismarck informed Simon that Germany based her policy on the declaration of December 11 1932 and that although the Reich could accept a convention lasting for five years, "equality would have to be applied in the first two years" and a "period of probation" was intolerable. Germany demanded "samples" of hitherto-forbidden weapons that were not to be abolished generally and complete freedom to increase the number of arms already permitted. Until she was informed
of the measures of disarmament to be undertaken by the other Powers, Germany "would not be able to be more specific about the equipment her new army would need".\textsuperscript{48}

On the surface, the German demands appeared to be dangerously near an ultimatum — though Bülow's instructions to Bismarck stated specifically that an ultimatum was to be avoided and that negotiations for a convention should continue.\textsuperscript{49} The main aim of the German demands was to lift the prohibition on weapons allowed to the other Powers; Germany already possessed a few of these weapons in secret and permanent and automatic supervision of the convention might have revealed their existence. If Germany was granted relatively minor concessions as regards "samples", a disarmament convention was possible;\textsuperscript{50} but if these concessions were not granted, Germany would withdraw from the Disarmament Conference.

Simon failed to perceive the true aim of the German demands. Although Bismarck told him that they were "a preliminary statement of Germany's attitude" pending further negotiations, he believed that they were put forward as an ultimatum.\textsuperscript{51} Consequently, in the week preceding October 14, when the Disarmament Conference was due to reconvene, the Foreign Secretary refused to make concessions regarding the période d'épreuve or "samples", hoping that Germany would eventually agree to the proposals he had drafted on October 3.\textsuperscript{52}

In refusing concessions, Simon assured the breakdown of the Conference since for Germany the early possession of at least some hitherto-forbidden weapons was a sine qua non of any convention. Mussolini realized this and on October 12 he suggested a compromise
between the British and German proposals. During the first year of the convention, chemical warfare and the bombardment of civilian populations would be prohibited, a system of permanent and automatic supervision established and Germany allowed double the number of the weapons permitted by the Versailles Treaty. In the second year, the Reich would be able to acquire a number of anti-aircraft batteries, and in the third a "minimum number of technical weapons, reconnaissance planes and small tanks". Also in the third year, a conference would be called to consider the effectiveness of the system of supervision, and in the following two years Germany would be permitted a number of "models" of weapons retained under the convention by the other Powers. In the sixth and seventh years, the Reich would be allowed to double the number of these "models", and in the eighth to triple them. Progressively, during years four to eight, the other Powers would destroy any weapons not permitted by the convention, beginning with the bigger guns, tanks and planes.53

Mussolini's appraisal of the international situation was perceptive. If Germany was not accorded a certain satisfaction of her demands and the Conference broke down, the only means of controlling her would be to apply sanctions and reoccupy the Rhineland, maybe even embark on a preventive war. But both Britain and France had rejected this course of action.54 Thus the logical alternative was to satisfy a minimum of German demands and assure that her rearmament took place under strict international control.

If Simon had consented to negotiate on the basis of Mussolini's proposal, it would have been possible to conclude a convention. On
October 13, Hitler told a Conference of Ministers that he accepted the Italian plan, and there were signs that the French might also agree. On October 6, Massigli, not the most conciliatory of French diplomats, said that he would consider a suggestion by Davis that Germany be permitted a number of observation aircraft during the période d'épreuve, and on October 14, Chambrun told Graham he was hopeful that negotiations on the basis of Mussolini's proposals would be successful. The French, apparently, were impressed by the argument that to concede Germany's demands for defensive armaments in stages under strict regulation and control was less dangerous than to concede nothing for four years and "everything" in the ensuing four. For the United States, Norman Davis had suggested the concession of anti-aircraft guns and observation aircraft, and on October 14 Sir Eric Phipps, who had succeeded Rumbold as Ambassador in Berlin, reported that the Americans would give way to Germany's demands. Officially, Davis gave Simon his full support in rejecting German rearmament, but in private he was concerned at the Foreign Secretary's intransigence and hoped he would reduce his demands.

On the morning of October 14, in what appears to have been a final attempt to secure concessions at Geneva, German newspapers published reports from the Swiss capital suggesting that the British delegation to the Conference was more intransigent than the French and that responsibility for the future of the Conference rested on Britain.

But Simon, possibly influenced by the confidence of the American delegation that Germany would accept the British programme of October 3, decided to refuse any concessions. In his speech to the Bureau
on October 14, he rejected any immediate rearmament by disarmed
Powers, except for "proportional" increases in weapons permitted by
the Peace Treaties in conjunction with the transformation of
Continental armies. Davis, Aloisi and Paul-Boncour backed the Foreign
Secretary, thus maintaining a united front, but Baron von Rheinbaben,
deputizing for Nadolny, merely declared that he would report Simon's
remarks to Berlin and that Germany demanded the substantial
disarmament of the heavily-armed Powers and the immediate implementation
of the principle of equality. 62

On the same afternoon, Henderson received a telegram from Neurath
stating that Germany was withdrawing from the Conference because the
Conference had failed to fulfil its "sole object, namely, general
disarmament". The unwillingness of the highly-armed states to carry
out their "contractual obligation to disarm" made it "impossible" for
Germany to obtain satisfaction of her "recognized claim" to equality
of rights. 63 In the same evening, Germany announced her intention to
withdraw from the League.

To a great extent, Britain was responsible for the German
withdrawal. The most efficacious method for securing a convention
would have been private negotiations between the Powers and British
mediation between France and Germany, but in the early summer, when
it would have been possible to take advantage of the German acceptance
of the standardization of Continental armies in order to initiate
private discussions, Simon refused to do so. Instead, he advised an
adjournment of the Conference until autumn and supported Henderson's
"disarmament pilgrimage" to various European capitals in the knowledge
that the journey had little chance of success. The Foreign Secretary
refused to take the responsibility of mediating between France and Germany, and except for Eden and Londonderry's talks in Paris on June 8, few disarmament discussions were held until September.

A considerable change in international politics took place during June, July and August, because of German policy regarding air armament and Austria. Britain, France and Italy aligned themselves, and together with America they were in a position to exert joint pressure on Germany. Yet when disarmament negotiations resumed at the beginning of September, Italy, not Britain, took the lead in trying to mediate between France and Germany, Mussolini putting forward his ten-point proposal for a convention. France and Italy quickly negotiated the basis of an agreement, but only later did Britain accept it, Simon drafting a definitive proposal on October 3. As regards security, this plan was certainly practicable, for apart from a provision for sanctions, nearly all the French demands were met. Moreover, Italy was prepared to agree to sanctions under certain circumstances, and Britain seems to have been considering the invoking of Article 11 of the Covenant in cases of treaty violations. On the other hand, Simon's proposals regarding "samples" were unsatisfactory, leading to Germany's near-ultimatum of October 6. The demand for "samples" was the major obstacle to a convention, and if it had been accepted an agreement at Geneva would have been within sight. Italy accepted the demand, and France and America would probably have done so also. But Simon rejected it and Germany withdrew from the Conference.

The British Foreign Secretary apparently failed to understand that it was not so much reductions in armaments that lead to security, but
the international control of armaments. He complained that British opinion would not agree to German rearmament, but by October 1933 this was an irrelevant question, since it was clear that Germany would rearm to some extent. Britain and the other Powers could not have prevented German rearmament, except by adopting a policy of coercion, but they could have controlled it by a convention imposing a strict system of international supervision. If such a system had been implemented and Germany violated her freely-negotiated obligations, the other states could have conferred together and agreed upon measures to counteract the violation. And if Germany continued to violate her obligations, world opinion, more especially British opinion, could probably have been induced to accept forcible measures against the Reich such as a reoccupation of the Rhineland by France. Although Germany would have resisted such a move, in 1933 there was little chance of the resistance being successful. And though at a later date, the resistance would have been stronger, the system of supervision would have prevented Germany from gaining any major advantages from her treaty violations, and the concerted action of her neighbours could still have been successful.
CHAPTER VI

LAST ATTEMPTS AT A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT

October 15 1933 - June 11 1934

Britain accepted the German withdrawal from the Conference with comparative calm. In a broadcast address on October 17, Simon remarked that the object of British policy was "not to rouse resentful feelings" but to "promote and invite co-operation between all nations of good will", and as regards disarmament to "seek an honest and honourable compact in a great cause upon which the hopes of Mankind for the future peace of the world are so largely founded".¹

The situation confronting the Government was delicate. Although Germany had withdrawn from the Conference and the League, Hitler continued to express a desire for peace, a disarmament settlement according Germany equality of rights and a Franco-German detente.² If he was sincere, the possibility of coming to terms with him still existed; if he was insincere, he had to be shown to be insincere. Germany's departure from the Conference and the League was no proof of Hitler's insincerity; the drastic amendments to the MacDonald plan during September had placed Germany in a strong moral position, with many sections of world opinion. In Britain, for example, Lloyd George maintained that European tensions arose from the refusal of France and her allies to disarm.³ MacDonald and Simon had failed in their attempts to ensure that a breakdown of the Conference would be blamed on Germany.

There were three main courses which Britain could adopt to try to retrieve the situation. The first was the application of sanctions against Germany in conjunction with France and her allies. But unless sanctions were applied à outrance, they could not facilitate a long-term
solution of the German problem. Moreover, they were unacceptable to British opinion, for whilst disliking the Hitler regime, the British people in general did not believe that a disarmed Germany was a danger to national security. If Germany violated a freely-negotiated agreement such as a disarmament convention, the situation might be different.

The second course open to Britain was to declare that disarmament was no longer a practical possibility, that each Power had the right to adjust its armaments as it pleased, and that Britain would rearm. But this would be an admission that the Government had failed in its efforts to bring about a negotiated settlement at Geneva, and in the circumstances of the time such an admission was inconceivable for on October 26, the Labour candidate in a by-election at East Fulham turned a minority of 14,000 votes into a majority of 5,000, campaigning on a programme of disarmament. The result was probably due to a natural swing back to Labour after the freak election result of 1931 and a detestation of the means test, but the Government interpreted the Labour victory as a victory for disarmament and pacifism. Baldwin, the real power behind the Government, described the result as a "nightmare"; he was afraid of the pacifists, afraid to advocate rearmament and even afraid to think about advocating rearmament.4

In conjunction with British rearmament, the Government might have negotiated an entente or even an alliance with France to deter Germany from aggression. But a policy of both substantial rearmament and alliance with France would tend to divide Europe into opposing groups and might precipitate a denunciation by Germany of the armaments
provisions of the Treaty of Versailles. The result would probably be an arms race, with all its inherent uncertainties, and thus this policy offered no real hope of a long-term solution to the German problem. Moreover, within Britain, the policy of alliances was anathema to the pacifists and many of the protagonists of disarmament whom Baldwin so feared. Thus, although the Government apparently desired a close relationship with the French – a noticeable rapprochement between the two countries had taken place during 1933 – the policy of entente was not pressed.

The third possible course was for Britain to mediate between France and Germany, a policy that Simon and MacDonald had shirked for the previous two years, except for a few occasions – for example, during the crisis over the standardization of European armies. The chances of this policy being successful in practice were now more remote than formerly, as Germany's withdrawal from the Disarmament Conference made it more difficult for the French to make concessions. But if Britain gave France additional assurances of support it was possible that the French Government would make enough concessions to secure an agreement with the Reich. And to follow a policy offering even a remote chance of a Franco-German settlement was better than following policies tending to divide Europe into opposing blocs and cause an arms race. Moreover, if Germany negotiated in bad faith, adept diplomacy by Britain could expose German insincerity, enabling the Government to take a firmer line with the Reich and gain public support for doing so. The policy of British mediation between France and Germany, as always, offered at least some chance of securing a long-term settlement to the German problem, the alternative solution to the problem being preventive action against the Reich.
Simon's broadcast address of October 17 indicated that the Government had already decided to adopt the policy of mediation between France and Germany. During an adjournment of the General Commission from October 16-26, the French began to urge that the Conference continue its work and conclude a convention which could be handed to Germany for signature, in the belief that a German refusal would cause the Reich to be blamed for the collapse of the disarmament negotiations. But Simon distrusted the idea, as he believed a failure to reach an agreement at Geneva would strengthen the elements in Germany opposed to disarmament and "almost justify" the German withdrawal from the Conference. Moreover, there was little point in presenting Germany with a convention based on proposals she had already rejected. The Foreign Secretary therefore proposed an adjournment of the Conference on the grounds that the General Commission should not undertake important discussions "until the dust raised by the recent action of the Germans had had time to settle". On October 25, after discussions between the Powers as to the procedure to be adopted, a temporary compromise between British and French viewpoints was reached and the Bureau decided to recommend the adjournment of the General Commission on condition that it meet again not later than December 4. The intervening period would be utilized for private negotiations between the Powers and the preparation of an up-to-date text of the British draft convention.

The adjournment of the General Commission was a victory of sorts for Simon's diplomacy as it gained time in which to formulate a more definite policy. The situation was complicated when Daladier's
government fell on October 24 over a budgetary question, though French foreign policy under Sarraut, Daladier's successor, remained unchanged, Paul-Boncour retaining the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Daladier the Ministry of War. At the same time, the difficulties facing the new administration in internal politics were so great that little time could be spared for the discussion of foreign affairs. On November 7, Simon proposed an immediate meeting between British and French Ministers, but although the French welcomed the suggestion, discussions did not commence until November 18.

The delay in initiating an Anglo-French dialogue had important consequences, the most significant being that the divergence of opinion over the future procedure at the Conference, shelved by the Bureau's decisions of October 25, had not been resolved. Simon was anxious to initiate private negotiations in order to "clear up the differences between the four principal European Powers", while the French were still eager to conclude a convention at Geneva in Germany's absence. On November 11, the Bureau decided that rapporteurs should be appointed to deal with most of the outstanding questions facing the Conference and that committees should be appointed to deal with effectives and supervision, but this was merely a temporary settlement of the procedural problem.

During November, Simon began to press more strongly for negotiations with Germany through diplomatic channels, and on November 7 Eden hinted to the Commons that the Government was prepared to abandon the programme outlined to the Bureau on October 14. Paul-Boncour, on the other hand, continued to believe that a disarmament convention should
be negotiated at Geneva as if Germany were still present and he insisted that France had made her maximum concessions. Mussolini took the realistic view that to continue discussions at Geneva in Germany's absence would serve no useful purpose, and on November 12 the Marquis di Soragna made reservations during the first meetings of the new committees on effective and supervision, intimating that the Italian representatives would refrain from voting on delicate technical questions and would be free to act as observers if political questions were discussed.

The action taken by the Italians made a settlement of the procedural question imperative, as the alignment of October 14 between Britain, France, Italy and the United States had been broken. Discussions between these Powers were held at Geneva from November 18 to 22, and eventually the French were forced, very reluctantly, to accept an adjournment of the General Commission until January 1934 and agree to negotiations for a disarmament agreement through diplomatic channels. As a sop to French wishes, it was also agreed that "after consultation with the officers and Chairmen of the Committees", Henderson should "advise how far the work of the Committees should be carried on in the meantime". But the appearance of unity between Britain, France, Italy and the United States was deceptive. Simon had intimated that Britain would be prepared to offer concessions to Germany, or rather that Britain would press France to make concessions, while Paul-Boncour wanted to base future negotiations on the programme of October 14. The Italians backed a stronger version of the British line, while the Americans indicated that although they were anxious for an agreement,
they considered the existing phase of discussions to be of a purely European character.

Meanwhile, on November 13, the Japanese representative on the Supervision Committee had announced that it was impossible for Japan to accept international control over her armaments. The conclusion of a disarmament convention, either inside or outside the Disarmament Conference was thus made improbable, since supervision was an essential element in any disarmament agreement. The Soviets, whose relations with the Japanese were extremely poor, were almost certain to follow the lead of their international rivals, and if the Soviets rejected supervision it was likely that other European states would also reject it. Moreover, the United States would probably refuse to ratify a convention that Japan refused to sign. 15

Hitherto, the policy of Japan had been an unknown factor, as the Japanese representatives in the Disarmament Conference had contributed little to the proceedings. It might be argued that the Japanese Government, controlled by the military, did not intend to reach an agreement at Geneva, particularly after withdrawing from the League in March; but it seems more likely that the Japanese hoped to secure an agreement, though on regional rather than general lines, for on June 27 Naotsake Sato, the Japanese delegate to the Disarmament Conference, suggested such an agreement to Hugh Wilson. 16 The condition for Japanese participation in a disarmament agreement was recognition of her interests in the Far East 17 - not an unreasonable demand. A similar policy had been followed at the Washington Conference in 1921-2 - political compensations on the Chinese mainland in return
for disarmament.

But whatever Japanese intentions, the announcement of November 13 that Japan would not agree to supervision made a general disarmament convention, at best, unlikely. Nevertheless, there was still a possibility that France and Britain could negotiate an arms control agreement with Germany, because Hitler had put forward new proposals for an eight-year convention to Phipps on October 24. The Führer was convinced that the highly-armed states were unwilling to reduce their armaments, so he suggested that France could be allowed to retain her existing army of over 600,000 men, together with all its offensive weapons, if Germany in return were allowed a short-service army of 300,000 men with no offensive weapons - such as tanks over six tons, heavy artillery over 150mm and bombers - but as many defensive weapons as might be necessary to arm her forces. The Polish, Czech and other armies would be limited to their existing numbers, and poison gas and bombing behind battle zones would be "entirely prohibited".

Hitler's proposals were extremely important, as they were the first definitive proposals put forward by the Germans since the memorandum of August 29 1932. During most of 1933, Britain, France, Italy and the United States had discussed disarmament among themselves, seldom consulting the Germans, and in the end this policy had proved disastrous. Germany had refused the "offer" of October 14 and withdrawn from the Disarmament Conference without offending liberal opinion, and the four-Power alignment against her had disintegrated. But now, if Britain,
France, Italy and the United States accepted Hitler's proposals either in whole or as the basis of a settlement, Germany would be unable to claim that the other Powers were trying to impose a diktat on her. Although the German proposals involved rearmament, this was irrelevant since it was certain that Germany would rearm whether or not an agreement was negotiated. Moreover, unless concessions were made to German demands, a large section of British opinion would believe German rearmament to be justified, while if Germany violated a freely-negotiated convention, British opinion would support the Government in taking more forcible measures against the Reich.

Thus, the most realistic policy for Britain to adopt would have been to accept the German proposals. If a settlement of the German problem was to be negotiated, it was necessary to make concessions to German demands; the alternative was to take preventive action. The proposals of October 14 were clearly unacceptable to Germany and a return to the original MacDonald plan was less advantageous to both Britain and France than the new German proposals, which offered France a greater margin of superiority in effectives and matériel.

It would also have been realistic to offer greater assurances of support to France. A policy of pressing the French to make concessions without offering additional assurances of British support in return was impracticable because the French would not reduce their margin of superiority over Germany unless their security was strengthened in other ways. There was a growing movement on the French Right, in newspapers such as "Le Temps" and in a section of the Radical-Socialist Party for a direct Franco-German accord - even if it involved German
rearmament. But the movement was still not strong enough to overthrow the policy of Paul-Boncour, who sought an internationally-agreed solution to the German and disarmament problems.

Simon could not accept that further assurances to France were necessary, and in a speech to the Commons on November 7 he deprecated the idea of additional Continental commitments and even declared that Britain was not "blindly fettered" by the Treaty of Locarno. Even though the Germans informed him that they would not object to an Anglo-French alliance in return for a disarmament agreement based on the Hitler plan, the Foreign Secretary refused to be drawn into extra commitments. The reason for the refusal was fear of public opinion. Yet it was inconceivable that an Anglo-French alliance would be rejected in the House, for the National Government's raison d'etre was to keep the Labour Party out of office and a defeat of the Government on the issue of an Anglo-French alliance would probably have led to a Labour victory in the ensuing election.

Although British Ministers realized that a degree of German rearmament was inevitable and that an arms control agreement involving rearmament was better than no agreement, they were slow to reply to Hitler's proposals. Their preliminary impressions were not communicated to the German Chancellor until December 8, six weeks after Phipps' interview with Hitler on October 24. The Chancellor had utilized the period to offer non-aggression pacts to Germany's neighbours (with the notable exceptions of Belgium and Austria) and he had also defined his disarmament proposals more fully - for example, he had asked for a number of "chaser" aircraft - as distinct from bombers - and declared
that Germany was willing to agree to international supervision. But despite the Führer's repeated efforts to renew the disarmament discussions, the British had not responded, the communication of December 8\textsuperscript{25} being little more than an attempt to elicit further information, especially regarding periodic and automatic supervision, the "disappearance" of the Reichswehr and the terms and form of the proposed non-aggression pacts. Direct comments on the German proposals were limited to a demand that the S. A. and S. S. be absorbed into the army or cease to exist as "supplementary organizations" and to an observation that the German claims to guns, aircraft and an army of 300,000 men were excessive.

Hitler's reply\textsuperscript{26} to the British request for information was encouraging, his disarmament proposals remaining very moderate. He pointed out that the MacDonald plan granted Germany an equal number of metropolitan effectives as France while his own plan allowed France a considerable superiority, and he agreed to transform the Reichswehr into a short-service army within three or four years. He refused to disband the S. A. and S. S. (he compared them to the Salvation Army!), but he agreed to regulate them according to strict international rules and to submit them to periodic and automatic supervision. He also gave assurances that he was ready to conclude non-aggression pacts with all Germany's neighbours, Britain and Yugoslavia. On December 12, Phipps was handed a letter from Hitler (dated December 11) giving the Chancellor's plan a more official character.\textsuperscript{27}

Despite Hitler's encouraging reply, the British Government responded slowly, and although a second Note\textsuperscript{28} was handed to the German Government on December 20, it again was little more than a request
for information, this time regarding the categories and quantities of the "defensive" weapons that Germany demanded and the form of the proposed non-aggression pacts. On all other points except the proposed increase in the German army, the British Government merely "took note" of the German proposals and emphasized that it was giving its "earnest consideration" to the letter of December 11. The only point on which the Government committed itself was the projected increase in the German army. This German demand was rejected on the grounds that it would produce "disastrous effects on the mind of Europe" and was based on an erroneous calculation of French effectives.

The slow and restrained response of the British Government was unfortunate, as Hitler's desire for a disarmament convention seems to have been genuine. He needed time in which to carry out the internal reconstruction of Germany and he was afraid of a possible Herriot government in France where the political situation was still unstable. Herriot's return to power seemed imminent to many observers, and Hitler was afraid that the ex-Premier, now almost fanatically anti-German, would negotiate a Franco-Russian alliance or even occupy the left bank of the Rhine. Further evidence of Hitler's sincerity is his willingness to negotiate an arms control agreement within Europe even though he realized that general disarmament was improbable because of the policy being pursued by Japan.

A British lead in following up the German disarmament proposals was now more necessary than before, because the French Government was too weak to take such an initiative. Camille Chautemps had replaced Sarraut as Premier on November 27, but political circumstances led him to follow a similar policy to his predecessor - reliance on the
proposals of October 14. Yet, as Tyrrell pointed out, the rigid
application of this policy could have only two possible results;
depending on the policy adopted by Britain, it would lead either to a
close Anglo-French alignment against German rearmament or to a definite
breach in Anglo-French co-operation. The extent to which France
would disarm or would agree to German rearmament still depended on
the strength of British security guarantees, and French Ministers were
even slower to reply to Hitler's disarmament scheme than their British
counterparts. A reply was not made until December 11, and, like the
British replies of December 8 and 20, it was little more than a
request for information.

On December 22, Simon visited the Quai d'Orsay to assure Chautemps
and Paul-Boncour that Britain did not intend to accept Hitler's
demands. But, apparently, the French Ministers were not reassured,
for on January 1 1934, Francois-Poncet handed an aide-memoire to
the Führer, stating the terms on which France would continue the
disarmament discussions. It was an astute move, as Britain's own
counter-proposals to the Hitler plan had not yet been formulated; it
was in the French interest to base disarmament negotiations on a
French rather than a British or German plan. Thus, although the
aide-memoire was very conciliatory in tone, its proposals were very
similar to those of October 14, including a de facto période d'épreuve.
The only major difference was a proposal for an immediate and universal
fifty per cent reduction of military aircraft providing it was
accompanied by the effective control of civil aviation and aircraft
manufacture. On the other hand, the French Note stressed three points
that were unlikely to please Hitler. It was emphasized that a convention
should be attained through the disarmament of the heavily-armed Powers rather than the rearmament of Germany and that the agreement should be negotiated within the Conference at Geneva. More important, France demanded that the S. A. and S. S. be disbanded or be counted as effectives.

On January 19, the Germans replied to the British Note of December 20 and the French Note of January 1. But although the tone of the German communications was conciliatory, they were merely a defence of the German position, a rejection of the October 14 proposals and a request for further information regarding British and French policy. Hitler's one concession was to submit Germany's compulsory Labour Corps to international supervision.

The situation now facing Britain had remained unchanged since Phipps' interview with Hitler on October 24 1933. As the British Ambassador in Berlin pointed out, there were two realistic policies for Britain to adopt - sanctions, or the conclusion of a convention with Germany granting her limited, gradual and controlled rearmament. And for the latter policy to be successful, Britain and France had to present a united front and, if necessary, threaten sanctions if the Germans refused to be "reasonable". Germany's fear of a possible French attack was diminishing. Like his predecessors, Hitler based his policy on the exploitation of Anglo-French differences and inertia. Tardiness on the part of Britain would lead either to a raising of German demands or uncontrolled German rearmament.

Britain had been preparing a new disarmament scheme since at least December 1933, hoping that a Franco-German compromise might be negotiated on the basis of French disarmament and German rearmament.
rather than German rearmament alone. Mussolini assented to the principle of the plan during conversations with Simon on January 3-4, 41 (though the Duce preferred an agreement based on Hitler's proposals), and on January 29 the new scheme 42 was laid before the Powers. Effectives were to be limited according to the MacDonald plan, except that the period of service in the short-term Continental armies would be open to discussion, as would the number of effectives, if 200,000 were found to be inadequate. French overseas forces would be reduced "considerably", and para-military training prohibited, though organizations such as the S. A. and S. S. would be permitted provided their non-military character was assured by a system of permanent and automatic international supervision. Germany would be allowed anti-aircraft guns, 155 mm mobile guns and tanks of six tons, as Hitler had demanded, and the other Powers would destroy their tanks over sixteen tons within five years and matériel over 155 mm within seven years.

Military aircraft were to be limited to their existing numbers pending the formulation of a scheme for the complete abolition of military and naval aviation and the "effective supervision of civil aviation". If the Permanent Disarmament Commission was unable to formulate such a scheme within two years, all countries would be entitled to military aviation and Germany would obtain parity with the other Great Powers within ten years. The construction or acquisition of types of weapons to be destroyed during the convention would be prohibited and a system of permanent and automatic supervision would be instituted to ensure the application of the convention.
There was a provision for consultation in the event of the convention being violated, and it was suggested that European security would also be strengthened by Germany returning to the League and negotiating ten-year non-aggression pacts with her neighbours.

In many ways, the proposed convention was more favourable to France than the proposals of October 14, as France would retain a superiority in matériel over Germany. At the same time, the British land proposals were more favourable to Germany than Hitler's, probably to induce the Führer to accept the air proposals. Thus, even though the Chancellor's demand for an army of 300,000 was not granted, the land proposals taken as a whole represented a fair compromise between French and German views, as did the provisions for the S. A. and S. S. The two major weaknesses of the British plan were the air proposals, which Germany was unlikely to accept - because she had already started to rearm in the air - and the security proposals, which France would probably consider insufficient.

Initial reactions to the British plan were not unfavourable. Daladier, who had been asked to form a new government on January 29, realized that the British land proposals were less favourable than Hitler's and suggested that the provisions for para-military organizations provided an "overwhelming difficulty" (as the S. A. and S. S. were not to be included in the calculation of German effectives), but he welcomed the proposal for consultation as an "important advance." This was especially encouraging in that the French (and Daladier in particular) were prone to overreact to disarmament plans entailing French concessions, even if the other Powers offered concessions in return. For Germany, Blomberg expressed his Government's "warm
appreciation" of the British proposals except for those concerning aviation, and the German military, fearing the establishment of a rival body, were pleased that the S. A. and S. S. would be subject to international control. The Wilhelmstrasse, "more catholic than the Pope", received the British proposals less favourably.

Since October 1933, progress towards disarmament had been hindered by the instability of French Governments, and by the end of January 1934 it seemed to many observers that French democracy itself might be in danger. Following the revelations of the Stavisky Affair, neo-fascist disturbances had taken place in an attempt to topple the Government, and on January 27 Chautemps, despite his majority in the Chamber, lost his nerve and resigned. Daladier became Premier and won a vote of confidence on February 6 but after a further Rightest disturbance, during which Herriot was all but thrown into the Seine, Daladier himself capitulated. On February 9, a new "government of national concentration" took office under Gaston Doumergue. Unfortunately for disarmament, it was biased to the Right, and included Tardieu, Marshal Petain, and Louis Barthou, who became Foreign Minister. The remaining Radicals in the Cabinet were mostly conservative as regards foreign policy - especially Herriot. French disarmament policy became stiffer almost overnight.

To discover the possibilities of an agreement based on the memorandum of January 29, the British Government sent Eden, now Lord Privy Seal, on a special exploratory mission to Paris, Berlin and Rome. On February 17, the British Minister had conversations with Doumergue and Barthou in Paris. The talks were not very encouraging.
Doumergue criticised the proposals regarding the S. A. and S. S., even suggesting that supervision over these bodies should be applied immediately. Barthou complained about the lack of a *période d'épreuve* and the concessions to German rearmament and observed that as regards naval and air armaments, in which Britain was especially interested, German equality would be delayed for two years. The Foreign Minister deprecated the British proposal for consultation as insufficient to provide for French security, and demanded additional guarantees for the execution of a convention. Almost the only encouraging remark that Barthou made was that it would be better to have a convention which satisfied no-one rather than no convention at all.

Eden's talks in Berlin were more successful as Hitler accepted the British proposals as the basis of a convention. Apart from a reluctance to return to the League — a point which Britain did not regard as a pre-condition of a convention — the Führer had only one major objection to the British proposals — the delay in according Germany equality of rights in the air. He demanded that Germany be entitled to possess short-range defensive aircraft (not bombers), the number of which would be limited to thirty per cent of the total air forces of Germany's neighbours or fifty per cent of the French air force, whichever was the lesser. The enquiry into the abolition of military and naval aviation would be held as proposed. In return for concessions over the air proposals, Germany would agree to French disarmament being delayed for five years and to strict supervision of the S. A. and S. S. The Führer also promised that these organizations would not possess or be trained to use arms; neither would they be concentrated or trained in military camps, be commanded or instructed...
"either directly or indirectly" by army officers or "engage or take part in" field exercises. He did not want a "second army" within the state. Moreover, if Germany was granted an army of 300,000, the Chancellor would even agree to reduce the "Green" (armed) police by 50,000.

Hitler's proposals were moderate, even generous. He was willing to let France retain a considerable superiority in material for five years and a superiority in air strength for ten years. He would also accept permanent and automatic supervision, not only over Germany's armaments but over the S. A. and S. S. Thus apart from the immediate increases in Germany's armaments, increases that were relatively minor if illegal rearmament was taken into consideration, the Führer had accepted, in effect, the proposals of October 14. And if France still did not believe that her security was sufficiently guaranteed, he would not oppose an Anglo-French alliance.

Eden, who had consistently advocated a more realistic policy than his superiors, wrote to MacDonald on the night of February 22, suggesting that a convention based on Hitler's proposals was preferable to no convention at all. German violation of a freely-negotiated arms agreement would arouse British opinion, whereas a violation of the more punitive aspects of the Treaty of Versailles would not. But the Prime Minister's first reaction to Hitler's suggestions was that they were "in substance ... inacceptable". Then, on February 25, an article in "The Observer", probably inspired by the Government, suggested that the results of Eden's talks in Berlin had made a "deplorable impression" in "governmental quarters", and that Eden
himself was "not competent either to negotiate or prepare for negotiation". The unfortunate point was that the same "governmental quarters" had no alternative policy if a convention was not concluded.

Mussolini, as realistic as ever, appreciated that a convention limiting German armaments was essential. Thus, on February 26, he informed Eden that he was willing to accept either the British proposals of January 29 or Hitler's amendments to them, and if neither proved acceptable to both France and Germany, he believed it possible to gain agreement on the basis of the Italian plan of January 31, a scheme based on Hitler's proposals of October 24. The Duce believed that France would be prepared to agree to the latest Hitler proposals since they delayed French disarmament and provided for effective supervision over the S. A. and S. S. Mussolini had also assured the French that Italy would fulfil her obligations under the Treaty of Locarno.

It was now apparent that the conclusion of a disarmament convention depended mainly on the French attitude to the British plan and the amendments formulated by Hitler. But by March 1, when Eden returned to Paris, the French had not considered the British proposals fully because of the internal difficulties resulting from the Stavisky Affair. Nevertheless, Doumergue and Barthou criticised the proposals severely and avoided accepting them even as a basis of a convention. Doumergue declared himself dissatisfied with Hitler's undertakings with regard to the S. A. and S. S. and maintained that France needed greater security guarantees on the lines of the French disarmament plan of November 1932 or at least the Paul-Boncour proposals of December 1933 for guaranteeing the execution of a convention. Barthou, on
the other hand, declared that the main difficulty was the acceptance of German rearmament. The two French Ministers also criticized Hitler's air proposals and demanded that as part of any settlement, Germany return to the League. The French Ministers were unwilling to state their security demands specifically, though they did tell Eden that the Senate Committees on Foreign Affairs, the Army, Navy and Air Force had suggested a reversion to the disarmament plan of November 1932.

The official French reply to the British proposals was not handed to Simon until March 19. The Note, drafted by Barthou, with some help from Herriot and Tardieu, was, in effect, a rejection of the memorandum of January 29. France had "most serious" objections to disarming at the same time as Germany was rearming and desired greater security guarantees to ensure the execution of the convention. The Treaty of Locarno and the proposed consultative pact were insufficient to provide security and "in the final analysis", it was necessary to "revert to" the Covenant of the League of Nations. France considered Germany's return to the League "an essential condition" of any arms agreement, and it was also necessary to "determine important points" concerning pre-military organizations, the limitation of national defence expenditure and the manufacture of matériel.

During Eden's talks in Paris, it had become clear that the French preferred a convention based on Hitler's amendments to the British proposals. Consequently, the Lord Privy Seal put pressure on his Government to accept Hitler's demands if this was necessary to secure a convention, and he also advised the re-examination of the British position regarding additional security guarantees to France. Phipps backed Eden's policy and sent Andrew Thorne, the Military Attache in
Berlin, to put the case to Lord Hailsham, the Secretary of State for War. Brigadier Temperley supported this policy, as did the Foreign Office, which in a memorandum prepared for the Cabinet on March 21 suggested that Britain's best policy might be the negotiation of an Anglo-French alliance involving specific military commitments.

The negative response of France to the memorandum of January 29 and the pressure exerted by Eden and the Foreign Office had some effect on the British Government. It had been clear for some time that Britain would agree to many of Hitler's demands, and it now became apparent that the Government might be willing to give certain guarantees in the event of a breach of the convention. On March 22, Simon suggested to Leopold von Hoesch, the German Ambassador in London, that supervision be limited to "certain European" states and that these states would agree to take joint action against a violator of the convention. This was a "personal suggestion ... not yet approved by the Cabinet", and Britain would commit herself to financial and economic, though not military, measures against violators. On March 26, the Germans accepted the Simon plan, provided that both Britain and Russia were members of the European agreement and supervision was general, though one or two exceptions, such as Japan and America, might be permitted. The German acceptance was not to be communicated to Paris, where it might be used to extract further concessions from Germany.

A major factor in Britain's decision to reconsider her policy as regards guarantees was the reports of Lord Tyrrell from Paris. The British Ambassador reported that there were two schools of thought in France, one believing that any convention would be injurious to France
because Germany would not observe its terms, the other believing that even an "indifferent" convention was worthwhile because it would set limits to German rearmament and "maintain international solidarity", and he believed that the latter would be successful if Britain agreed to the Paul-Boncour proposals of December 5 1933 for guarantees. The Ministerial Disarmament Committee discussed Tyrrell's reports on March 26, and Simon appears to have pressed his colleagues to agree to increase Britain's Continental commitments. The Foreign Secretary's proposals were not well received. Most Ministers were opposed to giving France additional guarantees and some believed that disarmament was no longer possible anyway. A compromise was reached, and it was decided that Tyrrell should ask Barthou whether France would accept a convention based on Hitler's amendments to the British proposals if Britain gave guarantees regarding the execution of the convention. On March 29, the Ambassador carried out his instructions.

Barthou refused to answer the British inquiry immediately and counselled delay while the French Government discussed its attitude towards the whole disarmament question. An interim Note was handed to Tyrrell on April 6, but it avoided a direct answer to the British questions. The delay probably occurred because the French Cabinet was divided. Tardieu and Herriot (together with General Weygand, Chief of the General Staff) were opposed to a convention legalizing German rearmament, while Barthou and Flandin were in favour of a convention provided Britain increased her security guarantees. Francois-Poncet also favoured the latter course and made a special journey to Paris on April 9 to put his case to the more important French Ministers. There was some doubt about Doumergue's attitude, though by April 9
he had decided in favour of the Herriot–Tardieu line. On April 17 Barthou handed Campbell a Note saying that France would not be justified in proceeding with negotiations for a convention legalizing German rearmament.

A considerable factor in determining the French decision to break off negotiations was the publication on March 27 of the German defence estimates for 1934–5. Army expenditure was increased by thirty-six per cent, naval expenditure by twenty-seven per cent and air expenditure by two hundred and seventy per cent, over the preceding year, and the French Note of April 17 used these increases as grounds for a general indictment of German policy. The publication of the estimates during the critical stage of the disarmament negotiations was, at best, a blunder of the highest order, because it strengthened the position of Tardieu and Herriot within the French Cabinet. It seems that the gaffe was due to the ultra-methodical officials of the German Treasury, who did not have the sense to withhold the figures.

The question remains as to whether Britain could have induced France to accept an arms convention by offering her additional security guarantees. Eden thought a British offer might have been successful, and Doumergue admitted to Campbell that if Britain had declared her "solidarity with France in the event of a German aggression" then the French reply of April 17 would have been of a different nature. But if this were true, why did the French not reply to the British démarche of March 29? Doumergue's suggestion that a British declaration of solidarity was "too much to expect" is not very convincing. Nevertheless, Britain can be criticized for not clarifying her position
as regards guarantees. Simon did not follow up the démarches of March 29 until April 10, when he did no more than repeat the enquiry. If Britain had offered France a defensive alliance, it is conceivable that France might have been induced to sign a convention.

To a great extent, the failure of the disarmament negotiations since October 1933 had been caused by Britain’s unrealistic policies. Hitler’s demands of October 24 were very moderate, yet Britain did not reply to them until December 8 and did not put forward a definitive disarmament plan until January 29, 1934. The delay was unnecessary — and also unfortunate, as the French Government became progressively weaker and less able to follow a strong line in foreign policy. By March, the British Government had more or less accepted Hitler’s proposals of October 24, 1933, but by this time there was a conservative administration in France, reluctant to agree to an arms convention which legalized German rearmament. Britain had at last realized that concessions to Germany were necessary to secure a convention but apart from Eden and, at the last minute, a reluctant Simon, there were few within the Government who realized that it was also necessary to make concessions to French security demands. Daladier would have accepted Hitler’s demands if Britain had given guarantees regarding the execution of the convention, but by the time the British Cabinet was considering such guarantees, the Daladier Government had fallen. It might still have been possible to achieve a convention if Britain had been prepared to conclude an Anglo-French alliance — as the Foreign Office advocated — but the Cabinet was against increasing Britain’s Continental commitments.
After the French Note of April 17, there was little that Britain could do to revive the disarmament discussions. On April 28, Joachim von Ribbentrop, Germany's newly appointed Special Commissioner for disarmament questions, told Phipps that the only way out of the deadlock was for Britain to persuade the French to reverse their earlier decision to break off negotiations, otherwise Germany would be freed from her existing limitations. But the French had already made up their minds. Norman Davis believed that the Note of April 17 was a bluff, and some credence was given to this idea by Barthou's suggestion of May 15 that a convention was still possible if Britain guaranteed the French and Belgian frontiers against German attack. But Hitler was now opposed to a close Anglo-French relationship, which, in the aftermath of the French Note, would give the impression that Britain had succumbed to anti-German pressure and abandoned her traditional policy of "balancing" between Paris and Berlin.

On May 29, on French instigation, the General Commission reassembled to consider the situation. Davis reaffirmed that America would co-operate in the preservation of peace but would not "participate in European political negotiations and settlements and would not make any commitment whatsoever to use its armed forces for the settlement of any dispute anywhere". Litvinov suggested that the Conference should convert itself into a Peace Conference in permanent session. On May 30, Simon stated that, although Britain had no further proposals to offer, he believed that if good will prevailed, a compromise based on the memorandum of January 29 was still possible and that, in any case, protocols should be signed on such matters as the prohibition
of chemical warfare, budgetary publicity and the establishment of a Permanent Disarmament Commission. But Barthou, in a speech which was "quite indescribable by those who heard it and no account did justice to its irony, its insolence and its passion", dispelled any remaining hopes that a convention might be attained. He condemned German policy, made it clear that France would follow a policy of raison d'État, and referred to Simon as "mon cher collègue et presque ami".

After the meeting of the General Commission of May 30, the Bureau drafted a resolution as to the future work of the Conference and set up committees to deal with the problems of security, air armaments, guarantees of execution for a convention and the manufacture of and trade in arms. On June 11, the General Commission appointed the Chairmen of these committees, and then adjourned sine die.

The Conference did not meet again. After June 11 1934, it was "every nation for itself and God for them all".
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

It would be wrong to suggest that the failure of the Disarmament Conference was solely the fault of Britain, as both France and Germany could have followed more conciliatory policies. But given the circumstances of the time, the policies of the two Continental Powers are understandable. British policy is not. The Government perceived that British security depended, in part at least, on a settled Continent, yet it followed policies that did not facilitate a disarmament convention. Concessions to both France and Germany were made reluctantly, and most Ministers did not understand the intimate connection between security and disarmament or the role played by force in the settlement of international disputes.

In the long run, European security depended on a peaceful solution of the German problem, and this could be achieved only through the appeasement of German grievances over the Peace Treaty. Germany would not willingly remain a second-class Power and other Powers were faced with the inevitability of a redistribution of European power in her favour. Consequently, it was in the interests of the other Powers to control the extent and speed of this redistribution of power, and this might have been accomplished, in part, by a disarmament convention. But France, quite naturally, wanted to ensure that any increase in German power was offset by increased assurances of support from Britain, and thus a disarmament convention was possible only if Britain gave France the assurances she demanded. But although British Ministers understood that states had to adjust to changes within international society, they failed to understand that power was an
essential element in the process of "peaceful change". They believed that French security was adequately protected by the Treaty of Versailles and were opposed to undertaking new commitments on the Continent.

British Ministers repeatedly told the French that public opinion would not support a policy based on new security guarantees to France, and though the effect of opinion should not be over-estimated, a fear of political repercussions was certainly a factor which led the Government to adhere to a policy of "no commitments". It might even be said that British Ministers became victims of their own myth — vigorously propounded during the 1920s — that an international "harmony of interests" existed and that direct British involvement in the European security system was not essential for the negotiation of a disarmament convention.

"Harmony of interests" was a very self-serving doctrine. It permitted Britain to exert an amount of influence on the Continent out of all proportion to British involvement in the European security system and allowed the Government to concentrate on defending Britain's more immediate interests — the security of the Empire and the defence of her trade routes. The disarmament schemes put forward by the Government at Geneva were based almost solely on these immediate interests and made little attempt to solve the main problem facing the Disarmament Conference — the German problem. Although France and Germany looked to Britain for help in solving their problems, the British Government deliberately avoided the role of "broker" — except when the role was unavoidable. The Government adopted the negative policy of "wait and see" and was reluctant to come forward with
proposals for a Franco-German settlement. MacDonald would only suggest that France and Germany "put their demands in such a way that Britain could say that she supported both sides".

During 1932, both France and Germany put forward disarmament proposals which, though reflecting national requirements, might well have formed the basis of a convention. But each scheme proved abortive, mainly because of British opposition. British aversion to a consultative pact or a pledge to supply aircraft to a victim of aggression was the main reason for the failure of the Brüning plan in April; MacDonald's hostility to a Franco-German entente or alliance was instrumental in causing Herriot to break off his negotiations with Papen at Lausanne; and the Government's unwillingness to undertake new commitments was the major obstacle to an agreement based on the French plan of November 14.

Yet whilst obstructing these attempts to secure a Franco-German compromise, British Ministers were reluctant to offer alternative proposals. Baldwin's scheme for qualitative disarmament of May 13 seems to have been inspired by a desire to improve British naval strength, and the schemes enunciated on July 7 and November 17 were little more than negative reactions to the Hoover proposals of June 22 and the French plan of November 14 respectively. Each plan was based on Britain's security requirements, or rather the Government's conception of these requirements. The proposals of July 7 and November 17 envisaged the abolition or restriction of weapons that threatened British security or which the armed forces did not find useful ("submarines, which they did not want and tanks over twenty tons, which they did not possess") but the retention of weapons that Britain
found useful, notably medium tanks and bombers. And the Baldwin plan — if it was intended as a serious proposal — was little more than an attempt to increase Britain's naval strength at the expense of America and Japan by abolishing capital ships, aircraft-carriers and submarines (the main strength of the American and Japanese navies) but not cruisers or destroyers (the main strength of the Royal Navy).

None of the three British plans of 1932 made any real attempt to come to grips with the German problem. Each contained concessions to Germany's demands for equality — if only because German security requirements were fairly similar to Britain's — but offered no corresponding concessions to French demands for security. The November 17 scheme did envisage a "no-force pact" to mobilize world opinion against an aggressor, but to France this was of no more use than the "paper guarantee" of the Kellogg Pact.

By October 1932, most members of the British Government seem to have been convinced that disarmament was impossible, and from this time onwards a desire to ensure that Britain would not be held responsible for a breakdown of the negotiations became a prominent, if not dominant, factor in British disarmament policy. Certainly this was the main reason for MacDonald laying the British draft convention before the Disarmament Conference on March 16 1933. Neither the Prime Minister nor Foreign Secretary had any great hope that the draft convention would be successful and indeed, after presenting it to the General Commission, they had no idea as to what should be done next.

The MacDonald plan did make some attempt at facilitating a Franco-German compromise, but like previous British plans, it was
based primarily on Britain's own security requirements. It envisaged reductions in the air forces of the Great Powers — except the R.A.F. — and the other Powers were expected to abandon the privilege of bombing whilst Britain would be free to use this method of warfare "for police purposes in outlying districts". The other Powers were also expected to give up their heavy tanks, while Britain, who did not possess any heavy tanks, would be allowed to retain her medium tanks of sixteen tons, of which she had few models but reputedly led the world in development.

As regards the German problem, the MacDonald plan made a number of concessions to German demands and went a long way towards securing the practical application of equality of rights over a period of five years. But it failed to offer corresponding concessions to France. There was no provision for continuous and automatic supervision of the convention or for "guarantees of execution". The Government wanted to maintain its influence on the Continent without paying the price of greater involvement in the European security system. British Ministers did make some attempt to meet French wishes during 1933 by relaxing their opposition to continuous and automatic supervision and by agreeing to a four-year période d'épreuve and an eight-year convention, but at no time were they willing to accept guarantees for the execution of the convention involving direct involvement on the European Continent.

A convention might still have been negotiated in October 1933, but the British Government decided to uphold the MacDonald plan as amended in September and reject the German demand for "samples" — unlike the Italians, and possibly the French and Americans — and
consequently, Germany withdrew from the Disarmament Conference.
Simon maintained that Britain could not agree to German rearmament,
but this was an irrelevant question as it was clear that Germany
would rearm whether a disarmament convention permitted it or not.

British Ministers apparently failed to understand that it was the
international limitation and control of armaments rather than reductions
in armaments which lead to security. Thus they were slow to follow up
Hitler's disarmament proposals of October 24, and by March 1934, when
a convention seemed possible, there was a conservative administration
in France, unwilling to legalize German rearmament. An Anglo-French
alliance might still have enabled a convention to be concluded, but
the Cabinet was reluctant to increase Britain's Continental commitments
and did no more than inquire whether France would accept a convention
based on Hitler's amendments to the British proposals of January 29
if Britain gave certain guarantees for the execution of the convention.
On April 17, the French effectively broke off all negotiations for
a disarmament convention.

If Britain had had a clearer vision of what was required to
conclude a disarmament convention, the Government might, in its own
interest, have smoothed the way at various points and facilitated the
conclusion of a Franco-German compromise offering some hope of a
peaceful solution to the German problem. Instead, British Ministers
misconstrued their long-term interests for short-term advantages and
followed a policy that was not conducive to a Franco-German settlement.
Anthony Eden suggested that MacDonald and Simon "missed the disarmament
bus" while Brüning was in power and thereafter found it impossible to
overtake it.¹ In fact, they made no real attempt to catch it, perhaps
even failed to realize why they should catch it.
Principal Abbreviations

DBFP  Great Britain, Foreign Office, Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939.

DDB  Belgium, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Documents Diplomatiques Belges 1920-1940.

DDF  France, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Documents Diplomatiques Français 1932-1939.

DGFP  United States, Department of State, Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945.

DIA  Royal Institute of International Affairs, Documents on International Affairs.

FRUS  United States, Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States.

PDC  Great Britain, House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates.

PDL  Great Britain, House of Lords, Parliamentary Debates.


CD  Conference Documents.

MAC  Minutes of the Air Commission.

MB  Minutes of the Bureau.

MGC  Minutes of the General Commission.

MLC  Minutes of the Land Commission.

MNC  Minutes of the Naval Commission.

VRPM  Verbatim Records of Plenary Meetings.

SIA  Royal Institute of International Affairs, Survey of International Affairs.

Notes to Chapter I

1 Inis L. Claude Jnr., Swords into Plowshares, p. 263.
2 Ibid., p. 268-9.

3 See ibid., pp. 228-38.

4 Ibid., p. 256.


7 Opinion on this point was divided. P. J. Noel Baker, an eminent authority on international law, considered the obligation to be legal (see Noel Baker, loc. cit.) while the British Foreign Office considered the obligation to be moral only (see DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 4, no. 92).

8 Great Britain, Foreign Office, Correspondence with the Allied Governments concerning Reparation Payments by Germany, Misc. No. 5 (1923), Cmd. 1943, p. 28.

9 The phrase "wipe out the past" is that of Lord Curzon (Foreign Secretary) speaking to representatives of the U.K., the Dominions and India, June 22 1921, cited in Earl of Ronaldshay, The Life of Lord Curzon, vol. 3, p. 226.

10 Stanley Baldwin (Lord President), July 30 1934, PDC, 5th Ser., vol. 292, col. 2339.

11 Austen Chamberlain (Lord Privy Seal), Feb. 8 1922, PDC, 5th Ser., vol. 150, col. 198. The expression "Guardian on the Rhine" seems to have been coined by Arnold Wolfers. See A. Wolfers, Britain and France between Two Wars, pp. 229-41.

12 J. R. MacDonald, "Protocol or Pact?", International Conciliation September 1925, pp. 256-63.

13 MacDonald to Secretary-General of the League of Nations, July 5 1924, Great Britain, Foreign Office, Correspondence between his Majesty's Government and the League of Nations respecting the proposed Treaty of Mutual Assistance, Misc. No. 13 (1924), Cmd. 2200; Viscount Cecil, A Great Experiment, p. 158.


15 The Assembly report on the Protocol explained that the Protocol did not apply to "disputes which aim at revising treaties and international acts in force or which seek to jeopardise the existing territorial integrity of signatory states". Ibid., pp. 257-8.

17 Cecil, op. cit., pp. 183 and 188.

18 Ibid., pp. 171-2 and 183.

19 Ibid., pp. 183-4.

20 Ibid., p. 183.

21 Ibid., pp. 186-7.


23 Cecil, op. cit., p. 190.


28 Memorandum respecting the Development of the Idea of a Mediterranean Pact, July 2 1934, printed for the use of the Foreign Office and deposited in the archives of the Public Record Office, London (no reference). A photocopy of this document was supplied to the author by Dr. F. Marzari.


31 For the text of the Draft Convention, see League of Nations, Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference, Draft Convention.

32 E. W. Bennett, Germany and the Diplomacy of the Financial Crisis: 1931, p. 78. For a full discussion of the German attitude towards the customs union proposal, see ibid., pp. 40-81.

33 Tyrrell (Paris) to Rumbold (Berlin) and Phipps (Vienna), March 25 1931, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 2, no. 5.

34 Henderson to Lindsay, June 26 1931, ibid., no. 87; aide-mémoire to the French Government, July 2 1931, ibid., no. 118; conversation between Henderson and Curtius, July 21 1931, ibid., no. 221.


38 Ibid., p. 250. Samuel had been one of the Liberal members on a three-party sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence established in March 1931 to "advise as to the policy to be adopted at the forthcoming Disarmament Conference". Viscount Templewood, *Nine Troubled Years*, p. 118.

39 See MacDonald, *loc. cit.*

40 Record of a Five-Power Meeting, December 6 1932, *DBPP* Ser. 2, vol. 4, no. 211.

Notes to Chapter II


3 Templewood, *loc. cit.*


5 Ibid., p. 187.

6 Ibid., p. 190.


10 Gibson to Stimson (Secretary of State), March 17 1932, *FRUS*, 1932 vol. 1, pp. 54-9.

12 Gibson, February 9 1932, RDC, VRPM vol. 1, pp. 64-7.
14 Litvinov, February 11 1932, ibid., pp. 81-7.
17 Ibid., p. 194.
19 At least, there is nothing in the published British documents or in any memoir sources to suggest that Simon followed up his enquiries.
20 Originally, the Easter break was to have ended on April 4, but it was extended to April 11 because of an Extraordinary Session of the League Assembly discussing the Far Eastern situation resulting from the Japanese occupation of Manchuria. RDC, MGC vol. 1, pp. 31-3.
22 Gibson, April 11 1932, RDC, MGC vol. 1, pp. 38-41.
23 Litvinov, April 12 1932, ibid., pp. 46-50; RDC, GD vol. 1, pp. 124-37.
24 Tardieu, April 11 1932, RDC, MGC vol. 1, pp. 44-6; Tardieu, April 12 1932, ibid., pp. 50-5.
25 Ibid., p. 82.
26 For the text of the resolution, see ibid., p. 91. The Soviets voted against the resolution because of its reference to the application of Article 8 of the Covenant, a document the Soviet Union had not signed.
27 Ibid., p. 113.
28 Ibid., p. 116.
29 Ibid., p. 113.
31 Conversation among members of the American, British and German delegations, April 26 1932, FRUS 1932 vol. 1, pp. 108-12.

32 See above, p. 44, also Liddell Hart, loc. cit.

33 Gibson to Acting Secretary of State, April 29 1932, FRUS 1932 vol. 1, pp. 112-4.


35 A. Francois-Poncet, Souvenirs d'une ambassade à Berlin, p. 41.

36 Papen, loc. cit. Apparently, Brüning did not inform his successor that the French had accepted his plan.

37 Memorandum by Davis, February 12 1932, FRUS 1932 vol. 1, pp. 34-9. See also, ibid., p. 62.

38 Gibson to Stimson, March 17 1932, ibid., pp. 54-9; Gibson to Acting Secretary of State, April 21 1932, ibid., pp. 104-6.

39 Gibson to Stimson, March 17 1932, ibid., pp. 54-9; Gibson to Acting Secretary of State, April 21 1932, ibid., pp. 104-6; Liddell Hart, op. cit., p. 195.


41 See DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 4, nos. 52, 74, 110 and 136.

42 Gibson to Acting Secretary of State, April 29 1932, FRUS 1932 vol. 1, pp. 112-4; Temperley, op. cit., p. 203.

43 Ibid., p. 204.

44 This is a personal suggestion based mainly on circumstantial evidence. Apparently, no British record was kept of the conversations of April 26. On April 23, however, MacDonald did inform Stimson that the British Cabinet had decided unanimously against giving further assurances such as a Mediterranean Locarno "for entering into additional commitments involving the possibility of military or naval responsibilities in the event of Continental war". DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 3, no. 240. See also, Gibson to Acting Secretary of State, April 25 1932, FRUS 1932 vol. 1, pp. 106-8.

45 Temperley, op. cit., p. 192.

46 The French found their argument difficult to substantiate and were embarrassed by the fact that they had christened tanks "chars d'assaut". A hasty change to "chars de combat" did not improve the French reputation for logic. Ibid., p. 195.
47 Lord Stanhope, May 31 1932, RDC, MLC, pp. 63-5.

48 RDC, MLC, pp. 112-28. For the debates in the Land Commission, see ibid., pp. 1-96.

49 Liddell Hart, op. cit., pp. 185 and 208.

50 Ibid., pp. 209-10.

51 See RDC, MNC, pp. 126-37.

52 For the report of the Air Commission, see RDC, MAC, pp. 299-312. See also, ibid., pp. 1-116.

53 Cabinet meeting of May 4, Middlemas and Barnes, op. cit., pp. 731-2.


55 Ibid., pp. 52-3 and 66; Lord Londonderry, Ourselves and Germany, pp. 53-4.

56 Lord Cecil, reported in the "Manchester Guardian" of May 18 1932, cited in Carr, op. cit., p. 25.

57 Mellon to Acting Secretary of State, May 13 1932, FRUS 1932 vol. 1, pp. 121-5; Gibson to Stimson, May 17 1932, ibid., pp. 130-1.

58 Mellon to Acting Secretary of State, May 13 1932, ibid., pp. 121-5.

59 Ibid.

60 Baldwin, speaking in the Cabinet on May 4, Middlemas and Barnes, loc. cit.

61 Mellon to Stimson, June 8 1932, FRUS 1932 vol. 1, pp. 158-60; Gibson to Stimson, June 10 1932, ibid., pp. 163-6; Stimson to the American delegation in Geneva, June 11 1932, ibid., pp. 166-8.

62 Gibson to Stimson, May 17 1932, ibid., pp. 130-1; Gibson to Stimson, June 7 1932, ibid., p. 157.

63 Gibson to Stimson, June 10 1932, ibid., pp. 163-6.

64 Castle (Under-Secretary of State) to Stimson, May 25 1932, ibid., pp. 185-6.

65 Stimson to Gibson, May 16 1932, ibid., p. 129; Stimson to Gibson, June 7 1932, ibid., pp. 153-7; Stimson to Mellon, June 7 1933, ibid., pp. 157-8.

66 Ibid.
Stimson's proposals envisaged a one-third reduction in the total tonnage of battleships and submarines, a one-fifth reduction in aircraft-carriers, cruisers and destroyers and the limitation of individual submarines to 250 tons. Land forces in excess of those necessary for internal police duties would be reduced by one-third and all military aviation as part of land armaments would be abolished in time of peace. Bombing would be prohibited, but reconnaissance planes allowed.

In a memorandum of May 24, Hoover had outlined proposals envisaging the abolition of submarines and aircraft-carriers, a one-third reduction in battleships, cruisers and destroyers and the abolition of tanks, heavy mobile guns and military aviation (except for scouting purposes). See ibid., pp. 180-2.


Papen, op. cit., pp. 2, 113, 156 and 175; Francois-Poncet, op. cit., p. 43.


Simon to Newton (Berlin), June 6 1932, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 3, no. 124; Simon to Neurath, June 9 1932, ibid., no. 128; Tyrrell to Foreign Office, June 11 1932, ibid., no. 133; notes of an Anglo-French Meeting, June 11 1932, ibid., no. 134. See also, ibid., no. 108.

Notes of an Anglo-French Meeting, June 11 1932, ibid., no. 134.

E. Herriot, Jadis; d'une guerre à l'autre, p. 322; Papen, op. cit., p. 176. Apparently, the idea of a military entente originated with Generals Hammerstein and Blomberg, not Schleicher. See DDF Ser. 1, vol. 1, no. 46, annex 2.

Ibid.

Ibid., Ser. 1, vol. 1, no. 46, annex 3.


81 Papen had dropped hints about his proposals to Stephane Lauzanne of "Le Matin", but their reception in Germany was unenthusiastic and the nationalist press opposed them. See, e.g., notes of an Anglo-German conversation, June 27 1932, ibid., no. 149.

82 Ibid; Herriot, op. cit., p. 345; Papen, op. cit., p. 177.


85 See below, p. 64.


87 Notes of an Anglo-French conversation, July 5 1932, ibid., no. 175.

88 Notes of an Anglo-French conversation, July 8 1932, ibid., no. 184.

89 For the text of the Anglo-French Declaration, see ibid., no. 189, enclosure.

90 Notes of an Anglo-French conversation, July 5 1932, ibid., no. 172.

91 See ibid., nos. 172 and 184. Direct evidence that the hindering of Franco-German negotiations and the need for an ally against the Hoover plan were the primary objectives of the British proposal is lacking, but the circumstantial evidence is convincing in itself.

92 Notes of an Anglo-French conversation, July 5 1932, ibid., no. 172; notes of an Anglo-French conversation, July 8 1932, ibid., no. 184; MacDonald to Herriot, July 13 1932, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 1, no. 17.

93 Gibson, June 22 1932, RDC, MGC vol. 1, pp. 122-4. For the genesis of Hoover's proposals and the considerable amendments made by the State Department to the original plan, see FRUS 1932 vol. 1, pp. 180-214.

94 See RDC, MGC vol. 1, pp. 129-30.

95 Simon, June 22 1932, ibid., pp. 124-6; Simon, June 23 1932, PDC, 5th Ser., vol. 267, cols. 1264-5; Simon, June 27 1932, ibid., cols. 1459-60; Baldwin, June 27 1932, ibid., cols. 1460-1; Baldwin, June 28 1932, ibid., cols. 1776-80; note by Samuel (Home Secretary) of a conversation with Henderson, June 24 1932, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 3, no. 254.
96 Gibson to Stimson, July 1 1932, FRUS 1932 vol. 1, p. 252.

97 See above, p. 63.

98 The full Statement of Views circulated by the Government is published in RDC, CD vol. 1, pp. 265-8.


100 Gibson to Stimson, July 2 1932, ibid., pp. 253-5.


102 For the progress of the private conversations leading to the report of July 5, see DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 3, nos. 241-9, 251-3, 256-7 and 261.

103 The full resolution and Benes' appraisal of it is in RDC, MGC vol. 1, pp. 153-61. Simon's original draft is in FRUS 1932 vol. 1, pp. 284-7.

104 The Committee had reported its (unanimous) findings to the General Commission on May 31. RDC, CD vol. 1, pp. 210-5.

105 See above, pp. 44 and 50.

106 See above, pp. 60-1.


108 Patteson (Geneva) to Vansittart (Permanent Under-Secretary), July 20 1932, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 3, no. 265; Rumbold to Simon, July 21 1932, ibid., no. 269; Gibson to Stimson, July 21 1932, FRUS 1932 vol. 1, p. 309.

Notes to Chapter III

1 DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 4, no. 46, n. 1.


3 Memorandum from the German Government to the French Government, August 29 1932, ibid., no. 62.

5 Campbell to Simon, September 1 1932, ibid., no. 59; Campbell to Simon, September 2 1932, ibid., no. 64; Rumbold to Simon, September 3 1932, ibid., no. 67. See also, Simon to Rumbold, August 26 1932, ibid., no. 50.

6 Francois-Poncet to Herriot, August 23 1932, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 1, no. 115.

7 Francois-Poncet to Herriot, August 25 1932, ibid., no. 125, annex; Francois-Poncet to Herriot, September 1 1932, ibid., no. 137, annex 1.

8 Note de la Direction politique, August 28 1932, ibid., no. 127.

9 It is not known whether the leak was accidental or deliberate. The only clue is a remark by MacDonald of March 14 1933 that anything said to Paul-Boncour (Minister of War) appeared in the press. DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 4, no. 301.


11 Note handed to the German Minister for Foreign Affairs by the French Ambassador in Berlin on September 11 1932, ibid., no. 84. See also, Campbell to Simon, September 14 1932, ibid., no. 90.

12 Neurath to Henderson, September 14 1932, RDC, MB vol. 1, p. 3.

13 Simon to Rumbold, August 29 1932, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 4, no. 52; Fleuriau (London) to Herriot, August 30 1932, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 1, no. 129.

14 Simon to Campbell, September 9 1932, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 4, nos. 79-80; Fleuriau to Herriot, September 9 1932, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 1, nos. 158 and 160-1. The German memorandum had been released to the press on September 6 for publication on the following day. Fleuriau had handed Simon the draft French Note on September 6.

15 Note de la Direction politique, August 18 1932, ibid., no. 106; Note de la Direction politique, August 28 1932, ibid., no. 127.

16 Francois-Poncet to Herriot, October 4 1932, ibid., no. 224.

18 Simon to Murray (Rome), September 19 1932, *ibid.*, no. 99. Mussolini had taken over the Foreign Ministry from Grandi on July 20, Grandi being appointed Ambassador in London on the following day.

19 Rumbold to Simon, September 20 1932, *ibid.*, no. 104. The British memorandum was regarded as a move towards France, and there was severe criticism of the juridical basis of the British proposals. See Rumbold to Simon, September 20 1932, *ibid.*, no. 105 and Rumbold to Simon, September 21 1932, *ibid.*, no. 106.

20 Memorandum by Simon, September 23 1932, *ibid.*, no. 111.

21 Memorandum by Simon, September 25 1932, *ibid.*, no. 112.


26 The French were anxious that a postponement of the reunion of the Bureau would be interpreted by Germany as evidence that "blackmail" succeeded. See *ibid.*, nos. 160-1, 163, 170, 174-5 and 180, also *DBFP* Ser. 2, vol. 4, nos. 79-80, 82, 86 and 91.


29 Simon to Tyrrell, October 5 1932, *ibid.*, no. 134.

30 Newton to Simon, October 7 1932, *ibid.*, nos. 143-4 and 146.

31 It was for this reason that the four-Power meeting had been proposed, and it also explains the urgency with which Simon had endeavoured to secure a postponement of the reunion of the Bureau. See memorandum by Simon of a conversation with Neurath, September 23 1932, *ibid.*, no. 111.

32 See above, p. 63.

34 Simon to Tyrrell, October 5 1932, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 4, nos. 134-5; Tyrrell to Simon, October 6 1932, ibid., no. 140; Herriot to MacDonald, October 6 1932, ibid., no. 141; Herriot to Paul-Boncour, October 6 1932, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 1, no. 228.

35 Conversation between MacDonald and Herriot, October 13 1932, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 4, no. 152; notes of an Anglo-French Meeting, October 13 1932, ibid., nos. 153-4; notes of an Anglo-French Meeting, October 14 1932, ibid., no. 156.

36 Conversation between MacDonald and Herriot, October 13 1932, ibid., no. 152. Further evidence that the British Government was not really in favour of disarmament is the phrasing of the Statement of Views of September, which expressed the hope that "there may result from Geneva ... a really valuable measure of disarmament...." The use of the word "may" implies that British Ministers were fundamentally unconcerned at the possibility of there being no result at Geneva.

37 Fleuriau to Herriot, September 15 1932, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 1, no. 184; Simon to Tyrrell, October 5 1932, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 4, no. 134.

38 Simon to Newton and Graham (Rome), October 13 1932, ibid., no. 155. See ibid., nos. 153 and 156 for the Foreign Secretary's backing of the MacDonald line.

39 See, e.g., Simon to Tyrrell, October 5 1932, ibid., no. 134.

40 See, e.g., Newton to Simon, October 7 1932, ibid., no. 145, also Francois-Poncet to Herriot, October 4 1932, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 1, no. 224.

41 Massigli to Herriot, September 23 1932, ibid., no. 208; ibid., p. 415, n. 1; notes of an Anglo-French Meeting, October 14 1932, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 4, no. 156; Simon to Graham, October 17 1932, ibid., no. 161. See also, memorandum by Simon, September 23 1932, ibid., no. 111.

42 Notes of an Anglo-French Meeting, October 14 1932, ibid., no. 156.

43 Simon to Tyrrell, October 5 1932, ibid., no. 135. In a conversation with Fleuriau on September 15 (see DDF Ser. 1, vol. 1, no. 184), Simon had suggested that "if we could preserve appearances ..., Germany's persistence ... would reduce the Disarmament Conference to nothing". And despite the obvious differences between French and British policy, the discussions of October 13-14 (see DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 4, nos. 152-4, 156 and 163) had taken place in a very amicable atmosphere.

44 Francois-Poncet to Herriot, October 4 1932, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 1, no. 224.

46 Newton to Simon, October 14 1932, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 4, no. 157; Newton to Simon, October 15 1932, ibid., no. 160; Newton to Simon, October 17 1932, ibid., no. 162; Simon to Newton, October 15 1932, ibid., no. 159.


49 RDC, MB vol. 1, pp. 32-8.

50 Paul-Boncour did not specify the nations that would be expected to participate in the mutual assistance pact, and neither did the full French plan when it was released on November 14. In private, however, the French regarded the participation of both Italy and Germany as a sine qua non of any agreement.


52 PDC, 5th Ser., vol. 270, col. 525.

53 Attlee, November 10 1932, ibid., col. 530. For his full speech, see ibid., cols. 525-34.

54 Although Attlee summarized Labour's aims, there was some disagreement within the Party as to the means by which they should be implemented. See, e.g., the speeches of George Lansbury (ibid., cols. 623-30) who made his usual plea for total disarmament and Frederick Cocks (ibid., cols. 565-72) who advocated a policy based on the Geneva Protocol.


56 Baldwin, November 10 1932, PDC, 5th Ser., vol. 270, col. 632. For Baldwin's full speech, see ibid., cols. 630-8.

57 "But when the next war comes ..., then do not let them [the young men] lay the blame upon the old men. Let them remember that they, they principally or they alone, are responsible for the terrors that have fallen upon the earth". Ibid., col. 638.


61 The relevant portions of Stimson's speech are in DIA 1932, pp. 295-303.


64 Francois-Poncet to Herriot, November 15 1932, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 2, no. 1; Francois-Poncet to Herriot, November 17 1932, *ibid.*, no. 9.

65 Francois-Poncet to Herriot, November 17 1932, *ibid.*, no. 9.


67 Francois-Poncet to Herriot, November 15 1932, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 2, no. 2.


70 Simon, November 17 1932, DRC, MB vol. 1, pp. 89-94.

71 Simon told Massigli (probably on November 17, but possibly during the preceding week) that he envisaged that the "no-force" pact would be activated in the event of a crisis in the Polish Corridor or in situations similar to that in Manchuria, where force had been used but no war declared. Massigli to Herriot, November 17 1932, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 2, no. 6. (Massigli was head of the League of Nations section of the Quai d'Orsay).

72 Figures for the leading European Powers towards the end of 1933 were (approx.): U.S.S.R. 1300-1900 machines; France 1650 machines; Italy 1000 machines; Britain 850 machines. See G. H. Young, *Stanley Baldwin*, p. 177 and Londonderry, *Wings of Destiny*, p. 88.
73 Tyrrell to Simon, December 1 1932, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 4, no. 201. For the negotiations concerning Simon's proposal for five-Power negotiations in Geneva, see ibid., nos. 187-99.

74 Conversation between Herriot and Davis, November 26 1932, FRUS 1932 vol. 1, pp. 476-81.

75 Ibid.

76 Conversation between Herriot and Davis, November 28 1932, ibid., pp. 481-6.


79 Wilson to Stimson, November 21 1932, FRUS 1932 vol. 1, pp. 398-401; Stimson to Wilson, November 22 1932, ibid., pp. 404-5.


81 Conversation between MacDonald, Simon and Aloisi, December 3 1932, ibid., no. 207.

82 Conversation between MacDonald, Simon and Aloisi, December 3 1932, ibid., no. 207; record of a meeting between MacDonald, Simon and members of the French and American delegations, December 5 1932, ibid., no. 208.


84 Record of a five-Power Meeting, December 6 1932, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 4, nos. 210-1; record of a five-Power Meeting, December 7 1932, ibid., no. 212; record of a five-Power Meeting, December 8 1932, ibid., nos. 214-5; record of a Meeting of the British, French, Italian and American delegations, December 8 1932, ibid., no. 213. Cf. DDF Ser. 1, vol. 2, nos. 71-2, 76 and 80-2, also FRUS 1932 vol. 1, pp. 492-9.
85 Record of a five-Power Meeting, December 6 1932, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 4, no. 211; record of a five-Power Meeting, December 7 1932, ibid., no. 212; record of a Meeting of the British, French, Italian and American delegations, December 8 1932, ibid., no. 213; record of a five-Power Meeting, December 8 1932, ibid., nos. 214-5; record of a five-Power Meeting, December 9 1932, ibid., no. 216. Cf. DDF Ser. 1, vol. 2, nos. 72, 76, 80-2 and 88, also FRUS 1932 vol. 1, pp. 492-501.


87 Record of a five-Power Meeting, December 8 1932, ibid., no. 215; record of a five-Power Meeting, December 9 1932, ibid., nos. 216-7; record of a five-Power Meeting, December 10 1932, ibid., no. 218; record of a five-Power Meeting, December 11 1932, ibid., no. 219. Cf. DDF Ser. 1, vol. 2, nos. 82, 88-9 and 92-6, also FRUS 1932 vol. 1, pp. 498-508.

88 See Francois-Poncet's analysis of the situation, especially concerning German intentions, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 2, no. 109.

89 Ibid.


91 See, e.g., the "Daily Herald" of July 14 1932.


93 Francois-Poncet to Paul-Boncour, January 18 1933, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 2, no. 205; Francois-Poncet to Paul-Boncour, February 4 1933, ibid., no. 260.

Notes to Chapter IV


6 Aloisi, February 2 1933, ibid., pp. 217-20; Litvinov, February 6 1933, ibid., pp. 234-9. For the remarks of the other delegates, see ibid., pp. 224-33 and 239-53.

7 Simon to Newton, November 12 1932, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 4, no. 171.

8 Eden, February 3 1933, RDC, MGC vol. 2, pp. 222-4.

9 Patteson to Simon, February 6 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 4, no. 260. Eden told Paul-Boncour that he had omitted any reference to the general consultative pact because of American "susceptibilities" - but it had always been clear that British participation in a general consultative pact was dependent on American participation. See, e.g., ibid., no. 211.

10 Draft Proposals by the U.K. Delegation, ibid., no. 278.

11 See RDC, MB vol. 1, pp. 149-61.

12 Fleuriau to Paul-Boncour, February 3 1933, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 2, no. 258.

13 Aubert to Paul-Boncour, February 18 1933, ibid., no. 320.


15 The record of these inconclusive debates is in RDC, MGC vol. 2, pp. 262-352.

16 Gibson to Hull (Secretary of State), March 8 1933, FRUS 1933 vol. 1, pp. 25-7.


18 DIA 1932, pp. 234-9.

20 Conversation between MacDonald, Simon and Benes, March 17 1933, DBFF Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 43; DIA 1933, pp. 415-8.


23 Neurath to Nadolny, February 15 1933, DGFP Ser. C, vol. 1, no. 20; memorandum by Bulow, March 13 1933, ibid., no. 79.


25 Record of an Anglo-French Meeting, March 10 1933, ibid., no. 290.

26 Record of an Anglo-French Meeting, March 10 1933, ibid., no. 290; Jean Paul-Boncour (Secretary-General to the French delegation to the Disarmament Conference) to Paul-Boncour, March 6 1933, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 2, no. 372; Hassell (Rome) to Foreign Ministry, March 10 1933, DGFP Ser. C, vol. 1, no. 68. See also, Eden, Facing the Dictators, pp. 27-33.

27 For the background of the British plan, see ibid., pp. 30-3, also Temperley, op. cit., pp. 234-9.

28 Eden, op. cit., p. 34; Temperley, op. cit., p. 239.

29 Patteson to Simon, March 2 1933, DBFF Ser. 2, vol. 4, no. 284; Patteson to Simon, March 6 1933, ibid., no. 287; Simon to Tyrrell, March 3 1933, ibid., no. 286; record of an Anglo-French Meeting, March 10 1933, ibid., no. 290; record of a Meeting between MacDonald, Simon, Eden and Wilson, March 11 1933, ibid., no. 294.

30 Eden, op. cit., p. 34. For the Geneva conversations, see DBFF Ser. 2, vol. 4, nos. 292-304, 306-7 and 310.

31 For the text of the British draft convention, see Wheeler-Bennett, The Disarmament Deadlock, pp. 267-92. For MacDonald's speech to the General Commission, see RDC, MGC vol. 2, pp. 352-7.

33 Record of a Meeting between MacDonald, Simon and Aloisi, March 14 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 4, no. 301.

34 DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 44. See enclosures B 1 and D 3 for the text of the Pact.


37 De Ligne (Rome) to Hymans (Foreign Minister), January 18 1933, DDB vol. 3, no. 10; Jouvenel to Paul-Boncour, April 11 1933, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 2, no. 112.


39 Ibid.

40 See Article IV of the draft Pact, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 44, enclosure D 3. On March 3, Jouvenel reported to Paul-Boncour that "the time is long past when Mussolini's ambitions can be satisfied by a few palm trees in Libya". DDF Ser. 1, vol. 2, no. 368.

41 Aide-mémoire for the Italian Ambassador, March 15 1933, DGFPP Ser. C, vol. 1, no. 84; Bdlow to Hassell (Rome), March 15 1933, ibid., no. 88; memorandum by Bdlow, March 17 1933, ibid., no. 95; Neurath to Hassell, March 24 1933, ibid., no. 115; Kerchove (Berlin) to Hymans, March 28 1933, DDB vol. 3, no. 18.


44 Vansittart to Patteson, March 24 1933, ibid., no. 51; Patteson to Vansittart, March 25 1933, ibid., no. 53.

45 De Cartier (London) to Hymans, April 5 1933, DDB vol. 3, no. 23. Cf. Simon to Granville (Brussels), April 4 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 68.
46 See, e.g., Patteson to Vansittart, March 25 1933, ibid., no. 53; conversation between Simon and Benes, March 25 1933, ibid., no. 54; Simon to Foreign Office, March 27 1933, ibid., nos. 56-7; Erskine (Warsaw) to Simon, March 29 1933, ibid., no. 58; note by the French delegation to the Disarmament Conference, March 25 1933, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 3, no. 47.

47 Patteson to Vansittart, March 25 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 53. For French suspicions, see ibid., no. 46.

48 See RDC, MGC vol. 2, pp. 361-403, especially pp. 372-4 (di Soragna, the acting Italian delegate), pp. 381-2 (Dovgalevsky, for the U.S.S.R.), pp. 388-90 (Bourquin, for Belgium) and pp. 391-4 (Nadolny).

49 For the British draft, see DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 64. For the British pressure on France, see conversations at the British Embassy in Paris, March 21 1933, ibid., no. 46.

50 Ibid., no. 76, annex.


52 Neurath to Hassell, April 12 1933, ibid., no. 153; memorandum by Bülow, April 19 1933, ibid., no. 165; Arnal (Berlin) to Paul-Boncour, April 15 1933, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 3, no. 133; Francois-Poncet to Paul-Boncour, April 20 1933, ibid., no. 145.

53 Hassell to Foreign Ministry, April 19 1933, DGFP Ser. C, vol. 1, no. 164; notes of an unpublished German document (no reference) supplied by Dr. F. Marzari.

54 Notes of an unpublished German document (no reference) supplied by Dr. F. Marzari; Hassell to Foreign Ministry, April 19 1933, DGFP Ser. C, vol. 1, no. 164; memorandum by Smend, April 20 1933, ibid., no. 172.

55 Memorandum by Bülow, April 20 1933, ibid., no. 170; Neurath to Hassell, April 22 1933, ibid., no. 176.

56 Hassell to Foreign Ministry, April 20 1933, ibid., no. 171; Hassell to Foreign Ministry, April 24 1933, ibid., no. 181.

57 Hassell to Foreign Ministry, April 22 1933, ibid., no. 178.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid., no. 208.

60 Francois-Poncet to Paul-Boncour, March 15 1933, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 2, no. 413; Francois-Poncet to Paul-Boncour, April 27 1933, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 3, nos. 199-200.

62 Francois-Poncet to Paul-Boncour, April 27 1933, ibid., nos. 191 and 199.

63 Attlee, April 13 1933, PDC, 5th Ser., vol. 276, col. 2742.

64 Austen Chamberlain, April 13 1933, ibid., cols. 2755-9.

65 MacDonald, April 13 1933, ibid., col. 2754.


67 Temperley, op. cit., pp. 243 and 248. See also, Lindsay to Simon, April 25 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 86; Simon to Lindsay, April 25 1933, ibid., no. 87; conversation between between Roosevelt and MacDonald, undated, FRUS 1933 vol. 1, pp. 102-4.

68 Davis, April 26 1933, RDC, MGC vol. 2, p. 416. For the previous discussion, see ibid., pp. 405-16.

69 See e.g., Hull to Davis, April 25 1933, FRUS 1933 vol. 1, pp. 106-7.

70 See RDC, MGC vol. 2, pp. 416-9; RDC, MB vol. 1, pp. 162-6; Patteson to Simon, April 27 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, nos. 93 and 95.

71 RDC, MGC vol. 2, pp. 420-57; Patteson to Simon, April 28 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, nos. 99-100.

72 Unsigned memorandum, May 15 1933, DGFP Ser. C, vol. 1, no. 239. See also, ibid., no. 23.

73 Massigli to Paul-Boncour, May 9 1933, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 3, no. 257; DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 124, n. 4; Temperley, op. cit., p. 248. For Eden's attempts to negotiate with Nadolny, see DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, nos. 103 and 106-12. For Britain's rearmament demands, see ibid., no. 105.

74 Memorandum by Leeper (Foreign Office), May 29 1933, ibid., no. 179. See also, Patteson to Simon, May 1 1933, ibid., no. 105.

75 Conversation between Eden and Nadolny, May 1 1933, ibid., no. 112, enclosure; Patteson to Simon, May 3 1933, ibid., no. 111; RDC, MGC vol. 2, pp. 440-1.


77 Unsigned memorandum, May 15 1933, DGFP Ser. C, vol. 1, no. 239.
78 RDC, MB vol. 1, pp. 167-71; Patteson to Simon, May 8 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 117; Patteson to Simon, May 9 1933, ibid., no. 119.

79 Patteson to Simon, May 9 1933, ibid., no. 123; Patteson to Simon, May 10 1933, ibid., nos. 124-5; Patteson to Simon, May 11 1933, ibid., nos. 131-3.

80 Ibid., no. 124, n. 4.

81 Temperley, op. cit., p. 249.

82 Lord Hailsham, May 11 1933, PDL, 5th Ser., vol. 87, col. 898. For Hailsham's full speech, see ibid., cols. 892-901.

83 Simon to Patteson, May 12 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 141.


86 Rumbold to Simon, May 11 1933, ibid., no. 136.

87 For the text of the statement, see "The Times", May 13 1933, p. 12.


89 For the origins of Roosevelt's message, see FRUS 1933 vol. 1, pp. 140-2 and 145-6. For the text, see DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 146.

90 Minute by Howard Smith (Foreign Office), May 17 1933, ibid., no. 152; Lindsay to Simon, May 18 1933, ibid., no. 156; Vansittart to Lindsay, May 23 1933, ibid., no. 168.

91 For the text of Hitler's speech, see DIA 1933, pp. 196-208.

92 For the text of the Davis declaration, see RDC, MGC vol. 2, pp. 474-6.


96 Memorandum by Leeper, May 29 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 179.

97 Tyrrell to Simon, May 19 1933, ibid., no. 161.

98 Memorandum by Vansittart, May 23 1933, Public Record Office, London, 225/Ref. CAB. 24/241. A photocopy of this document was supplied to the author by Dr. F. Marzari.


100 Simon to Tyrrell, May 30 1933, ibid., no. 186.


102, Simon, May 26 1933, PDC, 5th Ser., vol. 278, cols. 1439-54.

103 Tyrrell to Simon, May 19 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 161; Tyrrell to Simon, June 7 1933, ibid., no. 205; Paul-Boncour, May 23 1933, RDC, MGC vol. 2, pp. 491-3. See also, Marriner (France) to Hull, May 17 1933, FRUS 1933 vol. 1, pp. 147-8.

104 Eden, May 30 1933, RDC, MGC vol. 2, p. 570; Lord Londonderry, June 1 1933, ibid., p. 584; Tyrrell to Simon, June 7 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 205. See also, Simon to Patteson, June 1 1933, ibid., no. 194.

105 For the debate on the definition of aggression, see RDC, MGC vol. 2, pp. 499-502, 510-7 and 547-59.

106 Davis to Hull, May 30 1933, FRUS 1933 vol. 1, pp. 175-8; Patteson to Simon, May 30 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 183; Simon to Patteson, May 31 1933, ibid., no. 189.

107 Patteson to Simon, May 30 1933, ibid., no. 183; Simon to Patteson, May 31 1933, ibid., no. 189; Simon to Patteson, June 1 1933, ibid., no. 194.

108 The complete discussion of the British air proposals is in RDC, MGC vol. 2, pp. 529-46.

109 Patteson to Simon, April 26 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 91.

110 On May 30, Sato, the Japanese delegate to the Disarmament Conference, told Davis that Japan would be unwilling to agree to the prohibition of bombing unless aircraft-carriers were abolished, possibly in conjunction with the abolition of submarines, and he added that he could not agree to a non-aggression pact until the situation in the Far East had been liquidated. But it seems reasonable to suggest that, at that time, Japan might have agreed to the abolition of bombing if her interests in, and the new territorial arrangements of, Manchukuo and North China were recognized, as the main aspect of Japanese policy was to stabilize the Far Eastern position - on May 3 1933, the Truce of Tangku had been signed with China. Sato was angling
for a regional settlement of the disarmament problem linking political issues with disarmament, or at least he began to suggest such an agreement in June. See FRUS 1933 vol. 1, pp. 178-9, 188-90 and 200-1.

111 For the discussions on the proposed European Security Pact and "no-force" declaration, see RDC, MGC vol. 2, pp. 560-7.

112 Davis to Hull, May 30 1933, FRUS 1933 vol. 1, pp. 175-8; Simon to Patteson, June 1 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 194. See also, ibid., nos. 175, 183-4, 189 and 196.

113 Patteson to Simon, May 31 1933, ibid., no. 188.

114 Londonderry, June 1 1933, RDC, MGC vol. 2, p. 584. For the discussion of the clauses of the British draft convention regarding supervision (and the French amendments), see ibid., pp. 570 and 578-88.

115 Simon to Patteson, June 1 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 194.

116 See, e.g., Roosevelt's comment on this point, FRUS 1933 vol. 1, pp. 180-1.

117 For the later meetings of the General Commission, see RDC, MGC vol. 2, pp. 562-637.

118 Temperley, op. cit., p. 243; Eden, Facing the Dictators, p. 35.

Notes to Chapter V


2 For the British record of these conversations, see DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, nos. 207-8; for the French record, see DDF Ser. 1, vol. 3, no. 376; for the American record, see FRUS 1933 vol. 1, pp. 190-2.


4 Temperley, op. cit., p. 252.

5 Eden, loc. cit.

7 Simon to Tyrrell, June 26 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 221; Corbin to Paul-Boncour, June 21 1933, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 3, no. 412; Eden, op. cit., p. 43.

8 Paul-Boncour to Corbin, June 22 1933, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 3, no. 416; Corbin to Paul-Boncour, June 23-4 1933, ibid., no. 421.

9 For the meeting of the General Commission, see RDC, MGC vol. 2, pp. 637-43.

10 See, e.g., the French attitude on this point, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 226.

11 For the lack of rapport between Henderson and the British Government, see, e.g., Hamilton, Arthur Henderson, pp. 406-8 and 414-5.

12 RDC, MGC vol. 2, p. 638.


15 For the memorandum of June 2 1933, see DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 201, enclosure 2. For the memorandum given to Henderson on July 18 1933, see DGFP Ser. C, vol. 1, no. 370, enclosure.

16 Memorandum by Neurath, July 22 1933, ibid., no. 374.

17 See Paul-Boncour to Corbin, July 24 1933, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 4, no. 36, especially the annex, which is the record of Henderson's conversation with Paul-Boncour of July 22.


19 Harvey to Vansittart, July 24 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 269.

20 See ibid., nos. 269, 283, 331, 348 and 359, also DDF Ser. 1, vol. 4, nos. 50 and 68.


23 Rumbold to Simon, June 27 1933, ibid., no. 223. See also, ibid., no. 231.

24 For Vansittart’s memorandum and the diplomacy of the question of German air rearmament, see ibid., nos. 253, 256, 277-8, 280-1, 284, 287, 289, 298, 305 and 326-7.

25 Ibid., no. 256.


29 See Campbell’s analysis of the situation, ibid., no. 386.

30 Chambrun to Paul-Boncour, September 5 1933, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 4, nos. 177-9.

31 Mussolini’s draft proposal (see ibid., no. 177) envisaged permanent or automatic control, but it is probable that "or" was a typographical error for "and".

32 Chambrun to Paul-Boncour, August 15 1933, ibid., no. 113; Chambrun to Paul-Boncour, September 5 1933, ibid., no. 177.

33 See Paul-Boncour to Chambrun, September 7 1933, ibid., no. 187; Paul-Boncour to Cambrun, September 9 1933, ibid., no. 192; note du Cabinet du Ministre, September 12 1933, ibid., no. 203.

34 Ibid., no. 213, annex.

35 For the British record of these conversations, see DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 399, annex. For the French record, see DDF Ser. 1, vol. 4, no. 260, annexes 1 and 2. See also, Paul-Boncour to the French Representatives in London, Berlin, Rome and Prague, ibid., no. 227, also memorandum by Eden, September 19 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 399.

36 Simon to Tyrrell, September 21 1933, ibid., no. 403; Simon to Murray, September 21 1933, ibid., no. 404.

37 Simon to Tyrrell, September 21 1933, ibid., no. 403; Corbin to Paul-Boncour, September 21 1933, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 4, no. 233.


41 Conversation between Hymans, Simon and Ormsby Gore (First Commissioner of Works), September 26 1933, DDB vol. 3, no. 53; Patteson to Vansittart, September 29 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 419; conversation between Neurath and Simon, September 29 1933, ibid., no. 422, enclosure.

42 Conversation between Simon and Aloisi, September 23 1933, ibid., no. 409, enclosure; conversation between Simon, Suvich (Italian Under-Secretary of State) and Aloisi, September 25 1933, ibid., no. 412, enclosure; Patteson to Vansittart, September 29 1933, ibid., no. 419; conversation between Suvich, Aloisi and Simon, September 29 1933, ibid., no. 421; note by the French delegation to the Disarmament Conference, September 26 1933, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 4, no. 246; note by the French delegation to the Disarmament Conference, September 28 1933, ibid., no. 254.

43 Conversation between Simon and Aloisi, September 23 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 409, enclosure; conversation between Simon and Neurath, September 23 1933, ibid., no. 411, enclosure; conversation between Eden and Massigli, September 29 1933, ibid., no. 420, enclosure.


45 Bismarck to Foreign Ministry, October 4 1933, ibid., no. 478. For Simon's proposals of October 3 1933, see DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 440, n. 1.

46 Memorandum by Bülow, October 4 1933, DGFP Ser. C, vol. 1, no. 479.

47 Unsigned memorandum, October 6 1933, ibid., no. 484.

48 Simon to Phipps (Berlin), October 6 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 434.


50 Neurath to German delegation in Geneva, October 11 1933, ibid., no. 489; minutes of the Conferences of Ministers of October 13 and 14, 1933, ibid., no. 499.
51 Simon to Phipps, October 6 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 434; Simon to Phipps, October 10 1933, ibid., no. 443.

52 See ibid., nos. 434, 437-8, 440-1, 443, 445 and 447.


54 Memorandum by Eden, September 19 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 399; Herry (Paris) to Hymans, September 22 1933, DDB vol. 3, no. 47.


56 Patteson to Simon, October 6 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 432.

57 Graham to Wellesley (Foreign Office), October 14 1933, ibid., no. 453.

58 Patteson to Simon, October 6 1933, ibid., no. 432; Patteson to Simon, October 10 1933, ibid., no. 441; Phipps to Wellesley, October 14 1933, ibid., no. 451.

59 Note by the French delegation to the Disarmament Conference, October 12 1933, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 4, no. 300.


61 Patteson to Wellesley, October 14 1933, ibid., no. 445; Temperley, op. cit., p. 257.

62 For the meeting of the Bureau of October 14 1933, see RDC, MB vol. 2, pp. 181-5.

63 Neurath's telegram is cited in SIA 1933, p. 306.

64 Chambrun to Paul-Boncour, September 17 1933, DDF Ser. 1, vol. 4, no. 224; Chambrun to Paul-Boncour, October 11 1933, ibid., no. 291; note by the French delegation to the Disarmament Conference, September 26 1933, ibid., no. 246; conversation between Simon, Suvich and Aloisi, September 25 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 412.


Notes to Chapter VI

1 Cited in SIA 1933, p. 309.
2 Proclamation by Hitler, October 14 1933, DIA 1933, pp. 94-6; radio address by Hitler, October 14 1933, ibid., pp. 289-94.

3 DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, no. 451, n. 1; ibid., no. 459, n. 2.

4 Young, Stanley Baldwin, pp. 177 and 200.

5 See above, p. 175, also SIA 1933, p. 309.


7 Simon to Tyrrell, October 17 1933, ibid., no. 467; Simon to Tyrrell, October 19 1933, ibid., no. 470; Tyrrell to Simon, October 20 1933, ibid., no. 474.

8 Simon to Tyrrell, October 21 1933, ibid., no. 478; minute by Ronald (Foreign Office), October 24 1933, ibid., no. 488.

9 Simon to Tyrrell, November 7 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 6, no. 9.

10 Tyrrell to Simon, November 9 1933, ibid., no. 27.


12 Note communicated by the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs, November 15 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 6, no. 46, enclosure; Tyrrell to Simon, November 17 1933, ibid., no. 49.

13 Drummond (Rome) to Simon, November 8 1933, ibid., no. 20; Drummond to Simon, November 15 1933, ibid., nos. 36-7; Drummond to Simon, November 18 1933, ibid., no. 50; SIA 1933, pp. 314-5.

14 For the course of these negotiations, see DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 6, nos. 51, 58 and 61-3, also the enclosures in ibid., nos. 52-7 and 64-6. See also, RDC, MB vol. 2, p. 200.


16 Wilson to Acting Secretary of State, June 27 1933, ibid., pp. 200-1.

17 Ibid.

18 As early as September 27 1933, Sato had told Davis that Japan would not agree to supervision (ibid., pp. 232-5), but this may have been meant as a lever to draw America into a Far Eastern agreement concerning both political issues and disarmament. China had made peace with Japan in May 1933 (Treaty of Tangku), but neither the Americans nor the British had accepted the status quo resulting from that treaty - thus the Japanese attempts to link disarmament with political issues. It is significant that Japan withheld the public announcement of her attitude to supervision until after the German withdrawal.
from the Disarmament Conference – that is, until general disarmament
seemed impossible of attainment. It might be argued that the Japanese
had no intention of coming to a disarmament agreement and withheld
the announcement on supervision so that their country would not be
blamed for a breakdown at Geneva; but even if this were so, the
negotiation of an arms control agreement between the European Powers
(as distinct from a general disarmament convention) was not precluded.

19 Phipps to Simon, October 24 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 5, nos. 485
and 489; Phipps to Simon, October 26 1933, ibid., no. 494; memorandum

20 Tyrrell to Simon, November 16 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 6, no. 43;
Tyrrell to Simon, November 17 1933, ibid., no. 49.

21 Simon, November 7 1933, PDC, 5th Ser., vol. 281, cols. 41–64, See
especially, cols. 59–63.

22 Phipps to Simon, November 21 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 6, no. 60;
Phipps to Simon, November 22 1933, ibid., no. 67; Phipps to Simon,
November 27 1933, ibid., no. 79; Phipps to Simon, December 5 1933,
ibid., no. 99. The major reason for Hitler's "proposal" of an Anglo-
French alliance was probably a fear of a Herriot government in France
and the conclusion of a Franco-Russian alliance. See ibid., nos. 67,
99 and 101. Germany had little to lose by an Anglo-French alliance
(Britain would use it to press France into making concessions), but a
Franco-Russian alliance might foreshadow a possible resuscitation of
the anti-German coalition of the Great War.

23 Phipps to Simon, December 5 1933, ibid., nos. 97 and 99.

24 Simon to Tyrrell, November 8 1933, ibid., no. 19; Simon to
Tyrrell, December 7 1933, ibid., no. 112.

25 Simon to Phipps, December 7 1933, ibid., no. 105.

26 Phipps to Simon, December 8 1933, ibid., no. 114; Phipps to
Simon, December 9 1933, ibid., no. 120.

27 Hitler to Phipps, December 11 1933, ibid., no. 132, enclosure.

28 Phipps to Hitler, December 20 1933, ibid., no. 140, enclosure.

29 Phipps to Simon, November 22 1933, ibid., no. 67; Phipps to
Simon, December 6 1933, ibid., no. 101.

30 Chautemps had replaced Sarraut as Président du Conseil on
November 27, though Paul-Boncour remained at the Quai d'Orsay and
Daladier at the Ministry of War.

31 Phipps to Simon, November 22 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 6, no. 67;
Phipps to Simon, December 5 1933, ibid., no. 99; Phipps to Simon,
December 6 1933, ibid., no. 101. Hitler's fear of Herriot would account
for the Chancellor's "proposal" of an Anglo-French alliance.
32 Hitler to Phipps, December 11 1933, *ibid.*, no. 132, enclosure; Phipps to Simon, January 19 1934, *ibid.*, no. 190.

33 Tyrrell to Simon, December 15 1933, *ibid.*, no. 134.

34 Aide-mémoire left with German Minister for Foreign Affairs by French Ambassador, [December 13 1933], *ibid.*, no. 143, enclosure.

35 Eden, *Facing the Dictators*, p. 53. For the record of the conversations, see DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 6, no. 144.


37 For the German Note to Britain, see *ibid.*, no. 191; for the German Note to France, see *ibid.*, no. 193. See also, DGFP Ser. C, vol. 2, nos. 172 and 194.

38 Phipps to Simon, January 22 1934, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 6, no. 195.

39 *Ibid.*.


41 For the record of these conversations, see *ibid.*, nos. 161 and 164.

42 Memorandum on disarmament, January 25 1934, *ibid.*, no. 206. A few textual alterations were made before the memorandum was communicated to the other Powers. See *ibid.*, no. 217.

43 Campbell to Simon, February 2 1934, *ibid.*, no. 245.

44 Possibly the most interesting of these overreactions was that of Daladier to the MacDonald plan and the Roosevelt declaration of May 16 1933. On May 19, the French Premier told Baron de Gaiffier, the Belgian Ambassador in Paris, that "As long as I am in power, France will not destroy the arms, whether they be offensive or defensive, that Germany is not permitted by the terms of the Treaty [of Versailles]. This would be a crime against the nation ...." DDB vol. 3, no. 33.

45 Phipps to Simon, January 31 1934, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 6, no. 240.

46 Phipps to Sargent (Foreign Office), February 1 1934, *ibid.*, no. 244.


48 For a résumé of these conversations, see DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 6, no. 291. For the full record, see *ibid.*, no. 297. For Eden's version (based on *ibid.*), see Eden, op. cit., pp. 57-60. Cf. Koster (Paris) to Foreign Ministry, February 19 1934, DGFP Ser. C, vol. 2, no. 268. See also, Tyrrell to Simon, February 17 1934, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 6, no. 287.
49 For the record of Eden's talks in Berlin, see ibid., nos. 302-6 and DGFP Ser. C, vol. 2, nos. 270-1, 273 and 276, also Eden, op. cit., pp. 60-72.

50 The British memorandum of January 29 1934 suggested that a German return "ought to be an essential condition of agreement".

51 Eden, op. cit., p. 71. See also, Drummond to Simon, February 24 1933, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 6, no. 316.

52 Ibid., no. 303, n. 4.

53 Eden, op. cit., p. 75.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 For Eden's talks with Mussolini, see DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 6, nos. 320 and 322, also Eden, op. cit., pp. 76-9 and DGFP Ser. C, vol. 2, no. 283.

57 The Italian proposal corresponded in substance with a memorandum handed to Simon during his visit to Rome on January 3-4 1934 (see DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 6, no. 161). For the text of the proposal, see DIA 1933, pp. 354-60.


59 See above, pp. 93-5 for the French disarmament plan of November 1932. For the Paul-Boncour proposals of December 1933 for guaranteeing the execution of a convention, see DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 6, no. 172, n. 2.

60 For the text, see DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 6, no. 355, enclosure.


62 Eden, op. cit., p. 86; minute by Eden, March 16 1934, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 6, no. 337, n. 3.

63 Eden, op. cit., pp. 84-5.

64 Temperley, Whispering Gallery of Europe, p. 264.

65 Memorandum on Germany's illegal rearmament and its effects on British policy, March 21 1934, DBFP Ser. 2, vol. 6, no. 363.

66 Simon to Tyrrell, March 6 1934, ibid., no. 333.


69 Simon to Tyrrell, March 27 1934, *ibid.*, no. 368.

70 Tyrrell to Simon, March 21 1934, *ibid.*, no. 359.

71 Simon to Tyrrell, March 27 1934, *ibid.*, no. 368; Eden, *op. cit.*, p. 87.


73 Simon to Tyrrell, March 27 1934, *DBFP* Ser. 2, vol. 6, no. 368.

74 For the text, see *ibid.*, no. 377, enclosure.


76 Francois-Poncet, *loc. cit.*


78 For the text, see *DBFP* Ser. 2, vol. 6, no. 395, enclosure.

79 Campbell to Simon, April 30 1934, *ibid.*, no. 415; Patteson to Simon, May 15 1934, *ibid.*, no. 426.

80 For the full estimates as reported to Simon, see *ibid.*, no. 374, enclosure.


82 Eden, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

83 Campbell to Simon, April 30 1934, *DBFP* Ser. 2, vol. 6, no. 415.


86 Phipps to Simon, April 29 1934, *DBFP* Ser. 2, vol. 6, no. 412.
87 Conversation between Simon and Davis, May 28 1934, ibid., no. 435, enclosure.

88 Patteson to Simon, May 15 1934, ibid., no. 426.

89 Simon to Phipps, May 26 1934, ibid., no. 432.

90 Davis, May 29 1934, DIA 1934, p. 135. See ibid., pp. 133-8 for his full speech.

91 Litvinov, May 29 1934, ibid., p. 145. See ibid., pp. 138-47 for his full speech.

92 Simon, May 30 1934, ibid., pp. 147-56.

93 Temperley, op. cit., p. 265. For a translation of Barthou's speech, see DIA 1934, pp. 156-66.

94 Eden, op. cit., p. 93.

Notes to Chapter VII

1 Eden, op. cit., p. 47.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. DOCUMENTS AND OFFICIAL SOURCES

A. British Government Publications


B. French Government Publications


C. American Government Publications


D. Belgian Government Publications


E. League of Nations Publications


Conference Documents. 3 vols.
Series A. Verbatim Records of Plenary Meetings.
Series B. Minutes of the General Commission. 3 vols.
Series C. Minutes of the Bureau. 2 vols.


F. Other Publications


II. MEMOIRS, SPEECHES AND CONTEMPORARY WORKS

A. Britain

Avon, Earl of. See Eden, A.


**B. France**


**C. Germany**


**D. United States**


E. Other


III. NEWSPAPERS AND JOURNALS

A. British

Daily Herald.

New Statesman and Nation.

Spectator.

The Times.

B. French

L'Europe nouvelle.

L'Illustration.

Mercure de France.

Nouvelle Revue Française.

Revue des Deux Mondes.

La Revue Hebdomadaire.

Le Temps.

C. American

Foreign Policy Reports.

International Conciliation.

IV. SECONDARY WORKS – BIOGRAPHIES


V. SECONDARY WORKS - BOOKS

Beloff, M. The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia 1929-1941. New York,


Medlicott, W. N. *British Foreign Policy since Versailles*. London, Methuen, 1940.


VI. SECONDARY WORKS - ARTICLES AND ESSAYS


Lutz, H. "Foreign Policy in the Third Reich". Current History, April 1955, pp. 222-35.

MacDonald, J. R. "Protocol or Pact?". International Conciliation, September 1925, pp. 256-63.

Poole, DeWitt C. "Light on Nazi Foreign Policy". Foreign Affairs, October 1946, pp. 130-54.