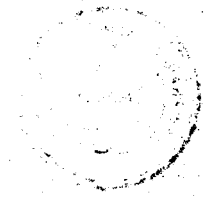


DISARMAMENT AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

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PREFACE

The object of this study is not merely to narrate the history of disarmament from the 19th Century and more systematically during the League period, but also to examine its relevance to the post-second world war disarmament negotiations. The study of the history of disarmament during the period under review itself is rewarding as it offers an interesting insight into the mechinations of European States which resulted in the First World War. Just like the present U.S. "military - industrial complex", there were very powerful military influences in every important European State which the political leaders could not resist. For instance, the General Staff of Germany, France or Russia were much more responsible than the politicians for the rejection of every reasonable proposal for the reduction of arms and pushing Europe to the brink of a World War.

The European State system which was utterly chaotic, exhausted and demoralised was to be rebuilt under the League system. But the new world order that came into being had within it the seeds of its distruction and of a future world war. It was erected on the irreconcilable and permanent antagonism of the satisfied and dissatisfied European Powers. It was the duty of the League system to maintain the balance between these two clearly divided groups. The disarmament negotiations under the League period were essentially a power struggle between the status quo powers led by France on the one hand and revisionist powers led by Germany on the other. European security and to a certain extent the world security hinged on every move and counter-move taken by and every alliance and counter-alliance made by France and Germany.

✓The League design to disarm Germany in the first instance and to be followed by corresponding reduction of armaments by other nations did not work. ✓On the contrary, it could only aggravate the arms race. It is the purpose of this study to examine all these developments, the cumulative

effect of which was the collapse of the disarmament efforts under the League period.

Another object of this study is to examine the causes of the failure of the World Disarmament Conference. Important among the reasons for the failure, it may be mentioned in particular, the very weak and loose collective security machinery provided by the league covenant, the loosening of the alliance of the Allied Powers, the national insult to Germany under the dictated Peace Treaty (of Versailles), the rise of H^ättler and the callous indifference of the major Powers to disarmament.

The advantages and disadvantages of voluntary and enforced disarmament will also be examined in this study.

The structural details of the League machinery of disarmament have also to be studied in some detail.

Finally, a serious effort will be made in this study to examine the general proposition that the success of disarmament efforts depends largely on resolving the underlying political conflicts in the international society.

Chapter - 1.Introduction

Man's search for security began with the killing of Abel by his brother Cain. Whether the Hobbesian view of men living in the state of nature is more accurate than Rousseau's view, recurring hostilities and fratricidal wars became a regular feature of inter-State relations. With the increasing ability of man to fabricate more and more sophisticated means of destruction in warfare, nations and people felt insecure and they thought of some device to control the instrument of war.

However, the idea of ensuring the security of nations through disarmament is of recent origin. In fact, disarmament is coeval with the phenomenon of arms race. According to Noel-Baker, " the growth of modern armaments had hardly begun seventy years ago. It is only since then that the arms race has been the dominating factor in international life".

There were several factors responsible for the arms race. A standing army, technological development and development of modern communications greatly accelerated the arms race in Europe in the 19th Century. Another self-perpetuating factor for the arms race is the lobby of armament industry and war. As Salvador De Madariaga most succinctly put it, " armament firms are interested in fostering a State

① Noel Baker, The Arms Race, (London : Stevens and Sons Limited, 1958), p. 31.

of affairs which will increase the demand for armaments²". Last but certainly not the least, arms race itself is a stimulating factor of arms race. In the words of Noel-Baker, " the arms race was a major factor in the causation of the 1914 war"³. The broad picture of the increase in armaments during the three decades⁴ before the 1914 war is shown in the following three tables:

Table - 1.

Men under Arms - Army and Navy (thousand)

<u>Countries</u>	<u>1884</u>	<u>1900</u>	<u>1908</u>	<u>1914</u>
Britain	281	327	375	397
France	556	659	657	834
Russia	806	938	1260	1253
Germany	458	629	653	864
Austria-Hungary	300	383	389	443
Italy	-	-	270	345
U.S.A.	37	126	128	165
Japan	43	273	256	301

② Salvador De Madariaga, Disarmament, (London : Oxford University Press, 1929)⁴, p. 9.

③ Noel-Baker, Op. Cit., p. 11.

4. Ibid. p. 40.

Table - II

Defence Expenditure in £ Sterling (Millions)

Countries	1883	1900	1908	1913
Britain	28	83	59	77
France	31	39.1	44	82
Russia	36	44.6	60	92
Germany	20	40	59	100
Austria-Hungary	13	13.8	21	24
Italy	12	15.4	18	29
U.S.A.	11	40.1	53	64
Japan	.5	5	4.5	12
Total	151.5	227	318.5	480
Average Price Level (1913 : 100)		95	90	100

Table III

Total Naval Expenditure Voted or Estimated & Million (Since 1908)

<u>Countries</u>	<u>1908</u>	<u>1909</u>	<u>1910</u>	<u>1911</u>	<u>1912</u>	<u>1913</u>	<u>1914</u>
Britain	32.2	35.7	40.4	42.4	45.1	46.3	51.5
Germany	16.5	19.7	22	22	22.6	23	23.4
Italy	6.2	6.5	8.4	8.4	18.5	10.2	10.4
France	12.7	13.3	17.3	17.3	18	20.8	19.8
Russia	10	9.6	11.6	11.6	17.6	25.3	26.7
Austria-Hungary	2.4	4	5.1	5.1	5.8	5.9	3.8

Although nations realized that disarmament could help to divert all these enormous human and material resources wasted on destructive and dangerous weapons to peaceful purposes and to conquer diseases, poverty and human misery, there was neither the will nor the initiative except sporadic and desultory attempts in the past, in the direction of disarmament. The Rush-Bagot Treaty (1817) was the first bilateral agreement on the limitation of armaments concluded in the 19th Century. Under the Treaty, the United States and Great Britain (on behalf of Canada) agreed to reduce the number of warships to three for maintaining peace and security in the border region of the Great Lake. Then at the instance of the Tsar of Russia, there were some infructuous attempts

at the Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907, to bring about some kind of understanding about disarmament which might have considerably reduced the heavy burdens of their armament's budgets. ✓ But the most systematic, concerted and organized efforts to reach disarmament agreements at an international level were made only under the League of Nations, at the end of the First World War. ✓ The Treaty of Versailles also reflected the same urge for multilateral disarmament.

Chapter 2

THE NEW WORLD ORDER UNDER THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

✓The First World War had brought about the downfall of four great empires - The German empire, The Austro- Hungarian empire, The Ottoman empire and the Russian empire. Thus at the end of 1918 a scene of enormous confusion, political and economic confronted the leaders of the Allies and Victorious Powers. ✓The immediate problem of the victors-Britain, America, France, Italy and Japan was a settlement with the defeated nations.

(The peace settlement between the victors and the vanquished took four years to complete). (And at the end a separate treaty was signed with each of the defeated countries. ✓The most important being the Treaty of Versailles concluded with Germany.) Whatever the differences the Allies had over other problems, they were definitely agreed on one thing at Versailles : Germany had been responsible for the war and it must be made to pay for her guilt in no uncertain way. Germany, which had been feared for many years, was broken and it must be made to realize war does not pay. The Versailles Treaty was, therefore, framed to give territorial rewards to those countries which had suffered German attack, and to weaken Germany in various ways so that it could not be a menace to peace again.¹

On January 19, 1919, the greatest peace conference assembled in Paris. But the Germans were not present. On May, 7,

1. Peter ~~Wales~~, World Affairs Since 1919, (London: Methuen and Company Ltd., 1958), P.21.

the Germans were summoned to Paris and handed over the Treaty.

The Treaty of Versailles had certain special characteristics which determined much of its subsequent history. Germany called this Treaty of Versailles a dictated peace treaty. It was imposed by the victors on the vanquished, not negotiated by a process of give and take between them. Nearly every treaty which brings a war to an end is, in one sense, a dictated peace treaty for a defeated power seldom accepts willingly the consequences of its defeat. But in the Treaty of Versailles the element of dictation was more apparent than in any previous peace treaty in modern times. The German Delegation at Versailles was allowed to submit one set of written comments on the draft treaty presented to them. Some of those comments were taken into account; and the revised text was then handed to them with the threat that war would be resumed if it were not signed within five days. Even on these occasions the ordinary courtesies of social intercourse was not observed.²

These unnecessary humiliations, which could only be explained by the intense bitterness of feeling still left over from the war, had far reaching psychological consequences, both in Germany and elsewhere. They fixed in the consciousness of the German people the conception of a 'dictated peace' and that the signature extorted from Germany in these conditions was not morally binding on it.³

② E.H.Carr, International Relations Since the Peace Treaties, (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1937), P.4.
3. Ibid., P.4.

After bitterly protesting that Treaty of Versailles bore no relation to Wilson's Fourteen Points, the Germans were obliged to accept the Allied terms.

The treaty was a compromise between the realistic and revengeful wishes of the French and the idealism of the Americans. On President Wilson's threat the Covenant of the League of Nations was included in the Treaty of Versailles.

Part I of the Treaty of Versailles was the Covenant of the League of Nations.

The II part of Treaty of Versailles included provisions regarding Germany.

First, we will deal with the Covenant of the League of Nations.

The European state system which was utterly chaotic, exhausted and demoralised was to be rebuilt under the League system. But the new order that came into being had within it the seeds of its own destruction and of a future World War.

The distribution of power as it existed at the end of the First World War found its legal expression in the peace treaties of 1919. It became the main purpose of the League of Nations to maintain peace by preserving the Status-quo of 1918 as it had been formulated in these peace treaties. Article 10 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, obligating its members to 'respect and preserve against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all the members of the

League', recognized as one of the purposes of the League the maintenance of the territorial status-quo as established in the peace treaties of 1919. ⁽⁴⁾ The status-quo implications of this Article taken by itself, are evident. They represent the condition that the status-quo was good and should not be changed, this conviction was not absolute, however, and Article 19 indicated that change ^{might} take place with the assent of the states directly concerned.

The provision for treaty revision under Article 19 was so weak as to be virtually meaningless. In the first place, the Assembly could only recommend, it was for the states involved to decide what effect, if any, should be given to the recommendations. Secondly procedural rules apparently required a unanimous vote for the Assembly recommendations. Under these circumstances Article 19 soon became a dead letter. ⁵

✓ Since peaceful change could not take place in adequate measure within the framework of the Covenant, it took place, when the power situation had shifted, outside the Covenant and in disregard of it. Thus Germany was able eventually to throw off many of the obligations imposed by the Treaty of Versailles under threat of force. Fear of a war for which they considered themselves unprepared led Britain and France to acquiesce. ⁶

5. M. Margaret Ball, International Relations, (New York: The Ronald Press, 1956), P. 333.

(4) H.J. Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), P. 37.

6. M. Margaret Ball, op. cit., P. 333.

7. ~~8. Ibid. P. 333.~~

Consequently in the period between the two world wars the struggle for and against the Status-quo was in the main fought either by defending or opposing the territorial provisions of the Treaty of Versailles and their guarantee in Article 10 of the covenant of the League.⁷

The division between status-quo and revisionist powers in the inter-war period did not precisely reflect the alignment of powers at the time of the First World War. All of the Central powers were revisionist in some degree of course, although Austria and Turkey seemed more or less willing to accept their new status as relatively permanent. ✓Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria were wholly revisionist in spirit and had no intention of accepting the 1919 settlement any longer than they must.⁸ ✓In addition to these states, three of the former Allied and Associated Powers were also revisionist. Italy had clearly indicated its dissatisfaction with the peace settlement at that time. Italy entered the war on the side of the Allies. It declared war on the Central Powers not for idealistic reasons but because after secret consultation with both sides it decided more territory could be gained by selling her services to the Allies. Its motives for entering the war were, then, unblushingly for gain. Having failed to achieve her ambition at the peace treaties, Italy began to consider herself a victim of Allies

⑦. H.J. Morgenthau, op. cit., p.37.

⑧. Peter Wales, op. cit., p.198.

rather than a beneficiary.⁹

Japan was dissatisfied with the recognition which it received as a power after 1919, including the unequal status which had been forced upon it at the inter-war naval conferences. It aspired to recognition as the great power of Asia, a status not yet conceded by the western states. Russia theoretically accepted the developments which had reduced its territory after the Revolution of 1917, but later activities indicated that this acceptance was temporary rather than permanent.¹⁰

The remainder of the war time Allied and Associated Powers favoured the retention of the status-quo by which they had gained. So did the new states that owed their existence to the 1919 settlements. The major policies of France and the continental beneficiaries in the inter-war period centered on preserving their gains from the peace treaties. This type of policy was pursued both inside and outside the League of Nations.¹¹

It was therefore, only consistent from their point of view that the nations chiefly opposed to the status-quo established in 1919 should sever their connections within the League. Japan in 1932, Germany in 1933 and Italy in 1937 broke their relations from the League. All these powers were dissatisfied by the territorial status-quo which they gained after 1919.

9. Stephen King-Hall, The World Since the War, (London: Thoms Nelson and sons Ltd., 1937), p.99.

10. Peter Wales, op. cit., p.198.

11. Ibid. p.199.

Thus the new order that came into being, was erected on the irreconcilable and permanent antagonism of the satisfied and dissatisfied European powers. It was the duty of the League system to maintain the balance between these two clearly divided groups. But it failed to do so and the result was the Second World War.

The disarmament negotiation under the League period were essentially a power struggle between the status-quo powers led by France on the one hand and the revisionist powers led by Germany on the other. European security and to a certain extent the world security hinged on every move and counter-move taken by and every alliance and counter-alliance made by France and Germany.

Part II of the Treaty of Versailles relating to Germany included a provision to return Alsace and Lorraine to France and to surrender all its colonies.

Germany was made to accept all the responsibility for the loss and damage caused by Germany's aggressive war. This was the war guilt clause which had never been accepted by Germany.

Finally there was an important section of the treaty designed to render Germany militarily weak. The object of the Allied powers was to render Germany and her allies completely defenceless for the future on the assumption that the victors retained the use of modern weapons. The naval clauses of the treaty were based on a British draft, the military and air clauses on a French draft and each had simply considered how they could remove as completely as possible any possible danger from their terrible foe.¹²

12. C.K. Webster, League of Nations in Theory and Practice, (London : George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1933) p.182.

Under the German Disarmament clauses, the number of men was limited in Germany's case to 100,000. The number of Officers was also limited, conscription was abolished and voluntary long service introduced. It was well meant as a blow at militarism, but it prevented an experiment in the limitation of conscript armies which might have been even more valuable. The great General staff was abolished. Voluntary formations were forbidden.¹³

Even more drastic was the limitation in weapons. Germany's navy had to be reduced to six battleships, six small cruisers, twelve destroyers and twelve torpedo boats. Submarines were entirely prohibited. The treaty also prohibited Germany from building replacement larger than 10,000 tons for armored ships, 6,000 tons for light cruisers, 800 tons for destroyers and 200 tons for torpedo boat. No budgetary limitation had been set for German naval armaments and this mistake was not recognised until Germany produced in the late 1920's her pocket battleship which had a novel armor arrangement and propulsion system.¹⁴

All air forces were outlawed and the possession of military air craft prohibited.

Germany had also destroyed enormous quantities of ground force equipment. In addition to 5,000 artillery pieces, 25,000 machine guns, 3000 mortars and 1,700 aircraft turned over to allies, the German Republic was forced to destroy 6,000,000

13. Ibid. P.183.

14. Henry W. Forbes, The Strategy of Disarmament, (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1962), P.28.

rifles and carbines, 105,000 machine guns, 242,000 machine gun barrels, 54,800 guns and spare barrels, 28,000 gun carriages, 28,400 mortars and spare tubes, 14,000 aircraft, 27,000 aircraft engines, 2,12,000 field telephones, almost 9,000 radio sets and 1,7000 armored vehicles. The ammunitions destroyed amounted over 38,000,000 artillery shells, 16,500,000 hand or rifle grenades and mortar shells, over 60,000,000 fuzes and 490,000,000 round of small arms ammunitions. Under Article 165 of the Peace treaty Germany was permitted to retain 84,000 rifles, 18,000 carbines, 792 machine guns, 1,134 light machine guns, 63 medium mortars, 189 light mortars 20477-mm field guns and 84105-mm howitzers. The ammunition holdings were fixed a maximum of about 56 million rounds for small arms, 25,000 for medium mortars, 151,000 for light mortars, 204,000 for the field guns and 67,000 for the howitzers.¹⁵

✓The disarmament provisions of the Treaty of Versailles included the demilitarization of the left bank of the Rhine and other areas and the opening of the Kiel canal.

German made little protest against this part of the Treaty of Versailles. But she asked that the same process should be applied to victors in accordance with the Armistic terms.

Although it was not a clause in the treaty, the section dealing with disarmament had a preamble which stated that

15. H.W. Forbes, op.cit pp. 25-26.

Germany was to observe the disarmament clauses so as to render possible the initiation of a general limitation of the armaments of all nations.¹⁶ This statement was later proved to be very useful for Hitler, who^{was} able to say that although Germany had been officially certified by the Allies as disarmed by 1922, The allies had never shown any signs of carrying out their implied promises to disarm. Hence Hitler asserted that disarmament clauses of the treaty were null and void.¹⁷

The Paris Peace Conference had definitely anticipated reduction of national armaments. This is evident from the text of the Covenant of the League and the Treaty of Versailles. In the peace treaties, the disarmament of the Central Powers was required as a prerequisite to general disarmament, as is seen from the Preamble to part V of the Treaty of Versailles which says:-

" In order to render possible the initiation of a general limitation of the armaments of all nations, Germany undertakes strictly to observe the military, naval and air clauses which follow".

✓ Therefore, in the minds of those who prepared the Covenant, disarmament was by far the most important of the tasks imposed on the League.

The piling up of armaments, and above all the competition to which it led, have been recognised by all historians as

16. Stephen King-Hall, Our Times, 1900-1960, (London: Faber and Faber, 1961), P. 87.

17. Ibid. P.87.

one of the chief causes of the First World War. Armaments breed suspicion. No one who reads the story of Anglo-German naval competition can deny it. The decision of one country to increase its air defence obliges even a friendly power to do the same and competition results—as one witnesses the effect on British policy of the French aerial defence scheme for expansion. The very fact of the existence of armaments, moreover, is an encouragement to justify their ^{existence} and perhaps their use. The League would not have been born, had there not been the desire to prevent war. Therefore, it was clearly the League's duty to attempt to remove this competition in armaments.¹⁸

The problem of disarmament is inseparable from the problem of security and one cannot be solved without the other, it is, therefore, logical in order to do away with the threat of war, which is as old as the world itself, that man should have tried to take action against the means that permit nations to wage a war.

Armaments lead to wars and insecurity, and, therefore, the way to reduce the chances of war is to reduce armaments and the way to eliminate war is to abolish armaments.

Keeping all this in mind, the framers of the Covenant of the League of Nations, especially in Article 8, made disarmament as the cornerstone of the League system. Carried away by the wave of hope and faith of International organization through the restructuring of international society, it was widely felt at the beginning of the inter-war period that maintenance of peace and

18. H.R. Greaves, The League Committees and World Order, (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), p. 200

security depended entirely on disarmament and that it would be sufficient for countries to agree to a limitation of their respective armed forces in order finally to remove the threat of war. So none of the League's activities had aroused so much interest in the world as its work for the limitation and reduction of armaments.

According to Article 8 of the Covenant : "The members of the League recognize that the maintenance of peace requires the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations". The replacement of the word 'domestic' from the draft Covenant by 'national' is significant, for it includes defense against outside enemies as well as the maintenance of internal order.¹⁹ The council was to formulate plans for the reduction of armaments of the nations whose ^{consent} covenant had to be obtained. It was also laid down that "The geographical situations and circumstances of each state" should be taken into account. The plan was to be revised after every ten years. A special clause was inserted regarding the evils of the private manufacture of arms. The members of the League agreed to interchange "full and frank information" of their armaments and industries which made them possible.

Articles 8 of the Covenant was therefore based upon two fundamental conceptions. The first was the idea of "common action". In a system of international solidarity like that of the League of Nations each state must have sufficient armaments to protect itself against aggression until this 'common action' can begin to function, ~~it left to its own unaided~~

19. C.K. Webster, League of Nations in theory and Practice, (London : George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1933), p. 184.

resources, a state unlawfully attacked, must be sufficiently armed not to be overwhelmed before having had time to mobilize the whole of its national forces. It will therefore be possible for the reduction of armaments to be the more substantial in proportion as the setting in motion of the contemplated 'common action' is less uncertain and likely to be more prompt.²⁰

Viewed from this angle, the limitation of armaments, in conjunction with the development of the systems for the peaceful settlement of dispute and with mutual assistance is means of organizing peace. But in order that it may be carried into effect, the principle of common action must supersede in the minds of the nations that of individual defence. It implies that the League was considered by them as a living reality, invested with positive responsibilities and possessed of effective power.²¹

Concurrently was the second essential idea upon which Article 8 was based - Article 8 of the covenant clearly stated that the point below which national armaments could be reduced depended upon the degree of security enjoyed by the nations concerned. A proper estimate of this safety must take into account not only the manner in which the 'common action' of the League will operate, but also the geographical situation and circumstances of each nation.²²

// An essential factor, dominating the entire problem of the limitation and reduction of armaments and acting, one may say, as a main spring for the functioning of Article 8 of the covenant was security provided under the League. It was decided in the early

20. Documents of International Affairs 1931 (Oxford: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1932), p.43.

21. ibid. p.44

22. Ibid. p. 44

✓years of the League that disarmament must go hand in hand with collective security. ✓It was generally thought that reduction of armaments could not be fully successful unless it is general; that there was a relation between reduction and a satisfactory guarantee of the safety to many governments and that such a guarantee might be found in a defensive agreement open to all countries providing immediate and effective assistance in accordance with a prearranged plan in the event of one of them being attacked.

Thus there is a linkage between disarmament and security. Article 16 of the Covenant of the League of Nations which deals with the collective security says: "Any member who violated the obligations under Articles 12, 13 or 15 was to be considered to have committed an act of war against all other members". The latter undertook to subject the violator 'to the severances of all trade or financial relations, the prohibition of all intercourse between their nationals and the nationals of the covenant-breaking state, and the prevention of all financial, commercial or personal intercourse between the nationals of the covenant breaking state and the nationals of any other state whether a member of the League or not' (Art. 16, para 1).

There was no attempt made in the covenant to provide for an international army, or even for the use of national contingents by League organ. [The League Council was charged with the duty of recommending what military naval, or air-force units members should contribute 'to protect the Covenant of the League'.] Any state which violated its obligations under the Covenant might be expelled by unanimous vote of the Council, not counting the vote of a state in question.

These military and economic sanctions of the covenant were attacked from two conflicting points^{of} view. Those nations fearing attack, such as France complained that the sanctions were not strong enough. As long as each state judged for itself the existence and the extent of its obligations, France could not disarm. On the other hand, such nations as the United States and Canada complained that the sanctions were too strong.

The collective security system under the League did not succeed in outlawing, although it did restrict the use of force. Thus article 10 obliged the members of the League to refrain from the use of force directed against the territory or independence of other members. Under Article 12, Members agreed not to go to war within three months of the handing down of an arbitral award, court decisions, or Council report, in cases to which they were party. League members were bound not to go to war against any member complying with an arbitral award, court decision or unanimous Council report. What is generally referred to as gap in the covenant, however, was the possibility of war in the event of a non-unanimous Council report issued under Article 15. In this case, the parties retained freedom of actions and could commence hostilities after three months. There was also a gap with respect to domestic questions, for the Council might refuse jurisdiction over a dispute on that ground in which case the parties might also go to war.

²³
 drafted // There were other weaknesses as well. The covenant was largely ~~largely~~ in terms of resort to war, and therefore, left hostile activities consisting of forcible measures short of war,

completely unlimited war itself was not defined nor was aggression the difficulties of defining the late term were found to be insurmountable. Enforcement under Article 16 was to occur only when a member or non-member accepting the obligations of covenant for the purpose of a dispute, resorted to war in violation of its obligation under Articles 12, 13 and 15. Other violations were not subject to sanctions, although they might give rise to expulsion.²⁴

Although a reading of Article 16 would indicate that economic sanctions were to be imposed automatically, and the council was to 'advise' on the military sanctions to be undertaken against aggressors, interpretive resolutions soon weakened these provisions. A resolution of the Second Assembly (1921) stated that while a country resorting to war against member in disregard of Articles 12, 13 and 15 was to be deemed to have committed an act of war against all League members, this did not create an actual state of war unless the members proposed so to consider it. This meant that economic sanctions were not thereafter to be automatic. Moreover a resolution of the Fourth Assembly (1923) weakened the whole concept of military sanctions by interpreting Article 10²⁵ in the following sense.

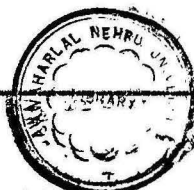
"It is in conformity with the spirit of Article 10 that, in the event of the Council considering it to be its duty to recommend the application of military measures in consequence of an aggression or danger or threat of aggression".

Council

"There shall be bound to take account, more particularly of the geographical situation and of the special conditions of each state"

24. Op. Cit. x

25. M. Margaret Bal, op. cit., pp. 334-335.



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"It is for the constitutional authorities of each member to decide in reference to the obligation of preserving the independence and the integrity of the territory of Members, in what degree the Member is bound to assure the execution of this obligation by the employment of military forces".

"The recommendation made by the Covenant shall be regarded as being of the highest importance and shall be taken into consideration by all the members of the League with the desire ^{to} to execute their engagements in good faith".

As a result of this statement members might disregard at will the council's call ^{for} for military sanctions. Not disobedience alone, but disobedience accompanied by violence was necessary for the sanctions to apply. Moreover, if a state was attacked it had the right ~~ever~~ ²⁶ of self-defense and this was not taken away from it by the Covenant.

Although France had voted in favour of these interpretive resolutions which had weakened the Covenant, it was anxious to strengthen the collective security system.

The weakness of the covenant became all too apparent in connection with the discussion of disarmament which took place during the early years of the League. Britain and the United States relied heavily upon the conclusions of the Noel Baker (British) and Nye (American) investigations of the machinations of the munitions makers in connection with the outbreak of First World War. These two countries were of the opinion that armaments lead to war, and that war, therefore, could not be eliminated until arms limitation was agreed to. France, its continental allies, and some other states, profoundly disagreed. To these latter countries it seemed utterly

impossible to disarm unless their security was guaranteed.

It was natural, therefore, that the first years of the League should be largely occupied with the question of security. On the one hand, France and the succession states demanded more definite guarantees and flatly refused to reduce their armaments until they obtained them. On the other, the British group led by Canada, and the neutrals led by the Scandinavian Powers, wished to reduce in scope and certainty even those guarantees which they had already given in Articles X and XVI.

Naturally, these revelations were not relished by those Frenchmen who hoped to erect a permanent and automatic machine for the security of the new Europe. It felt its position to be particularly vulnerable because Britain and the United States had failed to ratify the treaties of alliance, directed against Germany, which they had offered to France, at the Peace Conference in order to give up its claim to the left bank of the Rhine. France, therefore, insisted that the collective security provisions of the Covenant should be strengthened before it would commit itself to the holding of a disarmament conference, 28

As the situation developed, disarmament efforts soon proved to be ineffectual because the League collective security system remained weak.

The failure to strengthen the League collective security system and the inability to agree disarmament had for reaching consequences.

27. M. Margaret Ball, op. cit., p. 335.

28. C.K. Webster, op. cit., p. 149 .

The seriousness of the situation was perhaps not fully realised by 1933, as is illustrated by the appeasement policies pursued toward Hitler between 1933 and 1939. Nevertheless, countries were beginning to "hedge their bets" on the League system well before that; hope of protection through the League was slight even by 1933. That is why the nations like France did not agree to any proposal for reduction and limitation of armaments. The depression, the attempt to bring about an Austro-German customs Union in 1931, successful Japanese aggression in Manchuria in 1931-32, Hitler's rise to power in Germany in 1933, Italy's invasion on Ethiopia and finally the failure of the Disarmament Conference of 1932-34 all increased the sense of fear. Attempts were made to find security outside the League by way of alliances.

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Chapter 3

The Strategy of Disarmament under the League System

The Members of the League of Nations as a whole agreed to look to the League Council to draw up a plan for arms reduction. This arrangement was perfectly reasonable because the question of reduction of armaments depended, essentially on the conduct of big powers.

The purpose of Article 8 of the Covenant, which dealt with the reduction of armaments, was not only that armaments should be reduced, but that they should be reduced according to an international plan and no country should be free to prepare armaments beyond that prescribed limit. The essence of the covenant was that states should renounce their right to be the sole judge of their own armaments. This was the most dangerous of all questions. The crucial issue was to bring national armaments under international control.

Neither this nor any of the obligations of the Covenant with regard to disarmament were fulfilled. No such plan as had been foreseen by the states at the time of covenant-making, was ever prepared by the Council. Private manufacture of war material was neither prohibited nor regulated. The arms traffic never came under the control of the League. The pledge that full and frank information of the armed forces and war industries should be exchanged between Members of the League was regarded as impracticable. Each state continued to believe that its security depended entirely on its own armaments. Each state wanted to maintain armaments equal or superior to

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those of their neighbours.

Therefore it is not a cheerful task to describe the all long and complex disarmament negotiations which were never to attain to the results at which they aimed . But the efforts of the League of Nations towards disarmament must be told. Because the problem of disarmament, and the debates of the Assembly, the council, the Temporary Mixed Commission, the Permanent Advisory Commission, The Preparatory Commission for world Disarmament Conference and the World Disarmament Conference of 1932 itself, constitute an essential part of the annals of the League disarmament efforts and also the general history of the inter-war ~~efforts~~ period.

When the League came into existence the situation had changed completely. There was everywhere an ardent desire for lasting peace. The dangers of excessive military preparations and of competition in armaments were seen in the World War of 1914-1918. Now there was everywhere a hope that the states would come to an agreement for the renunciation of these means of destruction.

Permanent Advisory Commission

The Council of the League had taken a first step as provided in the covenant, which lays down in

Article 9 that :

" A Permanent Commission shall be constituted to advise the Council on the execution of the provisions of Articles 1 and 8, and on military , naval and air questions generally".

(According to Article 9 of the covenant a Permanent Advisory Commission was set up to advise the council on military , naval and air questions. The Commission consisted of army, navy and air force officers of each of the countries represented on the council. Each delegation included a naval, a military and an air representative, who were respectively members of three technical sub-commissions namely Military Commission, Naval Commission and Air Commission.)

M. Bougeois of France presented a report to the Council on the subject of the constitution of the Permanent Advisory Commission on May 19, 1920. He described the duties of this commission as follows : (1) to prepare the military naval and air regulations for states seeking admission to the League .(Article 1 of the Covenant), (2) to investigate the military, naval and air status of the Members of the League and to formulate plans for the reduction of armaments and for the limitation of the manufacture of arms.(Article 8 of the covenant), (3) to advise the council on the military, naval and air forces to be used by a Member states against a defaulting state. (Article 16 of the Covenant), (4) to assist the council in investigating the manner in which Germany executes the military regulations of the treaty¹ (Article 213 of the treaty of Versailles).

The council instructed the Permanent Advisory

1. League of Nations' Official Journal, June , 1920. p. 31.

Commission to draft regulations on the military, naval and air forces of the states, those who had applied for admission to the League and to request the Governments signatory to the Arms Traffic Convention of St. Germain of September, 10, 1919, to furnish information on their export of arms and to submit proposals for the formulation of Central International Office for the exchange of information, as provided in the convention .

The first meeting of the Commission was held at St. Sebastain in August 1920. The Commission submitted its report to the Council on October 22. The following subjects had been dealt with:-

(1) Asphyxiating gases. (2) Composition of the Military , naval and air forces of the states which would be seeking admission to the League of Nations.(3) Traffic in Arms and Munitions. (4) Constitution and composition of the organization to be placed at the disposal of the Council of the League for the exercise of the right of investigation authorized by Article 213 of the Treaty of Versailles, Article 159 of the Treaty of St. Germain, Article 104 of the Treaty of Neuilly, Article 143 of the Treaty of Trinon. (5) Preliminary enquiries to serve as a basis for proposals for the carrying out of clauses of Article 8 of the Covenant .

2. F. Kellor, Security Against War (II Vol.), New York: Macmillan Company, 1924) p. 684.

3. League of Nations' Official Journal , Nov-Dec., 1920. p. 37.

On these matters the commission agreed as follows : (1) The employment of gases would be a fundamentally cruel weapon, though not more so than certain other weapons, commonly employed , provided that they would only be used against combatants. Their use against non-combatants as objective , should however, be regarded as barbarous and inexcusable . (2) It would be useless to seek to restrict the employment of gases in wartime by prohibiting⁴ or limiting their manufacture in peace time. (3) The prohibition of laboratory experiment would be impracticable .

The Commission found the military, naval and air conditions of the Members of the League as an unsettled. With regard to traffic in arms and munitions, the commission was of the view that a Central International Office as proposed by the Council would be of no use until the St. Germain Convention for the control of traffic in Arms came into force. Instructions were issued by the Sub-Commissions to their delegates to obtain informations from their governments concerning the organisation to be placed at the disposal of the League. Finally the Commission agreed to "consider practical methods which may be employed for rapidly obtaining when the Council should so decide, all information with regard to armaments, and also the principles on which future plans for the reduction of armaments might be based"⁵,

4. League of Nations' Official Journal, Nov.Dec.1920 p.39.

5. Ibidit., p. 45.

The Sixth Committee of the First Assembly was to deal with disarmament . It was decided in this Committee that not only technical questions were involved in disarmament but also the geographical situation of the countries and their relations with neighbouring countries.

According to this proposition, the Sub-Committee of the Sixth Committee drew up a report to the Assembly which was adopted unanimously by the Committee. It had three resolutions referring to the work of the Permanent Advisory Commission. ✓ The first resolution urged the signatory states of the St. Germain Arms Traffic Convention to ratify the convention without delay and establish the International Office of Control. ✓ The second resolution urged that the Assembly to request the Council to order an investigation of the private manufacture of war material. ✓ The third resolution recommended as follows:

"Realising on the otherhand that a complete and comprehensive plan of disarmament depends upon the following conditions: ✓ first, under the responsibility of the powers signatory to the treaties of peace, upon the complete fulfilment of the reduction of armaments imposed by the above mentioned treaties upon certain of these powers; ✓ secondly, upon the exercise, as occasion may demand, of the right of investigation accorded by these treaties to the Council of the League of Nations in order to maintain this resolution and lastly, ✓ on the collaboration of the other great military powers which have hitherto remained outside the League, invite the Council " to request the Permanent Advisory Commission for Military Naval and Air questions rapidly to

to complete its technical examination into the present condition of armaments...."⁶

When the Assembly met in November 1920, it found that the Commission did nothing in the direction of reduction in armaments. It had reported negatively on every point of the programme submitted to it by the Council. What also could be expected from a Commission which was composed of only Military experts. Then the Assembly decided to set up another Commission which would be a different one from the Permanent Advisory Commission. It would differ from the first on two important points. Firstly it would be mainly a civilian Commission through ^hthese would be some military experts also and secondly, its members would be chosen by the Council on their own merits. They would not be the representatives of the governments.

The work of the Permanent Advisory Commission could be summed up as follows:

With regard to the right of investigation under Article 213 of the Treaty of Versailles, the Commission proposed that, should the Council desire to exercise this right, the Commission would appoint from among its members one delegate from each state represented on the Council.

On the subject of private manufacture of war material, the Commission decided to wait until it had been informed of the programme of the Temporary Mixed Commission which was created recently. On the question of interchange of information the Commission decided that the questionnaire⁷ submitted to the Council in December, 1920, covered the subject, but the time was not ~~so~~ suitable to send out such questionnaires.⁷

6. Records of the First Assembly, pp. 515-23.

7. F.Kellor, op. cit. p. 690 .

Temporary Mixed Commission

On the recommendation of the Assembly, the Council set up a temporary Mixed Commission consisting of 6 persons who were competent in the political, social and economic matters, 6 members of the Permanent Advisory Commission, 4 members of the Provincial Economic and Financial Commission, 6 members from the governing body of the International Labour Office, of which three members would be employers and three would be employees³.

The Temporary Mixed Commission began its work in July 1921. It divided its work into threesub-commissions (1) for the study of traffic in arms and manufacture of war material; (2) for the right of investigation and mutual control and (3) for statistical enquiry.

Some resolutions were passed in the Second Assembly, which charged the Commission with three functions : (1) preparation of a treaty for the reduction of armaments (2) investigation of armaments, of military budgets and of poison gas; and (3) traffic in arms including private manufacture, ratification of the St. Germain Convention and examination of surplus stock.⁹

7. Ibid. F. Kellor, op.cit., p. 680

8. F. Kellor, op.cit., p. 688 .

9. Ibid. p. 695 .

In its very first report the Temporary Mixed Commission mentioned about the technical and political difficulties in the way of disarmament.

The Commission considered the question of private manufacture of arms. On February 25, 1921, the Permanent Advisory Commission reported that no action could be taken while the Temporary Mixed Commission after reaching the same conclusion in regard to absolute prohibition and considering certain measures for the establishment of control, decided that the international traffic in arms rather than the private manufacture of arms was the proper point at which to attack the problem.¹⁰

On the other hand, the League tried to solve this problem in other ways. For instance, the Assembly recommended the Council to invite members of the League to agree not to exceed, for a specified period, the total expenditure on military, naval and air forces provided for in their budgets for the current year. The possibilities of limiting the use of poisonous gases in warfare and of the publication of fresh discoveries in this field were also considered. But on the whole the results of these endeavours were hopeless. But during this period the most important work was the preparation of the draft treaty of Mutual Assistance which was submitted by the Temporary Mixed Commission to the Assembly in ^{Sept} 1923.

10. Survey of International Affairs, 1924, (Oxford: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1925), p. 19.

The Temporary Mixed Commission first studied a plan, which was submitted by Lord Esher,¹¹ in this plan he suggested a massive and immediate reduction in the land and air forces of all the European powers. He suggested that these forces should be limited according to a fixed ratio and the Washington Agreement of 1921-22 should be taken as an example for this. They should be reckoned by units of 30,000 men of all ranks: France should have six such units, Italy & Poland four, others including Britain, three or less.

✓ The Esher plan was based on the conviction that armaments were in themselves a cause of war and disarmament promoted security. But this plan was rejected by the Permanent Advisory Committee for some technical reasons and the Temporary Mixed Commission rejected it because it did not take into account of the political and psychological factors.¹²

Upto now a very different attitude was that of France , Belgium , Poland and other European countries because they were always afraid of Germany's attack. These states also declared that they wished for nothing more than for a massive arms reduction. But they were of the view that the armaments were the result of the insecurity and fear Armaments were not the cause of insecurity and

11. F.P.Walters, History of the League of Nations (Vol.1), (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 220.

12. Survey of International Affairs, 1924, op.cit., p.21.

fear. These states were very much afraid of Germany's vast preponderance in man-power and enormous industrial resources. They declared that if Europe was assured of peace and if it was certain that any attempt to break the treaty of Versailles would be met by counter action then the reduction of armaments would follow. At the peace Conference France had given up her demand of Rhineland on a pledge from the United States and Britain that they would come to its help if it were attacked. The pledge had been repudiated because the United States could not become the member of the League of Nations. France was left with the covenant as its sole guarantee. But that guarantee was not enough because the United States was outside the League of Nation and Britain was showing a strong inclination to minimize its commitments under the covenant. Therefore, France was of the view that either it must maintain its armed forces at a high level or it must receive new pledges for its security.

This relationship between disarmaments and security was considered in the Temporary Mixed Commission to a great extent. It accepted the view of some states that security should precede disarmament. Keeping this in mind a series of four propositions was submitted to the Temporary Mixed Commission on July 7, 1922 by Lord Cecil. His points were that no plan for the reduction of armaments could be successful unless it were general; majority of the states could not agree to reduction of any proposal regarding reduction of armaments unless they received satisfactory

guarantees for their security; that such guarantees should be general in character, and, finally, there could no question of ~~guaranteeing~~ providing such guarantees except in consideration of a definite undertaking to reduce armaments. ¹³

The Temporary Mixed Commission adopted these proposals but the Permanent Advisory Commission insisted that the guarantees to be offered in consideration of an undertaking to reduce armaments would not be effective unless it were given substance in a technical plan for military co-operation pre-arranged between the parties. ¹⁴ The last suggestion was rejected by Lord Cecil and his supporters on the political ground. They said that in practice it would not lead to a general reduction in armaments but would revive the system of competitive group alliances which had resulted in the First World War. These two points were much debated in the Assembly and at last the Assembly adopted a resolution known as the Assembly Resolution XIV. It says: "The Assembly, having considered the report of the Temporary Mixed Commission on Armament on the question of the general Treaty of Mutual Guarantee, being of opinion that this report can in no way affect the complete validity of all the which are known to exist between states, and considering that this report contains valuable suggestion as to the methods by which

13. Survey of International Affairs, ^{1924,} op.cit., p. 21.

14. op. cit., p. 21.

a treaty of Mutual Guarantee could be made effective, is of the opinion that : (1) No scheme for the reduction of armaments within the meaning of Article 8 of the covenant, can be fully successful unless it to be general. (2) In the present state of the world many governments would be unable to accept the responsibility for a serious reduction of armaments unless they received in exchange a satisfactory guarantee of the safety of their country. (3) Such a guarantee can be found in a defensive agreement which should be open to all countries, binding them to provide immediate and effective assistance in accordance with a pre-arranged plan in the event of one of them being attacked, provided that the obligation to render assistance to a country attacked shall be limited in principle to those countries situated in the same part of the globe. In cases, however, where for historical, geographical, or other reasons a country in special danger of attack, detailed arrangements should be made for its defense in accordance with the above mentioned plan. (4) As general reduction of armaments was the object of the three preceding statements, and ^{The Treaty of Mutual Assistance The means} of achieving that object, previous consent to this reduction was therefore the first condition for the Treaty. This reduction could be carried out either by means of a general Treaty, which was the most desirable plan, or by means of partial treaties designed to be extended and open to all countries." 15

On this resolution, the Temporary Mixed Commission prepared a draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance. It was based on a British and French draft. The British draft aimed at the

conclusion of a general treaty guaranteeing to a state that was attacked the support of all other members of the League. But the special treaties were to be concluded only when the Council by a three-quarters majority, decided to negotiate a supplementary defensive agreement at the request of a State which was in a dangerous situation.

The French draft reverted to the idea of a pre-arranged plan of defense.

The debate on these two drafts centred on the two problems of the prevention of war and of mutual guarantees. The Temporary Mixed Commission entered upon the task of fusing the French and the British draft into one and the result was the draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance. This Treaty declared that an aggressive war was an international crime. It maintained the principle of general assistance and also provided for the conclusion of supplementary defensive agreements by which the signatory States undertook to put into immediate execution the plan of assistance they had agreed in case of aggression.

The Treaty also declared that if there was any threat of war, it might be advisable for the Council to take measures hitherto contemplated only when war had definitely broken out. If one or more of the signatory States became engaged in hostilities, it would be for the Council to decide within four days, who was the aggressor and which state was entitled to the assistance provided under the treaty. The Treaty did not define an act of aggression.

The Treaty contained the disarmament obligations recognized by the signatories. The mutual assistance was to be given only to those States which had reduced their armaments. It also provided for the establishment of demilitarized zones.

From the very beginning, it seemed that the Treaty had little chance of survival. It had no clear backing from any government. It was submitted to the States outside the League as well as to the Member States. Twenty nine replies were received. Eighteen acceded in principle but suggested some changes and improvements in it. But the opposition which the draft encountered soon made it clear that it could not come into force unless it was fully transformed.

✓ The Russians criticized the Treaty as lengthy on the general basis that there was no linkage between security and disarmament and that all that was needed was immediate all round reduction of armaments. ✓ The Americans declared that the Treaty was closely bound up with the covenant and therefore they could not accept it. ✓ The Britishers did not like the Treaty. They contróverted every proposal in the Treaty. ✓ France approved the Treaty and Italy also approved it except the provisions for special agreements.
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✓ || The Treaty was rejected by the Allies and Associated of France on the ground that these proposals did not

promise a sufficient increase of security to justify any reduction of the national armaments. The Treaty was rejected by the United Kingdom and its Dominions on the ground that it involved great extension of existing international obligations. Germany declared its inability to undertake the obligations involved on account of the almost total unilateral ¹⁸ disarmament to which it had already been subjected.

The main factor which really decided the fate of the treaty was the attitude of the British commonwealth and this was ^{for many reasons. Firstly Great Britain was} one of the greatest power in the world and it enjoyed a special prestige among small states Members, therefore, its ^{policy was likely to influence the} decisions of small Member-States. Secondly, the united naval power of the Commonwealth would be very valuable sanction for the enforcement of the terms of the Treaty in case of need.

In the British government's reply it was pointed out that "the main criticisms of the proposed treaty fall under two heads: Are the guarantees contained therein sufficient to justify a state in reducing its armaments? Are the obligations to be undertaken towards other states of such a nature that the nations of the world can conscientiously engage to carry them out.?" ¹⁹

18. Survey of International Affairs, 1924, op.cit., pp.25-26

19. Salvador De Madariga, Disarmament, London: Oxford University Press, Humphry Milford, 1929), p.102

Some states also pointed out that the determination of an aggressor was uncertain both on account of the unanimity rule of the Council and of the absence of any sufficient criteria.

In the Commission itself a cleavage had taken place between the points of view of states which were nervous about their security and those which were not. The states which felt themselves secure did not want to render assistance. None of them was willing to come to other's help on the applicant's mere request. The states which felt themselves insecure were not willing to reduce their armaments unless they received an effective assistance in case of need.

Thus due to the lack of ratification by the majority of states, this draft treaty of Mutual Assistance failed completely.

Geneva Protocol

After the failure of the Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance, The Assembly of the League met on September 1, 1924 to solve the problem of security and disarmament. It had been realized that it was impossible to formulate any plan for the arms reduction without taking into account the problem of security. The assembly drafted the Geneva Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes in 1924.

This Geneva Protocol was a successful attempt to translate into a formal system the formula - Arbitration Security and disarmament. This system was based on the conviction that the development of pacific settlement gives a basis

for confidence in the national security and that confidence makes possible steps towards disarmament.

This triple formula, namely, arbitration, Security and disarmament was not against the essential lines of the Covenant of the League of Nations. In fact, the founders of the League had forseen each part of the triple formula. The covenant laid emphasis on arbitration and on other methods for the pacific settlement of disputes; all that remained was to close the gap, if the Council were divided, the use of force would in theory become legitimate. The Covenant provided for security in so far as each member had to respect the territorial integrity and independence of other members, and to apply sanctions against that State which had violated the order of the Council or the Assembly all that remained was to make these sanctions effective. The Covenant also called for the reduction of armaments. For this the Protocol said that the Council should draw up a plan for the arms reduction as soon as possible.

The Geneva Protocol dealt with arbitration, security and disarmament in detail.

✓ The new thing in the Protocol was that it attempted to improve the Covenant and to provide additional security through compulsory resort to arbitration. ✓ The Covenant left the door open for war in cases when the Council failed to reach a unanimous judgement and also in

cases where the matter of the dispute fell within the domestic jurisdiction of a State. The Protocol tried to remove these weaknesses. It maintained that all disputes of a legal character should be submitted to the Permanent Court of International Justice, whose decision would be binding. But if the Council was not able to reach a unanimous judgement, it would not give freedom to the disputants to go to war. The Council had to refer the dispute to a committee of arbitrators whose decision would be binding. As regard the second weakness, the Protocol provided that such disputes which fell under the domestic jurisdiction of the States, though excluded by the Covenant under Article 15, should be submitted to the procedure of conciliation under Article 11, and no State, who had brought the matter under that Article, should be judged as an aggressor.

The Protocol defined an act of aggressor. Any State which decided to make war or fail to carry out the arbitrator's award would be considered as aggressor. Then it became the duty of all signatories of the Protocol to help the attacked State. They pledged that their cooperation should be loyal and effective, but they retained control of their own forces and were bound to help only when their geographical position and the condition of their armaments allowed them to do so.

21. F. P. Walters, op. cit., p. 273.

✓ The Protocol also provided for a Disarmament Conference to be held in Geneva on June 15, 1925. The Protocol would come into force only when the Conference had adopted a general plan for reduction of national armaments.

✓ The Assembly met on October 1, 1924, to receive the final text of the Protocol. Then the resolution was voted and the Geneva Protocol opened for signature. ✓ The French government was the first to sign the Protocol without any reservation, and its example was followed by Belgium, Brazil, Albania, Bulgaria, Chile, Poland, Greece, Yugoslavia, Latvia, Portugal, Finland etc.

✓ On the other hand the attitude of the British Commonwealth countries was not favourable towards the Protocol because of the exaggerated and even absurdly accounts of obligations to which Great Britain was alleged to have committed itself. They came to the conclusion that the Protocol was unworkable, that it would not lead either to world peace or to the prosperity or security of the British Commonwealth, therefore it should not be accepted in its present form.

✓ The Prime Minister of Canada particularly emphasized the consideration of the effect of non-participation of the United States upon attempt to enforce sanctions and particularly so in the case of contiguous countries like Canada.

✓Australia also criticized the Protocol.

These and other considerations had, in the minds of the British government, turned the balance against the Protocol and the British government rejected the Protocol. The British government objected to the compulsory arbitration because of the weakening of those reservations in Articles 15 of the Covenant which prevented any interference by the League in matters of domestic jurisdiction. The clauses which dealt with the sanctions were obscure, and would prove inefficient and they destroyed the balance and changed the spirit of the Covenant.

The British representative said that the purpose of the Protocol was to bring disarmament by closing some gaps in the scheme of the Covenant for peaceful settlement of international disputes and by sharpening the sanctions. He further said that the changes which the Protocol had made in the Covenant were formal rather substantial, they aimed at theoretical completeness rather than practical effect. But it was the sanctions which worried the British government because the United States was outside the League of Nations and thus remained outside the obligations. With it remaining aloof and perhaps trading with the offender, there was no certainty either that sanctions would stop trade or that the offender would be crushed or even that it would suffer most.

23. Denys P. Myers, World Disarmament, (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1932), p. 114⁴

✓ It was true that the Protocol had not modified Article 16. ✓ But no body could deny the fact that an increase in the number of disputes in which the council could determine the aggressor meant an increase in the number of disputes in which sanctions might have to be imposed.²⁴

Britain also criticized the Protocol because it tended to preserve the status quo which France wished to protect. It was of the view that the peace settlement of 1919 was defective because it was the outcome of a war.²⁵ There were many who believed that it would be easier to change the status-quo if the threat of changing it by force was entirely removed.

Britain said that the Protocol was calculated to meet the wishes of those States which felt themselves insecure. The best solution for their security would be to supplement the Covenant with the cooperation of the League by making special arrangements in order to meet special needs.²⁶

Thus Britain had four reasons for rejecting the Protocol. " The opposition of the Commonwealth Members; fear

24. E. H. Carr, International Relations Between The Two World Wars, (London: Macmillan Company, 1948), p. 92.

25. Salvador De Madariaga, op. cit., p. 113.

26. Ten Years of World Cooperation, op. cit., p. 75 .

of trouble with the United States; a reluctance to underpin the territorial settlement of Eastern Europe and the deep seated dislike of the Foreign Office for compulsory²⁷ arbitration."

The Protocol could not survive if rejected by the members of the British Empire besides which, many other States were avowedly modelling their attitude. Japan had already declared that it would not ratify the Protocol if it was rejected by Britain. A similar stand point was adopted by Italy.

Thus the Geneva Protocol came to an end. With the failure of the Protocol five years of hard and intensive labour to devise an international security system on a world wide scale came to naught.

Locarno Agreements

After the failure of the Geneva Protocol, the French search for security had once more run into a dead end and the French thought that it was again the fault of Britain. It was due to the unfavourable attitude of Britain that both the draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance and the Geneva Protocol failed. Now France was again in search of security.

27. F.P. Watters, op. cit., p. 284.

At the end of 1922 the German government had proposed to the French government to enter into a mutual pledge, in which Britain and Belgium would be included, not to resort to war against one another for a generation. Because at that time France had occupied Ruhr, therefore, this scheme was more advantageous to Germany than France. The French Prime Minister rejected the scheme at that time. But when the Geneva Protocol failed the French thought that it was time to have political as well as financial settlement with Germany. At this time Britain was prepared to guarantee the Franco-German frontier against aggression by Germany which was what France had always asked. 28

Locarno Agreements were signed in such an atmosphere. Although the Locarno Agreements were concluded outside the League of Nations, they could not be ignored, because they put into application certain ideas evolved during the previous years by the League of Nations. Their aim was to bring disarmament by increasing the sense of security in Europe. They depended largely for their effectiveness on the existence of the League. Their object was "to provide for the peaceful settlement of disputes of every nature which may eventually arise between them and to give these powers supplementary guarantees within the frame work of the Covenant and the treaties in force." 29

28. E. H. Carr, op. cit., p. 93 .

29. Ten Years of world Co-operation, op.cit., p.77.

On October 16, 1925, the ministers of all the States concerned assembled at a town of Locarno and the following agreements were signed:-

- (1) The treaty guaranteeing the Franco-German and Belo-German frontiers;
- (2) Arbitration treaties between Germany on the one hand and France, Belgium, Czechoslovakia and Poland on the other;
- (3) Treaties of mutual guarantee between France on the one ³⁰ hand and Czechoslovakia and Poland on the other.

The treaties had some important implications. First, voluntary endorsement by Germany of its western frontier gave that frontier a more sacred character and it was realized by every body that the obligations which were imposed by the treaty of Versailles were morally, if not legally, less binding than obligations voluntarily accepted. Secondly, Britain was ready to guarantee certain frontiers and it refused to guarantee others. This divided the frontiers into the first and second class from the security point of view. In the long run, the Locarno Treaty was destructive both of the Versailles Treaty and of the Covenant. It encouraged the view that the Treaty of Versailles lacked binding force unless it was confirmed by other treaty which was voluntarily accepted by the States. The Locarno Treaty also led to the view that the States could not be expected to take military action in defence of frontiers in which they themselves were not directly concerned.

But we cannot ignore the contribution of the Locarno Treaty to the pacification of Europe. It was the first time since the First World War that a fair and impartial balance was struck between French and German needs. Austen Chamberlain described it, as "the real dividing line between the years of war and the years of peace."³¹

The Locarno Treaty knit together States which had been enemies in the war.

Preparatory Commission for Disarmament Conference

After the failure of the Geneva Protocol, the Council created the preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference in December, 1925. It replaced the Temporary Mixed Commission. It consisted of (1) representatives of States members of the Council, (2) representatives of the States which were in a special position as regards disarmament because of their geographic situation. The United States, Russia and Turkey also entitled to sit in the Commission. Germany was also invited to take part. The Commission had two sub-Commissions:- Sub-Commission A was composed of military and air experts for each of the countries represented on the Commission. Sub-Commission B consisted of representatives of each delegation to the preparatory Commission.

31. E. H. Carr, op. cit., p. 97 .

The task of the Preparatory Commission was to prepare for the World Disarmament Conference and to lay down guiding principles for that conference's work.

When the Preparatory Commission was doing its work, certain developments connected with the problems of the reduction and limitation of armaments were taking place. Some of these were within the orbit of the League and some were outside the League.

General Act for the Pacific Settlement of Disputes

The General Act for the Pacific Settlement of Disputes was within the orbit of the League of Nations. It was drafted by the Committee on Arbitration and Security and presented to the Assembly in 1928. Upto 1932 it was brought into force by twenty states.

Outside the League of Nations was the Paris Pact for the Renunciation of War as an Instrument of National Policy.

Pact of Paris

The pact of Paris also called the Kellogg Brihd Pact was based on the consideration that the problem of disarmament could not be solved only by the reduction of armaments but it would follow only by the renunciation of force in setting the international disputes. ³²

The Pact of Paris declared: "The High Contracting parties solemnly declare in the name of their respective

countries peoples that they condemn recourse to war for the solution of international controversies, and renounce it as an instrument of national policy in their relation with one another³³.

The Pact of Paris did not mention any sanctions, it asserted no positive obligation to seek a pacific settlement and it also did not outlaw war. It only condemned or renounce war. Moreover there were many reservations which permitted each state war of self-defence and in such cases each state would be its own judge.³⁴ Nevertheless the pact was regarded as the long awaited victory of Man's better nature. The Pact signed on August 27, 1928, was ratified by nearly every state in the world. Britain ratified it with the reservation that the Pact was not to obstruct its liberty of action in areas of vital interest.³⁵ The Soviet Union was the first country to ratify it but it expressed its regret that there was not in the pact any obligation what so ever having to do with disarmament. Any international agreement, which renounced war and also talked about the limitation of armaments but did not offer any guarantee, would be a dead letter very soon.³⁶

33. Documents on International Affairs, 1923, op.cit., pp.1-2.

34. C. Perkins, International Relations, (Boston : Houghton Mifflin. Company,) p. 494.

35. Ibid. p. 495.

36. Documents of International Affairs, 1928, op.cit., p.11.

But the pact of Paris increased the feeling of security among nations because the United States was associated with it. The use of the Kellogg Pact in Far Eastern disputes had shown that the United States, as Senator Borah said, could not regard a violation of the Pact as something which did not concern it. The attempt to harmonize the Covenant with the Pact of Paris had also brought up the question of security.

The Draft Convention of 1930

In December 1930, the Preparatory Commission for World Disarmament Conference prepared a Draft convention and submitted it to the Council. The convention was not adopted unanimously. The U.S.S.R and Germany criticized it and they voted against it. The U.S.S.R was of the view that it was against the Soviet desires of universal disarmament and Germany voted against it because no provision was included in it for the termination of Germany's status of inequality, in the matter of disarmament.

(The Draft Convention gave emphasis on quantitative disarmament. It also discussed the problems of qualitative disarmament, chemical and bacteriological weapons, budgetary regulation of armaments and national control and inspection.)

The quantitative reduction of armed forces had occupied an important place and it had revolved round the problem of how to control or reduce man power and equipment without changing the existing relative situation. The problem of ratio was given a great attention in the Preparatory Commission but no agreement was reached by the Preparatory Commission on an acceptable ratio.

The Draft Commission finally adopted by the Commission was a hollow shell. It dealt with the limitation of effectives according to a table which ^{was} left blank. ³⁸ Reserves were not to be included but police forces, gendarmerie, customs officials and forest guards were to be counted. There were separate tables for home and colonial forces. The period of service was also to be limited according to a table which was left blank. Effectives were to be controlled by an average, the so called "average daily effectives".

Reserves were not to be counted in controlling the effectives. This question developed into a dual between France and Germany. After the First World War France had the largest conscript army in Europe except Russia while Germany's forces had been reduced to the lowest point according to the Treaty of Versailles. Germany wanted that reserves should be included in the limitation of effectives

38. League of Nations, Preparatory Commission for Disarmament Conference, C.P.D. 202 (2), (Geneva: Dec. 9, 1930) pp. 3-6.

because the German personnel in army served for twelve years and hence the number of reservists available in Germany was less than France.³⁹

(No agreement was reached in the case of ground force equipment and air forces but a little success was achieved in the field of naval disarmaments. The Preparatory Commission adopted budgetary rather than direct limitation for land armaments in 1930, Although the States were divided in their opinion whether this problem was to be solved by direct method or by budgetary limitation.

The Washington Conference of 1921-22 solved the naval armaments problem to some extent. This Conference resulted in naval limitation agreement between the United States, Britain, Japan, France and Italy and accepted a ratio of 5:5:3:1:67:1.67 for capital ships.

In Preparatory Commission the naval question developed into a struggle as to whether naval armaments should be controlled by classes or by global tonnage. Britain insisted upon limitation by category while other countries wanted limitation by global tonnage. Every country was inspired by its own national interests. The

39. H. W. Forbes op. cit., p. 22.

Draft Convention finally adopted was a compromise between global tonnage and tonnage by category. But this pleased no one.

With regard to the aircraft, the Draft Convention provided for the limitation of military planes and dirigibles by number and by horse power, with the usual blank tables attached. Civilian planes were to be free from restrictions but it was laid down that they should not possess any military feature.

The Draft Convention of 1930 also discussed the problems of qualitative disarmament. The aim of qualitative disarmament was to remove aggressive weapons and thus to remove the feeling of insecurity between nations. After the First World War it was thought that aggressive war could be eliminated by outlawing aggressive weapons. But no agreement could be arrived at during the League period as to which types of weapons were aggressive and which defensive.

With regard to military personnel the question of qualitative disarmament developed into a duel whether professional or conscript armies had a more defensive character. The Draft Convention of 1930 provided for conscript armies. It did not indicate even a period of service. It was mainly due to the attitude of the French government while it was anxious to disarm

Germany but it was not willing to abandon its own large conscript army.

The Preparatory Commission failed to arrive at an acceptable definition of aggressive weapons. Although there was a strong wave for the abolition of aggressive weapons but what constituted aggressive weapons, there was no agreement among States.

With regard to naval weapons, the Draft Convention mentioned that capital ships were to be limited to a maximum of 35,000 tons and they were to have no guns larger than 15-inch caliber. It provided that air-craft carriers were to have maximum displacement of 27,000 tons and to have no guns heavier than 8 inches in caliber. Air craft carriers[↑] of 10,000 ton displacement were to have no guns exceeding 6.1 inches in caliber. Submarines were to be limited to a maximum of 2,000 tons and 5.1- inch guns. No merchant ship was to be prepared for war duty except strengthening decks⁴¹ for the mounting of guns not heavier than 6 inches.

No qualitative control of land armaments^{The representatives of the States} was mentioned in the Draft,[↑] failed to arrive at a consensus in the Preparatory Commission. Germany and the U.S.S.R. wanted that the Treaties of ^{Peace} ~~peace~~ after the

41. Documents on International Affairs, 1931, op.cit., pp. 22-23.

First World War but France, Japan and Italy wanted a budgetary ceiling.

The Draft Convention did not mention any qualitative control of air-craft while all the states agreed with this view that the bombers were aggressive but they were not united on how to achieve a qualitative control of air-craft.

The Draft Convention provided for the prohibition of poison gases and bacteriological warfare. Article 39 says: "The High Contracting Parties undertake, subject to reciprocity, to abstain from the use in war of asphyxiating, poisonous, or similar gases, and of all analogous liquids, substances or processes.⁴²"

The Draft Convention made no mention of inspection or control but it required the States to submit information on the strength of effectives, on new material, and on budgetary figures to the Permanent Disarmament Commission to be created.⁴³

The Draft Convention fixed the date as February 2, 1932 for the World Disarmament Conference. In the interval of this period and the opening of the Disarmament Conference, the Assembly of the League adopted a

42. Documents on International Affairs, 1931, op.cit., p.33

43. H.W. Forbes, op. cit., p. 68.

resolution on September 29, 1931, which provided for an Arms Truce for the period of one year beginning from November 1, 1931. By the end of the year it had been accepted by all the states which had shown their intention of participating the Disarmament Conference.

Thus during the whole period between 1920 to 1930 many attempts were made by the League of Nations^s to ensure security of the small nations. Because the States which felt themselves insecure were not willing to reduce their armaments unless they received an effective assistance in case of need. Therefore, proposals like the Treaty of Mutual Assistance and the Geneva Protocol were^{made} in the Temporary Mixed Commission and the Assembly. These proposals tried to solve the question of security of small nations to some extent. But due to the unfavourable attitude of the big nations both of these treaties failed. The States which felt themselves secure did not want to render assistance. None of them was willing to come to other's help. They were inspired by their national interests and generally opposed ~~the~~ every proposal of the League which undermine their national interests. Britain was showing a strong inclination to minimize its commitments under the League. It did not want to become entangled in the political problems of Europe through any

44. Documents on International Affairs, 1931, op. cit., p.17. ✓

more security guarantee. In such an atmosphere France and other countries who were afraid of Germany's attack refused to reduce their armaments unless they received an effective assistance. They were of the view that security should precede disarmament.

Chapter - 4

The World Disarmament Conference of 1932

(The World Disarmament Conference at last met on 2nd February, 1932, with Arthur Henderson as its President. But the climate of 1932 was very depressing. Three facts in particular overshadowed the Conference. The first was the Far Eastern Conflict, ~~now~~ ^{then} at its most acute phase on The Shanghai Front. The second was the steady advance of aggressive nationalism in Germany and its reaction in France, Poland and elsewhere. The third was the economic disaster which had fallen on Europe since the previous May.)¹ It might well have been expected at that time that the economic disaster will increase the need for international co-operation, both economic and political and to reduction in the amount voted for armaments. But in fact, it resulted in bitterness and nervousness; each country blamed and criticized its neighbouring countries and the governments started spending more and more on defence.

By the number of participating countries, the Conference was no doubt the greatest in history. Sixty four nations were present. Theoretically the laboriously prepared ~~the~~ Draft convention drawn up by the Preparatory Commission for World Disarmament Conference was the point of discussion but from the very beginning new proposals pushed it aside. The delegates brought with them no less than 337 proposals. Thus the long and laborious preparatory work was brushed aside and the

1. F.P. Walters, A History of the League of Nations, (Vol. II) (London : Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 501.

Conference had to discuss a series of plans which the delegations saw for the first time.

① First of all, Tardieu, Minister of War in France, presented a new and elaborate plan on February 5². According to the French plan all the powerful and dangerous weapons - bombers, battleships, heavy guns etc. - should be set aside by the states that owned and they should be used only on the orders of the League or in self-defence against sudden attack; a standing international police force should be placed at the disposal of the Council; further national forces should be earmarked to reinforce the international police if required; and the general system of security should be strengthened by compulsory arbitration, definition of aggressor, an efficient organization of sanctions, and their extension to cover breaches of the Disarmament Convention as well as of the Covenant.

The French plan was criticized for two reasons. First, there was no possible chance that such a complete re-organization of the international system would be endorsed by the members of the British Common Wealth, Italy, Germany, Russia and the United States. Secondly, it did not deal with the German problem. France still wanted that Germany should be bound by the limitations imposed at Versailles.

② The French plan was followed by the British and American plans. According to the British plan presented by Simon a distinction was drawn between the two methods of limiting armaments which came to be known 'quantitative' and 'qualitative'

2. Survey of International Affairs, 1932, (Oxford : Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1933), pp. 197-199. ✓

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disarmament. The first aimed at fixing maximum limit beyond which the states would not go. Second referred to excluding by international agreement from use in warfare certain defined weapons or methods. He suggested the abolition or reduction of weapons which are made for attack than for defence especially those suited for aggressive warfare such as submarines. He pleaded for the acceptance of the restrictions imposed by the Washington and London Agreements. In regard to land armaments, he favoured the prohibition of guns above a certain calibre. He wanted the establishment of a Permanent Disarmament Commission.³ Gibson, the American delegate also proposed a new criterion for limiting the numbers of armed men by allowing to each country a fixed and absolute contingent for internal order plus a variable contingent for defence.

Both of them did not deal with the German problem

The German delegate reiterated his claim for equality and demanded that it should be achieved by the reduction of armaments of others. But nowhere in his speech there was any indication of a threat to rearm. He proposed that the system of qualitative limitation already applied to Germany should be extended to other countries. Grandi, the Italian representative supported Germany's stand. Italy accepted the German claim to equality and advocated the total prohibition of all powerful weapons, used by land, sea and air forces. It rejected the French demand for guarantees of security before arms could be reduced. Japan's representative said that it would be very difficult for his

3. Survey of International Affairs, 1932, op. cit.,
pp. 200-201.

government to reduce its land or air forces, though its delegation was prepared to study any workable plan in these armaments. In the case of naval armaments, its proposals did not differ in substance from those which had been put forward by Japan at other naval conferences in recent years. (Russia advocated total and complete disarmament.⁴ India's delegate, the Aga Khan supported the reduction of armaments but he criticized the French plan for fresh guarantees of security. He also criticized the French proposal for International Police Force and said that the establishment of a world authority would call for a vast and complex adjustment of the manifold provisions of International⁵ Law.

Thus many of the proposals which had been put forward in the Conference were open to the charge that they reflected the varying interests of their authors and hence failed to provide a basis for common agreement.

Senor de Madariaga summed up the situation in the fable which he related to the General Commission of the Conference on the February 25, of the Russian proposal for universal disarmament:

"The animals had met to disarm. The lion, looking sideways at the eagle, said : "Wings must be abolished". The eagle, looking at the bull declared : "Horns must be abolished".

4. Survey of International Affairs, 1932, op.cit.,
pp. 205-206.

Records of
5. The Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of
Armament, Series A, Verbatim Records of Plenary
Meeting, Vol. I, p. 159.

The bull, looking at the tiger, said, " Paws and especially claws, must be abolished". The bear in his turn said, "All arms must be abolished; all that is necessary is a universal embrace".

It is true that most of the smaller countries wanted to achieve same kind of qualitative and quantitative disarmament but this could not be achieved without the co-operation of big powers. While the big powers were interested in maintaining their own national interests, they generally voted with the small states only when their own interests were served.

There were many differences of opinion in regard to the weapons which would be classified respectively as 'offensive' and 'defensive'. This task of dividing armaments fell to the Commissions on Land, Naval and Aerial armaments, which were set up by the Conference.

As a result of the discussions in the Land, Naval and Air Commissions, the principle of qualitative disarmament appeared to be in danger of being refined out of existence.

In the naval Commission, each delegation considered those categories of vessels as defensive which were suited to its own country's needs, and aggressive, the categories which it did not wish to retain for itself. Thus the representatives of the United States and of Britain maintained that the battleship was a purely defensive weapon, and the submarine was offensive. Japan defended both the battleship and the submarine. All the other states were of the view that large battleships must be considered aggressive. The German delegate said that all the vessels which had been forbidden to Germany by the Treaty of Versailles, were aggressive while the

vessels which it had been allowed to retain were defensive. France and Italy maintained that submarine is not aggressive.

The report of the Land commission was also hopeless. In order to save time the Commission decided to deal with only certain types of weapons namely, artillery and armoured cars. But even in this limited field delegates were unable to reach on any unanimous conclusions. The Land Commission finally decided that "all artillery can be used for offensive and defensive purposes", and proceeded to divide all artillery into three categories. Artillery over 250. mm. caliber was most threatening to national defense" because of its ability to neutralize permanent fortifications. Artillery below 70-mm. or possibly 100-mm. in caliber was held to be primarily defensive for the middle range, however, no classification at all could be arrived at.

The Land Commission was divided into three groups. Germany, Italy, the Soviet Union, and the Scandinavian countries thought all tanks offensive weapons. Second group under British leadership, maintained that only the heavier tanks were offensive. A third group consisting of France and Japan declared that only tanks which were capable of assaulting modern fortifications of medium strength should be considered as offensive and that minimum weight of such a tank would be seventy tons. According to the French view tanks were essential

J.H.W. Forbes, the strategy of Disarmament,

(Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1962), P. 42. ✓

to the defense of a country. Only France and Japan supported seventy-ton limitation. Britain favoured twenty-five tons. All other States wanted to abolish tanks entirely, with the exception of Finland, Estonia and Latvia,⁸ ~~These~~ ^{US} ~~the~~ report of the Land Commission, like that of Naval Commission, consisted mainly of a record of conflicting opinions.

The report of the Air Commission presented a better appearance of unanimity. The Commission was of the view that all air armaments could be used to some extent for offensive purposes; that civil aircraft could serve military ends; and that the capacity of air armaments for offensive action depended on certain of their constructional characteristics. The Commission unanimously declared that air bombardment was a grave threat to civilians. The report made special mention of poisonous gases, bacteria, and incendiary and explosive appliances.⁹

✓ As the question of chemical and bacteriological weapons and methods of warfare arose in connection with land, air and naval armaments, the General Commission had to appoint a Chemical and Bacteriological Committee on May 10, 1932, to deal with those questions. Its reports were unanimous. It recommended that the qualitative method of disarmament should be applied to the use of all natural or synthetic noxious substances, to appliances, devices or projectiles specially constructed for the use of such noxious bodies; discharge or dissemination in any manner of pathogenic microbes or of infected substances; to

8. op. cit., p.43.

9. Survey of International Affairs, 1932, ^{pp.} cit., p. 229.

projectiles specially intended to cause fires; and to
appliances designed to attack persons by fire, such as flame
10
projectors. *

Thus no agreement was reached by any of the three comm-
ission, the experts held their principal responsible for these
hopeless results. In Europe the political power of the General
Staff was very great at that time.

By mid-June the conference was not able to reach
any accord regarding the reduction of existing armaments. It
was totally bogged down. In order to break the stalemate private
conversations were held between Gibson for the United States,
Mac Donaléd and Simon for Britain, and Herriot and Paul-
Boncour for France. But no progress was achieved. It was felt that if
France and its allies could be moved from their insistence on
sticking to the letter and spirit of Versailles; if the British
Commonwealth was ready to consider any proposal involving new
commitments and if the United States could pledge itself not to
offer opposition to the sanctions of the Covenant then the conference
might look forward to good results.

10. Survey of International Affairs, 1932, op. cit., p. 231

* It also be remembered here that the International Conference ✓
on the Control of the International Trade in Arms, Munitions, and ✓
Implements of War which was held at Geneva in May and June 1925, ✓
had drawn up a Protocol which bound the contracting parties not ✓
to make use of chemical and bacteriological methods of warfare. ✓
✓ By the beginning of 1932 the Protocol had been signed by 46 States ✓
and ratified by 34 of them.


(When it was clear that no progress was being achieved at the conference, the Americans made a fresh effort to break the deadlock. Henderson was asked to call a general meeting of the conference and President Hoover's proposals were announced by Gibson at Geneva on June 22, 1932."¹¹)

In the beginning of his proposals, president Hoover made mention of the Briand-Kellogg pact in which all the signatories had agreed that they would use their arms only for defence. He referred to economic relief which the reduction in armaments would bring. Then he dealt with the three problems land forces, air forces and naval forces.

√ In regard to land forces, president Hoover proposed that the offensive character of weapons should be reduced by the abolition of all tanks, all chemical warfare, and large mobile guns. He suggested that there should be a reduction of one third in the strength of all land armies over and above the so-called police component. This 'police component' would be determined by the criterion established in the peace Treaty, which had been assigned to Germany, for example, 100,000 troops for a population of 65,000,000 people.¹²

11. Survey of International Affairs, 1932, op. cit., pp. 240-241.

12. Ibid.



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President Hoover's proposals in regard to the air forces dealt only with military and naval aircraft and ignored the problem of civil aviation. He suggested the abolition of all bombers.

In regard to naval forces, the treaties of Washington and London were taken as the basis, and reduction of one third was proposed in the treaty in regard to the number and tonnage of battleships and submarines subject to the condition that no country should retain a submarine tonnage in excess of 35,000 tons. A reduction of one fourth was suggested in the treaty as regards tonnage of aircraft carriers, cruisers and destroyers.¹³

The American proposals revived for a while the almost imperceptible hope of the Disarmament Conference. They were very definite and simple. The smaller powers welcomed them with great enthusiasm. Italy accepted the 'Hoover Plan' entirely and in all its parts.

But Paul Boncour, speaking for France, pointed out that nothing was said about security in this plan. France was not willing to make substantial reduction in its armed strength without fresh guarantees of help if it or its allies were attacked. The change of government in Germany was to France an ominous and alarming sign. The inability of the League to protect China from the aggression of Japan confirmed its view that something more than the covenant was required. The United States did not want to become entangled in the political problems of Europe through any more security guarantee.

13. Survey of International Affairs, 1932, op. cit., p. 241.

✓ The British government did not like the Hoover Plan. It was critical on the details of the plan. It did not want to abolish either tanks or bombers, nor to forbid air bombardment. It wanted to abolish submarines. It wanted to cut down, for the future, the size of capital ships and cruisers, but ^{not} to scrap those already in service. Meanwhile Japan had declared itself totally opposed to whole plan.

It was soon realized that Hoover's efforts did not succeed to set the Conference once more on the move. After five months of debate, no conclusions were in sight, and it was becoming impossible to keep the delegations at Geneva any longer without a break. Then the Americans British and French ^{proposed} that the Conference should adopt a resolution summing up the progress made and laying down what was to be done to prepare the next session.

During the next fortnight, the delegates were busy in preparing the draft resolution. It was a very difficult task of drawing up a resolution which could be accepted by all the nations. All the states had suggestions to make. For example, the German delegate wanted that the resolution should declare that the Conference had accepted the German view that there should be equality of status in armaments. The French wanted a clear reference to the necessity for establishing a comprehensive system of security. The Americans wanted the acceptance of the Hoover Plan.

At last, after a great discussion, a text was prepared which was more or less satisfactory to the majority of states though not to all of them. In the resolution, nothing was said about German equality of rights; nothing about any

concrete decisions for reduction of national armaments; nothing about guarantees against aggression. It was affirmed in general terms that the Conference was unanimously determined to achieve substantial reduction, and that a primary objective should be to reduce the means of attack. Guns and tanks were to be forbidden above certain limits, but what those limits were to remain undeclared. Even the reference to the abolition of air bombardment was expressed in guarded language, so as to leave open the possibility to retain bombers and to use them for police purposes.¹⁴

This resolution was submitted to the Conference by Dr. Benes on July 20, 1932. After a lengthy discussion, voting took place on July 23. Forty-one delegations accepted it but most of them did so with open dissatisfaction. They did not want to prolong the deadlock.

✓ Britain and France supported the resolution. Japan also accepted it with the exception of the prohibition of air bombardment. The resolution was opposed by Italy, Germany and the U.S.S.R. It was the opinion of Italy that the conference had made no progress in the direction of reduction in armaments. ✓ The German Government did not accept this resolution. Its delegation pointed out that nothing was said in the resolution about the German equality of rights therefore Germany

14. F. P. Walters, op. cit., p.511.

could not take part in the further discussions of the Conference unless its claim to equality of rights in armaments was recognized by the Conference.

From this time forward the Italian policy became more and more harmonized with that of Germany and its attitude in the Conference was for the most part indifferent and even obstructive.

Now the question of German armaments became the dominant issue in world politics. The German decision to quit the Conference unless its claim to equality of rights had been recognized, came as a dramatic shock to the world. In fact it did not produce a new situation but made clear the fundamental and inescapable reality. Even then the big powers were not ready to face it. In regard to the substance of the German claim the British Government said, "Germany is not legally entitled to the abrogation of Part V of the Treaty of Versailles by any disarmament convention . . . The correct position under the Treaty of Versailles is that Part V is still binding and can only cease to be binding by agreement".

This statement of the British Government's views was received with satisfaction in France and with surprise and resentment in Germany.

Thus the French and British governments continued to insist on the legal validity of the Treaty, and still spoke

15. Documents on International Affairs, 1932, (London : Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1933), p. 183.

16. Survey of International Affairs, 1932, op.cit., p. 264.

as though it were in their power to grant or refuse permission to Germany to break away from the restrictions which were imposed on it through the Treaty of Versailles. But no legal argument affect the conviction. This was not merely a Germany's view but was widely shared by others also. In fact the disarmament provisions of the League Covenant were applied sternly only in the case of Germany. The Allies had broken their promise made both direct to Germany and in the Covenant of the League. While the twelve years passed, every Member of the League, except the defeated countries, was completely free to build up its land, naval and air armaments as it wished. In these circumstances, the provisions of the Treaty were no longer decisive.

After the adjournment of the Conference, notes were exchanged between the German and French government but no progress was made towards disarmament. Meanwhile the tone and temper of statesmen on both sides became more bitter. In Germany they threatened immediate rearmament, in France they declared that Germany must be held strictly to the limits of the Treaty and France should increase not reduce its armed strength. The British government was still sitting on the fence; the Americans remained aloof from the dispute and Italy supported the German claim of equality of rights.

At last, a conference was held between France, and Britain, The United States, Italy and Germany. The representatives of the five countries tried to find a formula which would satisfy the German demand that its equality of status should be recognized in principle and at the same time it would satisfy France that its security would be safeguarded. After

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five days of intensive labour , on December 11, 1932, the
17
following declaration was signed:

1. "The governments of the United Kingdom , France and Italy have declared that one of the principles that should guide the Conference on disarmament should be to grant to Germany and to the other powers disarmed by Treaty, equality of rights in a system which would provide security for all nations....."

2. "On the basis of this declaration Germany has signified its willingness to resume its place at the Disarmament Conference".

3. "The governments of the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy are ready to join in a solemn reaffirmation to be made by all European States that they will not in any circumstances attempt to resolve any present or future differences between the signatories by resort to force".

4. "The five governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy declare that they are resolved to co-operate in the Conference with other States there represented in seeking ^{without} that delay to work out a convention which shall effect a substantial reduction and a limitation of armaments with provisions for future revision and with a view to further reduction".

The American delegate's signature applied only to the fourth clause of this declaration.

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Germany accepted the declaration. There was a general satisfaction at Germany's return to the disarmament Conference. Then the Conference adjourned until January 31, 1933. The first year of its work had ended where it should have begun.

The Disarmament Conference reassembled in 1933. The recognition of the claim of equality of Germany in principle in the declaration of December 11, 1932, made it possible for the German delegation to return to the Disarmament Conference but it could not solve the political problem of reconciling the German demand for equality with the French insistence on 'security first'.

✓ The declaration of December 11, 1932 was accepted by France because the principle of Germany's equality of rights was conceded as part of 'a system which would provide security for all nations'. The French government interpreted this phrase to mean that the establishment of a satisfactory system of security would precede any steps in the direction of equalizing the armed forces of France and Germany. On the other hand, Germany wanted to attain equality in armaments as soon as possible. Its attitude was clearly defined in an article by General Vo Schleicher which was issued to the Press on January 26, 1933. In this article the Chancellor of the Reich announced that Germany was returning to the Disarmament Conference with the object of achieving 'in the shortest time', the conclusion of a convention which would, satisfy Germany's fundamental demand by creating equal security for all through the disarmament of heavily armed states. This declaration lost none of its force

when its author resigned and Hitler came to power on January 30. Nor the change of government in France on January 31 could mean that there was any possibility of modification in the old French policy that security should precede disarmament.

At this time , the Nazis in Germany became the master of the country. Their militaristic attitude seemed to make all talk of disarmament hollow and unreal.

✓ This certainly was the sentiment of France, driven more and more on to the defensive, politically against the Italo-German campaign for treaty revision, and military¹⁹ against the sudden revival of German fighting power. The French had always accused Germany that it had violated the Treaty of Versailles by concealing those arms which it was under the obligation to destroy. With the advent of Hitler, France saw the revival of German nation-in-arms. It realized that it was not capable now to enforce the disarmament provisions of the Treaty. Its vast preponderance in armaments was the only hope of security against the German preponderance in manpower and industrial resources.

✓ In these circumstances the French were not ready to accept any proposal for the reduction of its armaments without any guarantee of security. Thus after six weeks of fruitless discussion again a deadlock was created in the Conference.

✓ Now the initiative to break the deadlock came from the British government on March 16, 1933, Macdonald gave

the Disarmament Conference a new lease of life and a new plan for the reduction and limitation of armaments. In his speech he said that the situation was very serious and the delegations to the Disarmament Conference might return to their respective countries without a draft convention if the stalemate was not broken by more positive response.

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The British draft convention submitted to the Conference consisted of five parts. Part I dealt with security and it was based on the Kellogg Briand Pact. It laid down that in the event of any breach or threatened breach of the pact, a conference should be held between the parties ^{of} the convention, at the request of any five of them. If a breach of the pact was threatened, it would be the aim of the Conference to decide what steps could be taken, and if a breach was found to have occurred the Conference would determine which party was to be held responsible.

Part II dealt with land effectives and with land, naval and air material. In regard to effectives, the result of the proposals would be to reduce the whole of the land forces of continental Europe, excluding forces stationed overseas, to a militia basis by fixing eight months at the maximum period of service.

20. Survey of International Affairs, 1933, op. cit.,
pp. 253-257.

The following table shows the suggested figures for the continental European countries:-

<u>Land Armed Forces</u>		
Party	Stationed in Home Country	Total including overseas
Germany	200, 000	200, 000
Belgium	60, 000	75,000
Bulgaria	60, 000	60, 000
Spain	120, 000	170, 000
France	200, 000	400, 000
Greece	60, 000	60,000
Hungary	60, 000	60, 000
Italy	200, 000	250, 000
Netherland	25, 000	75,000
Poland	200, 000	200, 000
Portugal	50, 000	60, 000
Rumania	150, 000	150, 000
Czechoslovakia	100, 000	100, 000
U. S. S. R.	500, 000	500, 000
Jugoslavia	100, 000	100, 000
Each other Continental European state	No separate figure	50, 000

In regard to land material maximum calibre of 105 mm. (4.5 inch) was proposed for mobile land guns in future. The maximum calibre of coast defence guns would be 406 mm. The maximum limit for the weight of tanks would be

16 tons. All prohibited material would be destroyed within three years of the coming into force of the convention. With regard to naval material the object was to extend the provisions of the Treaty of London to France and Italy.

✓Part III dealt with air armaments. Bombing from the air was prohibited except for police purposes and provided that the Permanent Disarmament Commission should immediately devote itself to working out the best possible schemes for the complete abolition of military and naval air craft and if no agreement was possible on a method of effective supervision then it would determine the minimum number of machines required by each party consistent with its national safety.

✓Part IV related to the chemical, incendiary and bacteriological warfare, which was prohibited in accordance with the proposals that had already been accepted by the Conference. Preparation for such warfare in time of peace was also prohibited.

✓Part V contained clauses relating to the composition, functions and operations of the Permanent Disarmament Commission.

The British idea was that the convention was to remain in force for five years, except for naval provisions which would remain in force until December 31, 1936 and the rules forbidding the use of chemical methods of warfare which were to remain indefinitely. A second disarmament conference would be held to conclude a new convention before the expiry of the convention.

The main features of the British draft convention were the proposals in Part I, that a conference would be held between the parties to the convention in the event of a breach or threatened breach of Kellogg Pact and the inclusion in Part II, of definite figures relating to the effectives and the aeroplanes of European states. It was the first time since the discussion of disarmament had begun under the auspices of the League of Nations, that proposals had been submitted in this concrete form.

✓Almost every delegate in the Conference liked the British plan. ✓The American representative did not take part in the discussion and the ✓Japanese delegate maintained that the plan was to apply only in Europe so the question of its applicability to Japan need not to be considered. ✓The Russian delegate criticized the air and naval proposals and regretted that the figures which had been given in the draft convention applied only to European States. ✓France and Germany did not reject the draft but their representative again pointed out the differences in their views. The French delegate emphasized the relation between security and disarmament. ✓The German delegate accepted the provisions of the draft convention only on the understanding that they would make it possible for other states to disarm. He said that some modifications in the draft would be necessary in order to satisfy Germany's prestige and its need for security.

The German delegate presented many amendments to the draft convention, the result of which would be to include

trained reserves among effectives and to limit the number of overseas forces stationed near the home country.* ✓The German delegation also proposed that the whole question of the standardization of continental military forces should be referred to the Permanent Disarmament Commission. French delegate again pointed out that there should be reduction of armaments without any rearmament and he further said that the grant of equality of right²² to Germany depended upon the satisfactory guarantee of security.

✓Germany's representative refused to withdraw his amendments. Many attempts were made for a compromise but all failed. The situation became more serious by the wide publicity given to an article in the German Press by Freiherr Von Neurath, which was understood as a definite announcement of Germany's intention to rearm. In this article, the German Foreign Minister said that it was the earnest desire of Germany to secure equality by means of a reduction of the armaments of other nations but the realization of Germany's equality of rights through disarmament²³ had failed due to the attitude of highly armed states. Now the love of war for war's sake was seen in Germany. These manifestations were discouraging the British opinion. According to the British view a refusal by Germany to take any further part in the Disarmament Conference would lead to the rejections of the offers made to it, and the situation would demand the greatest consideration. In such circumstances Germany would be bound by the Treaty of Versailles and any attempt to rearm would be a breach of the Treaty and would bring into operation the sanctions for which it provided. The same view was expressed by the French government. Thus again a deadlock was created in the Conference.

*Since Germany had neither reserves nor overseas forces this proposal would have left the total of her effectives untouched, on the other hand, it would have greatly reduced the number of effectives allowed to France.

22. Survey of International Affairs, 1933, op.cit., p.262.

23. ibid., p.265.

✓ibid.

Then on May 16, President Roosevelt issued an appeal to the heads of all the fifty four States represented in the conference. He appealed them not to let the conference fail otherwise its result would be disastrous to peace and stability of the world. As regards disarmaments, he called for the acceptance of the British plan, accompanied by commitments to continue the process of reduction until all offensive weapons had been completely destroyed and also by a new and all-inclusive pact of non-aggression²⁴ After few day, on May 22 Norman Davis informed the conference that his Government would only adhere to the British proposal for consultation in case of a breach of the Kellogg-pact, but would promise to do nothing to oppose the action of the League against an aggressor State its, as a result of that consultation, it agreed with the League's verdict.²⁵ This statement was of a great importance because the members of the British Commonwealth had been reluctant to think about applying sanctions for fear of finding themselves in conflict with the United States over the freedom of the seas.

The day after Roosevelt's appeal, Hitler accepted the British draft as the basis of the future disarmament convention. He claimed that Germany had disarmed in accordance with the Treaty of Versailles. He said that the Nazi and the Stahlhelm were not military organization and declared that their purpose was to protect Germany against communism. Germany did not want to use force in support of its claim. It believed in peace. He declared, "Germany is at any time willing to undertake further obligations of international security if all the

24. Documents on International Affairs, 1933, op. cit., (1934), pp. 194-195.

25. Ibid. pp. 211-212. ✓

other nations are ready on their side to do the same and if this security is also to benefit Germany. Germany would also be ready to disband her entire military establishment and destroy the small amount of arms remaining to her if the neighbouring countries will do the same thing with equal thoroughness but if these countries are not willing to carry out the disarmament measures to which they are also bound by the Treaty of Versailles, Germany must at least maintain her demand for equality.²⁶ Towards the end of his speech Hitler struck a warning note, "The Germany Government and the German people will under no circumstances allow themselves to be forced to sign what would mean a perpetuation of the degradation of Germany."²⁷

Hitler's declaration produced some relaxation of tension in Europe. His speech was a remarkable one. Even today after reading his speech one is compelled to think that the speaker was sincerely anxious for disarmaments and peace. He was a master of conscious deception. His speech comforted the hearts of all who were afraid of Germany's rearmament. "It was the beginning of a phenomenon before which posterity will stand for ever astonished. From then on, Hitler was able to commit one action after another of such a nature as to make war more and more certain, and yet by the art of speeches to renew again and again the hope that, in the end, he would show himself to be a man of peace."²⁸

26. Documents on International Affairs, 1933, op.cit., (1934), p.205.

27. Op.cit., p. 207. ✓

28) F. P. Walters, op. cit., p. 547. ✓

Hitler followed his speech by giving instructions to his delegation to support the British plan. On June 7, 1933, the conference adopted a recommendation that the British draft convention should be accepted as the basis of future convention. This acceptance would be without prejudice to amendments submitted by many countries. But now there were other problems and progress was very slow. Japan raised new difficulties over naval limitations. Britain insisted on the retention of air bombardment for police purposes. France demanded, among other things, that the provisions for inspection and investigation should be strengthened. Russia also shared the French view because it was afraid of Hitler.

At the beginning of June, no real progress was made. Then many diplomatic negotiations were held in Paris between the French Prime Minister, Lord Londonderry and Eden on behalf of British Government and Norman Davis of the United States. The reduction of French armaments was the main subject of discussion. But the French Prime Minister made it clear that his Government could not agree to any proposal which would reduce its armed strength unless it was assured of a satisfactory system of control ^{of} armaments and of arms manufacture and was assured of some fresh guarantee against German rearmament. It was the opinion of French people that Germany was preparing its youths for war and it had already started to manufacture those arms which were prohibited by the Treaty of Versailles. The Nazi leaders were openly inspiring the youth of the nation with the desire for war, aggression and revenge. Hitler wanted to include Austria in the Great Reich. In these circumstances the French government wanted some modifications in the British plan.

Due to the Great ~~E~~ efforts of Eden, the British delegate, Norman Davis of the United States and the French Prime - Minister Daladier, there appeared to be general agreement between the United States, France, Britain and Italy on the principle that the duration of validity of the disarmament convention should be divided into two ^{parts} points: during the first phase, which might last for three or four years, the prohibition on increase in German armaments would remain in force, and it would be strictly supervised. The reduction of the armaments of the other nations would be the second phase.²⁹ The proposal departed substantially from the original British draft convention, which had been accepted by the conference in June as the basis of the future disarmament convention.

On October 14, Jhon Simon, on behalf of the Great Powers who had been in consultation together, announced in the conference that, " The scheme which emerged for consideration as the result of number of these interviews was one in which the proposal period of eight years would begin with the transformation of Continental armies on the lines set out in the British draft, together with the setting up, through the medium of the Permanent Disarmament Commission, of an adequate system of supervision, so that the sense of security which the due observance of the convention will afford should provide the ground work for the practical attainment of the two ideas of disarmament and equality.³⁰

29. Survey of International Affairs, 1933, op. cit., p. 296.

30. Documents on International Affairs, 1933, op. cit., p.282.

This proposal could not be accepted by Germany, It left Germany for another four years in a position of judicial inferiority because it would still be bound by the limitations of the peace Treaty and would be subjected to regular investigation on that basis. Hitler wanted to stand before his ^{country} convention as the champion sent to redress the wrongs done to Germany. He needed a plain issue on which the whole nation would be united and such an issue was now ready. A few minutes after Simon had spoken, a telegram, evidently prepared in advance, was sent by Freiherr Von Neurath from Berlin to the President of the Disarmament conference. He stated: "on behalf of the German Government I have honour to make to you the following communication. In the light of the course which recent discussions of the powers concerned have taken in the matter of disarmament, it is now clear that the Disarmament Conference will not fulfil what is its sole object, namely, general disarmament. It is also clear that this failure of the Conference is due solely to unwillingness on the part of the highly armed States to carry out their contractual obligation to disarm. This renders impossible the satisfaction of Germany's recognized claim to equality of rights, and the condition on which the German Government agreed at the beginning of this year again to take part in the work of the conference thus no longer exists. The German Government is accordingly compelled to leave the Disarmament Conference." On the same day on October 14, Germany also withdrew from the League of Nations.

The Disarmament Conference did not come to an end on the withdrawal of Germany but all sense of reality had gone from its subsequent meetings and ultimately on June 11, 1934, the conference separated, gloomily aware that it was not likely to meet again.

Thus the World Disarmaments Conference failed completely as its main object was to conclude a world disarmament treaty which it could not do. And the wheels were turning with increasing speed in the opposite direction. Not reduction, but arms race became the order of the day in one country after another.

On March 16, 1935, Germany denounced Part V of the Treaty of Versailles and reintroduced military conscription. On March 7, 1936, Germany repudiated Articles 42 and 43 of the Treaty of Versailles, denounced Locarno Agreements and sent troops into the demilitarized Rhine land. "After 16 years, the circle of frustration was closed. Efforts at World Disarmament Conference through the League had begun with the Unilateral disarmament of Germany. The efforts ceased with the unilateral rearmament of Germany. The collective intelligence of Europe, having failed to achieve security, turned towards preparations for suicide."

The Great Sea Powers also reached a similar impasse. Naval disarmament had begun in 1921 with the termination of an Anglo-American Japanese naval race. Naval disarmament ended in 1936 with the resumption of the same race.

✓By the beginning of 1937, all treaties imposing quantitative restrictions on the three great naval powers came to an end. ✓In March, London announced its plans for constructing 238,000 tons of new battleships, including 35,000 tons dreadnoughts, and an expanding programme of over £100,000,000 in the ensuing year on naval armaments. ✓The United States and Japan followed Britain. On April 23, 1939, Hitler denounced the Anglo-German Naval Pact of 1935 on the ground that Britain's alliance with Poland was hostile to the Reich and a violation of the purpose of the agreement. ³³

" On the walls of the feast of Belshazzar, the destruction of his kingdom was foretold by the cryptic words mene, mene, tekel, upharsin. " The letters of failure, written larger over the portals of successive disarmament conferences during the two decades after the Treaty of Versailles, became letters of impending catastrophe for the Western World. ³⁴ "

World

Causes of the failure of the/Disarmament Conference

✓The World Disarmament Conference failed because of the power rivalry between France and Germany. France was afraid of Germany. Germany was demanding equality of rights and demanded that it should be achieved by the reduction of armaments of others and abstained from anything in the nature of

33. F. L. Schuman, op.cit., pp. 232-233 .

34. Ibid.

a threat to rearm. But France refused to consider any form of compromise and proposal which would reduce its own armaments. The constant refrain of France was that security should come first and then the Disarmament. The sentiment of France was driven more and more on the defensive, politically against the Italo-German campaign for treaty revision, and militarily against the sudden revival of German fighting power. Its vast preponderance in armaments was the main hope of security against the German preponderance in man power and industrial resources. It wanted to maintain the status-quo established by the peace treaties whereas Germany wanted to break that status-quo. France was of the view that the conference should neither consent to German armaments nor ask for any reduction from it on the other hand, Germany was demanding equality of rights and said that it was its moral right to rearm, if other great countries would not disarm. But the French could not for a moment listen to any such view. They believed that Germany was not only drilling its youth by millions, but that it was also manufacturing the arms prohibited by the Treaty. Thus in such an atmosphere to think of any disarmament treaty was impossible.

France was not willing to accept any disarmament proposal unless it guaranteed security. It rejected the Hoover Plan for the abolition of all offensive weapons and a one thing reduction of all defensive weapons. France wondered what the United States would do if a nation which followed its call for disarmament ^{thereby} ~~threaty~~ weakening its power to defend itself were suddenly attacked by its neighbour. Nothing was said

about security in this plan. Both Great Britain and the United States did not want to become entangled in the political problems of Europe through any more security guarantee.

✓ There was no effective international machinery to ensure the security of nations. League's collective security system was ineffective and unworkable. It was not able to do anything effectively when Japan ^{invaded} invaded Manchuria and Italy ^{on} on Ethiopia, Mussolini wrote openly that he would have Ethiopia "with Geneva, without Geneva, against Geneva". Even then the big nations were not united for collective action against aggression. In Manchurian case, the British Foreign Minister proclaimed openly his rejection of the fundamental principle of the League, "the object of my policy," he said in the House of Commons, "is to keep my own country out of trouble. The aggressor may do as he likes³⁵" In the Abyssinian case, the same Foreign Minister said, "He would not risk losing a single British ship for the sake of Abyssinia³⁶." Hence no state was willing to be disarmed in the absence of an effective collective security machinery because it had to depend on its own armaments for its defense. Some States demanded definite guarantee and flatly refused to reduce armaments until they obtained them.

The Logic of disarmament under the League system was based on the disarmament of Germany as ✓ to render possible the initiation of a general limitation of the armaments of all

35. Gilbert Murray, From the League to U.N., (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 74 . ✓

36. Ibid.

nations'. This principle was later to be very needful for Hitler, who was able to say that although Germany had been disarmed by 1922, the Allied had never shown ~~only~~ any signs of carrying out their implied promise to disarm. Hence he could claim that the disarmament clauses of the Treaty were null and void.

✓ This was not merely a German view but was widely shared by others also. ✓ In fact the disarmament provisions of the League covenant were applied sterily only in the case of Germany. The Allies had broken their promise made both direct to Germany and in the ~~covenant~~^{en} of the League. While the twelve years passed every Members of the League, except the defeated countries, was completely free to build up its land, naval and air armaments as it liked. Therefore in 1933, Germany left the Disarmament Conference by saying that the heavily armed States had no intention either of disarming or of fulfilling their pledge to satisfy the German claim to equality of rights.

✓ In Germany, when Hitler came into power, to think of any disarmament was useless. All talkes of disarmament seemed hollow and unreal. Hitler's aim was to undo the wrongs done to his countrymen and Germany through the League system and the Treaty of Versailles. From the very beginning, Germany had the galling impression that it was forced to accept a ~~dictated~~ peace. The German's as they pondered over the savage penalties of the dictated treaty and brooded on revenge, reached the conclusion that what had been demonstrated by the victors was the fact that might was right.

(13)

If the World Disarmament Conference had been held in 1924, when France German reproachment was possible, it would have had much better chances of success. The very procrastination, the very extraordinary leisureliness of the Preparatory Commission, was evidence that in the 1920's France was not concerned about world disarmament any more than as a theoretical problem. Its major enemy was ^{al} already disarmed. But ⁱⁿ the 1930's it was France's major enemy who threatened to rearm. Disarmament came consequently to mean to the French the finding of a formula where by German disarmament could be maintained without any significant reduction of French armaments. France was not really going to disarm if it was not secure. How could one land power ever to be secure against a more powerful and ⁿpotetial neighbour ? Disarmament in such cases cannot effectively remove the fuse from the bomb.³⁷

Naval disarmament also ran into difficulties in the 1930's and was in effect abandoned. At the time, Japan had also become aggressive. In order to promote its expansionist goal Japan left the League in 1933. This was another set back in the success of Disarmament Conference.

With the emergence of Mussolini with his sinister designs in Italy, the fate of the World Disarmament conference was sealed. Italy being a dissatisfied power determined to destroy the status-quo established by the victorious nations after the First World War under the Treaty of Versailles.

37. Frederick H. Hartmann, The Relations of Nations, (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1957), p.290.

A conference at which each nation was seeking greater relative strength for itself, and greater relative weakness for others, was not a conference which had a good prospects of success. In the World Disarmament Conference every State put forward such proposals which would serve its own national interests. Big nations voted with small powers only when they were satisfied that it would serve their national interests. Where one State's gain was another State's loss and where nothing could be done except by unanimous consent, there result would be the failure. This was what had happened in the World Disarmament Conference.

It was lack of will and almost exclusively lack of will among the Great Powers, which prevented the success of the Conference, lack of will based on lack of mutual trust, and on the knowledge of Germany's wide spread secret rearmament in factories outside her own borders.

✓ Last but not the least, the World Disarmament Conference was bound to fail because several Governments represented at it were merely tools of their arms manufactures and other vested interests. These internal pressure groups were committed to arms race as a means of economic and social survival in the conditions created by the slump.

To sum up, the World Disarmament Conference failed because the European State system was decaying and the whole international system was collapsing. The world depression of 1929; the financial chaos of 1931; the new dictatorship in

Germany of 1933 and its profound repercussions elsewhere; the diminished membership of the League of Nations and the reduced authority of the League; menace of Japan, the rise of Hitler to power in Germany and Mussolini in Italy all came in rapid succession; and a new race in armaments- all contributed as *Cumulative* for the collapse of the World Disarmament Conference. Since then the profits of rearmament were regarded as a necessity for the recovery of Capitalism from the slump, and rearmament was pressed on that as well as on other more general grounds of 'national interests.'³⁹

39. Vigilants, Why the League Has Failed, (London : Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1938), p. 71.

Chapter-5

Enforced and Voluntary disarmament

Historically, attempts at disarmament have occurred under two different sets of circumstances. Under one, disarmament has been imposed as a penalty following defeat in war; under the other, it has been achieved by nations under mutually acceptable conditions. Generally, victors have imposed disarmament upon vanquished states. According to the Treaty of Versailles disarmament was imposed on Germany. Its land forces, navy, weapons—all were limited by the Treaty of Versailles. Air force was strictly forbidden. The Treaty required almost complete disarmament of Germany. The victors had done this to Germany with the hope that it might never again be a threat to world peace.

But a big difficulty with enforced disarmament is that, to keep it effective, a continuous supervision by the victors and a willingness to act in concert to suppress violations are necessary. Unless the victors remain in occupation and enforce their will by armed coercion on the land of the defeated, this may mean a reoccupation. To remain indefinitely in occupation and yet permit a national army owing allegiance to the occupied State is a contradiction in terms. Yet once the defeated State has been evacuated it becomes very difficult to see that the limitations are being observed.¹ The problem is very simple in the case of weapons which are difficult to conceal, such as - tanks and ships. But the problem becomes very difficult in the case of small arms and machine guns etc. which

1. Frederick H. Hartmann, ^{op. cit.} ~~The Relations of Nations~~, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957), p. 278.

are not difficult to conceal.

✓When there is disunity among the allies, at that time rearmament and increase in power of the defeated country usually goes on. Defeated country takes advantage of their disunity. After the First World War disagreement between France and England were not serious. But when France occupied the German Ruhr in 1923, it was opposed by England. France occupied Ruhr in the face of intense British opposition. Germany came to know about this disagreement between France and England and it took advantage of this disunity between these two powers. Disagreement between the victors permits or assists in the resurrection of the power of the defeated country.

If the Allies have lost its unity the rearmament of the disarmed State is not a difficult one. By 1926 Germany was substantially recognised as a great power by the former allies.

This imposed disarmament is less effective; it permits the disarmed State to regain its strength eventually and it encourages the spirit of revenge. This is clearly evident by the rearmament of Germany which led to the Second World War.

Voluntary Disarmament

If the history of enforced disarmament is one of failure, the history of voluntary disarmament is not so disappointing. Because in the case of voluntary disarmament, the disarmament is not imposed upon one state by another state or

Coalition of States, it has been voluntarily accepted by the states. If an agreement is reached between some states on disarmament then the concerned states will carefully observe the disarmament clauses of that agreement. Because it will be in their interest to observe the disarmament provisions of a treaty. That agreement has been reached by the mutual consent of the States. States know that this agreement has been reached by their own will and it is not against their will, therefore, they respect such agreement. Such attempts have sometimes been made on a local, bilateral basis covering a restricted area. The Rush-Bagot Agreement of 1817 between the United States and Great Britain stands in contrast by virtue of its longevity, it is still in effect. Both the countries know that it is in their interest to observe this agreement, therefore, they are observing this agreement uptill now.

Similarly the naval conferences which were held outside the League of Nations were successful. The Washington Conference of 1922 was very successful. These naval conferences brought disarmament in the field of naval disarmaments. The problem of naval disarmament was solved to the largest extent in these naval conferences- the Washington Naval Conference of 1922 and the London Naval Conference of 1930. Therefore, it is necessary to deal with these naval conferences in detail.

Washington Naval Conference : 1921-1922

During First World War the United States began a big programme of naval expansion, climaxed by the Naval Act of 1916 with provision for ten new battleships, six battle cruisers, and more than a hundred smaller craft. The motive behind this American policy of naval supremacy, as intimated by the Secretary of Navy, Josephus Daniels, "was primarily to fashion a club to hold over the European Allies in general, and over Great Britain in particular, pending their adherence to President Wilson's comprehensive plans for reduction of armaments and creation of a new world order."²

There were two main factors which brought about the conference of 1921. First was the naval competition between the United States and Britain. It had been a settled British policy up to now to maintain a navy equal in strength to the combined forces of the next two largest navies. With the great expansion of the American Fleet, it was beyond the capability of Britain to retain that standard - at least in the light of American firm determination to achieve equality.³

The second factor was the Anglo - Japanese Alliance concluded in 1902. It had been renewed and changed in 1905 to provide that an attack upon either party by

2. Sprout, Harold and Margaret, Towards a New Order of Sea Power, (Princeton; Princeton University Press, 1940), p. 59 ✓

3. Frederick H. Hartmann, op.cit., p. 281 . ✓

one other power would be a cause of war for both States. The Alliance was to continue indefinitely, subject to abrogation by either party on one year's notice. After the First World War this treaty was causing a great alarm in the British Dominions. Canada in particular feared that its operation might conceivably some day bring it into a war on the side of Japan against the United States. Although this treaty was between Japan and England, the Dominions traditionally fought on the side of Britain when Britain had to fight a general war. The United States also wanted that this treaty should be terminated so that Japan's position might become weak.⁴

✓ Therefore President Harding of the United States invited Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan to send delegates to a conference in Washington to consider limitation on naval armaments. All these States accepted the invitation. At the Washington Conference agreement was reached regarding the number of capital ships that the parties might have, this conference resulted in a naval limitation agreement between the United States, Britain, Japan, France and Italy. These States accepted a ratio of 5:5:3:1.67:1.67 for capital ships, i.e., armored vessels between 10,000 and 35,000 tons. The actual total tonnage for this type of vessels were to be eventually: 525,000 each for the United States and Britain, 315,000 for Japan, and 175,000 each for France and Italy. Battleships were limited to a maximum of 35,000 tons and naval guns to 16- inch caliber.

4. Frederick H. Hartman, op.cit., p.281 . ✓

Aircraft carriers, permitted at the ratio of 135,000 tons each to the United States and Britain, 81,000 tons to Japan, and 60,000 tons each to France and Italy, were limited to a tonnage of 27,000, except that every country was permitted to possess two of up to 33,000 tons. Guns on aircraft carriers were not to exceed a 6-inch caliber.⁵

No new capital ships were to be constructed for ten years except a few replacement units which was specifically mentioned in the treaty. Existing forces were to be stabilized close to the formula by the scrapping of few ships.

Due to this treaty sixty-eight ships were scrapped; twenty eight by the United States, twenty four by Britain and sixteen by Japan. The United States scrapped some such ships which had not been yet completed.

According to Article 19 of the Washington Treaty, the United States, Britain and Japan agreed that the existing status-quo in the Pacific, with regard to fortifications and naval bases, shall be maintained.

Thus the Washington Treaty of 1922 dealt with the relations between the United States and Great Britain, and with the relations between the United States and Great Britain on the one hand, and Japan on the other.

As the result of this treaty the United States sought parity with Britain in battleship strength. It was bound

op. cit.,
5. H.W. Forbes, ~~The Strategy of Disarmament~~, (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1962), pp. 28-29. ✓

to achieve that parity because of its superior and militarily uncommitted industrial resources. The only question was whether it would achieve that equality with Britain by way of costly competition or by way of mutual agreement. Since there was no political conflict between the two countries, both the countries agreed upon a practically identical maximum tonnage for their battleships.⁶

After the First World War Japan had become a preponderant naval power in the Far East, thus threatening the interests of the United States and Britain in that reign. It was inviting both the countries for a race in naval armaments. But the United States did not want that race due to some financial and psychological reasons. On the other hand, Britain had military alliance with Japan. The British Dominions, more particularly, feared that this alliance's operation might some day bring them on the side of Japan, if there is any conflict between the United States and Japan. [Thus Great Britain and the United States not only had no political conflicts with each other which might lead to war; they had also an identical interest in avoiding armaments race with Japan.] Great Britain solved its political and military problems in the field of naval armaments by dissolving the alliance with Japan and agreeing to parity with the United States in the case of capital battleships. The United States also achieved what

6. H.J. Morgenthau, ^{op. cit.,} ~~Politics Among Nations~~, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), p. 373. ✓

it wanted by separating Great Britain from Japan and reaching equality with Great Britain. The understanding between the United States and Great Britain not only isolated Japan but at the same time it placed it in a position of hopeless inferiority with regard to heavy naval armaments.⁷

✓ The Washington Conference of 1922 secured the limitation of armaments up to certain limits. [No agreement was reached on the limitation of other vessels although the United States wanted a reduction of cruisers and submarine strength also.] It wanted that these should also be reduced to a certain extent. But because of disagreement between the States no agreement was reached on these questions. Both France and Italy felt that submarines were vital to their defense, therefore the efforts of Britain to outlaw submarines ended in failure. The cruiser question collapsed for different reasons. Britain did not want to grant equality to the United States in this category in 1921, which it thought vital to the defence of its Empire. As a result of the Washington Conference, competition moved from capital ships to cruisers and new naval race followed in this category.

✓ This conference was also disappointing in the case of land armaments and aircrafts. But the success of this conference in arresting the competition in capital ships

7. H. J. Morgenthau, op.cit., p. 373 .

was a concrete achievement of the highest order, and this produced immediate psychological effects. Before the conference came to an end, the ^{previous} provisions tension had been relaxed, the most dangerous suspicious had been dissipated, and the future settlement of outstanding issues in the Far East and the Pacific had been rendered easier by the creation of a new atmosphere of good will.⁸

The Geneva Conference of 1927

The Washington Conference led directly to the Geneva Conference of 1927. Both were devoted to the limitation of naval armaments. Both were held outside the League of Nations and both were called by the President of The United States. Its objective was to avoid rivalry in cruisers and other ships. After the Washington Treaty the big powers had started a race in building them.

Britain and Japan accepted the invitation but France and Italy refused to attend the conference and they insisted that ~~a~~ naval arms were only one phase of the whole armaments problem that should be tackled as a unit.

After lengthy discussions, Britain and the United States failed to reach agreement on the cruiser question,

8. Survey of International Affairs, 1920-1923, ^{Op. cit.,} ~~(Oxford: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1927)~~, p. 493. ✓✓✓

probably because their experts had the tendency to view the world through a porthole. The delegates of Britain and the United States deadlocked on the question of parity and the large versus the small cruisers. Therefore, the Geneva Conference of 1927 failed completely.

The London Naval Conference of 1930

In the history of the disarmament and security problem, the year 1930, in which the Naval Treaty of London was signed is a very important year. The London Naval Conference of 1930 was another major attempt to remove competitive naval construction as source of international friction. Its purpose was to extend the gains obtained at Washington in 1922 to the other types of vessels.

The policy which the British and American Governments intended to pursue at the Conference was made known at an early stage. The British Government's attitude was declared by the statements of Alexander and Macdonald who made it known that their Governments would like to see a reduction in the size and gun calibre of capital ships as well as the postponement of replacement. On the question of reducing the size of battleships there was no official statement from the United States before the conference opened.⁹

Japan declared that it was prepared to agree to the postponement of the battleships replacement. It was opposed to the abolition of submarines and claimed parity

9. Survey of International Affairs, 1930, op.cit., 1931, p.32 .

in that arm with Great Britain and the United States.¹⁰ The French and the Japanese opposed the move for the abolition of submarines. They expressed their concern to avoid the application of the ratio to all classes of vessels which had been fixed at Washington. Italy demanded parity with France in the conference. France did not want that Italy should be granted parity with it which it had been forced to accept at Washington so far as battleships and aircraft carriers ^{were concerned}. Now it should not be recognized in auxiliary vessels.¹¹ France was of the view that its requirements were much higher than those of Italy. It needed large number of ships to protect overseas dependencies.

From the above statements it was clear, that the treaty will be concluded between the three naval powers—the United States, Britain and Japan. While British delegates tried their best to bring about conciliation between the divergent views, the United States delegates wrestled with Japan on its claims for increased cruiser strength. France and Italy could never remove their differences and they did not sign the main part of the treaty, dealing with cruiser strength.

The significant results of the London Treaty were as follows : (1) Equality of cruisers between Great Britain and the United States was recognized (2) no battleship were to be constructed prior to 1936 (except for France and Italy which

10. Ibid. op. cit., p. 32 .

11. op. cit., p. 33 .

were entitled to build two each), and (3) the United States, Great Britain, and France agreed to reduce their battleship fleets to 15:15:9 respectively. The sections of the Treaty, which France and Italy did not accept, were very significant for the major powers: (1) heavy (8-inch gun) cruisers were to be limited at an 18:15:12 ratio for the United States, Great Britain, and Japan respectively, (2) light (6-inch gun) cruisers were to be limited by tonnages: 143,500 for the United States, 192,200 for Great Britain and 100,450 for Japan, (3) the destroyer fleets of Great Britain and the United States were not to exceed 150,000 tons each, and Japan was limited to 105,500, (4) the three powers were to enjoy parity in submarines at a limitation of 52,700 tons, and (5) an escape clause was provided for the possibility of a non-signatory nation challenging the naval security of one of the three countries.¹²

President Hoover hailed the London Naval Conference of 1930 as "a great success in removing the competition in naval arms between the greatest naval Powers and the burial of the fear and suspicions which have been constant product of rival warship construction."¹³

The British Government was disappointed at the failure of the attempt for five-power Treaty. But the financial

12. H. W. Forbes, op. cit., pp. 30-31 .

13. Survey of International Affairs, 1930, op.cit., p.74 .

aspect of the agreement made the widest appeal to it. The Japanese Government said that the treaty would reduce the expenditure for naval armaments but it pointed out that the proportion of naval strength allotted to Japan was less than its need during the period ending in 1936, and this Government was completely free to present at the next conference whatever claims might then appear suitable.

Although the Washington and London Naval Treaties limited vessels of every category for the three big naval powers and limited capital ships and aircraft carriers for the fourth and fifth naval powers yet it was substantial achievement. There were four weaknesses in these two Treaties which soon appeared. The first was, the absence of comprehensive limitations on the naval power of France and Italy, the second was, the 'escalator clause', the third was, the high tonnage limits fixed much above actual strength and the fourth was, the launching of the 'pocket battleship' by Germany in May, 1931, a ship that was under the Washington Treaty tonnage limit but it had the power of a large vessel.¹⁴ Furthermore, nothing was said about land and air forces in these treaties.

✓ The next naval disarmament effort was made at the London Naval conference of 1935-1936 but it failed, because Japan demanded parity with the United States and Great Britain, which Britain and the United States were not ready to

14. Norman D. Blamer and H.C. Perking, International Relations, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1953), pp. 499-500.

give and early in 1936 Japan left the conference.

Thus only the Washington Naval Conference of 1921-1922 was successful in the real sense of the term. It was successful not so much because it brought disarmament in the field of naval armaments but because it stabilized armaments and established a 'Status-quo' in the Pacific. By 1930 the political basis of the agreement of 1922 was evaporating and by 1934, after Japan had started its aggression on Manchuria, the whole basis on which the 1922 agreement had been made was gone. As Frederick H. Hartmann said, "Japan's insistence on parity and its withdrawal in the face of Anglo-American opposition were the surface symbols of deep-set disagreement. They were the harbingers of approaching war."¹⁵

Thus in the end we can say that voluntary disarmament remains in force so long as it serves the interest of the participation^{-ants}. When they think that it is against their national interest, they renounce it. "The limitation of armaments, whether enforced or voluntary, cannot of itself do away with the threat of ultimate attack. The potential power of the possible enemy is the inevitable product of its resources and manpower. Short of dismemberment and its loss of Sovereignty, the feared State retains the potential for rearmament or an increase of existing armaments."¹⁶

15. Frederick H. Hartmann, op. cit., p.285 .

16. Ibid p. 299 .

Chapter - 6

Conclusion

An attempt has been made in the foregoing pages to examine the efforts within and outside the League of Nations to bring about arms reduction which would ensure peace and security, reduce tensions and bring economic benefits to the nations accepting an agreed ratio of arms limitation. Did the League of Nations belie the hopes of humanity? To what extent The League of Nations succeed in persuading nations to accept limitation and reduction of arms? What were the reasons for the failure of the League to avert and The Second World War? Why did the disarmament efforts under the League of Nations fail? What are the basic problems which impeded the progress of disarmament efforts? These questions have been carefully examined in detail in the preceding chapters. A number of important conclusions emerge from this study.

① The main obstacle to a general and complete disarmament is the nature of the present international system. While considering the prospects of disarmament one must keep in mind the state of the balance of power in international relations. In an international system where there is no supreme coercive world authority, States try to provide for their security by their own armed strength and with the help of the allies. Here we may say that the efforts of the League of Nations towards disarmament failed mainly because it lacked some coercive power to make its decision binding and for this reason France and some other countries refused to consider any

disarmament proposal unless it guaranteed security. They knew that the League of Nations would be able to do nothing if they became the victim of aggression of their opponents and the examples of Manchuria and Ethiopia were before their eyes.

The League of Nations was not able to do anything effectively because it lacked coercive power to make its decision binding. In the absence of supreme coercive world authority, a nation has to depend on its own armed strength and it would not agree to any disarmament proposal which will put it at a disadvantage. It is also important to realize that the power equilibrium is a variable factor. When States regard armament as useful and necessary they are naturally reluctant to disarm, and are determined that any disarmament which occurs shall not have an adverse effect on their power position¹. Thus, there is a close relationship between the willingness to disarm and the feeling of security.

There are two kinds of views on the question whether armaments are a cause or a consequence of international political tension. Some believe in the assumption that men fight because they have arms. From this assumption we may conclude that if men would give up all arms, all fighting would become impossible. Arms control or disarmament is the first step towards the settlement of political disputes.

Another view is that arms race itself is a manifestation of inherent tension and hence disarmament can

1. Vernon Van Dyke, International Politics, (New York : Appleton - Century - Crofts, Inc., 1957), p. 246.

be brought about only in the wake of a political agreement.
As Quincy Wright says :

" Successful disarmament treaties have always been accompanied by political arrangements which were believed by the parties to augment their political security or to settle their outstanding political problems. The two have gone hand in hand , and, considering the conditions of successful negotiation, it is unlikely that agreement will ever be reached on the technical problems of disarmament unless the parties have lessened tensions by political settlements or by general acceptance of international procedures creating confidence that such settlements can be effected peacefully".

Therefore, it has been accepted by the experts on international relations that, while disarmament could not by itself abolish war, it could to a great degree lessen the political tensions that might easily lead to war.

Disarmament or at least regulation of armaments is an indispensable step in a general settlement of international disputes. Competition for armaments reflects competition for power. So long as the States have contradictory claims in the power contest, they are forced by the very logic of the power contest to have contradictory claims for armaments.

2. Quincy Wright, A Study of War , (Chicago : The University of Chicago Press, 1942), Vol. II, pp. 800-801.

3) H.J. Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations ^{op. cit.} (New York : Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), p. 387.

Therefore, the precondition of disarmament is a mutually satisfactory settlement of the power contest. If the concerned States have agreed among themselves upon a distribution of power, then they can agree to reduce or limit their armaments, otherwise not.

Disarmament issues cannot be solved so long as the conflicts of power from which they have arisen remain unsolved.

After the First World War France became the preponderant military power in Europe. The Treaty of Versailles left Germany thoroughly disarmed. This distribution of power became the main problem when the World Disarmament Conference met in 1932. Germany's main purpose at the Conference was to change that distribution of power while France's avowed purpose was to maintain that distribution of power. Germany tried to achieve its aim by demanding equality of rights between France and itself. On the other hand, France tried to achieve its goal by linking the German principle of equality with the principle of security. For Germany to give up its demand for equality in armaments would have meant to accept its inferior power position as permanent and for France to give up its demand for security would have meant its position as the preponderant military power in Europe.

Hence the controversy between France and Germany on the limitation of their respective armaments at the World Disarmament Conference of 1932, was in its essence a conflict over the distribution of power.

If we look at the history of the disarmament efforts in the past, it tells us that States agree to reduce their armaments only when either their political rivalry is submerged in an alliance or their interests do not clash directly. Fear of insecurity is an obstacle to disarmament. This is well evident by the fruitless efforts made for disarmament during the inter-war period. The hopes of Wilson proved to be illusory and no general disarmament was ever achieved. What made the nations to keep up the state of their military preparedness and blocked their accepting of any plan of disarmament was fear of other nations' aggressive intentions.

During the League period, what especially stood in the way of disarmament was the French demand for security. France was of the view that without any guarantee of security, it had no alternative but to build up its own system of security based on armaments and alliances. The French rejected the idea that disarmament created security. They said that armaments might be dangerous in future, but any reduction in their armaments was far more dangerous for the present. If they reduced their armaments to the level of Germany, Germany would not care for the Treaty of Versailles and make preparations for another world war. Hence France always insisted during the inter-war disarmament negotiations that security pacts must precede disarmament agreement. When the United States President Coolidge invited Great Britain, Japan, France and Italy in 1927 to participate in a conference to limit construction of those types of vessels, which were not covered by the Treaty of 1922, Italy and France did not accept the

invitation on the ground that further limitation would be dangerous from the point of view of their security.

But security is essentially linked with political agreement. If the Rush-Bagot Agreement of 1817, which provides for limitation of British and American naval strength on the Great Lakes is cited as the most successful disarmament agreement, it is only because Britain and the United States had no political rivalries at that time. An accommodation of political interest is necessary for the success of any disarmament plan.

But the main feature of international relations is that no solution of the problem of security and no accommodation of political interests are permanent. Therefore, States try to take all possible precautions against future difficulties while formulating their national policies. Armaments as instruments of power are kept in reserve. Thus, it is the fear of future insecurity also that is an hinderance in the way of disarmament .

A political agreement and a removal of the fear of insecurity both in the present and in the future, are the two conditions that must be met before any disarmament negotiations can be successful. Disarmament is not possible without the removal of the fear of insecurity, which in turn is not possible without the solution of political problems. Nations can be expected to disarm when they feel themselves secure. During the League period France was ready for

reduction in armament if the big nations such as ~~the~~ Great ✓
Britain and the United States guaranteed its security. It
knew that the collective security, which was provided under
the Covenant, was weak and unworkable. In the absence of any
effective collective security system, no nation will take
the risk by reducing its armaments.

The fear of insecurity in the present may
be removed or lessened but not necessarily the fear of future
insecurity. Nations cannot be expected to disarm completely
even if political differences are removed. They would give
their consent to any disarmament proposal which is permissible
by political understanding in the present and would retain
arms to the extent to which it is warranted by what they
consider their fear of future insecurity. Thus, it is illogical
in the present context of international relations to admit
the possibility of general and comprehensive disarmament.
History also shows that disarmament has been possible only
when it was neither general nor comprehensive. This is so
because the outlawry of a particular weapon does not neces-
sarily restore the balance of power nor does it terminate
arms race.

During the inter-war period the Washington
Naval Conference of 1922 was the most successful attempt
at disarmament. It was successful partly because none of
the participants had any political purposes to serve by naval
superiority and mainly because the acceptance of a ratio
in tonnage of capital ships did not prevent them to cons-
truct other types of vessels. The weapons problem it dealt

with was by nature susceptible of treatment - battleships and carriers are relatively few, difficult to hide and it takes a long time in building. Even so it was unlikely that agreement would have been reached if Britain's intention to terminate the Japanese Alliance had not been evident. At that time none of the Sea Powers wanted war, and stabilization of capital ships in 1922 meant a balance of naval armaments that served to limit the possibilities of successful attack, and since that attack of any one State on others had to come mainly and ultimately by sea, and since the weapons involved could not be easily, quickly or secretly produced, agreement was reached.

The main reason why a partial disarmament is possible and general and comprehensive disarmament difficult is political disagreement among the Great Powers. In the case of comprehensive disarmament, an agreement upon it will end the power of a State to control the level of its own armaments. Such an agreement was sought to be achieved at the World Disarmament Conference of 1932, in which it failed completely. And the failure of the World Disarmament Conference ultimately led to the failure of the League of Nations.

Although the League of Nations' efforts towards disarmament failed, yet its ^{relevance} legacy to the modern world is very important. It institutionalized the problem of disarmament. It started with a Permanent Advisory Commission.

4. Frederick H. Hartmann, ^{op. cit.,} ~~The Relations of Nations,~~ (New York: ~~The Macmillan Company,~~ 1957), p. 299.

For the first time the whole programme of disarmament was discussed in a systematic manner. When the United Nations was formed after the Second World War, it was the view of the politicians that this new organization will not meet with the same fate as its ^{predecessor} ~~previous~~ one because last time they had to create the League of Nations out of nothing and this time the foundations were there.

The League of Nations and Disarmament

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