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CHAPTER I
FROM PARTISAN POLEMIST TO BIPARTISAN DIPLOMATIST

The story of the part played by the United States in international efforts from 1931 through early 1938 to disarm the world cannot be adequately told without due regard to the efforts of Norman H. Davis. Under two administrations, those of Hoover and Roosevelt, Davis provided the continuity of American representation at every disarmament conference during the seven year span. He served under Hoover as a Democratic member of the bipartisan delegation to the World Disarmament Conference in 1932 and under Roosevelt as Chief American Delegate to the same conference in 1933. Davis was present in Geneva in May 1934, when the full conference assembled for the last time, and still occupied the post of America's primary disarmament negotiator at the final meeting of the Bureau of the Disarmament Conference in May 1937.

Between formal sessions at Geneva he worked either behind the scenes to reconcile international differences or under the spotlights to achieve settlements of specific arms control issues. He succeeded in convincing Germany to return to the conference table in December 1933, but failed
nature of his cabinet." Hoover, placing considerable emphasis on timing, admitted the advantage of proceeding with Herriot's support, but stressed the necessity of English backing at all costs. Advised that Davis had an appointment with MacDonald that evening, Hoover left him to his own devices as regarded a meeting with Herriot, while Stimson added a note of caution on dealing with the French Premier because of the notorious reputation of the French for leaking stories to the press.

The domestic and international political situations also hovered over the discussions of a potential postponement of the conference. Hoover told Davis and Gibson he would accept the responsibility for such a proposal, but Davis questioned the necessity for adjournment, if an agreement could be achieved in thirty days. Hoover's only fear centered around the question of re-negotiating the various national policies during the American election campaign. "If there is going to be an adjustment," the Chief Executive told Davis, "... with nothing in front of us, then Lord help them at Lausanne." In other words, if the European nations answered the Geneva proposals equivocally and without a firm prospect of post-election success and then adjourned the Lausanne Conference with a recommendation for cancelling both debts and reparations, American public reaction against the questions of both
debts and reparations could be disastrous. Davis interjected that the Europeans had been upset that these two issues were not a part of the Republican platform and Hoover replied that they had been omitted at his insistence to avoid "difficulty for the whole world conflict." "I want to be indiscreet enough," Davis told him, "to congratulate you on that platform." 40

40 Verbatim transcript of telephone conversation between the President, the Secretary of State, Gibson and Davis, June 19, 1932 at 4:30 PM (Geneva time); Davis Papers. The content of this message has been recorded at length here because of several discrepancies between it and the "Memorandum by the Secretary of State," FR, 1932, I, 189-191. For example, Stimson omits or mis-states the following important factors:

a. The President's stress on American assumption of an "offensive position" at Geneva;
b. The President's emphasis on the importance of Davis' position with respect to the immediate negotiations and to the prospective domestic acceptance of positive results;
c. Davis' emphasis on the urgent necessity for MacDonald's support, although Stimson took credit himself for three years of constant effort to build up Anglo-American cooperation, the latest endeavor having been on his trip to Geneva;
d. Davis scepticism about Herriot's cabinet is summed up in a statement that "the French were talking much more favorably about land forces," thereby conveying the impression that Davis suggested the French would be friendly to the American Plan, when the contrary was true.
e. Rather than being "guided somewhat by what happens with him [MacDonald] tonight," with respect to a contact with Herriot, the consensus is stated by Stimson that Davis and Gibson should go Lausanne, "even at the risk of creating comment, [rather] than to lose a day and to see Herriot there." Stimson did not leave the matter up to Davis as Hoover did.

All these points are mentioned not to attack the accuracy
All in all, the leading Democratic delegate to Geneva wholeheartedly supported his Republican Chief Executive on the questions of separating the arms control issue from that of debts-reparations. It is difficult to conceive that either of them was naive enough to believe profoundly in the wisdom of the action. The President, however, was bound not only by his personal inclination toward pacifism, but more importantly by the force of public opinion. Davis, on the other hand, was possibly a prisoner of his official duties, yet this did not exonerate him of the responsibility for rendering constructive criticism of the idea. Nevertheless, Davis had considerable work before him, as did the whole delegation, because the President wanted all the details on the plan's release worked out within forty-eight hours.

The initial phase of negotiations involved acceptance by England and France of the general outline of the American plan, since Hoover had agreed originally to entertain some alterations of details, but he "did not want it whittled away too much." MacDonald, when contacted by Davis and Gibson, grasped the significance of

of the Secretary's memorandum, which may have been written hours after the conversation, but merely to defend the initial premise of this study, namely, the significance of the role of Norman Davis at Geneva.

\[Ibid.\]
the proposal immediately and approved the land and air reductions. As concerned the navy, however, he voiced concern because of both the delicate balance achieved in the London agreements and the ticklish nature of the Far East situation. He pleaded the necessity for further consideration before offering a final decision. Harriot, on the other hand, welcomed the consultation, but was alarmed at the prospect of another difficult problem, when Germany and Italy with England's support were pressing him for cancellation of reparations at Lausanne. On one point at least, the French Premier was candid and clear: he would accept no reduction of land effectives.

Discussion of the Harriot talks between Stimson, Gibson and Davis, later the same day, cast a completely new light upon the Hoover Plan and its potential effect on both Geneva and Washington. French rejection of reduced land forces dampened Gibson's enthusiasm, which had been predicated upon securing joint French-English support. He now questioned the value of even presenting the plan to the conference. "There is a new situation here," he advised Stimson. The Secretary recalled that this had been his initial fear: "You are now coming back to my original view--don't you see? You must be able to understand the

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42 FR, 1932, I, 194.
situation as it is here." Perhaps Gibson and Davis did "understand," but then in a rather strange, somewhat inexplicable remark, Stimson added:

Now you know that we want to get a good reason to stop the conference. Did you understand that the other day? His real purpose is to get a good reason for an adjournment.

Consequently, Stimson relented and, at Davis' insistence, granted him one more day to confer with MacDonald in an effort to obtain English support. But at no juncture in this entire conversation did Stimson elaborate upon his highly opaque observation.

Was the President really playing politics with world disarmament? Perhaps he had only become unnerved because of the European linkage of the debt-reparations questions to arms control. Or did he perceive a means to translate a Geneva failure into political gain?

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43 Verbatim transcript of telephone conversation between Stimson, Gibson and Davis, June 21, 1932 at 1:20 AM (Geneva time); Davis Papers. Note that in FR, 1932, I, 195, Stimson cites a telephone conversation "this evening," although the memorandum is listed as not printed. The inconsistent dates, Stimson's communication is dated June 20, while the transcript is dated June 21, result from the time differential between Geneva and Washington. The key to the identification lies in Stimson's reference to Gibson's reversal of attitude with respect to presentation of the plan at Geneva. There may also be an error on p. 195 in a cross reference to an interview with Herriot, cited at pp. 171 and 172, since the transcript from the Davis Papers reported a conversation with Herriot in which he actually rejected the American Plan.
Unfortunately, Stimson spoke only in innuendoes. And Gibson and Davis diplomatically refrained from comment. The demeanor of all three raises still another question: Was Hoover making a grand gesture at Geneva, but, in so doing, forcing the conference into a position that France, at any rate, would find impossible to accept? The economic heart of the Hoover Plan was the saving of two hundred million dollars a year by the United States alone plus a saving to the world of some fifteen billion over a period of ten years.\(^4\) The popular effect of this might confront France with a decision between either accepting disarmament and then paying her United States debts out of the savings or refusing disarmament and then attempting to bargain on debts from a more vulnerable standpoint. At least some of Hoover's advance groundwork supports this supposition: On June 19, he had explained to Stimson, Davis and Gibson that the disarmament and European finance problems were parallel to one another rather than the one being dependent upon the other.\(^5\) Little analysis is required, however, to detect the salutary effect that disarmament, productive of monetary surpluses, would have on both settlement of debts to the

\(^4\) Transcript cited in footnote 42, supra.

\(^5\) Ibid.
United States and the reduction or cancellation of reparations from Germany.

Although none of the foregoing points raises any important political questions, other aspects of the developmental process of the plan do. Hoover had been willing to accept the idea of a six month postponement as coming from him personally. If the deferral of the talks was accompanied by a note of hope for future agreement, Hoover certainly could claim a degree of success to the electorate and then deal with any difficulties after a prospective election victory. The Davis idea that it might not be necessary to postpone, if agreement could be achieved in thirty days, would necessarily have perturbed Hoover, although no evidence supports this speculation. At any rate, the suggestion was more than likely a normal manifestation of optimism by Davis rather than an iron-clad probability, an eventuality that would not completely have escaped the President.

The savings angle in the Hoover Plan presented possibilities as a double-edged, political sword. The economies envisioned shifted the Lausanne burden entirely onto European shoulders, most notably those of France, whose Premier Pierre Laval, it must be remembered, had almost torpedoed Hoover's moratorium less than a year previously. Little prospect existed that Herriot would or
could accept reduction of land forces as foreseen in Hoover's proposition. The only alternative remained that of making debts to the United States and reparations from Germany contingent upon one another. Yet the Tardieu Government had ratified an agreement with America, omitting what Herriot labeled as a "safe-guard" clause, linking debt installments to receipt of reparations payments. Moreover, Herriot had voted against ratification of the pact. 46

If France hedged on Hoover's Geneva proposals, the Chief Executive would be in a position to take to the hustings with a claim that France stood in the way not only of effective disarmament, but also of American domestic recovery. In addition, Hoover had insisted on the omission of a stand on debts and reparations from the Republican platform. This clearly left him an open road upon which he could maneuver either way depending upon the final outcome of the Lausanne Conference. Properly exploited, the combination of issues could register widespread appeal to a public already steeped in isolationism and suspicious of wily Europeans. And the rationale coincides with Hoover's oft-expressed views on the international origins of the American depression.

46 FR, 1932, I, 133.
This whole line of reasoning, however, ascribes to Hoover the attribute of skill in manipulation of a combination of domestic and foreign issues within a complex framework of international developments. Such characteristics generally are associated with Hoover only by interpreters biased in his favor. One evaluation, perhaps more realistic, although theoretical, emerges initially from recognition of the close interrelationship between the Lausanne and Geneva Conferences, Hoover's denial of this to the contrary notwithstanding, and the widespread rumors that the Americans were prepared to trade debts-reparations for disarmament. Perhaps the Hoover Plan was a way of discounting such arguments. Then again maybe we are attributing too much to a strange chain of coincidences whose real implications were unfathomed by a Chief Executive not overly famous for his political acumen. Maybe the President in all sincerity just did not realize the potential political volatility of the issues in the combination in which we have placed them. Or possibly he did and history has not done him justice. The resolution

47See, for example, William Starr Myers, The Foreign Policies of Herbert Hoover: 1929-1933 (New York, 1940), which was recommended to us by Mr. Hoover himself in a letter dated December 26, 1961; a less biased treatment by Robert H. Ferrell, American Diplomacy in the Great Depression (New Haven, 1957), 212, credits Hoover with introducing the Plan "to stop the conference from 'dawdling'," a conclusion that appears a little too pat.
of the problem, however, is not possible with evidence now available. In fact, concentration during the 1932 campaign on essentially domestic affairs without the side effects we have mentioned appears to reduce the cogency of our argument. Yet the fact still remains that the President, supported by the statements of his Secretary of State, did push hard for postponement of the Disarmament Conference for highly questionable reasons. But for the moment, the further developments at Geneva are of more immediate concern in order to gain insight into the further evolution of American arms control policy.

Progress in Geneva from the evening of June 21 through the afternoon of June 22 was achieved at a tortuously slow rate. Davis and Gibson were in telephonic contact with either the White House or State Department on at least four separate occasions to report the developing state of events. Davis carried the bulk of the

48 Transcripts of telephone conversations in the Davis Papers as follows:

a. The President, the Secretary, Gibson and Davis, June 21, 1932 at 6:00 PM (Geneva time, as are all the following); FR, 1932, I, 197-201.
b. The President, Stimson and Davis at 8:15 PM; FR, 202-207.
c. The President, Stimson, Gibson and Davis at 10:45 PM; FR, 207-210.
d. Stimson and Davis, June 22, 1932 at 1:00 AM; not printed in FR.

The substance of these conversations provides the factual data contained in the following three paragraphs, unless otherwise specifically footnoted.
a year later to forestall Japanese termination of the Five-
Power Naval Limitation Treaty of 1922. Davis waged an
almost endless battle during the Disarmament Conference to
settle the Franco-German dispute. When the London Naval
Treaty of 1930 came up for reconsideration in 1935, he
represented American interests, while concurrently attempt­
ing to obtain Franco-Italian adherence to the treaty and
the attendance of both nations at the second London
Conference.

To close out his career as America's "peace
salesman," Davis carried the hopes and aspirations of
Americans and peoples the world over to the ill-fated
Brussels Conference in 1937. But like so many of the
parleys of the thirties, the conference failed to stem the
rising tide of opposition to the existing world order.
After Brussels, he abandoned the conference table and laid
down the instruments of diplomacy. Thus, the career of
Norman Davis, disarmament diplomat, came to an end after
seven years spent in a seemingly hopeless, yet valiant
endeavor to bring the world's armaments under effective
control.

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Who was Norman H. Davis and what qualified him for
appointment by Herbert Hoover as a Democratic member of the
negotiations due to the utter exhaustion of Gibson, who had been maintaining the American position in the plenary sessions. The focus of attention rested on MacDonald and Simon since further French adherence to the Hoover ideas appeared impossible after news reports from Lausanne that Davis and Gibson had offered to trade debt cancellation for disarmament. The reports were baseless, but they led to an outburst of protest in Washington. Contrary to Davis' recommendations of frank cooperation with Herriot, although the American also had recognized the French Premier's shaky position, he was not provided with all the details of the Hoover Plan. Had a candid exchange been effected, one could speculate that he might have reacted more favorably to the American ideas in their entirety. Unpredictable as he and his entourage were, however, they could well have leaked the whole plan to the press, the fear ventured by Stimson, and ruined any chances of American gain or credit at the conference. At any rate, efforts to enlist French aid ceased early.

But, as already mentioned, the major emphasis centered on the British. Davis and Gibson in tandem and finally Davis alone sought to obtain strong English support for the entire Hoover proposition. MacDonald first balked over the naval considerations, using necessity for full cabinet backing as his justification. Finally, Davis worked
around this obstacle by convincing Hoover that British comment on the plan, after its release and at their leisure when formal conference deliberations opened, would suffice. He even secured Simon's agreement to work for a postponement and for the appointment of a committee to draft an alternative treaty embodying the new approach. In the final round-up, however, MacDonald did not budge from his initial position despite prodding by both Davis and Gibson and it was the American delegation which had to sacrifice advance British endorsement of the plan for a sympathetic British reaction to the general framework of Hoover's ideas.

The President's tight time schedule for release of the plan appears to have been the major reason Davis failed to bring Great Britain around to a position of full support. MacDonald even offered to send Simon by plane to London to acquire cabinet sanction for the naval reductions, but Davis estimated the move would take a week. Hoover, referring repeatedly to the growing pressure from Lausanne, finally moved the time of release from the evening of June 21 to the morning of June 22, but rejected deferment beyond that time:

If I delay it for forty-eight hours, I have got to delay it for at least a month. It is not fair to the Democrats to put this out during their convention. It is entirely nonpartisan. . . . I could not take it up while the Republican Convention was in session--I did not want any political medicine made of it.
If the time factor was not political, then it is difficult to fathom just what did dictate the urgency. Certainly Stimson had provided no insight when confiding to Davis his initial doubt of the President's timing, although the Secretary finally agreed that it was "a wise move." Davis had come to the same conclusion and now thought the plan would give the conference "something to shoot at and a chance to get public opinion really crystallized."

Budgetary limitations and consultative pacts with Europe in the event of a breach of the Kellogg Pact represented the two most potent and controversial issues on which the Administration would have needed popular support. Davis and Gibson suggested both ideas for inclusion in the Hoover Plan, not as their own original concepts, but because of the strength they added to the overall arms control negotiations.49 Stimson explained the omission of both features from the final draft: "they would make great trouble here in two different directions. The budgetary suggestion to our services who have never agreed to it and the other . . . politically."50 But when

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49 FR. 1932, I, 202 (consultative pacts); 193 (budgetary limitations). Both points were discussed at length in the transcripts cited under footnote 48, c and d, supra.

50 Ibid., 210.
queried about the two points by Davis in a later conversation, Stimson added a new dimension: "No, the President does not want it mentioned. You get that? ... He was quite stiff on that. Afraid of trouble it might make here." Strangely enough, consultative pacts were already included in the Republican platform and, through the intervention of Davis and Swanson after the Hoover Plan had been announced, a similar plank was adopted by the Democrats. But to add a real twist of fate, the French

51 Transcript cited under footnote 48 d, supra.

52 An undated cablegram from Davis to Hull "for the platform committee at the Convention" suggested the Democrats endorse a conference of Kellogg-Briand signatories when an actual or threatened violation occurred, an act that would be "as effective as a consultative pact without its obligations;" Davis Papers. The enlistment of Davis-Swanson support is verified in a telephone conversation transcript between the President, Stimson, Gibson and Davis, June 22, 1932 at 9:30 PM (Geneva time); Davis Papers, and in FR, 1932, I, 217-218. FR, 217 contains the pertinent excerpt from the Republican platform: "We favor enactment by the Congress of a measure that will authorize our Government to call or participate in an international conference in case of any threat of nonfulfillment of article 2 of the treaty of Paris, Kellogg-Briand Pact." The Democrats were somewhat more bold in their wording: "We advocate a firm foreign policy, including ... the Pact of Paris abolishing war as an instrument of national policy, to be made effective by provisions for consultation and conference in case of threatened violations of treaties;" excerpted from Ewing Laporte, compiler, Official Report of the Proceedings of the Democratic National Convention (place of publication not listed, 1932), 148.
representative at Geneva told Gibson and Davis, after the plan's release, "that if the President had only embodied in his statement the reference in the Republican platform plank to cooperation and consultation, it would have been easy for the French to accept the plan and for the French press to back it."

From the outset, Hoover probably realized he was working under circumstances in which he would be damned if he did and damned if he did not. A promise of American consultation, in spite of the Republican platform, undoubtedly would have unleashed a wide and unified American cry of "entangling alliance." Yet the omission of the concept, at least superficially, lessened the attractiveness of the Hoover Plan to the French.

But just what did Hoover finally propose in his "Plan?" He suggested that the time had come to "cut through the brush and adopt some broad and definite method of reducing the overwhelming burden of armament which now lies upon the toilers of the world. This would be the most important world step that could be taken to expedite

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53 FR, 1932, I, 217.

54 Ibid., 211-214; all references in the next four paragraphs to the Hoover Plan were derived from this official message to the Geneva Delegation. The May 24 Memorandum of Hoover is found at 180-182. A copy of the June 22 White House press release, containing the data cited in FR, is also in the Davis Papers.
economic recovery. Reduction of mutual fear and friction "arising out of world armament" was practical along with the maintenance of adequate forces for national self-defense; indeed, the achievement of both was possible and the world could also save ten to fifteen billion dollars over the ensuing decade.

More specifically, Hoover recommended "that the following principles should be our guide:"

First: The Kellogg-Briand Pact, to which we are all signatories, can only mean that the nations of the world have agreed that they will use their arms solely for defense.

Second: This reduction should be carried out not only by broad general cuts in armaments but by increasing the comparative power of defense through decreases in the power of the attack.

Third: The armaments of the world have grown up in general mutual relation to each other. And, speaking generally, such relativity should be preserved in making reductions.

Fourth: The reduction must be real and positive. They must effect economic relief.

Fifth: There are three problems to deal with—land forces, air forces and naval forces. They are all interconnected. No part of the proposals which I make can be disassociated one from the other.

Based on these principles, I propose that the arms of the world should be reduced by nearly one-third.

By concentrating on those issues for which the broadest mandate had been registered at Geneva, Hoover apparently hoped to gain significant world support. But, in selecting the most expedient route, he altered certain aspects of the original May 24 memorandum. For example,
he ignored civil aviation and its military potential, although he retained the abolition of bombers, tanks, chemical warfare and heavy mobile guns. He replaced the Versailles formula for calculating internal police forces with a broader coefficient proposed by Gibson and Davis, thereby placing all nations on the relative standards set for the World War I losers. The most drastic changes, however, applied to the naval sections. Reduction by one-third replaced abolition of submarines, while carriers, rather than being abolished, were to be reduced by only one-fourth. And the across-the-board reduction by one-third in battleships, destroyers and cruisers was replaced by a more complex arrangement that foresaw battleships diminished by one-third, destroyers and cruisers by only one-fourth.

Then, as in his introduction, Hoover returned to the economic benefits to be realized from the plan, paying only incidental attention to the humanitarian gains achievable through disarmament and omitting totally any reference to the existent political complications:

The effect of this plan would be to effect an enormous saving in cost of new construction and replacements of naval vessels. It would also save large amounts in the operating expenses in all nations of land, sea and air forces. It would greatly reduce offensive strength compared to defensive strength in all nations.
These proposals are simple and direct. They call upon all nations to contribute something. The contribution here proposed will be relative and mutual. I know of nothing that would give more hope for humanity today than the acceptance of such a program with such minor changes as might be necessary. It is folly for the world to go on breaking its back over military expenditure and the United States is willing to take its share of responsibility by making definite proposals that will relieve the world.

The main content of the Geneva speeches in reaction to the plan rolled into Washington with commentary from Gibson and Davis. Simon gave a long speech in extremely guarded words, but "better than we had expected." Joseph Paul-Boncour, chief French delegate, found fault with the lack of emphasis on mutual security and organization of peace-keeping machinery. The plan, if adopted, would certainly satisfy German demands for equality, according to Rudolf Nadolny. The coolest reception came from Tsuneo Matsudaira of Japan. Although brief and courteous, he asserted that Japan would have to oppose the suggested naval reduction, yet later the same day, he privately hinted that despite difficulties he hoped for the success of the plan. The real hero of the hour, however, proved to be Dino Grandi, whose announcement of Italy's unequivocal acceptance of the plan down to its last details burst upon the conference to be received with "uproarious applause." He was the last speaker and Gibson and Davis presumed that Grandi's impact might rest with the delegates. Having thus
reported the Geneva opinions, Davis inquired, as a matter of interest to the delegation, about American reception of the plan; however, neither Hoover nor Stimson could comment.55

The press reaction in America was generally mixed between support and dissent. The Nation called the plan a "political trick" to give the appearance of reduction, yet really bring about an increase in armaments. This conclusion interpreted the minimum established force levels, even if the United States did not seek to meet them, as targets toward which to build. There was justification for such a charge, since American army and navy strengths were well below the minimums, although little evidence pointed toward a build-up. In contrast, The Christian Century headline read "The President Proposes Real Reduction."

"His is no pacifistic proposal," claimed the article, "but it goes further than any other suggestion" toward "giving effect to the outlawry of war" and achieving economies by reducing military establishments "which came into being on the assumption that war was the law of the world."56

55 Ibid., 215-218; transcript of telephone conversation between the President, Stimson, Gibson and Davis on June 22, 1932 at 9:30 PM (Geneva time); Davis Papers.

56 The Nation, July 6, 1932, 5; The Christian Century, July 6, 1932, 851.
During the week after the Geneva announcement, Business Week analyzed the Republican platform, but did not even mention any relation between the call for arms reduction and the prevailing state or future of business. It is easy to perceive that this was before the era of importance of military contracts. Nation's Business, on the other hand, although it made no reference to the Hoover Plan, carried a subtle plea for disarmament in Point Thirteen of Henry I. Harriman's Fourteen Point "Business Platform" of the United States Chamber of Commerce, whose presidency he had just assumed:

Keep out of the League of Nations, but enter the World Court. Promote peace and economy by disarmament and aid in the abolition of war reparations by giving fair consideration to a reduction of war debts.57

The business world just found it extremely difficult to turn away from its predilection with making money and getting the economy back on its feet. The two journals mentioned were not even perceptive enough or, perhaps more accurately, brash enough to link the Geneva proposals to

57Business Week, June 29, 1932, 12-13; and July 6, 1932. Nation's Business, July 1932, 20 and 59; Point 14 is here included to overcome superstition attached to the number "13," but even more so because of its inspirational value: "The depression of '29 was caused primarily by loss of moral perspective and a collapse of common honesty. The Sermon on the Mount and the Ten Commandments will always be the guide to real and lasting prosperity."
bipartisan American delegation to the World Disarmament Conference in Geneva in February 1932?

Davis was no stranger to Hoover, either officially or privately. The two men had worked together during and after World War I as members of the Wilson Administration. Davis had "retired" at thirty-eight years of age and joined the Treasury Department in August 1917, devoting a portion of his later efforts to Supreme Economic Council activities. He subsequently served as Under-Secretary of State from June 1920 until the Wilson cabinet left office in 1921. Although he had been absent from extended government service for over a decade when he accepted Hoover's call to go to Geneva in December 1931, he had never lost interest in the affairs of the state.

Focusing his attention on world economic problems, League of Nations activities, Democratic Party policy and development matters, and the world cause of disarmament, Davis led an extremely active and prominent life during the twenties. He sought every possible opportunity to make his views known, in print and in speech, in public and in private, on the course and conduct of American international relations. His dedication to the principles and practices of Woodrow Wilson made Davis a much-sought-after speaker by the most diverse groups, both partisan and non-partisan. His almost meteoric ascent to the pinnacle of economic
the Lausanne Conference and examine the implications of the interrelationship.

A broader analysis appeared in *Time*, which labeled the plan "a bold and radical attempt to galvanize the conference into action after five months of fumbling." The magazine hazarded the supposition, not without foundation, that rejection of the Hoover ideas could mean a closed door in Washington to European nations seeking war debt reductions. Senator Borah was quoted as calling the plan "fair and sound," while majority leader Senator Robinson estimated that the "plan would test the good faith of the Geneva Conference." A cross-section of the press, as reported in *Time*, produced such adjectives as "timely and bold; sensible; irrefutable" to describe the President's Plan.58

When the initial enthusiasm wore off after the Hoover Plan's introduction, the delegates returned to the arduous tasks of examining and revising, negotiating and

58*Time*, June 27, 1932, 16. On July 4, *Time* made the following portentous observation in an aside on the whole Geneva-Lausanne drama: "Since the deliberations at Lausanne and Geneva were expected to go indefinitely, smart young Robert Thompson Bell, press officer for the American statesmen now in Switzerland, last week took a villa for the summer strategically located on the lake shore at Celigny, between Geneva and Lausanne."
deliberating in order to produce a universally acceptable new draft treaty or final resolution. The first suggestions, supported by the French, pointed toward an immediate agreement of limited scope to be followed by adjournment to allow consideration of the broader details. Davis attacked this idea in conversations with Paul-Boncour, asserting that the United States might accept abolition of chemical warfare, tanks, mobile guns, etc., but only if the accord was accompanied by a strong ratification of the Hoover principles. Stimson subsequently altered Davis' approach only to the extent of rejecting the immediate treaty idea, which the Secretary felt might detract too much from the Presidential proposals.59

On June 25, Davis went one step further in talks with Henry de Jouvenel, Paul-Boncour's temporary replacement, and seemed to make some progress. The French, Davis asserted, were impractically following a concept of piling one mutual security treaty on top of another and actually moving toward the potential bankruptcy of their allies. In lieu of such complicated agreements, Davis insisted that a Hoover treaty would bring world public opinion to bear on France's side. Such a pact would contain the added feature

59 FR, 1932, I, 227-228.
of American and English signatures to a disarmament accord, embodying not only mutual arms reduction between France and her traditional enemy, Germany, but also entailing a measure of supervision and consultation through the Permanent Disarmament Commission. Stimson at first retreated in the face of this idea, but then commended it as a "legitimate and forceful argument," especially in the context of attempting to force France away from dependence on bilateral "covenants of assistance." The Secretary did caution Davis against emphasizing consultation, even through the Commission.60

While Davis appeared to be making headway with the French, the first evidence of what could have become a breach of Anglo-American cohesion in the arms control discussions came to his attention on July 5. British reluctance to endorse the Hoover Plan, it turned out, had been prompted by their own desire to launch an equally extensive proposal. When Davis and Gibson had openly brought forth the President's plan in mid-June, the English equivocated because the plan pre-empted them, when they were seeking to gain the initiative, and embarrassed them,

60 Ibid., 234-236, 248.
since the Dominions had not approved their plan and MacDonald and Simon were unable to release details.\textsuperscript{61}

Just how astute had Hoover been? Perhaps he had somehow sensed that a British plan was in the wind, especially after Baldwin's ideas had been reported in May by Davis and Gibson, and therefore pushed through his own plan. The record offers nothing in confirmation or refutation of such a supposition. Certainly this revelation of British dissimulation did not please an American delegation in Geneva that had placed so much stock in close cooperation with their English counterparts. The British were, however, prepared to continue the intimate coordination with Gibson and Davis, now that the positions of both countries were public knowledge.

When the English plan was officially released to Parliament by Baldwin on July 7, analysis showed the air and land portions to be compatible with the Hoover Plan. The naval proposals, however, revealed the necessity for a complete rebuilding of all fleets into smaller units, if the British ideas were accepted; the overall tonnage reduction exceeded that foreseen by Hoover. Or as MacDonald had indicated to Davis, the English were not dissatisfied

\textsuperscript{61}\textit{Ibid.}, 272-277; transcript of telephone conversation between Davis and Stimson, July 6, 1932 at 1:40 PM (Geneva time); Davis Papers.
originally with the President's plan; they questioned whether it should not go further than the Chief Executive apparently desired. But the American Secretary of State, was moved to call the whole scheme "rather humbug," when apprised of Baldwin's ideas by Gibson and Davis. Nevertheless, they saw the seed of compromise in the separate plans.

The existence of two distinct proposals from major powers made endeavors at conciliation necessary. Upon Davis' recommendation, Simon agreed to submit a compromise resolution to the General Commission, embodying some of the attributes of both plans plus all the major points on which general approval had already been registered. Davis negotiated all the changes in the British draft to bring it more into line with the American position. Many of the alterations seemed minor in isolation, but in their entirety they left a definite United States imprint on the final product. Under-Secretary Castle noted that all Davis' initial suggestions represented a decided improvement, but the Administration wanted to push further in the air and land armaments sections, on the question of specific instructions to the Conference Bureau for action during adjournment, and on the direct relation of naval reduction to substantially corresponding land reductions. Gibson was able to report back immediately that all the instructions had been fulfilled by Davis in advance of their receipt, a
a fine tribute to the skill and perceptivity of the Democratic delegate. Nevertheless, Stimson doubted, although admitting he had not read the new draft in detail, that sufficient attention had been paid to the President's ideas. After making a detailed examination, however, the Secretary was moved "to congratulate you on the elements of strength and the direct relationship of the President's plan which you have successfully retained."62

Having reconciled British views to those of the American Administration, the only thing that remained was a formal vote by the General Commission to register reaction to the Anglo-American compromise resolution. On July 23, Eduard Benes, the Czechoslovakian delegate to the Commission, formally introduced the Simon proposal of July 20 to the assembled Commission for action. Speaking on behalf of the measure before the vote was taken, Gibson referred to the resolution as a pledge in the form of the "embodiment of those immediate steps of reduction and limitation" that ultimately would lead to the realization of "that full measure of disarmament which the world expects."63 The final tally showed forty-one nations favoring


63 Ibid., 308; a copy of the State Department press release covering the speech is in the Davis Papers.
the Anglo-American proposal, two nations rejecting it and eight countries abstaining from the vote.

An analysis of the balloting revealed a fundamental split between the delegations and forecast many of the difficulties that were to plague the Disarmament Conference during the remainder of its deliberations. Two nations, Russia and Germany, voted outright against the Benes Resolution. Maxim Litvinov remarked that he cast Russia's vote for disarmament, not for the resolution, and the implication was clear. Germany, on the other hand, supported the principles set forth by the resolution, but opposed the omission of recognition of the concept of equality among signatories. Among the abstainers were the remaining "unequal" nations, the losers in World War I--Bulgaria, Hungary, Austria and Turkey, who were joined in abstention by Afghanistan, Albania, Italy and China. The latter power stated flatly that she would vote against any disarmament idea until the Sino-Japanese dispute was settled to her satisfaction. The other forty-one nations, present and voting, registered their unqualified support of the Anglo-American plan with the exception of Japan, which offered reservations based on the need for further study of the relation of air armaments to all other arms.

What were the implications of this outcome? First of all, the conference went into adjournment based on the
majority vote in the General Commission. The next meeting of the Conference Bureau was set for the week of September 21, 1932. At that time the Bureau under instructions from the Commission would begin work directed at the next session, tentatively scheduled for January 1933, the latest possible date under the procedural regulations.

Secondly, and undoubtedly more important for the cause of arms control, the "veto" votes cast by Germany and Russia, plus the composition of the abstaining bloc, indicated that there was no universal basis for disarmament contained in the amalgamation of the Hoover-Baldwin plans. Even before the conference could again take up its work, the major powers would have to deal separately with German demands for equality and to reconcile those demands with the equally strong French call for security. But all that was yet to come and the height of the barriers built in July 1932 gave no immediate evidence of being in any way insurmountable. Fragile though it later proved to be, the profound hope exuded by the delegates to Geneva appeared to be the wave of the future.

With the adjournment of the conference, the American delegates, at least those not assigned to permanent diplomatic posts in Europe, packed for the homecoming trip. And Norman Davis was no exception. The work had been challenging, the issues had often seemed insoluble. But
dogged perseverance and tenacious "dental efforts," as Dr. Woolley had described them, paid dividends in the end. And a grateful Chief Executive was not hesitant at expressing his appreciation in a personal letter to Davis:

It is a great pleasure to congratulate you on having added further achievement to the long list which has marked your career in the service of the American people. The complete confidence which I had in you . . . has been abundantly justified. I deeply appreciate the devotion and energy with which you threw yourself into the delegation's tasks, and I was most happy to see your steadfast optimism in the face of every difficulty rewarded by results which considerably exceed what appeared possible in the early days of the Conference.\(^6\)

\(^6\)Hoover to Davis, August 19, 1932; Davis Papers.
CHAPTER III
INTERREGNUM INTERLUDE

The last five months of 1932 represented a period of remarkable transition in the career of Norman H. Davis. Events, both foreign and domestic, dramatically shaped the course of his activities before the dawn of the New Year. Sir John Simon would strongly recommend his appointment to the planning committee of the International Economic and Monetary Conference and President Hoover would reply by naming him America's alternate delegate. On September 12, the Germans would notify the Disarmament Conference Secretary of their intention neither to return to the late summer meetings of the Conference Bureau nor to participate in the further work of the conference in January. This development portended grave difficulties for the total cause of arms control. Of lesser apparent consequence was the effort to reconcile Anglo-American differences over the reduction of naval forces combined with the necessity for Japanese approval and Franco-Italian endorsement of any compromise before the work at Geneva could progress satisfactorily.

On the home front, after a strenuous campaign, the Hoover Administration would suffer defeat at the polls in
success plus experience on the Supreme Economic Council gave an aura of authority to articles he wrote, especially as they concerned the financial status of the post-war world. More important, however, for the task confronting him in 1931 was the continuous stand he took in favor of disarmament and the need for the United States to participate in international arms control negotiations. Equally as significant, although he admittedly enjoyed both a national and an international reputation in 1921, was the contribution of his myriad activities during the succeeding decade to the steady increase in his stature as a statesman, politician, financial expert and diplomat.

The Harding Administration had hardly taken office before Davis began publicly to reveal his concept of the role of international cooperation for peace and stability that America had to assume in the post-war world. He perceived the necessity for the country to exert its great moral influence in restoring to the world the calm and equilibrium so necessary if that world were to recover from the economic chaos that reigned supreme. In Europe, for example, he noted that Germany would exert initiative only after the issuance of decisions on reparations ceilings and the relaxation of restrictions on her activities as a nation. "It is of even greater importance," said Davis on April 2, 1921, "to determine what part the United States
November, but serve on until March 1933 as a "lame duck" government. The Republicans would still be responsible for policy, yet reluctant to undertake definitive measures in view of the withdrawal of a popular mandate. This chain of circumstances, particularly those with international significance, rendered Davis' vacation prospects rather tenuous and pointed toward the necessity for his early return to the diplomatic arena of Europe.

He had hardly alighted from the ship after his return voyage from Europe, when Secretary Stimson delivered his important August 8 speech before the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. The heart of the message, an overall review of four years' experience with the Kellogg-Briand Pact, proved to be the remarks on the American attitude toward sanctions and consultation. The pact brought into focus the force of world opinion as a deterrent to aggression. The American Government aimed "to make this sanction . . . effective and to insure that the Pact of Paris should become a living force in the world."

In the realm of consultation, as a consequence of the outbreak of Sino-Japanese hostilities in 1931, the Secretary continued, the United States concerted with the League Council to call the attention of the disputants to their Paris Pact obligations. Although initial efforts at conciliation had not succeeded, Stimson declared, America
"maintained its attitude of sympathetic cooperation" with the League. Finally, the United States notified both China and Japan "that it would not recognize any situation, treaty, or agreement which might be brought about by means contrary to the covenant and obligations of the Pact of Paris." Two months later the League endorsed the action. The Secretary admitted that this doctrine in and of itself was not a pioneer pronouncement, yet he added that the manner in which it "organized and mobilized" international opinion was unique. More importantly, this development made inevitable the "consultation between the signatories of the Pact when faced with the threat of its violation." Stimson emphasized the "implication of consultation," rather than its "implementation" by formal action, which he considered unnecessary or, more accurately, although he did not say so, impossible of achievement. But he did point to the party planks "endorsing the principle of consultation" as evidence of support by the American people, who "will not fail to do their share in this endeavor."

What were the long range consequences of this elaboration in greater detail of the Hoover-Stimson Doctrine? The effect on the subsequent diplomatic negotiations of Norman Davis will be seen as the sequence

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1 FR, 1932, I, 575-583.
of later events evolves, but Stimson apparently sought some immediate ends. One recent evaluation holds that the speech was simply an admission that the Peace Pact "contained no sanctions but depended for its enforcement on the will of the people."\(^2\) It is true that Stimson said as much, but this finding hardly seems to do him justice.

Given the tenor of his preachments during the Manchurian crisis and the sharpness of phraseology in the Borah Letter, the August 8 speech appears to have been a logical continuation of the Secretary's endeavor to crystallize public opinion behind a more vigilant foreign policy. In order to broaden the extent of his appeal to include the entire nation, he even solicited bipartisan support by referring to both political platforms, despite the fact that the electoral campaign was underway. Equally important however, the pronouncement revealed to the world an American readiness to confer with other nations as an "inevitable" result of a breach of the peace, a step never before anticipated of America by other major powers. And Norman Davis would find that European statesmen interpreted the speech in just such a context, although the Secretary's remarks failed to arouse any significant popular support in

his own country, which was neither interested in nor inclined toward the extension of a broader license for the Government in foreign affairs.

On August 15, before Davis even had a chance to breathe freely of vacation air, an exchange of correspondence between the State Department and the British Foreign Office led to his inclusion in the planning party for the Economic Conference. Stimson communicated with Ray Atherton, American charge in London, in response to Lord Simon's recommendation of Davis:

His experience and wide acquaintance would seem to us to be very valuable. On the other hand, the appointment of an individual not a part of the Administration as the sole representative of this Government on the Organizing Committee might give rise to criticism and political difficulties.

Thus, when the formal nominations were made to the League Secretary, Berlin Ambassador Frederic M. Sackett was designated the American delegate and Davis his alternate. The appointment of Sackett was necessarily partisan, but that in no way detracted from apparent Administration confidence in Davis' ability. Nor for that matter did this conference have any bearing on his important activity in the arms control field, although it did represent the major reason for his early return to the Continent. Certainly

\(^3\)FR, 1932, I, 820 and 821.
partisan-political considerations did not affect his disarmament role because with Wilson tied down in Geneva and Gibson bed-ridden with an extended illness, Davis would bear the brunt of American representation in the forthcoming round of sessions in all the capitals of Europe.

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The July 23 resolution to adjourn the Disarmament Conference invited the signatories of the Washington and London Treaties to make necessary arrangements for reconciling the naval reduction foreseen in those treaties with the general program of disarmament envisaged by the conference resolution. In a telegram to Lord Simon, Davis offered on September 9 to be prepared upon his return to Europe to discuss this matter with the British. Then, after arriving in Europe, he worked out the initial October contacts that led to the official convocation of the talks on October 7 in London.

The task ahead was clear. American-British differences had to be adjusted to the mutual satisfaction of both powers; then corresponding action should be taken with the Japanese. When these steps were completed, France and Italy had to adhere formally to the concepts of the

4Ibid., 528-529.
London Treaty and also accept the Three-Power basis for further reduction. All the loose ends then needed to be tied up into a final provision on naval reduction for insertion into the general disarmament treaty at the January meetings. Davis journeyed from Geneva to the English capital along with his legal adviser, Allen W. Dulles, and the technical advisers from the two service branches, Admiral Arthur J. Hepburn and Lt. Colonel George V. Strong, prepared to undertake the arduous negotiations. Needless to say, the requirements were extensive, but Davis displayed his usual optimism and placed the greatest degree of emphasis on Anglo-American accord, after which he considered all the other contingencies could be settled without undue difficulty.

The English did not prove to be willing compromisers. Davis ran up against a deep division between the Cabinet and the Admiralty with the former prepared to discuss reduction and the latter determined at all costs to sustain Britain's relative naval power at a high level. Politically and officially, the cabinet had the final decision, but refused to overrule the navy chiefs. Thus, a stalemate ensued early in the talks. The English endeavored to force a future American commitment to a reduction in the amount of capital ships under commission, but were themselves reluctant to endorse a concurrent lowering of the number of
commissioned light cruisers and destroyers. A critical British analysis of the popular reception of the Washington and London Treaties served as justification for this point of view; the public was attracted to the trend established by the treaties, but did not understand fully the unique effect of naval reduction on national security as a whole.

Throughout the debates, Davis maintained the position that navies could be reduced further within the Hoover framework. Therein, the emphasis centered on proportional reduction of all arms, which in turn forecast a diminished need for naval armaments. In other words, naval arms had to be considered within the national military spectrum and the Hoover formula would reduce, proportionally, all such spectra, yet still retain the relative strengths of the total armed forces of all the major powers. The English, in argumentation against this view, persisted in looking upon the navy as a single entity, rather than just as one segment of a total military establishment. In reality, Davis was encountering the traditional British reliance on a strong and diversified fleet as a prerequisite to effective English fulfillment of world-wide security and colonial commitments.

5Unless otherwise footnoted, data on all the naval talks, not just those in London, was taken from the official report filed by Davis on January 17, 1933; Davis Papers. Extracts only of this report are found in FR, 1932, I, 560-574.
In somewhat more complex terms, however, and this is undoubtedly where American policy least complemented British policy, the United States because of her own refusal to accept international obligations ignored the United Kingdom's world-encompassing responsibilities. More specifically, cut-backs in the American-English-Japanese fleets along proportional lines theoretically lessened the prospects of Far Eastern difficulties. By sustaining only a marginal interest in the Pacific, America would become more secure in the Western Hemisphere. But a reduced British navy would be hard-pressed to maintain far-flung empire obligations in Africa and the Middle East, to say nothing of continental affairs. American-Japanese reductions would not decrease these colonial ties and United States failure to join with England in supporting European security only shifted a larger measure of the burden to the United Kingdom.

In short, American policy revealed a captivation with the numerical formula for the reduction of naval power as set down in the Washington and London Treaties. On the other hand, that policy rejected any responsibility for creating the international political atmosphere necessary to the effective functioning of the formula. And ironically, the spokesman for this point of view was Norman Davis. In his indictment of the Harding Administration a
decade earlier, he had pointed to the need for America to participate actively in world affairs and strengthen the peace machinery. In representing the policies of Hoover, however, the pressure of duty forced him to abandon the spirit of mutual cooperation in favor of a course of national self-interest.

Because of his impending return to Geneva, Davis strove without success through late October to culminate the Anglo-American discussions. Stimson's absence from Washington on campaign tours paralyzed the State Department and no definitive responses were forthcoming to Davis' requests for authorization to issue a hopeful joint press communique from London. The destroyer-cruiser-capital ship impasse gradually necessitated a shift in the topic of the talks to conditions for Franco-Italian entry into the London Treaty framework. But before this aspect received any noticeable attention, the Japanese question began to loom large on the horizon.

The naval talks did not ignore Japan; the prevailing conviction was that a united American-English position could be used as a lever to coerce the Japanese, probably much in the same manner as had been done at Washington and London. On October 28, Davis reported on conversations with Matsudaira in which the existence of a Japanese plan was revealed, an alleged compromise plan between the American
and British proposals. But the real details came two days later, when Ambassador Joseph Grew reported from Tokyo that the Japanese were hammering out their plan based on a realization of their new international position after the Manchurian affair, debate of which stood on the agenda for the pending League meetings, and on the significance of the German demands for equality. The Japanese rejected the Hoover proposals and argued for increasing defensive naval strengths by reducing the offensive forces of other navies. This, the Japanese believed, could be accomplished through the elimination of naval aviation, both carriers and planes, complemented by a retention of submarines as essentially defensive weapons. Moreover, the Japanese were bent upon abolishing the existing naval ratios in favor of an enhanced position for Japan and they considered that Five-Power talks at Geneva would be the logical place to carry through their plans. Grew pointed out that "efforts are to be made to liquidate the disarmament problems at this conference without waiting for the second London Conference of 1935." Clearly, the Japanese perceived an opportunity to make headway in view of the apparent British-American discord and were prepared to force the

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6 FR, 1932, I, 542.
7 Ibid., 543-545.
is going to play in bringing about a readjustment in world affairs." Isolationist thought had to be replaced by internationalist thought. By the same token, he argued, cooperation with other nations entailed much less risk and promised far greater returns than did non-participation in international matters.¹ "Risk" and "return" might be in the vernacular of the financier, yet Davis demonstrated adeptness and imagination in their application to political proceedings.

Nor was he without substantive ideas on what America should do for he was astute enough to realize that the essence of world recovery involved the pacification of long-standing political disputes between the nations of Europe. And it was in this situation that America could assist. Speaking to the Institute of Politics at Williamstown, he remarked that "purely as an enlightened selfish policy," the United States not only should, but could, contribute her moral influence toward political settlements in Europe as a necessary prerequisite to commercial and industrial revival.² This did not constitute a revolutionary departure from traditional American foreign policy, but it provoked commentary.

¹New York Times, April 2, 1921, reporting Davis' speech before the Bond Club in New York City under the byline: "Wants U. S. To Act In World Concert."

²Ibid., August 25, 1921.
hands of their counterparts in the expectation of achieving added international stature as well as a more favorable naval arrangement.

When Davis did leave London, the objective of his immediate plans was the amelioration of Franco-Italian disagreements through prospective personal visits with Herriot and Mussolini. But, in the meantime, Stimson thanked him for "helpful" information and expressed the feeling that "the progress you have made to date should be of real value to you in the next chapter of trying to complete the London Treaty." Nevertheless, the Secretary was apprehensive of any manipulations that might upset the delicate balance of naval forces or produce a less stable situation "by which Japan could profit at our expense." Interestingly, he now admitted that "we" had perceived a "highly disturbing" dislocation in the Baldwin proposals, reported in mid-May by Davis and Gibson, and "we felt forced to present an equivalent counter-proposal which would affect the savings which Baldwin sought but would avoid the dislocation. This was incorporated in the naval sections of the President's plan." 8 Apparently then it had been the desire to pre-empt the English that had motivated the Hoover Plan.

8Ibid., 546-548.
In reality, the Secretary was just admitting that some of the Hoover chickens were now coming home to roost. Hoping to anticipate English interests in economy through ambitious naval reduction, perhaps the White House and the State Department had unknowingly created the Anglo-American impasse that now plagued Davis. Granted, the English had acted without candor during the initial discussions of the Hoover Plan, but in his desire to "cut through the brush" undoubtedly the President had struck the tap root of United Kingdom dependence upon a strong navy, regardless of its cost. These speculations seem to hold more than a measure of truth, when considered in relation to the conclusions reached by Stimson in his communication to Davis:

Your conversations with the British are essentially an attempt to reconcile the British and American ideas, and as such are a constructive measure. But there are already indications that the Japanese are hoping to profit by them to secure their own objective, primarily a ratio change, and if we are not exceedingly careful, we shall be faced in 1935 with an unsettled treaty situation which will complicate ... negotiations still further.

The Hoover formula for equating naval and land forces began to appear less and less realistic, mainly to the British, especially if it were not backed by definite American commitments to participate actively in international affairs. And all the Secretary of State seemed able to do was speculate upon the difficulties evolving from a chain of circumstances brought about largely by actions of the
Administration he represented. Moreover, it was Davis' job to attempt to rectify the situation in which endeavors Stimson did give him license to "frankly tell me, if at any time you disagree with me."

By the time Davis responded to this enjoinder, he was already in Rome, prepared to parley with Mussolini. In an exchange of cables with Stimson between November 8-15, he sought to emphasize the need for reconciling naval limitation, a short-term consideration, if linked to the London Treaty which would expire in 1936, with the general disarmament program of Geneva which, if accepted, would extend over a ten year period. Stimson agreed with him in principle, yet sought without complete success to convince Davis that inclusion of France and Italy in the London Treaty should be considered only a preliminary step toward dealing with naval limitation in the general disarmament concept. What the Secretary really wanted, it seems clear, was the expansion of the London Treaty as insurance against a stalemate and possible failure at Geneva, a viewpoint to which Davis finally acceded, albeit reluctantly.

The unanswered question then remains as to which man was really the most representative of the Hoover concept and most cognizant of the real situation? Stimson,

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9Ibid., 548-549, 556-560.
cautious, generally realistic, strove to achieve the utmost within the limits of the prevailing conditions. Davis, on the other hand, given to "going all the way," according to Dr. Woolley, pressed for authority to pursue the ultimate goal. Stimson resolved the problem by deciding to proceed slowly, but this hardly answers the question. His course undoubtedly held the better prospects of success with the European powers; however, it rejected the practical and popular appeal of the Hoover Plan and ignored entirely Japanese readiness to negotiate away the London Treaty in favor of a new naval arrangement. The Tokyo plan, insofar as it was known, appeared unacceptable, but it certainly was negotiable and the Japanese reportedly were prepared to talk. Moreover, expansion of the London Treaty represented the acceptance of a temporary expedient, tenuous at most in view of the changed attitude in Tokyo, in lieu of a response to the international popular demand for far-reaching arms control. Nonetheless, based on Stimson's initiative, the whole trend of the naval talks finally turned toward holding the British-American deliberations in abeyance, creating a broadened united front against Japan, and, to this end, concentrating on the French and Italians.

On his way back to Geneva, Davis stopped in Paris on October 29 to converse with Premier Herriot and examine
the French ideas with respect to the Treaty of London. The Frenchman pointed to the necessity for Franco-Italian agreement and encouraged Davis to do his utmost during his planned trip to Rome to discern a formula for solving the differences between the two countries along lines satisfactory to both America and England. This conciliatory attitude, however, did not extend to all the Premier's views. In another context, yet still touching on the London Treaty, Herriot commented on Secretary Stimson's August 8 speech. He labeled it an American safeguard against "unauthorized implications" being associated with the idea of consultation as "embodied in existing treaties such as the London Naval, the Nine Power and in the contemplated Disarmament Treaty." Davis explained the address as purely a "unilateral statement of national policy" not susceptible to inclusion in an arms control treaty. But Herriot's "implication" was clear and unequivocal. The French still sought increased American assurance in the realm of mutual security, naval or otherwise. By and large, however, during Davis' visit the French officials attached more immediacy to the German demand for equality than to any program for naval reduction.

10 Ibid., 348-349.
True to his word, Davis endeavored in Rome to employ his "good offices" in the Italian disagreement with France. But during conversations with both Mussolini and Fulvio Suvich, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, he found that French rejection of the 1931 Italian accord, suggesting a plan of mutual regulation of the navies of the two countries, had induced a reluctance to make new overtures. In the face of this, Davis suggested England bring the two nations together with the United States participating, if desired. Mussolini accepted this procedure, emphasizing the importance of American presence at such meetings. At the Foreign Office, however, Davis detected a deep resentment of the French tendency to downgrade Rome's naval requirements and to strive for superiority. The Italians rejected this attitude; thus, equality entered the arms control picture on a level other than that between France and Germany. At the close of the Rome visit, Italy's diplomats stood firm on a demand for parity with France and offered no evidence of preparedness to negotiate this question in subsequent meetings.11

Therefore, it was on notes of suspicion, jealousy and national pride that the naval talks entered their final phase on December 2 at Geneva, where all the

11 Ibid., 550-556.
interested powers were assembled for work with the Conference Bureau. Davis hoped to overcome the apparent obstacles with a clear enunciation of America's policy. French and Italian acceptance of the London Treaty constituted for Washington a necessary preliminary to either a general disarmament treaty or a separate long-term naval accord. And only in the scope of such treaties would the United States even consider qualitative changes in any category of naval vessels. This course of action recognized not only that the introduction of a new, all-inclusive French Plan at the Disarmament Conference could postpone a general agreement for an indeterminate period, but also that naval limitation might survive, even if Geneva failed. Moreover, if both a general and a long-range naval accord proved impossible of achievement, at least the world would have breathing space until the end of 1936 when the London Treaty expired. The policy seemed to cover all contingencies, yet it applied pressure on the English, French and Italians to clear the way toward naval rapprochement, undoubtedly on the premise that this in turn would increase the prospects for settlement of the essentially European problem of land armaments.

The prime issues that emerged during the final phase of the talks were the Italian demand for parity with France and French refusal to concede any aspects of her
naval program to either Italy or England. Initially, Davis tried to eliminate the parity problem by stressing its feasibility only in terms of a long-term treaty during whose duration the existent French superiority could be overcome. If the two nations were to sustain the prevailing disparity and achieve a long-range goal of near equality, however, France would have to abandon her ambitious building program. The French delegates claimed this would create domestic political difficulties, but agreed to take the matter up with Paris. The answer, based largely on naval ministry recommendations, made it clear that France would not voluntarily agree to naval reduction, parity with Italy or alteration of present construction schedules unless the Cabinet overruled naval officials, an extremely remote eventuality.

On the assumption that only by concerted American-British action could progress be achieved, Davis conferred with Simon to plot an alternate course. The drafting of an Anglo-American formula for Franco-Italian adherence to the London Treaty represented the most practical approach. This formula could then be referred to both Rome and Paris supported by necessary political pressure to facilitate ratification. But such a plan meant emphasis on principles rather than details and portended potentially fatal results. Finally, the two diplomats called only for ratification of
those "parts" of the London Treaty with which either France or Italy agreed. In the long run, this method would bring both nations at least part way into the overall naval picture and would prospectively simplify the 1935 negotiations on the renewal of the treaty. And the existent impasse in the general disarmament field could be alleviated. Before the details of the procedure could be worked out, however, the Herriot cabinet was toppled and the question of further Four Power discussions in the naval field became purely academic for the time being.

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While the London talks on the naval phase of disarmament were still in session, Germany announced her refusal to attend any further meetings at Geneva. There is little doubt that Germany's action had been justified. Under the Versailles Treaty, her armaments levels were rightfully reduced and concurrently the powers agreed in the League Covenant to follow suit with similar cut-backs. Even though Germany entered the League in 1926, no concerted program evolved. And it was this "unequal" treatment to which Germany persistently objected in all international circles. By 1932, of course, the German domestic political scene had so changed that the renunciation of Versailles became a popular political demand, especially
from the fledgling National Socialists of Adolf Hitler. This entire combination of circumstances added up, however, to considerably more than just disarmament. Certainly any further progress in arms control would be impeded without Germany at the conference tables, but in reality the security of all Europe rested upon the prospects for achievement of a solution to the German equality issue.

In the face of the German problem, as in so many others during the inter-war period, United States policy makers found themselves confronted by a paradox of their own creation. The force of Germany's demands was such as to require a rapprochement with France on a broad basis, which meant the discussion of nearly all phases of European settlement arising out of World War I or, in short, the convocation of a new peace conference. Arms control was just one of the myriad issues involved, yet the American diplomats in Europe, noteworthy among them, Norman Davis, had authority to negotiate only on disarmament. Foremost among the points of emphasis in instructions to Davis during early October 1932 were admonitions to caution lest the United States be pulled into the discussion of issues not directly related to the reduction of arms. He had to make the best of the dilemma, but the Washington-drafted policies he followed made the matter so much the worse for the interested European powers. They all wanted America
The New York Times editorialized on Davis' remarks, offering the chronological record as evidence in support of his observations. Three years had passed and still the United States had no treaty with Germany, while Europe still groped in a blind alley for leadership and organization. The major powers had spent those same years in building battleships and only recently had begun to talk of a conference in November on the limitation of sea power.

"From the outset it was evident to calm observers, here as in Europe, that the United States was destined by the logic of the situation to the opportunities and responsibilities of leadership." Up until this time perhaps Davis qualified as a "calm observer" of American policy, but if so it was only the lull before the storm.

The convening of the Washington Conference on November 12, 1921 heralded United States assertion of a leadership policy. Or did it? Norman Davis did not think so and he was highly sceptical of the outcome of the negotiations. One of his prime reservations, formulated before a Republican women's group in January 1922 before the deliberations were complete, focused on American guarantees to Japan in the Four-Power treaty, which replaced the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902 with multilateral

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3 Ibid., August 26, 1921.
to join in the informal talks on the Germany problem; but they hesitated to restrict the latitude of the negotiations in such a manner as to limit their usefulness in the settlement of broader questions at stake outside the realm of disarmament.

Initially, Lord Simon took the lead, without any prior coordination with the French, toward commencing the discussions with Germany by proposing a meeting on October 11 in London under the provisions of the Declaration of Mutual Consultation of July 13. One point of this four-point agreement to which Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany were parties stated that the powers "intend to work together and with the other delegations at Geneva to find a solution for the disarmament question which will be beneficial and equitable for all the powers concerned." So far, so good, but the remaining three points covered agreements to consult on general problems of mutual concern within the spirit of the Covenant, on cooperation toward convocation of a world economic conference, and on coordination of commercial affairs to prevent discrimination against any nations. It was simple to invite the United States as one of the "other delegations" to discuss arms control, but the implications of the other provisions

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12 Ibid., 452 and 694.
with respect to American public reaction were unpredictable.

Secretary Stimson exhibited apprehension to Davis on two specific points: London was a poor choice of locations because it was not "within reach of Geneva," meaning it appeared remote from disarmament, and, unless advance assurance was forthcoming that this was the best means of getting Germany back into the conference, "there would be serious danger of a public controversy arising in which the purpose of the meeting as being confined to disarmament might be misinterpreted, to our serious embarrassment." For his part, however, Davis kept his distance from the preliminaries, preferring to hold himself in reserve for the main event, when and if scheduled.

Several factors combined to undermine Simon's approach and led to an alternative course. Neither the Americans nor the French were happy with the London meeting site. And the same two countries considered the date of the talks unpropitious in view of the German election campaign, then underway. Both preferred to wait as did the Germans themselves. Davis was unhappy with the "observer role" discussed for America. He wrote to Gibson that "it was certainly a mistake to try to bring them all together

\[13\text{Ibid.}, 453.\]
under the Consultative Pact and to bring us in the back
door in the role of observer (sic)." He had told MacDonald
that three things were necessary, otherwise they were all
"wasting time." The United States and Great Britain had to
agree on a real reduction program, then bring pressure on
France and Italy to "bury their differences," and finally,
induce France to accept the reduction program after which
Germany and France could get together "without any more
foolishness." But Davis did not just confide in Gibson.
He suggested a similar approach to Stimson, placing
specific emphasis on "naval reduction," the only major
issue separating the Americans and the English, and the
Secretary approved the procedure. But all progress was
slow until Germany herself finally relented.

On November 1, before his departure for Rome and
further naval talks, Davis reported on a conversation with
Sir Eric Drummond, Secretary General of the League, in which
the Englishman mentioned a trip to Berlin and talks with
Franz von Papen, German Chancellor, and Konstantin von
Neurath, Foreign Minister. The upshot was that England con-
sidered approaching Germany at the coming League Council

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11 Davis to Gibson, October 18, 1932; Davis Papers.
meeting (November 14, eight days after the German elections) and suggesting an informal meeting at Lausanne to which the British would send Arthur Henderson, President of the Disarmament Conference, thereby "getting tied up with" arms control. In a remarkable demonstration of candor and a somewhat blunt retort, Davis told Drummond this seemed a "childish and evasive" way to broach the subject. He suggested Von Neurath be asked openly and frankly to come to Geneva without any conditions whatsoever for the purpose of discussing with the other four powers the question of Germany's re-entering the conference.\textsuperscript{16}

Upon returning from his meeting with Mussolini, Davis wrote of the German debacle to Frank Polk: "I have done a lot of traveling and a lot of fishing but as yet I have no fish on the string. Although at least two of them are on the hook, I cannot tell yet whether they will be landed."\textsuperscript{17} France and Italy appeared prepared to take up the matter in earnest and only Germany remained aloof. Davis pursued this problem directly with Von Neurath on November 22 and three days later was able to report to Washington that conversations would officially begin on December 2 in Geneva.

\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Ibid.}, 472-473.

\textsuperscript{17}Davis to Polk, November 21, 1932; Davis Papers.
In the interim before these talks began, Davis again traveled to Paris to quiet apprehensions and insure full participation by the French. Because of its relevancy to the German problem, Herriot brought up the new French arms control plan into which the idea of consultation had been integrated. At this juncture, Davis gave the French Premier an incisive and perceptive lecture on the theory and philosophy of the evolution of American foreign policy, noteworthy because it was both reflective of his skill as a diplomat and indicative of his profound understanding of the political processes in American life that both dictate and restrain flexibility in policy making. And incidentally, the Premier could draw his own conclusions on the rightness or wrongness of wagering the future of disarmament on the single factor of consultation.

The United States, said Davis, could not be pushed "faster or further than it was prepared to go" toward the achievement of a "legalistic formulation" for the Stimson Doctrine just because of the Secretary's August 8 address. In fact, a demand for such a formulation might jeopardize the "long step forward" that had already been taken. The American Chief Executive dutifully outlined America's obligations under her treaties. Stimson had done this on the President's behalf with the Kellogg-Briand Pact and, since there had been no noteworthy dissent in the United
States, France "should be content." Not only was America now "committed to the principles of consultation in case of a violation or threat of violation of the Peace Pact, but it has already established a precedent of consulting." In the meantime, America was observing how other nations responded to their responsibilities. More important, however, although the Pact did modify the "doctrine of neutrality and belligerent rights," the conduct of nations with respect to that Pact would not be properly codified within a disarmament treaty.

The force of the Davis arguments registered heavily on Herriot and an aura of conciliation, later proven to be more illusory than real, centered over the remainder of the Paris talks and eventually the main point of the meeting was reached. To facilitate Germany's return, Davis introduced to the French a "preliminary convention" to serve as the basis for agreement. Extending over a period of three years and avoiding all references to political questions, such as equality and security, leaving them for the general arms control treaty, the convention foresaw the establishment of a Disarmament Commission. Working with the Hoover Plan, the British resolution of July 23 and the new French and Italian Plans, both undiscussed at Geneva as yet, this commission would be required to prepare a general disarmament accord for ratification not later than January 1, 1937,
the date of expiration of the "preliminary convention" as well as the Washington and London Treaties. But there were stipulations, the first being that Germany accept an assurance that the powers would work in good faith to reduce arms in return for her agreement to an extension of the time period before which the question of equality would be resolved. And secondly, the French would have to concede that the practical applicability of equality could be worked out along with the theoretical considerations of the concept. All in all, Herriot was satisfied with the principles as outlined and endorsed their usage in bringing Germany back into the conference.  

After several preliminary meetings to work out an agenda, the formal Five-Power conversations opened on December 6 in Geneva. The conference was to extend over another week, however, before a final compromise was reached. Davis followed several different lines to invoke action on the broadest possible basis. Initially, he introduced the "preliminary convention," but was voted down by the French, despite Herriot's previous stand, on the premise that the Germans might use it as a lever to

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18FR, 1932, I, 476-486.

19Davis report to the Department of State, December 29, 1932, plus a copy of the signed original of the final resolution; Davis Papers. The report covers the period December 2-12, 1932. See also FR, 1932, I, 489-528.
raise the ante for their return. He then turned to projecting world public opinion into the deliberations by emphasizing the importance of some immediate achievement to satisfy impatient popular demands. Somewhat cynically, he responded to Paul-Boncour's enjoinder to discuss the merits of the new French Plan: "An announcement that each of the Powers had agreed to scrap ten heavy guns and give up one thousand men would have more effect upon the world than the formulation of one thousand new plans!"

It was Davis also who prevented placement of the full blame on the Germans for the lack of a speedy resolution of the situation. On December 8, before the Germans had even been invited into the plenary discussions, Herriot proposed an invitation to Germany, giving recognition to "equality of rights in a system which would provide security for all nations." The American delegate attacked this with a question of what would be done if she refused? He argued for agreement on a basis for return and then the issuance of a Five-Power statement. But he refused to relinquish the American demand for prime emphasis on the issue of disarmament rather than on the secondary questions of equality and security. He achieved all he asked on the former point, but had to concede to demands for equal stress on all three issues.
In the final analysis, the last five days of the talks deteriorated into arguments over semantics, especially after Herriot asked Von Neurath for a definition of "equality" and the German delegate retaliated with a demand for a closer French explanation of "security."

Introductions of individual position papers inevitably led to the appointment of drafting committees, whose efforts produced ever more restricted communique proposals. It gradually became evident that nothing more than a face-saving announcement would emerge rather than an extensive declaration of future intentions. Finally, on December 11, the "Five-Power Declaration" was signed. In essence, the United Kingdom, France and Italy granted Germany "equality of rights in a system which would provide security for all nations," exactly as Herriot had demanded, and agreed to include the principle in a general treaty. In return for this, Germany consented to resume her representation at the conference. The Four Powers then renewed their affirmation not to solve their disputes "by resort to force." And the last paragraph, the only one mentioning the United States, encompassed all that Davis had been able to salvage from months, weeks, days and hours of negotiations and deliberations, truly small recognition of the effort expended:
The Five Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy declare that they are resolved to cooperate in the Conference with the other States there represented in seeking without delay to work out a Convention which shall effect a substantial reduction and a limitation of armaments with provision for future revision with a view to further reduction.

The German return to the Disarmament Conference facilitated continuation of the arms control talks according to schedule and also made it possible to suspend proceedings over the coming holidays. The Conference Bureau held its last meeting of the year in secret session on December 13 and the following day the General Conference convened, only to adjourn immediately. The re-convening of the two groups was set for January 23 and January 31, 1933, respectively. During the last secret session, however, Rene Massigli of France asked that the new French Plan be considered as the first item on the General Conference agenda. President Henderson in a decision that was somewhat ironical stated "that there was no reason why a general explanation and discussion of the French plan" could not be undertaken along "the same broad lines as that accorded to the plan of the President of the United States." Thus, the delegates could look forward to going over much of the same ground again, debating issues they had considered closed in July. Davis' prophesy gained credence: world patience

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20FR, 1932, I, 415-416.
peace-keeping machinery in the Pacific. While carrying on aggression in China and Siberia, he declared, Japan made no binding pledge to leave the United States undisturbed. Davis feared the treaty was "a false step into a European alliance." He questioned the omission of Holland, Russia and other nations with Far Eastern interests, "if this is a treaty to confer before taking up arms." He wondered further whether the Anglo-Japanese Pact had really been discarded or whether America had just become a part of it. Rather than have the American people think the Far Eastern situation was settled and "go to sleep," Davis favored the inclusion of "a clear enunciation of the open-door policy" in the Nine-Power Treaty, which guaranteed the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of China. The implication that appears to underlie all these remarks is an idealistic search by Davis for a single all-encompassing treaty for the Far East instead of a maze of agreements that fragmented rather than crystallized the diverse objectives at issue. But this idealism gradually evolved into political partisanship in his subsequent attacks on the Washington Agreements.

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4 Davis speech before the Republican Neighborhood Association, a New York women's group, on January 11, 1922. The meeting and speech were reported in the New York Times, January 12, 1922.
would no doubt grow thinner over the submission of a "thousand plans."

With the general order of business completed, the American diplomat prepared for a homeward voyage to capture a few short weeks of repose and to consult with the Administration. On the eve of his departure, he received a heartening message of gratitude from his old friend Lord Cecil. The English statesman congratulated him warmly "for the splendid work that you and the American delegation have done." Only because of American intervention, on more than one occasion, had the important cause of peace through disarmament been sustained. "We all know your devotion to this object," wrote Cecil, "and if we have been sometimes disturbed at newspaper stories of this or that we have never questioned that your attitude had been dictated only by what you considered would be best for the success of the Conference."21

There was little question but that Davis' efforts had been concentrated in the direction of the "success of the Conference." Hardly another statesman could lay claim to more energy expended. But the gains registered, such as they were, had come only through arduous efforts, persistent mediation, unrelenting perseverance. In his reply

21 Cecil to Davis, December 13, 1932; Davis Papers.
to Cecil, written after arriving in America, an ominously portentous and strangely prophetic note seemed to hang over Davis' words:

I still believe that if we want to save the Conference we have got to get a treaty within the next three months that will register all of the principles that can now be agreed upon and put into effect some very substantial measure of disarmament. If the Conference has to wait for the working out of a general Convention which will satisfy Germany as to equality and France as to security, which in effect involves a military and political reorganization of Europe, I very much fear that it will result in failure. It would take at least another year or two to work out such a comprehensive scheme and I fear that British and American public opinion will demand that we either do something sooner or that we withdraw and let Europe work out her own problems.22

We are now certain of the outcome of all Davis' prognostications; they all came to pass except for the first one. The world did not achieve a settlement within "the next three months," although he was right back in the thick of the foray as an emissary of an Administration toward which he had not just a deep feeling of duty, but also of party loyalty.

Davis served the Republicans well. He adhered to the guidelines laid down by Hoover and Stimson and cooperated with Gibson by insuring that American influence was brought to bear, where and when possible. Although his own
ideas often clashed with those of the Administration, he never allowed his personal convictions to obscure his sense of duty. In many respects, perhaps because of his independent role as a delegate from the "opposition" and his freedom from the fetters of civil service, he reacted quicker than Gibson, the Chief of the Delegation, against decisions Davis felt restrained the delegates. But his reactions never were violent; his criticism was always well-reasoned and diplomatic. And his forceful arguments and his persuasive powers left their mark on the disarmament policy evolved during the last year of Hoover's tenure. Passivity had been turned into activity largely because of the part played by Davis. And now the interregnum interlude was rapidly drawing to a close. With the Democrats taking over perhaps he would be able to induce greater changes in American policy. Whereas he had waged mainly a sustaining battle as a "representative of the opposition," he might be able to register the full impact of his ideas as a delegate of the party in power. Only time would tell . . . .
PART II

AMBASSADOR OF ARMS CONTROL
CHAPTER IV
THE EVOLUTION OF NEW DEAL DISARMAMENT POLICY

Radical and immediate though the New Deal attack on the American domestic plight may have been, the approach to foreign policy was infinitely less venturesome. The sudden turnover of personnel instituted in the essentially internal affairs branches of the Executive Departments did not extend to the State Department, except at the very top level. Secretary Cordell Hull "weeded out an official here and there," but "retained the seasoned, experienced persons in key positions."¹ This did not mean an absence of policy innovations; however, the evolution of new lines in the conduct of diplomacy progressed slowly and experimentally. In numerous instances, the Roosevelt Administration merely followed the pathways already laid out by Hoover and Stimson. Certainly, this proved to be the case with arms control.

¹Cordell Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull (New York, 1948), I, 179-181. Under-Secretary Castle speculated in a letter to Davis on November 16, 1932, that with the exception of the tariff question "the attitude of the new Administration toward foreign matters will be similar to that of Mr. Hoover;" Davis Papers.
Norman Davis occupied a unique position within the disarmament policy framework of the Government at the end of 1932 and the beginning of 1933. He was the sole political appointee to continue at his post after the New Deal assumed office. He carried with him the guidelines of the outgoing Hoover Administration; he was instrumental in framing the policies of the incoming Roosevelt Administration. Even though he had rendered worthy service to the Republicans, this fact did not disqualify him for further responsibility in the eyes of the new Chief Executive. In fact, over the years, Davis would gradually become the single, most influential Government spokesman on foreign affairs outside immediate executive circles in Washington.

The mid-March 1933 appointment of Davis as Chairman of the American Delegation to the Disarmament Conference takes on an unusual dimension, when the role that he played within Democratic Party circles during the final Hoover year in office is considered. He was not a "new dealer;" long a vocal member of the internationalist wing of the party, he was "thoroughly disgusted" when Roosevelt denounced the League of Nations in early 1932 and, under pressure from the Hearst press, demanded the continued payment of war debts. He found it hard to believe that the New York Governor could abandon loyalty and principle to
obtain the party nomination. In April, he wrote to Hull:

> I hope you will not let Franklin Roosevelt try to go too far to win the support of the Progressives in the West. If we are not careful, this will develop into a campaign similar to that of 1896, with the same results.²

At this early date and even up until convention time, Davis' real choice for the party nomination was Newton D. Baker.³ Writing to him from Geneva in April, Davis expressed apprehension that the party would try unsuccessfully to win on Republican mistakes. He suggested that constructive criticism of the policies of isolation, non-cooperation and tariffs seemed to hold the key to success, provided they were effectively exploited. Emergency measures instituted by the Republicans had not eliminated the international causes of the depression, mainly due to a lack of forceful direction and guidance. Because "the people are too bewildered to seek a leader," the Democrats with Baker could promise to fill the existing leadership gap. On the other hand, Al Smith's candidacy "almost clinched Roosevelt's nomination" and John Raskob's opposition "helped him more than anything

²Davis to Hull, April 7, 1932; Davis Papers.

³Davis to Frank Polk, February 17, 1932, and to Wayne Johnson, March 1, 1932; Davis Papers.
else." Nevertheless, "as nearly as I can gather," Davis continued, "there is no genuine enthusiasm for Roosevelt on the part of the many important men who have come out for him." Most of them either got on the bandwagon, hoping to back a winner, or out of opposition to a repeat of 1928. In another letter to Baker in mid-June, he expressed fear of the harm the Smith-Roosevelt hostility could bring to the party and hoped that Baker might "yet be able to save the situation." Davis undoubtedly wanted the party to win above all, but with the least possible sacrifice of principle by the successful nominee. Or perhaps in counseling both Hull and Baker he was merely exercising the financier's proclivity for holding a "mixed portfolio," covering all contingencies.

Although Davis finally threw his support to Roosevelt, he pinned his expectations on the success of Wilson's war-time Secretary of War. In a telephone conversation with Under-Secretary Castle on July 1, he learned that after three ballots no candidate had been chosen. In response to Castle's observation that many people were convinced the New York governor would not get the bid, {

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4Davis to Baker, April 7 and June 16, 1932; Davis Papers. Attached to the former was a letter of introduction of Wayne Johnson, a Victory Fund chairman, named by Davis as the source of business support for Baker and presumably for Davis' knowledge of party developments.
Davis remarked, "Thank Goodness." And he was quick to express jubilation at Castle's assertion that Baker might yet receive the nomination. After the Roosevelt victory on the fourth ballot, however, Davis reacted with a congratulatory telegram, including his "hope to return and take part in the campaign." And as soon as his duties at Geneva allowed it, he sailed for the United States, ready to join the battle against the Republicans with the party standard bearer, reinforced with enthusiasm and zeal, armed with advice and ideas.

Despite his basic orientation toward international affairs, Davis combined this talent with perceptive insight into domestic activities in formulating concepts for the campaign. The tariff constituted a fundamental point of Republican vulnerability because high barriers eliminated foreign markets for excess American agricultural and manufactured products. On the other hand, the Democrats should "take it easy on the Reconstruction Finance Corporation" in view of the results it was producing and the future potential it held. Moreover, he felt that the general party thesis should be to demonstrate that Hoover's

5 Transcript of Castle-Davis telephone conversation on July 1, 1932 at 11:00 PM (Geneva time); Davis telegram to Roosevelt, July 4, 1932; Davis Papers.
efforts to cope with the domestic plight had been as futile as the Republican policies aimed at avoiding the conditions that brought on the depression in the first place.6

Davis' main emphasis centered on illumination of vital areas in which Administration policy had failed and the assertion of Democratic readiness to step into these troubled situations with vision and force. In other words, he would concentrate the campaign attack on specifics rather than generalities, thereby avoiding a hollow program of criticism for criticism's sake and insuring a substantive appeal for support from the electorate.

But Davis' personal contribution to the campaign proper was cut short by his recall to Washington for Economic Conference briefings and further orientation on the naval and German problems at the Disarmament Conference. Nevertheless, he kept in touch with Roosevelt, both before and after the election. He wrote to him on the arms control picture, calling the candidate's attention to three possible courses of action still open to all the powers in the disarmament field:

First, such a drastic reduction that public opinion in the world and moderate opinion in Germany will realize that the Allies are honoring their moral

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6 Davis to Hull, April 7, 1932, and to Roosevelt, August 8, 12 and 22, 1932; Davis Papers.
If the reflections to the Republican women constituted only a preliminary salvo in the Davis sortie against the policies of Harding and Secretary Charles Evans Hughes, then the main barrage was unleashed before the Council on Foreign Relations on February 17, 1922.\(^5\) Davis rebuked Harding for having talked, as a candidate, of an association of nations without international involvement. He found that once in office, however, the Chief Executive had abdicated control of foreign policy to the Senate, which took the initiative by passing one resolution calling for a separate peace with Germany and another asking for an arms limitation conference. He asserted that concentration on the Far East was an expedient employed in response to a growing and articulate public opinion. In Davis' words, both the President and his Secretary of State were convinced of the "inexpediency and futility of attempting to bring about a Limitation of Armaments without the concurrent settlement of other questions so intimately related to, if not the cause for, maintaining and increasing armaments."

Davis had no quarrel with this basic premise; he doubted its applicability in a context that accepted a

\(^5\)Comments Upon the Conference on the Limitation of Armaments and Far Eastern Questions; No. 29 in a series published on the Proceedings of the Council on Foreign Relations (New York, n.d.). This pamphlet contains a transcript of Davis' speech and his remarks during the subsequent period. The pamphlet is the source of ideas and quotations accredited to Davis from pages 6 through 9.
obligation; second, a defiant breach of the Treaty of Versailles by Germany; or, third, an agreement to allow Germany a limited increase in armaments above those fixed by the Treaty.

Davis favored the first alternative and hoped to realize some degree of success out of the impasse between Germany and France, but, as we saw in the previous chapter, he was unable to achieve his ultimate goal.

The information did little more than keep the future President abreast of Geneva developments. One interesting suggestion was that, if he were elected, Roosevelt make a pre-inauguration trip to the capitals of beleaguered Europe. Davis had already discussed the matter in passing with MacDonald, who enthusiastically endorsed the idea. The future Chief Executive entertained the proposal seriously, but finally in late November advised Davis that "the difficulties here are such that I have concluded to stay here." However, Roosevelt wanted very much to discuss European affairs with Davis and, in lieu of a personal conversation, asked him to send along a confidential letter in the diplomatic pouch. "It is important," wrote the President-elect, "that we should push the disarmament conference to the fullest extent."7

7 Davis to Roosevelt, October 15, 1932 and Roosevelt reply, November 26, 1932; Davis Papers. Whether or not Davis sent the requested letter by pouch is not known; no trace of such a letter was found either in the Davis Papers or the Roosevelt Papers.
With the election over, speculation began over a choice of Stimson's successor. Prominent among the names mentioned was that of Norman Davis. Castle wrote him expressing hope for such an appointment in order "to have someone in the Department with an intimate knowledge" of all current matters. The professional diplomats in government service, using the process of elimination, had already narrowed the field to Davis. In his reply to Castle there was the usual note of appreciation, but he discounted his chances and added that he was not counting on the appointment: "I doubt if Franklin feels that he is under any particular obligation to me and if he should call upon me it would be for reasons which I really would prefer." Davis realized not only that his absence from the immediate Washington scene worked against his prospects, but also that his position with the Hoover Administration would be held against him by some. But, more important, he hoped that the Secretary of State post, if he received it, would be awarded purely in recognition of unreserved dedication and duty to the national interest.

Davis was not an ardent partisan politician in his views on the conduct of government under a two-party system. Through the twenties he had been consistently and

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⁸Castle to Davis, November 16, 1932, and Davis reply, December 20, 1932; Davis Papers.
outspokenly critical of the Republicans. Yet when called upon to serve the "opposition," he unstintingly gave his best. This fact, however, does not justify a conclusion that he saw the Republicans in a different light for having served under them. In a speech text, undated, but apparently foreseen for use in the 1932 campaign, appears the following passage:

The Republican policy towards world peace has been weak, vacillating, untrue even to itself. No step has been taken in twelve years to redeem the pledge of 1920 for a meeting of the "best minds" to create a method to save the United States and the other nations from another world war and to fulfill the promise made to our war-dead and to the hundreds of thousands of voters who accepted at face value the program of the Republican leaders.9

Davis had hardly become less of a Democrat because of one year's service in the Republican Administration.

The real explanation for his attitude appears to lie in the fact that he found it possible to represent a Republican Administration without in any way sacrificing his own party convictions. Pure and simple concentration on the supremacy of the national interest was the answer.

9Speech text, undated; Davis Papers. Dating the document approximately was possible not only from the "twelve years to redeem the pledge of 1920" passage, quoted above, but also from another subsequent statement in the text: "This year she (America) was kept waiting on the threshold of the Assembly when she wanted to discuss disarmament and on the threshold of the Council when she wanted to discuss Manchuria." Both these events place "this year" as 1932.
Davis sought to make his feelings clear to Sumner Welles in December 1932 in response to a letter from the future Under-Secretary of State. He admitted his friendship with Hoover, but also pointed to his equally close relationship with Roosevelt to whom he had the additional tie of mutual party membership. He did not feel Hoover did him a favor by appointing him to the disarmament delegation, but "thought he could depend upon me to deal" with the issues concerned "better than anyone else who was available." In regard to the post of Secretary of State, he was "embarrassed and irritated" by all the talk. But, and this was not incited by any allusions in Welles' letter, he was astonished that his loyalty and dedication had become a topic of contention in party circles. Finally, in a most revealing conclusion that speaks both for itself and for the man, Davis summed up his entire outlook on service for the Government:

I recognize, of course, that so far as the office of Secretary of State is concerned it would have been better for me to have been at home and for nothing to have been said. On the other hand if I had neglected what I considered to be my duty and had I not placed the interests of the United States above my personal ambition or interest I would have gone counter to my conscience. I would, therefore, rather maintain my own self-respect and feel I have done what I considered to be my duty, than to be the Secretary of State at such a price. 10

10 Welles to Davis, November 19, 1932 and Davis reply, December 8, 1932; Davis Papers.
Nor was such a code in any sense an ephemeral thing with him. Recalling his evaluation of the 1924 campaign and the respective roles played by John Davis and Calvin Coolidge, it can be readily seen that Norman Davis constantly regarded dedication to the national cause more highly than recognition for personal achievement or political service.

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In Washington, in the meantime, the Hoover-initiated liaison between the election losers and winners began to show signs of deteriorating on foreign as well as domestic issues. The major foreign policy arguments between the outgoing and incoming cabinets focused on the tariff and trade policy, and the Economic Conference. During the campaign, Roosevelt had called for "mutual agreements for trade" to replace the unchecked exploitation of foreign markets by all nations without regard for the overall effect on world commerce. He declared his program would "do more for the peace of the world and ... contribute more to supplement the eventual reduction of armaments" than any other possible policy. But, and here is where the Democratic candidate revealed some initial indications of "economic nationalism," he stressed that the reciprocal

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11 See Chapter 1, p. 23.
trade agreements "will make possible the approach to a national economic policy at home which will have as its central feature the fitting of production programs to the actual probabilities of consumption."12 This implied, at least, a measure of planning of certain facets of the country's economy, an idea that was anathema to the Republicans.

But this impasse did not extend specifically to the mutual approaches of the two Administrations to arms control. In fact, as Roosevelt himself pointed out later in Samuel I. Rosenman's collection of his public papers and letters, "it will be seen from my letter of December 19th that I wholly agreed with President Hoover's policy toward disarmament." An examination of the November-December 1932 exchange of correspondence, as collected by Rosenman, between Roosevelt and Hoover bears out this contention. Moreover, the same letters reveal a basic conflict between the concepts of "coordinated consideration" and "selective treatment" of the pressing issues of disarmament, debts and the Economic Conference. Hoover suggested the conference delegation "should also embrace in its membership some of the old or new members of the delegation to the arms

12 Samuel I. Rosenman, editor, The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt (New York, 1938), I, 785. The remarks are from a radio speech to the Business and Professional Men's League on October 6, 1932.
conference in order that these three important questions should be given coordinated consideration." He even asked Roosevelt for nominations for the economic delegation. The President-elect replied, however, "that the questions of disarmament ... debts, and permanent economic arrangements will be found to require selective treatment even though this be with full recognition of the possibility that in the ultimate outcome a relationship of any two or of all three may become clear." 13

Roosevelt attempted to make his views clearer by dealing with each of the problems in turn. On disarmament, he wrote to Hoover:

Your policy is clear and satisfactory. Some time, however, is required to bring it to fruition. Success in a practical program limiting armaments, abolishing certain instruments of warfare and decreasing the offensive or attack power of all Nations will, in my judgment, have a very positive and salutary influence on debt and economic discussions.

With relation to debt cancellations, Roosevelt desired that the nations involved approach the United States on an individual basis to negotiate advance arrangements, thereby accelerating action at the Economic Conference. As concerned the conference itself, he did not want "permanent world economic progress" submerged in disarmament and

13 Ibid., 868-880.
debts; a relationship existed between the three, but not an identity. "Therefore," concluded the President-elect, "I cannot go along with the thought that the personnel conducting the conversations should be identical." In view of the divergence of opinion, the incoming Chief Executive requested that Hoover hold in abeyance the appointment of the delegates and the formulation of an international economic policy until after inauguration.

Through utilization of "selective treatment" was Roosevelt knowingly attempting to achieve a workable separation of the three most prominent foreign policy issues, a feat that Hoover had been incapable of or, at least, unsuccessful in accomplishing? On the other hand, Roosevelt's method may have been only a manifestation of the basic experimentation that imbued the overall New Deal approach to government. Past experience pointed up several reasons why the public mind, both at home and abroad, encountered difficulty in separating one issue from the others. At Lausanne, debts and disarmament had become intermingled, only to be further clouded by the addition of the reparations problem. Davis, while a member of the disarmament delegation, worked on the periphery at Lausanne and was involved in the newspaper speculation over the trade of debts for arms reduction.
When initial exchanges began on the Economic and Monetary Conference, Hoover acceded to Sir John Simon's suggestion and appointed Davis, still a disarmament delegate, to the planning committee. Finally, Hoover proposed to Roosevelt that disarmament delegation members, among whom only Davis had the requisite capability and reputation, be appointed to the coming Economic Conference. Thus, it was not at all strange if the American public, at least, considered the three issues as really one; in fact, it could identify all three with a single man.

Davis himself constantly sought at the conference tables to keep the issues apart, but this was not necessarily brought out in publicized reports of the various proceedings. Moreover, the Washington-Geneva conversations in June 1932, concerning the Lausanne talks and the Hoover arms control plan, reveal that Davis accepted without opposition the somewhat futile efforts of the Chief Executive to establish public understanding of disarmament and debts as "parallel issues." Given Davis' position within this complex chain of developments, it is not presumptuous to speculate that his tangled activities served as the example necessary to motivate the "selective treatment" approach employed by Roosevelt. No evidence was uncovered to substantiate a definitive conclusion along this line, yet the fact remains that Davis was the sole individual
whose experiences suggested, as Roosevelt pointed out to Hoover, that identical personnel should not be involved in both the disarmament and economic conferences.

In addition, a cursory glance at subsequent developments demonstrates a concerted effort in New Deal circles to confer responsibility for the three issues on separate individuals. Debts, first of all, were placed on a nation-to-nation basis, negotiable only through established diplomatic channels. This honored the Democratic platform pledge not to cancel the obligations outright, but prevented World War I winners from capitalizing on non-payment of reparations by the losers as an excuse for non-recognition of the debt payments due. Secretary Hull's reciprocal trade program partially alleviated the strained relations with a number of nations over the debt problem by opening American markets to some excess European commodities. Ultimately, the debts-disarmaments issues just dropped from the scene with the transformation of Europe from a peace to a war-preparation footing.

On the question of the Economic Conference, Davis continued with the planning phase after his return to Europe, but he was pulled out when Hull assumed the delegation chairmanship as the conference opened. All subsequent negotiations, as well as the eventual United States withdrawal and the resulting blame that accrued to the
fundamental division between affairs in Asia and those of Europe. Administration policy makers, he asserted, rather than recognize the interrelationship of the two areas, exhibited little fear of entanglement in Asiatic controversies, yet shied away from involvement in the European situation. Unacceptable though the Washington Agreements were to a Wilsonian idealist, they did represent the limit to which the American people were prepared to allow any Administration to go. Justifiable as his arguments may have been in terms of responsible internationalism, Davis' castigation of the Harding-Hughes policies appears to have been really unwarranted except on purely partisan grounds.

And as his argument unfolded further, the political overtones swelled to a crescendo. He chided the Republicans about promises unfulfilled and pledges unkept, while accusing them of taking half-way measures to avoid facing real issues head on. Nor was Davis beyond capitalizing on a basic American aversion, when he expressed the fear that the Washington Treaties, especially the Four-Power Pact, inextricably tangled the United States in a European balance of power struggle despite Senator Henry Cabot Lodge's assurances to the contrary.

In his central attack, however, he reduced his political incriminations to innuendoes, while affecting an endeavor at popular enlightenment. Cessation of naval
Administration, depended wholly on decisions by Roosevelt and, to a lesser degree, Hull and Assistant Secretary of State Raymond Moley. Disarmament, as we shall see in greater depth, almost immediately became the exclusive domain of Davis, even to the practical elimination of Secretary Hull insofar as major policy matters were concerned.\textsuperscript{14}

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Davis' unique association with both Republicans and Democrats qualified him as a mediator in the inter-party liaison effort instituted by Hoover. When called to Washington on December 23, 1932, Davis detected little disagreement on the ends sought by Hoover and Roosevelt, but perceived considerable difference of opinion over the means to employ. The root of the difficulty, he felt, lay in a misunderstanding and "the effect of the campaign." Always the optimist, however, he anticipated the establishment of "some method of cooperation."\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{14} Davis to Gibson, March 2, 1933; Davis Papers. The Far East situation and the interrelation of the European debts to domestic recovery represented the initial concern of Hull after the Democrats took over.

\textsuperscript{15} Davis to Gibson, December 31, 1932; Davis Papers.
Thus, through the ensuing two months, Davis sought to soothe aroused tempers and restore sober judgment. In some respects, however, the speculation over him as future Secretary of State and his conciliatory attitude in the inter-Administration dispute combined to compromise him as an arbitrator in the eyes of most Roosevelt intimates. But he sacrificed his own personal fortune to the greater cause of national harmony. In spite of his best efforts, the deep antipathies between the "rugged individualists" and the "brain trusters" precipitated ever-deepening cleavages.

What were the exact position and attitude of Davis during this gestation period of New Deal foreign policy? He had not been in Washington during the initial debate over "coordinated consideration" and "selective treatment." Therefore, any effort to reconstruct advice he might have given Roosevelt would be pure conjecture. Allan Nevins has asserted that Davis was sorely disappointed that the President-elect rejected the Hoover proposals. If this conclusion be correct, and well it may be, it certainly discounts Davis' valiant efforts at separating the Lausanne issues of debts-reparations from the Geneva issue of arms control during his deliberations with Europe's statesmen.

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in 1932. Granted, Davis may have agreed with Hoover's partiality for the most efficient utilization of qualified diplomatic personnel, but this does not mean that he advocated the simultaneous negotiation of debts, disarmament and world economic programs as interrelated matters. In fact, such a supposition overlooks his philosophy, as borne out by our examination of his evolving position during the twenties, that only the quieting of international antipathies could create an atmosphere in which to deal with arms control, commercial and trade relations, reparations and the like. In other words, a priority program of outstanding problems should be established and they should be settled in order of their importance.

Davis understood, possibly better than anyone else, the complexities associated with the three major issues. Privately, he decried the policy of non-cancellation of debts and had criticized Roosevelt for continuing the tradition. But he had always been astute enough, as the President-elect certainly was, to admit that the American public would undoubtedly reject a reversal of the policy. Nor was there anywhere an individual with a better comprehension of the insecurity of European politicians with respect to the question of arms limitation, most of all in France, where acceptance of reduction without concommitant security guarantees was tantamount to political suicide.
Furthermore, Davis knew well the impediments created against a free flow of commerce by the excessively high American tariffs. The fact that he saw greater benefits to be derived from universal adherence to the traditional "most-favored-nation" concept than from reciprocal agreements between nations did not necessarily place him at odds with an essentially pragmatic approach to world economy. On the contrary, he apparently had no objection to nation-to-nation negotiations, since this is what the "most-favored-nation" idea entailed, and he agreed with the ends Roosevelt sought; the argument centered only on the choice of means. In the final analysis then and in the absence of any definitive evidence to the contrary, it appears wholly plausible that even though Davis was dissatisfied with given aspects of the new Chief Executive's planned approach, he was prepared to accept the practical and theoretical validity of the President-elect's program.

Davis' primary task consisted of restoring communications between Republicans and Democrats, who were engaged in the hot and furious "Battle of Washington." First of all, he convinced Roosevelt, much to Moley's chagrin, to reverse his decision to call for postponement of the Economic Conference until after the American economy

17 Davis to Castle, December 20, 1932; Davis Papers.
took an upturn, although Roosevelt subsequently returned to his original position favoring deferment of the meeting. Then at Davis' behest, the President-elect met with Stimson and endorsed the non-recognition policy in the Far East, issuing on January 17 a public statement calculated to sustain the Stimson Doctrine. Subsequently, Davis was instrumental in bringing about a second Roosevelt-Stimson encounter as well as a meeting on January 20 between the incoming and outgoing Chief Executives.18

The major issue was still European debts. Roosevelt maintained a firm stand for regular diplomatic negotiation, while Davis argued in support of America's moral obligation to readjust the debts, thereby facilitating "healthy commerce" and promoting peace and prosperity. Throughout all the inter-party conferences, Davis encountered strong opposition from the "brain trusters" and it was Moley who later gave indirect credit to the role Davis played. Analyzing the "Battle" in retrospect, the Assistant Secretary lauded the fact that the outgoing Administration had failed to convince Roosevelt to accept "coordinated

18 Raymond Moley, After Seven Years (New York, 1939), 92. Moley's antipathy to Davis, "the darling of the internationalists in both parties," (p. 90) persisted until he resigned as Assistant Secretary later in 1933 and even carried over into his private observations of the Washington scene; Stimson and Bundy, op. cit., 292-293.
consideration," although he admitted that Davis, Hoover and Stimson put forth persuasive arguments.19

The incoming President, however, never retreated from his mid-December endorsement of the Hoover disarmament policy, apparently exempting this particular issue from the generalization by Nevins that an uncertainty persisted with relation to the future lines of Democratic foreign policy. In fact, if Davis bridged the gap between the Stimson policies and those of the New Deal, as Nevins also asserts, then arms control policy under Davis promised to move forward according to already established guidelines.20

At least through January and February 1933, however, American disarmament policy labored under the same stagnation that afflicted domestic policy. Stimson played a waiting game. The introduction of the French "security" plan provoked widespread comment in Geneva, but the American delegation reserved comment. Then a group of small nations proposed that all the delegations re-affirm the idea of pacific settlement of international disputes based on the Five-Power Declaration of December 11, 1932 that had cleared the way for Germany's return to the

19 Ibid., 105. Davis to Sackett, February 20, 1933; Davis Papers.

20 Nevins, op. cit., 6-7.
conference. Stimson instructed Gibson and Wilson to parry any criticism of United States silence with a reiteration of American adherence to the Pact of Paris. While this issue waxed and waned, Gibson reported on February 23 that Japan had "definitely decided" to withdraw from the League, although it was not clear until March 1 that the Japanese would remain in the Disarmament Conference.21 By that time the impending transfer of power to the Democrats relieved Stimson of any practical responsibility for further action or comment.

The first inaugural address of Franklin D. Roosevelt contained no mention of the arms control deliberations again underway at Geneva. Except for introducing the "good neighbor" concept and mentioning trade relations in passing, the Chief Executive relegated foreign relations to a position of secondary importance behind the "establishment of a sound national economy." The new President favored "as a practical policy the putting of first things first," but more significantly in view of the position taken by Davis in the "Battle of Washington" "would spare no effort to restore world trade by international economic readjustment."22 The interesting feature in this fleeting

21FR, 1933, I, 9, 10-11, 12-13, 16, 20.
22Rosenman, op. cit., II, 14.
reference to international affairs, aside from the "economic readjustment" proposed by Davis in connection with the debts issue, was the accent on practicality. Roosevelt apparently was intimating that the United States would analyze each aspect of foreign relations as it developed and formulate policy on an experimental basis with prime emphasis on the interrelation of international developments to domestic affairs.

Hull effectively captured the significance of Davis' activities and personality during the period of transition, even discounting the fact that as a fellow Tennessean the new Secretary of State was perhaps a bit prejudiced. He characterized him as having "dedicated his life primarily to the promotion of peace with disarmament" and to economic progress through reduction of trade barriers. "This ability and experience made his services much sought after by both Republican and Democratic Administrations, especially Hoover and Roosevelt," the Secretary noted in his Memoirs. Both during the period of exchange of power and later, Hull added, Davis had free entry to deliberations in his office and enjoyed the Secretary's utmost confidence. "Not a showy person, Davis had real wisdom and . . . an intimate knowledge of the world's complications." Qualified to be sent anywhere, "no person could have represented our Government more capably at the
Disarmament Conference than Norman Davis." In spite of this evaluation, however, Hull had to admit that "no living person" could have achieved the arms control results desired by the peoples of the world because of the hectic years that lay ahead. Nevertheless, Davis undertook on behalf of the New Deal the thankless and somewhat hopeless task of trying to rid the world of its arms.

On March 9, 1933, he was officially named Chairman of the American Delegation to the General Disarmament Conference with the rank of Ambassador, replacing Hugh Gibson. Since Inauguration Day, he had been studying Gibson's reports from Geneva on the developing situations there. From these analyses he found that the French remained obstinate on both the German equality issue and the Italian naval problem. The English, Gibson reported, expressed apprehension lest the meetings adjourn for Easter never to reconvene; MacDonald even decided to go personally to Geneva to "save the Conference." The Prime Minister also contemplated trips to Rome, Washington and Berlin, in that order, if circumstances warranted. The Germans, now under Nazi control, attacked the Conference and the Treaty of Versailles and threatened the establishment of a potent air arm, thereby promising to become increasingly

\[23\text{Hull, op. cit., I, 224.}\]
contentious adversaries. Settlement of the Far Eastern debacle, presumably along lines favorable only to Tokyo, was advanced by the Japanese as a prerequisite to arms reduction. In an effort to break this log jam, continued the Geneva despatches, the Italians offered the idea of adjourning until after Easter both the General Commission and the Political Committee in which all the unpleasant remarks originated. The other committees would continue work on technical matters.

Gibson was convinced that Europe had lost all interest in whether or not the United States reduced its own armaments in the framework of a universal agreement. What European statesmen wanted was definite American adherence to international machinery for initial consultation in the event of aggression, after which the United States could proceed under her own constitutional processes in setting down a final policy. But Europe would demand assurance that America's course of action embody non-interference in any sanctions decided upon at the time of initial consultation.²⁴ Thus it was becoming patently clear that American moral influence would no longer suffice; Europe was moving toward forcing the United States to accept a greater share of the burden of world peace and security.

²⁴FR, 1933, I, 22-25, 31-34, 34-38.
competition carried economic appeal and dispelled fear, but was no substitute for the establishment of effective world wide machinery, bolstered by American participation, before we surrendered "our inalienable right to use force."

Discarding obsolete weapons neither prevented war nor answered the widespread demands for the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means. Naval disarmament, he argued, meant sacrifice, not just sinking worthless vessels. And any economies attendant upon reduced naval building represented false savings if, instead of enhancing security, they really resulted in a loss of military stature and national preparedness.

Admittedly, all these observations were defensible in terms of deep dedication to the concepts of the League of Nations, to increased United States association with other nations in seeking solutions to the world's economic dilemma and to the realization of an international political climate conducive to independent existence for all nations. But this conclusion tends to obscure the fact that, in actuality, Davis was indicting the Republicans with abandonment of the national interest and with duplicity in their claims of economic savings, arms limitation and world settlement.

He found little to criticize in the Nine-Power Treaty, believing that it laid a foundation for more
Both Davis and Hull, supported by the President, refused to be stampeded into reaching hasty decisions in the face of what appeared to be an impending crisis. On March 10, Hull forwarded instructions to Gibson, who was serving until Davis' arrival in Geneva: "It is clearly inadvisable for us to consider going so fast or so far until the Administration has had time to appraise the general situation, in both its domestic and international aspects, with Norman Davis, who is now in Washington." The prime emphasis centered on forestalling any definitive action on political questions until Davis arrived on the Geneva scene in late March. For this reason, the new Delegation Chairman advised Gibson to accept the Italian proposal and gain a "five or six week breathing spell" rather than entertain any improvised arms control plans or short-term treaties with limited objectives. Both the President and Hull endorsed this procedure with the latter also proposing renewed private conversations between the Five Powers, especially between Davis, "the representative of President Roosevelt," and MacDonald. Hull considered that a concerted "joint effort" by these two might reveal possibilities "for saving the situation," although he added that "Davis has no set plan or panacea."\(^{25}\)

\(^{25}\)Ibid., 29-30, 40-41. Hull's specific description of Davis' position undoubtedly implied greater flexibility
While Davis completed last minute briefings at the War and Navy Departments in preparation for his departure on March 22 on the USS Manhattan, another complicating factor arose. In a conversation with Gibson on March 15, during which the Davis-Hull ideas were revealed to him, the British Prime Minister expressed his regrets at being unable to accede to Davis' desires to wait. He had already mentioned the existence of a new English arms control-security plan to the press along with a statement that it would be introduced to the conference the following day. Agitated over French recalcitrance, MacDonald had decided to mount public opinion against Paris and force the disarmament issue. He intimated to Gibson that all the major nations would have to make concessions, if the plan proved acceptable, yet he was convinced that the general framework of the plan satisfied the diverse demands of Italy, France and Germany, the major roadblocks to progress.26

Fundamentally, the MacDonald Plan combined the ideas of security and disarmament into a single draft

and responsibility than normally attaches to an Ambassador's appointment, although he is a representative of the President. Davis' ambassadorial warrant, filed in his papers, did not extend beyond the Disarmament Conference, but Roosevelt apparently granted him a wider license than arms control. Moffat also noted on March 17, see Hooker, op. cit., 93, that Davis "is going over without any plans and with the prospect of using our influence to best advantage that he can."

26 Ibid., 41-42.
convention, whose very complexity foreboded dilemma and uncertainty. The arms control sections generally followed the lines laid down in the Hoover Plan with certain modifications of the strengths of national armies plus the addition of a Permanent Disarmament Commission to oversee the progress of reduction, once begun. The security section constituted a codification of the implied idea of consultation contained in the Kellogg-Briand Pact. Any five signatories, one of which had to be a major power, could request a conference to be arranged by the League Secretary General, preferably at Geneva, in the event of a breach or threatened breach of the pact. The conferring nations bound themselves to identify the aggressor or potential aggressor in the situation under discussion and to decide a course of action, such course to be subject to the approval of all seven major powers and a majority of the other conferring nations.27

In theory, at least, the MacDonald Plan had considerable merit. It answered the immediate questions of security, equality and arms reduction and provided a

27 Ibid., 43-54, contains only excerpts from the plan. The full text is found in League of Nations, Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments, Geneva, Conference Documents, II, 476-493. The State Department press release on the plan, March 17, 1933, is found in the Davis Papers. The Seven Major Powers were the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy, France, Germany, Japan and the USSR.
permanent agency for future weapons control, both buttressed by watch-dog provisions to guarantee the peace. But the inter-war period, especially the mid-thirties, was an era in which theory meant little in the conduct of relations in the international arena. Passion and emotion, fear and suspicion, as well as ideological conflict and manifestations of uncontrolled national self-interest dictated the ways of practical politics in both their external and internal aspects, regardless of the nation concerned.

The United States was no exception. After learning from Gibson that the French renounced the MacDonald Plan, that the Japanese reserved judgment and that Germany and Italy equivocated, Hull, with Davis' agreement, ambiguously re-emphasized to Gibson the necessity for withholding American comment, other than to "pay tribute" to MacDonald's stated goal of crystallizing the negotiations to encourage progress. By what stretch of the imagination it was possible for Hull and Davis to anticipate any action, knowing the inimical attitudes of the four major nations, is not known. Apparently both men still foresaw America's continuing role as that of a mediator of essentially European problems. Until Davis consulted with America's Geneva delegates and diagnosed the international situation in Europe, however, no comment was contemplated on the security aspects of the proposed plan. Moreover, the
Secretary and his Arms Control Ambassador continued to place great faith in the necessity for Anglo-American co-operation: "We realize no effective disarmament can be brought about unless the two countries are in close accord." 28

This was undoubtedly true, but it was not unique. The idea ignored the demands of the continental powers to say nothing of Japan against whose interests the League had adopted the Lytton Report in mid-February. In fact, the entire tenor of the contemplated Hull-Davis policy struck the same notes as that initiated by and adhered to by their Republican predecessors.

The President himself, according to Jay P. Moffat's diary, displayed a great personal interest in disarmament, but failed to appreciate either "the difficulties or the European psychology which he is up against." More importantly, as Moffat also noted, "Europe is so convinced that the Roosevelt Administration plans to bring us in toward the League of Nations, that the knowledge, when it comes, that our policy will probably be more cautious than under Mr. Stimson will come as a great shock." In reality, the State Department focused its planning of European policy upon the circumspect Democratic platform plank, recognizing the spirit of consultation as embodied in the

28 Ibid., 66-67.
Pact of Paris. But the Department did not endorse the translation of that "spirit" into effective machinery for sustaining peace.29

Perhaps European statesmen were interpreting Roosevelt's campaign renunciation of League membership for America as a political expedient really inconsistent with the successor to Wilson. After all, even the Republicans had gradually discarded some of the tenets of hard-shell isolationism in favor of a measure of cooperation. Certainly the Democrats could be expected to move even further in the same direction. But then, and this is undoubtedly where the European observers misjudged their politicians, the new President, while a skilled and provenly effective administrator of domestic matters, really had little experience in the complexities of foreign affairs.30

The first task of Norman Davis involved the accumulation of detailed and first-hand observations of

29Hooker, op. cit., 92-93. See also Stimson and Bundy, op. cit., 292-293, for Stimson's similar evaluation of Roosevelt.

30Louis B. Wehle, Hidden Threads of History: Wilson Through Roosevelt (New York, 1953), 110. Wehle states that on July 26, 1932 "Roosevelt gravely suggested that the United States should join the League of Nations to help restore world order." Wehle asserts the statement convinced him that Roosevelt needed "at his elbow a mature expert on foreign affairs." This ultimately led to Wehle's introduction to the President of William C. Bullitt, who briefed the Democratic candidate before the election and the President-elect after the polling was completed, concentrating mainly on the European situation.
the complicated European scene to serve as a base upon which to build effective New Deal policy. His itinerary called for him to arrive in London around March 30 for consultations in response to MacDonald's request, then to proceed to Paris for talks with the new French Government, and finally to travel to Geneva for briefings by the American delegates there. At his first news conference after debarking in London, the Ambassador announced to reporters his plans for a number of exploratory talks related to the convocation of the Economic Conference "around May or June." Simultaneously, he intended to study the European situation and "discover where the United States might contribute its aid and cooperation usefully in those fields where its interests were involved." And finally, he brought neither a disarmament plan nor any rigid ideas on arms control with him. 31

While Davis had been on the high seas, the Disarmament Conference delegations solved the problem of postponement until after Easter and afforded him the "breathing spell" for which he had hoped before the introduction of the MacDonald Plan. On March 27, pursuant to an English proposal, the delegates voted to recess until April 25 at which time they would reconvene with the Prime Minister's

plan as the first agenda item. This action renewed world hope for success and dampened the despair that had broken out in many capitals concerning the probable breakdown of the conference altogether. And the American Chairman used the pause in conference deliberations to work his way effectively through a long itinerary and an almost unbroken chain of informal talks before again resuming his chair at the Geneva conference tables.32

The tour of the European capitals introduced him to the prevailing political climate. New governments had taken over in France and Germany since he had last been on

32Ibid., 474 fn. In view of its significance with relation to the role of Davis, the following is the full text of the cited footnote, omitting only hours at which the meetings took place:

Between March 30 and April 10, the schedule of conversations which Mr. Davis had with various officials in London, Paris and Berlin was as follows: London, March 30, Davis, MacDonald, Simon; March 30, Davis, MacDonald, Simon, Allen W. Dulles; March 31, Davis, MacDonald, Simon, Dulles; April 2, telephone conversation between Davis and MacDonald at Chequers; April 2, Davis, MacDonald; April 3, Davis, MacDonald, Stanley Baldwin, Neville Chamberlain, Simon, Dulles; Paris, April 4, Davis, Joseph Paul-Boncour, Dulles; April 5, Davis, Edouard Daladier, James Theodore Marriner, Dulles; April 5, Davis, Henry de Jouvenel, Marriner, Dulles; April 6, Davis, Edouard Herriot, Hugh S. Gibson; Berlin, April 8, Davis, Adolf Hitler, Baron von Neurath, George Anderson Gordon, Dulles, Herr Hanfstaengl; April 8, 9, Davis, Von Neurath, Herr Bernhard W. von Buelow, Rudolf Nadolny, Dulles; Enroute from Berlin, April 9, 10, Davis, Francois-Poncet; Paris, April 11, Davis, Count Pignatti, Marriner.
the continent. Berlin and Rome were moving nearer to one another undoubtedly because of a closer identity of interests and certainly because of more compatible forms of political rule. In Paris Herriot had given way to Daladier and five short-lived ministries would endeavor over the next eleven months to keep France afloat in a sea of European unrest. Closer Anglo-American understanding would result from an April visit by the Prime Minister to Washington for meetings with Roosevelt. But the two leading Democracies, both plagued by internal situations driving them toward stricter policies of "economic nationalism," would gradually find it ever more difficult to sustain international interest in the activities of the Geneva Conference, which was slowly but surely entering its twilight phase.
CHAPTER V
GENEVA, THE GREAT HOPE SHATTERED

When Norman Davis formally assumed the chairmanship of America's delegation at Geneva in late April 1933, one-half of the famous "100 Days" of concentration on revival of the American economy had already been marked off the calendar. The ensuing fifteen months produced ever-recurring failures in the international arms control endeavors, yet, by the time Davis delivered his May 29, 1934 address to the Geneva Conference, early manifestations of the breakdown of the first New Deal coalition of businessmen, workers and farmers also had become evident. In view of this development, any consideration of American disarmament policy during the final year of the General Disarmament Conference and of the men who made and implemented that policy in both Washington and Geneva, must necessarily emphasize the decided imbalance in favor of domestic issues under the New Deal. In addition, such an examination must analyze, at least superficially, the prevailing conditions that dictated an evasive attitude toward matters of international concern.
NORMAN H. DAVIS AND THE QUEST FOR
ARMS CONTROL, 1931-1938

DISSERTATION

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extensive safeguards to world security. But he wished the treaty had gone further through the inclusion of a call for universal disarmament. Separate resolutions recommending a limit on Chinese armies, condemning poison gas and outlawing submarine attacks on merchantmen represented the sum total of action by the conference toward world-wide arms control. Had these measures found their way into the treaty, the principles they enunciated could have been strengthened through integration into the corpus of international law. He conceded that the action taken "may help formulate and enlist the support of public opinion for future action in a world conference," but the limited number of nations in attendance at Washington diminished the prospects for any universal call for extensive arms limitation.

Admitting that the Harding Administration may have sought to clarify the American position and to assert some degree of United States leadership, in his summation before the Council on Foreign Relations Davis reiterated the blatant ambiguity in the role taken by the State Department. America agreed to cooperate with European nations in Far Eastern affairs, but would not coordinate matters in Europe. Reinforcing his position, he spoke out sharply about the concern of statesmen for two outstanding disturbances of the international political and economic equilibrium, namely, the conditions in Europe and the Far East created
A key factor to rapid action on New Deal domestic programs was support from midwestern and western Progressives, both Democrats and Republicans. Roosevelt could not afford to alienate this combined group of Senators and Representatives, if he hoped to achieve the far-reaching modifications of the American socio-economic system that he envisioned as necessary in order to inspire recovery. But these men were a strange breed, especially if viewed with respect to their ideas on foreign policy. Fundamentally, they were isolationistic in their combined outlooks except as concerned the Far East, toward which they maintained a benevolent, humanitarian attitude flavored with an abiding missionary zeal that rang with religious as well as economic overtones. Equally profound was their allegiance to the Monroe Doctrine and the role it played in guarding the Western Hemisphere against incursions by non-American forces. This meant that the new Administration could not venture very far afield with respect to European affairs, but could exercise somewhat more latitude in the Orient and Latin America. Such an analysis may seem to place too great an importance on the foreign affairs views of the progressive bloc, except for the fact that those views undoubtedly coincided with the
general American outlook toward matters of international
interest and concern.¹

An examination of Roosevelt's foreign affairs pro-
nouncements during his initial year in office, especially
those on disarmament, reveals the nature of the tightrope
he walked out of deference to this Congressional group and
to the national public opinion that it reflected. Moreover,
these policy statements show cautious reserve toward
Europe, warm mutual friendship and cooperation toward Latin
America, and responsive interest toward China and Japan.

Delivering his initial address on foreign relations
before the Pan-American Union in April 1933, the President
elaborated upon the concept set forth in his inaugural
address, that of a "good neighbor . . . who respects his
obligations and respects the sanctity of his agreements in
and with a world of neighbors." This "world of neighbors"
does not appear to have implied just Latin America nor
does his further statement that "the essential qualities
of a true Pan-Americanism must be the same as those which
constitute a good neighbor." Nevertheless, seizing on the
site of the speech and the nature of the occasion, both
Latin Americans and newspaper correspondents interpreted

¹Foster Rhea Dulles, America's Rise to World Power
(New York, 1954), 168-170; Selig Adler, The Isolationist
Impulse (New York, 1957), Ch. 11, "The Isolationist
Tornado."
"good neighbor" to apply only to the Administration policy toward the countries of the Western Hemisphere.

But Roosevelt apparently had a broader connotation in mind. In August 1933 at Vassar College, for example, he emphasized that in the Western Hemisphere the "good neighbor" idea had been "carried forward more vigorously and ... brought more gratifying results" than anywhere else. ² Admittedly, this lauds the success of the concept in one specific area, but does not mean he envisioned his policy as restricted to that area. The fact remains that Roosevelt spoke of a "good neighbor" in a "world of neighbors," a rather homey concept that certainly could not overly encourage those of internationalist leanings. More important, popular association of the idea with the Western Hemisphere could not unduly frighten anyone of isolationist convictions.

Neither of these addresses carried any hint of American reaction to arms control developments. But in his April invitation to Prime Minister MacDonald to visit the United States, the President welcomed discussions of the approaching Economic Conference and drew attention to "the need for making further progress toward practical disarmament." "In my judgment," he declared, "the world

situation calls for realistic action; the people themselves in every nation ask for it." Nevertheless, when the Prime Minister arrived, even though the combined ideas of arms control and security were being deliberated at Geneva, the five joint communiques issued in Washington between April 22 and April 26 made not one mention of the Geneva talks. Since the demands of the "people" could not have changed so much in less than a month, it is not presumptuous to conclude that Roosevelt was steering away from issues which might be interpreted as implicating the United States in collective security ties with Europe. In contrast, he privately gave extensive assurances to the English leader and endorsed all but the security facets of the MacDonald Plan.3

This reluctance to discuss disarmament publicly persisted after the MacDonald visit. From April 27 through June 3, 1933, the President met in conference with the heads of various other governments. Among the countries represented were Canada, France, Italy, Germany, Mexico, China, Japan, Brazil and Chile. In the communiques issued after the Canadian, French (two separate statements), Mexican, Brazilian and Chilean talks, there is again no mention of the Geneva Conference or the existence of the

issue.\textsuperscript{4} Certainly for the American nations, arms control was not a vital matter, although they had delegates at Geneva, but what of France? Considering her controversial role at the conference, the President probably preferred to omit the matter, especially in view of French demands for American assurances of support of a far-reaching European security system. But here too, in private with Herriot, Roosevelt explained his acceptance of the MacDonald Plan and his intention to follow an independent American line in relation to cooperation with European plans for coordination of action in international disputes.

The announcements after the German and Italian meetings were strangely related. After seeing Jung of Italy and Schacht of Germany, the President joined them in issuing communiques that coupled economic to military disarmament, pointing up the conclusion that the former was a necessary precursor to the latter. Behind closed doors, however, Roosevelt assured Schacht that America would work for a program to reduce all arms to the Versailles level, provided Germany honor the status quo and not demand weapons increases. Following the original premise that the major Administration goal was to avoid

\textsuperscript{4}Ibid., 149-152 (Canada and France), 158-159 (Italy), 174-175 (Germany), 206-207 (China and Mexico), 211-213 (Brazil and Japan), 218 (Chile). For Roosevelt's private remarks to Herriot and Schacht, infra, see FR, 1933, I, 109-111, 130-131, respectively.
any linkage of America to Europe in terms of collective security, neither of these official references to disarmament had any real implications because neither of these European powers had any traditional ties with the United States. And the establishment of the precedence of economic over military disarmament coincided almost exactly with the priority of issues already being followed on the United States domestic scene.

The final two meetings were with Japanese and Chinese statesmen and the public statements released subsequently reveal the sharp difference in the official American attitudes toward European and Far Eastern affairs. Recognition was given again to the importance of both economic and military disarmament, but a marked identification of American interest with the political difficulties between China and Japan was exhibited along with an expression of hope that hostilities would soon cease and peace be restored. The China statement predicted an almost united Sino-American effort in approaching both the Economic and Disarmament Conferences "with the determination necessary to bring their labors to success." The joint announcement with Japan did not reveal such unity of purpose, but showed both nations "resolved to contribute to the maximum of our ability, in a spirit of mutual cooperation" to bring about a "helpful" solution to both economic and disarmament problems.
In each case, the explanations of the lengthy examination of the mutual positions of China and Japan in the Far East dispute revealed a remarkably more profound American official interest in the political ramifications in that area of the world as contrasted to the marginal, almost superficial concern displayed after the meetings with Europe's statesmen. The sharpness of this distinction may not have resulted wholly out of deference to the Progressive congressmen, but certainly the effect could not have been lost on them or on the broad segment of public opinion reflected by them.

Moreover, the China-Japan communiques displayed an interest that is out of all proportion to that in the Presidential message of June 9 on the occasion of the initialling of the Four-Power Pact in Rome. Roosevelt welcomed the idea of alleviating national conflict through international cooperation and expressed hope that the pact would encourage the efforts at Geneva and London. In no sense, however, did he reveal any unity of purpose between the United States and the four European powers with respect to the amelioration of international economic or disarmament ills.5

The restrictive formula demonstrated by the President pervaded his thinking all through 1933 and, in

5Rosenman, op. cit., 221-222.
many respects, through his entire first term. At the annual dinner of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation in December 1933, the same spirit of aloofness from international affairs characterized his remarks. He lauded the efforts of the League of which "we are not members and we do not contemplate membership," but toward whose endeavors "we are giving cooperation . . . in every matter which is not primarily political." This was almost like a page out of Republican campaign speeches from 1924 through 1932. Despite this fact, and perhaps to remove some of the sterility from the general tenor of his statements, Roosevelt proposed the mounting of an effort along strictly national lines in which the 90 per cent of the world's population favoring peace and disarmament would force cooperation upon that ten per cent being governed by leaders still dedicated to "the use of the sword for invasion of, or attack upon," their neighbors. He called for the elimination of offensive weapons and the construction of "permanent and non-mobile" border fortifications. He urged that this action be supplemented with national declarations not to send armed forces across any border and with the codification of these declarations into an international agreement; then the world would have sufficient opinion crystallized to "separate the sheep from the goats." The non-conformists would be identified
as employing unenlightened concepts in a world mobilized for peace.\textsuperscript{6}

The idealism in Roosevelt's remarks cannot be denied, but was he being realistic or deferential? The greater part of the world's leaders, and he noted that it was the leaders not the followers who were responsible for the major difficulties, had long since abandoned the idealistic concepts of Wilson in pursuit of more practical solutions, whether achievable or not. And in the final analysis, the Roosevelt proposals were closely akin to those made by his predecessor some eighteen months previously in response to a seemingly durable caliber of national public opinion. In December 1933, "first things first" was still the watchword and domestic progress continued to take precedence over earnest cooperation in and coordination of international affairs.

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Before the Disarmament Conference reconvened after Easter, Norman Davis had to complete considerable planning. He analyzed the situation in Europe and detected a general air of agreement among European powers that they should take punitive measures to assist any continental nation

\textsuperscript{6}Ibid., 544-549.
victimized by an aggressor. To complement such action, Europeans foresaw that non-European countries and non-League members would have to confer with, and accept the course of action decided by, the parties attempting to regulate any conflict. If initial consultations proved fruitful, especially in determining an aggressor, outside governments would be asked not to interfere with any collective action taken either to curb the aggression or to aid the country under attack. Davis reported his findings to Washington along with detailed proposals for a revised American policy based on continuation of the idea of American leadership as established by Hoover in June 1932.7

The sum and substance of his suggestions contained a number of Stimson ideas modified in such a manner as to conform to the evolving situation. Davis found European statesmen gradually taking cognizance of the essentially regional nature of their security problem. And it was on this development that he wished to capitalize. Stimson had once spoken of the "two hemispheres," Europe and Asia,

7FR, 1933, I, 89-101. Copies of two telegrams, April 16, 1933 (Nos. 163 and 165 from Geneva) from Davis to Hull were found in the Roosevelt Papers (163) and the Davis Papers (165). File copies of memoranda of conversations between Davis and political leaders in London, Paris and Berlin are found in the Davis Papers: London, with MacDonald on March 31 and April 2; Paris, with Paul-Boncour on April 4, Daladier on April 5, Hériority on April 6, and Leon Blum on April 7; Berlin, with Hitler on April 8; Enroute back to Paris, with Italian Ambassador Pignatti on April 11.
"by the state of mind and political policies" of France and Japan.

The French policy to gain dominance in Europe and "so prevent another invasion by Germany" impeded restoration of confidence and stability and "a reduction in armies." More importantly, "the settlement in the Far East may all be upset unless Europe is straightened out." The stabilization of Europe depended largely upon assurances to France, he declared, yet the Harding Administration refused to grant such guarantees or to join the League, thereby obviating the necessity for unilateral support to France. On the other hand, the United States asked France to participate in the Four-Power Treaty to insure peace in the Pacific and tranquility to Japan, the power primarily responsible for all the Far Eastern difficulties. Davis expressed his inability to understand the resulting paradox and, in so doing, revealed his awareness of the uncomfortable position in which his remarks placed the Administration. Undoubtedly, his primary intent was the achievement of an altered American approach to foreign affairs. But by diluting the idealistic virtues of his arguments with a strong measure of partisan politics, he rendered himself vulnerable to counterattack.

The reaction to his unfavorable criticism of the Four-Power Treaty was immediate. News reports, however,
between which the United States had to operate, while contributing to stability in the Americas. Davis' application of the idea came in the form of three regional areas in which the total security responsibility varied as did the individual national contributions to that "total security" picture: the Continent of Europe in which the United States had only a marginal interest, while the United Kingdom and the USSR had continuing interests; the British Empire and Russia with both powers having both continental and non-European interests; and the remainder of the world, in which the United States performed a major function. America's special position in the Far East, as demonstrated in the Manchurian crisis, and in the Western Hemisphere made United States participation, if not leadership, necessary in any action, punitive or otherwise, against international disputes in those areas. This very factor made American support of a universal arms control treaty, such as that proposed by MacDonald, unrealistic in the absence of corresponding arms reductions by the Japanese because of their special role in the Far East. And Japan was already equivocating on the MacDonald Plan, as should the United States, according to Davis, because of the interrelationship of the mutual positions of the two countries.

In order to deal effectively with this situation, Davis recommended a re-orientation of American policy
along regional lines and the redetermination of the official attitude on consultation and neutrality, the latter being necessary to enable the United States to participate in the plan he envisioned. In order to achieve a realistic universal arms limitation and security treaty to fulfill the diverse national requirements, he suggested one single document, embodying initially the following concepts:

- Renunciation of certain already-agreed-upon weapons.
- Limitation of navies.
- Establishment and operation of a Permanent Disarmament Commission.
- General obligation to consult when danger threatened.
- Definition of "effectives" and other analogous rules of general application.

These provisions would constitute the only "universal" aspects of the proposed treaty. The special obligations to be assumed by individual nations would be incorporated into three regionally-oriented sections, delineating respective national responsibilities and establishing procedural regulations consistent with the diverse natures of the geographic areas concerned. The final convention would then comprise all four elements, interwoven and interrelated as necessary, to insure cogency, universal applicability, and periodic revision.

Davis realized both the advantages and shortcomings of the proposals as indicated by his supporting arguments.
This was not an "entangling alliance," but merely a redefinition of American policy with respect to the rights of neutrals, an international concept long obsolete and proven ineffective in the onrush of World War I. Admittedly, he argued, the United States would forfeit some rights of neutrality, but would not accept any corresponding obligations. Provided the consultative findings and the naming of an aggressor were acceptable, America would merely refrain from breaking the lines of collective action established by other nations. In Europe, for example, if peace endured, the United States would lose nothing and could achieve economic gains from political stability and alleviation of tension. If war broke out, America might lose some foreign trade, but the causes that drew her into the last war would be removed and her freedom of action safeguarded. In Asia, on the other hand, America's naval position demanded her participation in any international restraints on aggression, while guaranteed independence of judgment and action allowed her to follow any chosen course without fear of being obligated by the actions of other nations.

Davis knew full well that his suggestions meant the assumption by the United States of an even more advanced and more constructive position than had heretofore been the case. He argued, however, that "the limited
progress so far made towards general disarmament indicates clearly that it is only by attacking the problem in a new and bolder spirit that we are to get satisfactory results."

A year of seemingly interminable bickering, argument and counter-argument, proposal and counter-proposal had not succeeded in dampening his enthusiasm, curbing his ingenuity or limiting his vision.

But eagerness to have his own plan accepted did not blind him to the realities of the Geneva situation and the political exigencies of the American domestic struggle. The alternative he offered to Roosevelt and Hull took cognizance of both factors. Subject to certain marginal modifications, the United States could accept the entire MacDonald Plan minus the Security Section (Part I). To protect the independent tradition in international affairs, Davis proposed some reservations contingent upon answers to two questions. If a general disarmament treaty, achieving substantial progress, appeared in the offing, would the United States be willing to consult with the signatories in the event of an outbreak of hostilities? And further, if a specifically European consultative system emerged, would the United States be willing, after choosing a course of action independently, to honor collective measures instituted by Europe and to withdraw protection from American citizens contravening those measures? A
positive answer to both these questions would place Davis in a position to argue effectively in support of the MacDonald Plan and to bring moral pressure to bear on reluctant or hesitant European powers. 8

In these two propositions is found the heart of what would subsequently become a most radical departure from the traditional American policy of isolationism. Formal announcement of the change, however, had to await crystallization of the European situation. For the moment, the origin of the ideas appears most important. Granted, the Prime Minister's Plan outlined the exact terminology to which Davis was seeking to fit an American approach. But the idea of consultation as an inherent part of United States policy had been evolved and defended by Stimson in 1931 and 1932 based on the provisions of the Washington and London Treaties and the Pact of Paris. The then Secretary of State fought against the formal codification of the concept out of deference to American public opinion, preferring to allow indirect application of the idea to become entrenched in the national mind before attempting to institutionalize consultation as a practical instrumentality of American foreign policy. Apparently Davis felt that the time was ripe for the United States

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8 FR, 1933, I, 89-101.
Government to go to both the Senate and the people for their formal approval. In fact, he even argued strenuously against Roosevelt's ultimate choice of a unilateral declaration of American agreement to consult.

The Administration response to Davis' suggestions took the form of a Presidential letter to him. The guidelines were based largely on initial commitments Roosevelt had made to the British Prime Minister plus analyses of the domestic and foreign scenes. The major emphasis in the new policy was on relinquishment of any leadership position America had attained, regardless of how insecure it may have been, in favor of a retreat to the hackneyed moral influence approach. Immediate and practical disarmament would be the American goal. Pursuit of this aim would follow two lines: reduction of the annual costs of arms in all national budgets; and arrival at a domestic policing of armaments in as short a time as possible. As a means to these ends, Davis was to support a diminution of the power of offensive weapons, thereby strengthening the defense, and a reduction in the danger of surprise attack and war in general.

By and large, Roosevelt considered the English Plan to be a "definitive and excellent step," but no more than that. Nevertheless, he wanted it amended only to the extent of shoring up the inspection machinery, which should
be continuous and automatic rather than sporadic and contingent. Later, the United States would press for additional limits on offensive weapons and supplementary safeguards against surprise attack, but America should not now jeopardize prospects for progress. Finally, the President revealed the short-range goal of the policy: Roosevelt and apparently MacDonald wanted to answer Germany's demands for immediate increases in armaments by convincing her to maintain the status quo in return for assurances that the other nations would reduce to her arms levels as soon as possible.9

Davis accepted what he labeled a "wise courageous policy . . . extremely helpful," at least as far as it went. But the "nub of the issue," as he was wont to comment, was America's position on Part I, the consultation procedures of the English Plan. And it was on this aspect of the new policy that Davis differed strongly with Roosevelt and Hull. According to the President, the United States would not sign Part I and agree to sit in judgment of an aggressor or to assist in the formulation of collective security measures. The most the Administration could muster was a unilateral declaration that,

9Ibid., 101-109. Personal letter from Davis to Roosevelt, April 23, 1933; Davis Papers.
after the powers decided on a course of action, the United States, if it concurred, would refrain from activities contrary to the selected course and would withhold national protection from American citizens violating the established regulations. This much coincided with Davis' proposals except for the "unilateral" nature of the declaration. On the other hand, the Administration desired to have the coordinating authority for all consultative procedures vested in the Secretary of the Permanent Disarmament Commission and not in the League Secretary General. Further, the mandatory selection of Geneva as a site for consultation drew Presidential objections, the feeling being that the choice of site should either depend upon the location of the aggression or be left to the discretion of the Secretary. These two features conflicted with the rationale of Davis' arguments.

The clash of ideas on this whole method of procedure reveals the depth of Davis' dedication to the argument favoring a more internationalistic role for the United States and his conviction that the time to assert American leadership was at hand. Equally strong was the rebuttal of Roosevelt, who, in the end, overruled the Ambassador. Davis pushed for American commitment as a non-League member to confer with the League Council in order to speed reaction to aggression; a separate consultative body would
prove unwieldy, cumbersome and, more important, time-consuming.

The Senate, Davis argued, had already approved treaties "set up under League auspices containing references to the League and providing for the use of League organs." The Administration should take advantage of this attitude and press for a more responsible American role. He reasoned that a unilateral declaration would not be as effective a lever to influence a substantial arms reduction as would adherence to a consultative arrangement. And if a separate declaration were made contingent upon universal ratification of the English Plan, then the declaration itself would be subject to Senate scrutiny. Moreover, he continued, the Senate might be less friendly if convinced that "an effort was made to commit the United States to a major decision in foreign policy" without that body's consent. In essence, Davis advocated a test of the Senate's mettle on the whole issue of American consultation with other powers rather than circumvention of the Senate with an executive declaration. But he acceded to the idea of a unilateral statement, although he still defended his own alternative method as a "more effective way of dealing with the problem if you consider it politically practicable."\textsuperscript{10}

\textsuperscript{10} Fr. 1933, I, 112-119.
Hull's answer to Davis was a masterpiece of equivocation. The Administration rejected the idea of a contractual form for the declaration to consult, "partly for political reasons, partly to reserve to ourselves the right of an unchallengeable interpretation of its meaning and partly to accentuate our complete independence of judgment and decision." The President, in reaching his ultimate policy, had taken cognizance of the merit of Davis' suggestion of regional limitation in Europe and elsewhere, but wanted "another genuine effort" at the universal approach to arms limitation in order to solidify international cooperation, which was a necessary preliminary to both the Economic and Disarmament Conferences.\textsuperscript{11}

This all added up to the fact that Roosevelt was not prepared to enter the United States in the race to stem the tide of political instability that threatened to envelop Europe. Reservation of the "right of an unchallengeable interpretation" and accentuation of "our complete independence" were plausible arguments, but were oriented toward domestic rather than international challenges. No nation accepts an interpretation of international agreements that goes contrary to national self-interest and no sanction has ever been effective in

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Ibid.}, 124-126.
ascribed to him motives which he denied. On March 8, 1922, the *New York Times* reported that Davis along with Bernard Baruch was acting as an emissary from former President Wilson to Senator William E. Borah, prime mover of the "irreconcilables," in an effort to increase general public dissatisfaction with the treaty. In response, Davis issued a formal press statement on March 9, asserting that he had acted purely of his own volition. The final treaty was "an alliance repugnant to American principles and precedents," but he favored its ratification with necessary reservations to eliminate the defects and to provide other powers interested in the region with "the same rights and guarantees" accorded to the four powers. There does not appear to be any inconsistency between this attitude and the one that Davis expressed to the Council on Foreign Relations.

Nor does Borah's correspondence with him reflect any evidence to confirm the *Times* allegation. In a letter to Davis, the Idaho Senator congratulated him for a "splendid presentation" on February 17, but gave no hint of any interim contact between them. Borah wanted the treaty defeated because "it is in fact nothing but the old alliance system which has tortured Europe for three hundred

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6 *New York Times*, March 9, 1922.
forcing a country to carry out responsibilities that it claimed never to have accepted. Nor was there any question about the United States not retaining her independence of "judgment and decision," although the intent of the MacDonald Plan was to unite America with the other Great Powers to strengthen consultative action. If Roosevelt and Hull had doubts on these points, they could have formulated detailed reservations to Part I of the plan, setting forth explicitly the American position, exactly as Davis had suggested. All that was demanded was a formal declaration of intent to confer and the whole European future, especially from the standpoint of France, depended on this one thing. But what the Administration sought to achieve was the enunciation of a policy without the acceptance of any corresponding obligation to deliver.

In reality, Hull could have omitted all but the "political reasons" and let it stand at that. Roosevelt had endorsed the Hoover arms control policy and he was following it to the letter. The ultimate goal was the reduction of armaments costs to which the President added the gradual replacement of a program of international inspection with a domestic plan. Both these ideas had considerable appeal: no one objects to budget reductions, while the elimination of foreign inspectors certainly recognized a basic American aversion to interference in
essentially domestic and, above all, private affairs of manufacturers and businessmen. The addition of the unilateral declaration to consult pushed beyond the Hoover ideas, but the whole issue was contingent upon substantial arms reduction based upon the Hoover-Stimson-Davis formula for limiting offensive and strengthening defensive components. In other words, it was a unilateral gesture the execution of which depended on multilateral coordination of the most complex of the post-war problems.

This arms control policy, considered in its entirety, had all the earmarks of political expediency rather than international sincerity. Actually, it contributed nothing to resolve the dilemma. Before security could be achieved, the continental powers, most of all France, wanted formal United States and United Kingdom guarantees of consultation. England was prepared to consult, but Roosevelt held out for a unilateral declaration that had only the element of good faith to back it up. In contrast, security had to precede arms reduction according to the order of preference established at Geneva or, at least, the two had to evolve simultaneously. If Geneva now failed, Roosevelt could lay claim to having made a grand effort at "universal disarmament" and his domestic political position would not be in jeopardy, either publicly or congressionally. Moreover, he could lay the
blame, if he desired, at the feet of Europe's recalcitrant statesmen, not only for their having denied the American people the benefits of reduced arms expenditures, but also for having failed to eliminate the threat of war.

Several questions arise from even a superficial analysis of the Roosevelt policy. The answers to them are not at all apparent or, in some instances, satisfying. And until history discovers some method for intercepting and recording for posterity the thought waves of great men, most of the answers will remain clouded with conjecture.

First of all, was this policy tenable? Given the arguments outlined above, it certainly was and the isolationistically-inclined American public would have accepted it. Then we must ask if it was justifiable? In terms of the pressing demands of the domestic scene, Roosevelt undoubtedly had a case, because he needed the continued cooperation of the progressive-isolationist bloc. But was the policy defensible in terms of the long-range implications of the unsettled conditions in Europe and Asia? The answer to this is an unequivocal "No," but the President could not foretell the future or predict the rapidity with which world order would deteriorate. He could only evaluate the importance of internal instability against the uncertainty of foreign involvement and he opted for the former.
This conclusion, however, does not dispel the ever-haunting speculation as to whether or not the forcefulness of Roosevelt's leadership and the wide acceptance of his dedication to action could not have combined behind his magnetic personality and his ability to rally public support and culminated in the formulation of an effective policy along the lines suggested by Norman Davis. But the President was hesitant to beard the lion of public and Congressional isolationism, probably with justification, although the truth of this assertion will always be steeped in supposition. The fact remains that Davis did put forth a proposal, and the arguments to support it, for a radical departure from the traditional lines of American foreign policy. The decision on the implementation or rejection of the course of proposed action, however, was not his to make.

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While the President and the State Department were formulating a definite policy, the Geneva talks again got underway. And almost immediately signs of dissension began to appear. Early manifestations of a division of the delegations into two camps became slowly visible with Germany representing the nucleus of the "losers" and England-France constituting the bulwark of the "winners."
Until the final points in America's position could be worked out, the conference deliberated the arms reduction portions of the MacDonald Plan, leaving Part I until later. Germany's delegate, raising objections to several aspects of the plan, attacked the idea of counting Nazi Party Storm Troopers as "effectives" in the armed forces and the denial to Germany of prototypes of newly developed weapons, which she was prohibited from manufacturing, but which she desired to have on hand against the possibility of rapid rearmament by her neighbors. England, with French backing, countered these demands with arguments that the structure of the English Plan was such as to achieve a fine balance between security and disarmament with the emphasis on universal reduction to the Versailles levels, provided Germany did not rearm or expand the amount of manpower she had under arms. Italy and the United States combined to act as arbitrators between the two sides in an effort to gain acceptance of the arms reduction portions of the plan as they stood.

As these portentous events took place in Geneva, two significant developments occurred in the United States: the President took to radio on May 7, delivering his second "fireside chat," this one on foreign policy; and on May 16, he issued his "Peace By Disarmament" letter to fifty-four heads of state. In the first instance, the Chief Executive
pointed out that the world situation went hand-in-hand with the domestic scene; the latter, however, still demanded the Administration's primary attention. Working in conferences with the other nations of the world, the United States was seeking "four great objectives:"

A general reduction of armaments, which would lead to a decrease in the fear of invasion or armed attack with the added benefits of reduced costs and, ultimately, balanced budgets.

A lowering of the existing world barriers to trade.

The introduction of stability into the international currency situation.

The restoration of friendly relations and greater confidence between all the nations of the world.12

In general, the goals seemed clear, but the technical wherewithal for their achievement was not evolving simultaneously in the State Department. Guidance to Geneva was unclear because the President had taken almost complete charge of the dispatch of instructions to Davis. The brevity and lack of clarity in the guidelines indicated lack of acquaintance with prior developments as well as disregard of demands from the War and Navy Departments. In fact, State was prohibited from sending copies of Geneva instructions along to War and Navy for their information and comment. In the meantime, as Moffat noted in

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his journal, "matters in Geneva are going very badly, where the Germans are remaining intransigent in insisting on their professional army in addition to the increased numbers of troops allowed them" under the provisions of the MacDonald Plan.\textsuperscript{13}

It was the German situation that prompted the May 16 Presidential letter. In a personal letter to Roosevelt on April 23, Davis had suggested that "in the near future" the President might stimulate concerted action at Geneva by advising the European nations that America would have to re-evaluate "the nature of our future representation" unless they were willing to come to grips with their own problems. Then after the announcement that Hitler would address the Reichstag on May 17, Davis recommended that the Chief Executive "take the wind out of his sails" by speaking in advance of the German Chancellor. The Ambassador prepared and forwarded to Washington a prepared text for the President's consideration. However, the message arrived too late to be used. Hull advised Davis subsequently that Roosevelt "was gratified, however, to find that despite certain differences in emphasis, the ideas he developed proved to be in essential harmony with

\textsuperscript{13}Hooker, op. cit., 94. The journal entry was dated May 3, 1933.
those you submitted." The only "difference" of major import concerned application of American policy. Davis suggested the President direct his attention and exert his influence toward the deadlock in Europe, but the tenor of the actual letter carried universal overtones calculated to reach a much wider audience and create a greater impact.

In his letter, Roosevelt set forth two objectives for the Disarmament Conference and proposed a course of action aimed at the realization of those goals. Ultimately, the conference should achieve the total elimination of all offensive weapons, but the immediate concern centered upon substantially reducing the numbers of such weapons in existence and the abolition of many others. The first step could be realized through acceptance of the ideas "broadly outlined in the MacDonald Plan." Concurrently, the nations represented at Geneva had to agree upon a schedule for the necessary successive steps. While all this was underway, all nations needed to refrain from increasing armaments levels above those established by existing treaties.

Having set forth these provisos, the President then came to the heart of his message with a fourth step to be taken "concurrent with and wholly dependent on the faithful fulfillment of these three proposals and subject to existing treaty rights." He proposed a universal non-aggression pact supported by solemn reaffirmations of
agreements against further armament. "Provided these obligations are faithfully executed by all signatory powers," nations should then commit themselves not to dispatch any troops across their international borders. In summarizing the intent of his message, Roosevelt admitted that "any strong nations" rejecting the ideas he put forth would block progress not only at Geneva, but also at London. "In such event," he concluded, "the civilized world, seeking both forms of peace, will know where the responsibility for failure lies."

The American Chief Executive had apparently attempted to couch his final remonstrance in broad terms, but it was obvious that the target of his remarks was Germany. Employing the full stature of his office, Roosevelt sought to martial the forces of international public opinion behind a drive to accelerate the sluggish bickering that continued to bar the way toward progress in arms control. He also endeavored "to cut through the brush" as had his predecessor nearly a year previously. The proposals made by the President appealed to long-standing public demands, but the nature of the world situation demanded more.

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14 Davis to Roosevelt, April 23, 1933, State Department press release, May 16, 1933; Davis Papers. FR, 1933, I, 140-142, 145-146 (Hull's message to Davis), 143-145 (text of Roosevelt's letter; see also Rosenman, op. cit., I, 185-191, which contains Roosevelt's personal notes on the content and effect of the letter).
American idealism would neither suffice to protect the territorial integrity of beleaguered European and Asian nations nor to force the leading politicians in those nations to retreat from what they defined as their national responsibilities.

Ultimately, the Presidential letter created an atmosphere of conciliation. "More realistic than Hoover's approach," comments Richard W. Leopold in *The Growth of American Foreign Policy*, "it showed, nonetheless, the bounds beyond which the United States would not go." But the immediate effect was the emergence of a more moderate approach in Hitler's speech, about which there was much advance apprehension. He reiterated that Germany stood alone as a really "disarmed" nation, but added that the situation could not continue indefinitely. The spirit of the Roosevelt message impressed him, and the Germans, declared the Chancellor, were prepared to negotiate further in good faith as long as a serious effort was exerted toward disarmament, equality and security. One serious hurdle had apparently been negotiated, but the entire length of the course loomed ahead.

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15Leopold, op. cit., 513.

years . . . it is a political grouping, which always gives rise to a counter-grouping and which inevitably gives rise to war." He was astonished at arguments that the treaty was a step toward the League, adding pungently: "If I were a League man, I would fight this thing as persistently as I am," because the treaty foresees a system that actually made it impossible for the international body to exist.7 Fundamentally, the former Under-Secretary of State and the heir apparent to the Foreign Relations Committee chairmanship both opposed the final form of the Four-Power Treaty. Davis, however, argued that the pact could be altered constructively by the addition of significant reservations and thus become a contribution to the amelioration of international difficulties. Borah, on the other hand, maintained down to the final Senate vote that the treaty violated America's traditional opposition to "entangling alliances."

Yet it was not tradition in Davis' estimation that led to American reluctance to cooperate with the League, but rather timidity and inaction on the part of the Harding Administration. "One of the objectives of the League," he wrote,

7Borah to Davis, March 9, 1922; original letter contained in the Norman H. Davis Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., subsequently referred to as "Davis Papers."
Real progress, however, appeared in the offing after Davis' speech to the General Commission on May 22. The American delegate expounded upon the Administration desire to eliminate surprise attack, to augment defensive capabilities of all national armies while diminishing their offensive strength, and to enhance security even further through a balanced and well-defined system of "controlled disarmament." In the end, the United States sought reduction of all armed forces and their equipment to the levels of domestic police contingents, responsible only for the maintenance of internal order. This was the goal set forth in the Hoover Plan, carried further in the MacDonald Plan, and recently supplemented by Roosevelt's "non-aggression-no force" proposal.

But all these remarks were merely introductory. They led up to the real American announcement for which the Geneva delegations, especially those of European nations, had long been waiting: an American agreement to consult. This policy declaration took the United States beyond the confines of strict isolationism, although still leaving the real decision to the European states because in no event would America move without a prior "substantial reduction of armaments." Davis said:

I have made it clear that we are ready to do our part not only toward the substantive reduction of armaments but also to contribute in other ways to the organization of peace. In particular we are
willing to consult the other states in case of a threat to peace with a view to averting conflict. Further than that, in the event that the states, in conference, determine that a state has been guilty of a breach of the peace in violation of its international obligations and take measures against the violator, then, if we concur in the judgment rendered as to the responsible and guilty party, we will refrain from any action tending to defeat the collective effort which such states make to restore peace.17

In what Manley O. Hudson was to call "the high water mark of our international relations since the war," the United States seemed to shed its cloak of isolation and venture forth, albeit cautiously, to join the world in the quest for international security and arms control. The New York Times called the Davis pronouncement "a definite step forward in American foreign policy." "The inevitable inference," editorialized the Times, "is that the world has moved and the United States has moved with it. This country no longer boasts of 'splendid isolation'." The policy of consultation, commented The Nation, was "cleverly designed to give Europe a maximum assurance and at the same time to give our own Congress a minimum of cause for apprehension." But, the same paper added,

17FR, 1933, I, 154-159. In a letter to Newton D. Baker, July 21, 1933, Davis pointed out that he had proposed a general outline of future American policy, e.g., redefinition of neutrality rights and consideration of measures to confer with other nations as set forth in the May 16 Presidential letter and his own May 22 speech, to the President-elect during their talks in December 1932; Davis Papers.
"whether or not the Davis statement saves the arms conference from final collapse, it gives it at least a fighting chance to achieve some agreement."\textsuperscript{18}

Speaking to newsmen after the speech, Davis encountered objections to the policy of consultation on the grounds that the United States was committing itself too far in security matters. He explained that the objective of the policy was "the substantive reduction of arms," after which America was prepared to work for the organization of peace. The clarity of his remarks was calculated to dispel any conclusions that the United States had visions of leading the attack on political inequities throughout the world. On the other hand, America had offered to the greatest extent possible to cooperate with nations mutually interested in the establishment of effective peace-keeping machinery.\textsuperscript{19}

The rapidity of developments at Geneva through late May and early June seemed to forecast imminent success. But the reconciliation of all the diverse factors now involved in the disarmament-security picture proved too much


\textsuperscript{19}Memo for the Record, Press Conference for American Newsmen, May 22, 1933; Davis Papers.
for the General Commission of the conference. The necessary ingredients for a far-reaching agreement were all at hand, but the proper recipe for their usage had yet to be compiled. Henderson with the acquiescence of all parties concerned decided that the Conference Bureau should carry on with revisions of the MacDonald Plan in preparation for a second reading, incorporating into the document the newly-proposed concepts of non-aggression and sanctity of frontiers. Concurrent with this activity, the final phases of negotiation began on the Four-Power Pact, whose completion promised further broadening of the strictly European basis for appeasement of political and economic differences. And all the major remaining points of contention were continental in nature. The prevailing spirit of cooperation and coordination, however, pointed toward rapid settlement through the medium of private multilateral talks.

All these circumstances made Davis' further presence in Europe unnecessary, if not somewhat detrimental. The major concessions yet to be made depended almost entirely on the French. He did not want France to rely on his availability as an excuse for taking or refusing to take responsible action on her own. Furthermore, by absenting himself from Europe, he could avoid any speculation in the press or otherwise that he was hovering near in order
to pressure the French government in the event any difficulties developed. The Department approved his line of thought and on June 18 he sailed for home "to report to the President on the work of the Disarmament Conference."

Before departing, however, he announced that he would be on hand for the next General Commission meeting scheduled to get underway in mid-July.20

Before the Ambassador joined the President for a cruise on the USS Ellis and then a short stay at Campobello in late June, a ground swell of criticism rose concerning Davis' continued representation of the United States at the conference. Through late May, June and July 1933, letters, demanding both his ouster and his retention, streamed into the White House. His name had come up in a Senate investigation of the "House of Morgan" from which he had borrowed money in the past (still owed them some at the time) and from which he had received preferential treatment in the purchase of securities.21 In a cabinet meeting on May 26,

20FR, 1933, I, 192-194.

21Harold B. Whiteman, Jr., Norman Davis and the Search for International Peace and Security, 1917-1941 (Yale University, 1958, unpublished dissertation), II, 553-558, goes into extensive detail on the matter of Davis' position in the whole Morgan affair, clearing him of any illegal or questionable practices. The Senate apparently reached the same conclusion, since it confirmed his ambassadorial appointment despite the furor.
1933, his most hostile opponent, Harold L. Ickes, suggested that Davis, under pressure from the Morgan banking interests, was attempting to push the United States too close to the League and that he was a "distinct liability to the Administration." Typical of communications urging Davis' dismissal was one reading "I for one can not place any trust in any action he may take on your behalf [meaning the President], or as your spokesman in foreign affairs."

In contrast, another letter from an admitted Republican, "standing behind you," counseled the Chief Executive to "retain Norman H. Davis abroad" because the entire world needed him there.

In his press conference on June 14, the President was called upon to comment on an Associated Press story that Davis had resigned: "That is a new one on me. He sent a long message over last night and didn't say anything about it." Further speculation was fomented in early July, however, by the White House announcement that Davis would not go back to Geneva. Roosevelt clarified the


\[\text{23}^{23}\text{Letters to the President from Malcolm Garretson, Forest Hills, N.Y., May 25, 1933, and from R. B. Parsons, San Mateo, California, May 29, 1933; Roosevelt Papers. These are only two representative samples from the large number of such letters in the collection.}\]
matter for newsmen by explaining that the decision to postpone the General Commission convocation until October prompted the move: "He will hold himself in readiness until Henderson wants him there." The addition of a comment that he would "in any event go over by late August-early September" implied that Davis still enjoyed Presidential confidence and no evidence was found to indicate that Roosevelt even contemplated his removal.24

During the two short months that Davis was in the United States, a deep estrangement built up between the nations of Europe, forcing the Administration to consider revisions of its Geneva policy. Hitler's position within Germany gradually became more secure and his demands for concessions on arms control-security more pointed. The traditional and natural French reaction was withdrawal which could be reversed only by iron-clad guarantees from the United States and Britain. By mid-August the new American line of approach began to crystallize. At a press conference on August 16, after a session with Roosevelt and Under-Secretary of State William Phillips, Davis "made it plain the United States had abandoned the leadership, or initiative, and he would merely be on hand for consultation and to offer assurances this country would cooperate."

24Record of Presidential Press Conferences on June 14 and July 7, 1933; Roosevelt Papers. An undated cablegram in the Davis Papers from him to the President reveals that Davis did offer his resignation.
Commentary on the statement concluded that "the unusual role of a 'roving ambassador'" was coming to an end. In the future, read an article in the Washington Herald, rather than visit the capitals of Europe to deal with a wide range of problems, Davis' duties would be limited to the field of disarmament and that alone.25

In reality, this was not a strange development. The United States had withdrawn hastily from the London Conference in July and sharpened the course of "economic nationalism." Although Administration circles undoubtedly knew the repercussions this could have on disarmament—certainly Davis had so advised them—the idea of "separate treatment" persisted. And with the tensing of European tempers over the failure at coordination of economic affairs, it was only natural that uneasiness should be manifested over arms control prospects. Thus, it was equally natural that Davis' exequatur be limited to exempt him from involvement in essentially bilateral relations with European nations.

What was not revealed to the press on August 16 was the clear shift in American policy over and above the retrenchment of isolation. In the future the United States

25Clipping, August 17, 1933, from the Washington Herald, forwarded to Davis at Stockbridge, Mass., by the State Department on August 17, 1933; Davis Papers.
would support the French position and line up against Germany. France would not be asked to forfeit her military predominance in Europe without assurances through "continuous inspection" of German adherence to arms reduction procedures, when and if implemented. "It is up to Germany to furnish conclusive proof," Roosevelt wrote to Davis, "... that it does not intend to profit by other people's disarmament to seek revenge. If, however, this proof is given, then the French must accept alone the responsibility of a refusal to reduce military strength." And, he added, it would be a tragedy if any leading nations allowed economic or financial differences of opinion "to obscure their vision or affect their attitude on this question, where there is basically a real community of interest."26

It was relatively easy for the President to separate the economic from the disarmament issues, but this ignored the realities of the inherent interrelationship between the two matters. The Administration wanted disarmament, but would not agree to the unrestricted guarantee of consultation necessary to achieve it. On the other hand, Roosevelt expected Europe's statesmen to forget

26 Draft letter from Roosevelt to Davis, undated, forwarded to Davis by Moffat on August 18, 1933; Davis Papers. Record of Presidential Press Conferences on August 25 and 30, 1933; Roosevelt Papers.
having been left high and dry at London and neither hold this action against the United States nor allow the American retreat to "economic nationalism" to affect arms control negotiations.

This was truly the working of a nimble mind, reacting to the demands of domestic pressure, while merely sympathizing with the needs of the international situation. This was asking other nations to undertake action in the name of world peace and security, regardless of the potential effect on their domestic situations, a course the United States hesitated to follow out of deference to its own national requirements.

"Please let me remind you," wrote Roosevelt in the final instructions to Davis on August 30, "that in offering to go along with such supervision and control [as envisioned in the French proposals] I will encounter many objections in the United States." Nevertheless, the President felt confident that the "overwhelming majority of Americans" would support him, if only England and the nations of Europe would "accept what has today become a necessity," namely, disarmament.27

The last round of 1933 sessions at the Disarmament Conference got underway in private in September. Davis

27Roosevelt to Davis, August 30, 1933; Davis Papers. See also FR, 1933, I, 209-210.
is to bring about world-wide disarmament, but of course it could not accomplish much in that direction so long as some of the principal powers, particularly the United States, held aloof. . . . We are now having "No More War" parades, which are about as effective as similar parades against smallpox which would be to prevent recurrence of that disease. Vaccination is the only safe preventive.

Even if the United States persisted in remaining out of the League, a condition that Davis was prepared to accept because of the pressure of public opinion, he called for impartial service by America outside, but in cooperation with, the League to hasten the return of European stability.8

A readjustment of European political thought to achieve a "settlement of German reparations and land disarmament" constituted the paramount goal. The linkage of "reparations" with "disarmament" by Davis was no accident. His own personal deliberations on European affairs convinced him that the ideas of economic stability and national security were closely interwoven. "This is not solely a matter of economics, by any means," he concluded in an article in June 1922. To meet the costs of rehabilitation, he wrote, the devastated countries needed capital, either in the form of German reparations or from

arrived in London on September 6, continued to Paris twelve days later, and finally reached Geneva on the twenty-fourth. Enroute he had conversed with the English and French cabinet chiefs and disarmament diplomats, availing himself of their observations over the preceding two months. Conditions, in general, had not progressed beyond that stage achieved in June before his return to America. But United States policy had changed and this Davis explained to his European counterparts.

For public consumption, he spoke to American correspondents in Geneva: the United States encouraged the conduct of political conversations between the powers of Europe to the extent that such talks might contribute to political appeasement and clear the way for disarmament. But he personally did not intend to be pulled into anything but straight arms control discussions. Revealing one aspect of American interest and couching his remarks in the vernacular of the financier, he declared that "disarmament was a cold-blooded business deal; it was an effort to prevent nations breaking their backs financially." His observations, as he revealed them to the reporters, led him to conclude that Germany must either be sensible and accept a reasonable convention or renounce the restrictions imposed at Versailles. On the other hand, Anglo-American assurances of the integrity of an arms control-security
pact would bolster the confidence of the French, "but they were not going to get that guarantee," at least not from the United States. Having publicly set forth the premises upon which American policy would now operate, no doubt could be raised concerning the Administration conviction that an essentially European dilemma faced the world. The United States would contribute her support only on the issue of disarmament and not for the purpose of underwriting the peace of Europe.

In the ensuing two weeks, a final impasse was reached. France, convinced that Germany was already rearming, called for a four year transition period to be written into the MacDonald Plan, during which time "continuous supervision" would be carried out. After that period had elapsed and provided there were no violations, then the serious arms reduction phases of the plan might be implemented. Germany was not averse to this solution since it also allowed her an increase in military manpower, while concurrently transforming her armed forces along with all other nations into uniform militia contingents. The real deadlock developed over the arming of Germany during the

28 Memo of Press Conference in Geneva, September 29, 1933; Davis Papers. Davis' use of "appeasement" should be considered in its pre-Munich meaning: "to bring to a state of peace, quiet, ease or content" and not "to accede to the belligerent demands of a country."
"transition." France insisted she be limited to those weapons authorized under the Versailles Treaty. The Germans demanded, in addition, prototypes of all advanced weapons then in use, except for those later to be abolished, as a safeguard against eventual non-reduction by the heavily armed powers. Neither side would agree to any compromise in its respective position.

Finally, on October 16, claiming that she was not receiving the equality of treatment promised under the December 11, 1932, agreement that had brought her back to Geneva, Germany walked out, not only of the disarmament deliberations, but also of the League of Nations. Thus, the turning point was reached in the inter-war efforts to sustain the forces of moderation and restrain the forces of radicalism. Germany's withdrawal from the councils of Europe meant the breakdown of the controls imposed after World War I and marked the opening of the tempestuous struggle for domination of the European Continent that ended in World War II.

This development transformed the disarmament debacle into an ever more threatening problem for Europe. Political settlements had to be achieved before any further progress could be made whatsoever. And all such agreements would have to evolve out of such documents as the Versailles Treaty, the League Covenant and the Locarno
Pact, none of which directly affected American interests. In light of all this, Davis amended the scope of his functions with the concurrence of Washington. He would remain in Geneva and assist in keeping the machinery functioning for the eventuality that Five-Power talks on arms control might later be initiated. Germany had elections coming up on November 12 and many observers, Davis among them, believed Hitler's position would be solidified after the balloting was complete.

But the Administration was apprehensive that Davis was getting involved in the very political conferences he so diligently avoided. In fact, on October 16, the President told him to issue a press statement, and then send him the text, making it clear that he was in Geneva "purely for disarmament purposes" and would stay under those conditions as long as a likely prospect for success existed. Although he had already attempted to make that very point to newsmen the same afternoon, again the following day Davis announced the additional clarification desired by the Administration.29

29 FR, 1933, I, 276. Davis told Roosevelt by phone that "my information is that Hitler is the best one of the lot and this election is probably going to get rid of some of the worst part of his group. He certainly wants to make peace with France;" Record of telephone conversation between the President and Davis, October 16, 1933; Davis Papers, see also FR, 1933, I, 276-278, 296. Memo of Press Conference in Geneva, October 16, 1933 and State Department
Having withdrawn to the sidelines for all practical purposes, little real reason remained for him to continue his vigil in Geneva other than to offer periodic moral encouragement to his colleagues. And even this soon became superfluous. On October 21, Daladier's government fell and French policy hit dead center. Two days later, the General Commission adjourned until December 4, turning its work over to the Conference Bureau. That body also adjourned after two days' work in order to enjoy the impending holidays; no definite date was set for reconvening. Under these circumstances, after consultation with Hull, Davis once again returned to the United States, leaving Wilson in charge in Geneva. In late December, the latter also came back to Washington to assist in drafting new United States policy in preparation for what would prove to be Davis' last Geneva effort at arms control in May 1934.

While events in Europe developed sporadically during the first two months of the New Year, Davis periodically worked at the State Department, evaluating

press release, October 30, 1933, of an October 16 press conference in Geneva; Davis Papers. These separate documents cover the respective conferences referred to in the text. For a summary of some of the adverse press comment, see Hooker, op. cit., 106-107.

30 Record of telephone conversation between Hull and Davis, October 30, 1933; Davis Papers.
incoming reports. On at least two occasions he prepared to return to Europe for further meetings, only to have his departure postponed. "I am getting a little impatient," he wrote to Lord Cecil, "to get back to disarmament again, but I do not wish to go back to Geneva to cool my heels." And in the evolving situation, he would have done just that. The British were working on a scheme for a conference away from Switzerland in the hope of getting Germany back into the arms control picture, but the French were objecting. Mussolini proposed an arms limitation treaty affirming the status quo for all nations but Germany, which would be allowed to expand her army. Thus, two diverse schools of thought were emerging: the Italians, realizing the perils of an arms race, sought controlled rearmament of Germany up to relative levels with the other powers; the English pressed for the idea of arms reduction with concurrent transformation of national forces into militia status.

Davis was on hand in Washington to lead Administration reaction in support of the British and against the Italians. Along with Moffat on February 19, he delivered to Sir Robert Lindsay, the Court of St. James's Ambassador, the American response to a British aide memoire, which had

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31 Davis to Cecil, January 16, 1934; Davis Papers.
requested American comments on revised British policy. The statement was a reiteration of the Hoover-initiated line, advocating strengthened defense and reduced offense within a framework of substantial arms reduction. The American note commented that the English, apparently to regulate their approach to the political exigencies of the continent, now foresaw far less reduction than they had the previous June. The United States agreed to support the revised British position, but still viewed "a convention involving an actual reduction in armaments not only as essential in itself, but as facilitating a general political appeasement."

To the Italians, on the other hand, Davis issued an almost stinging rebuff. Meeting with Ambassador Augusto Rosso the following day, he called the Italian proposal a "negation of disarmament." The convention they brought forth could only be signed by European powers because it did not fulfill the demands of any non-European delegations, especially those interested in real arms reduction not just pacification of European differences. He even suggested that the consistent Italian stand for arms control appeared to have been abandoned. Italy might do better by joining with the United States in backing the English plan in order that a three-power bloc could exert its influence toward the amelioration of the Franco-German
disagreements. Rosso explained that Italy, fearful of the failure of the British suggestions, would prefer to see Germany's rearmament contractually limited rather than left to unilateral fancy. Davis called this an obvious admission that disarmament could not be achieved.32

The pace of events in Europe began to slow in late February and he decided to take a leave of absence to accept an offer from the Swedish match firm of Kreuger and Toll to join with a small group of influential and reputable financiers in negotiating the disposal of the firm's assets. With Presidential approval, he left for Sweden on February 23, agreeing to remain "on call" in case the developing situation necessitated his attention. Naturally, his departure led to press speculation and Roosevelt told newsmen that Davis had "no mission," but was going to Europe "purely and solely in a private capacity." The newspaper conjecture was not without some basis, however, Roosevelt's denial to the contrary notwithstanding. On February 20, Hull asked the American charge in London to arrange an appointment for Davis with MacDonald on March 2 "without public knowledge." The purpose of the meeting was to

discuss the growing naval problem between the United States, the United Kingdom and Japan.33

He wound up his negotiations in Sweden in early April just in time to make a quick analysis of European affairs for Hull before returning to New York and Washington. Under French pressure and out of apprehension over the German situation, the British had instituted a review of their policy with an eye toward realization of a purely European arms reduction settlement. And this in turn made American revision necessary because the English wanted a re-interpretation of the May 22, 1933, declaration by Davis. What the English were considering, in general, was the imposition of economic and financial sanctions as a penalty against any infractions of the arms reduction convention they foresaw. What they needed was a determination of the potential applicability of the Davis theory on consultation in relation to such a system.

A debate ensued between Hull and Davis over assurance to London on America's position. Hull argued that the May 22 policy pertained only to breaches of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, i.e., actual or potential hostilities. But England's newest scheme foresaw the exercise of

American neutrality out of deference to sanctions imposed for contravention of a disarmament convention to which America apparently would be a signatory. Although Hull admitted the serious nature of such potential violations, the penalties would be imposed by the Permanent Disarmament Commission through a technical inspection team of which the United States theoretically could be a member. In Hull's mind there was little analogy between the two situations. In fact, the presence of an American in a group investigating a violation would ipso facto bind the United States to abide by the findings of the team. Following this line further then, if sanctions were to be imposed for such infractions, America would also be bound in advance to participate in the imposition of penalties. Such an agreement, according to the Secretary, because of its restrictions on American independence of judgment and decision, would never stand the test of domestic public opinion.

On the other hand, Davis submitted that a breach of an arms control pact would threaten the peace almost as surely as an act of aggression. He perceived only a difference in degree. The ultimate aim of arms reduction was peace and, if the United States could consult on infractions of the peace, then she could certainly confer on violations of an arms reduction convention supporting
their domestic treasuries. But Germany could not pay unless the agreements were realistic. Paradoxically, he argued, a Germany sufficiently strong and prosperous to afford reparations "might be a menace." Thus, in the absence of adequate security arrangements, the European nations "are inclined to keep Germany down." Only a reconciliation of these divergent views offered any hope for future progress.

These were the reflections of a man sorely concerned over the plight of Europe. When he had entered the Wilson Administration, Davis' activities had been limited largely to Latin American commercial, financial and economic matters. But Treasury and State Department assignments had broadened his outlook and his knowledge. The enduring imprints left upon his thinking, however, grew out of his admiration for and dedication to Wilson himself. In no area was this more apparent than in disarmament, a prime European consideration.

Reviewing one of Ray Stannard Baker's volumes on Wilson, Davis revealed the depths to which the Wilsonian idealism had penetrated his own thoughts. Valuable data in Baker's book demonstrated both the futility and impossibility of disarmament without concurrent guarantees of

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9"What Can Germany Pay," Our World, I, No. 3 (June 1922), 93-94.
that peace. Should America reject the idea of sanctions suggested by England, he pointed out further, the British undoubtedly would not press ahead for accord with France and prospective disarmament.

In this respect, the suppositions of Davis proved true. English policy gradually evolved into the idea of a European consultative body to whose decisions Great Britain would accede only if America agreed also to honor those same decisions. In other words, England wanted America to underwrite the whole system. In the absence of American acceptance of a course of action chosen by the European powers, the British would also withhold support. This was tying the Union Jack to Uncle Sam's coattails with a vengeance, since any difficulties developing on the continent could be stemmed only with American approval and acquiescence. Needless to say, when this dimension was added, even though he had argued against Hull in the beginning, Davis fully accepted the Secretary's point of view. \(^{34}\) American policy thus remained the same as it had been in May of the previous year. And there would be no significant change in preparation for the General Commission meetings finally scheduled for the coming May.

Davis made one last effort to breathe life into what proved to be the fast-fading movement for arms control at Geneva. On May 29, speaking before the General Commission, he urged the acceptance of the revised MacDonald Plan as a basis for further discussion and achievement of rapid agreement. He reminded the major powers that they had endorsed the plan less than a year previously and, in spite of changes in the European political picture, the fundamental concepts of the proposed arms control-security package remained as valid in May 1934 as they had been in June 1933. And in a final burst of encouragement, he reiterated the United States agreement to consult with the European nations in the event of aggression as an added indication of the sustained American interest in the affairs of Europe.35

But, after the initial flush of delegates' enthusiasm over renewing old contacts had passed, the conference rapidly deteriorated into near-chaos. The one power on whom the whole situation depended, France, had not come to Geneva to listen. French policy became so intransigent as to reject any new plan conceived by any nation whatsoever. Her Geneva delegation came prepared to give a full

international airing to the German situation and to ask cooperation from the nations of Europe in the forging of security guarantees to discourage any German thoughts of aggression. But England and Italy had no alternative course by which to alter French views and stalemate ensued.

The practical, if not the actual, death knell was sounded on June 11, 1934 over the badly battered remains of the idealistic venture to reduce armaments and transform the world's armies into domestic police contingents. The sessions came to an end subject to reconvocation at the call of President Henderson. But the call never came. Disarmament was a dead issue; the next order of business could only be rearmament. The impasse at Geneva unleashed an apprehensive national rush into mutual security agreements calculated to produce an atmosphere of coercion around Germany. Ultimately, two armed camps would evolve out of a conference that had set as its goal the reduction of national armies as the first step toward the realization of a world of law, order, peace and tranquility.

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The inter-war efforts to reduce the size and strength of the world's armies have been perceptively summed up by Foster Rhea Dulles in *America's Rise to World Power*. 
Adding certain pertinent reflections on the efficacy of America's role in those endeavors, he writes:

The failure of disarmament was the triumph of timidity. Here perhaps was the final and conclusive example of the unhappy alliance between idealism and irresponsibility that was the most significant aspect of American foreign policy during a period in world history when forces still hardly perceived had begun their inexorable march toward another war.36

For Norman Davis the adjournment at Geneva represented the culmination of some twenty-seven months of unrelenting pursuit of an ideal, but an ideal which gripped the imagination not only of the few, but also of the many. That often undefinable and inexplicable medium known as world opinion consistently stood on the side of disarmament through some eight years of ups and downs. And the reports were always the same: the people demand the reduction of armaments. But what of those few who decided for the many? Davis had encountered the best men that European politics had to offer and it was not through lack of persuasiveness or inability to produce plausible, acceptable, defensible arguments that he had failed to sway them to his belief in the cause. It was rather the prevalence of a haunting fear in the minds of those men, all of whom had suffered to varying degrees the ravages of the world's

36 Dulles, op. cit., 166.
first war and its awful aftermath, that another such holocaust could descend on the Continent of Europe. These men shared the fears of the people they led and aspired to the same goals, but they had the increased burden of decision-making upon them. And it was in the process of exercising this responsibility that emotion so often got in the way. Davis had wagered the strength of his idealism, his faith in world order, and lost; but the rebuff did not discourage him. So long as an opportunity afforded itself, he would continue his persistent quest for a solution to the pervasive problem of world armaments.
CHAPTER VI

THE LONDON NAVAL CONFERENCE OF 1935

The reduction of world navies represented a major objective of the various universal disarmament plans submitted to the General Disarmament Conference. While the Geneva arms control discussions proceeded along their rocky course in late 1933 and early 1934, however, the necessity for commencing more limited negotiations to provide for revision of the Five-Power Treaties of Washington (1922) and London (1930) became apparent to the major sea powers. Then with the practical breakdown of deliberations at Geneva in June 1934, continued regulation and control of naval forces became a problem of most immediate urgency. In fact, the sole remaining hope for any measure of arms reduction whatsoever appeared to lie in the successful outcome of the London Naval Conference of 1935.1

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1 United States Senate, Disarmament and Security: A Collection of Documents, 1919-1955 (Washington, 1956), 84th Congress, 2nd Session, 13-26, 30-43. The expiration date of the Washington Treaty was either December 31, 1936 or two years from the date of notification of abrogation given by a signatory, whichever date was later. In no case could a signatory abrogate before December 31, 1934, in which case all signatories were committed to confer on
It will be recalled that the Washington Treaty complex dealt not only with naval limitation but also with the regulation of Far Eastern political affairs. The key to the fine balance achieved in 1922 was Japan. In return for guarantees of consultation in the event of a threat to insular possessions and of non-fortification of certain Pacific bases, Japan had accepted a navy smaller than that of the United States and the United Kingdom, abandoned the Anglo-Japanese alliance of 1902, and agreed to honor the territorial integrity of China. In 1930, the Japanese accepted the broadening of the existing naval agreement to include additional types of naval craft. But, beginning in 1931, when military began to replace civilian control of Japanese internal affairs, that nation commenced to manifest signs of breaking out of the fetters she had donned at Washington. Not only did she move into Manchuria, but she also undertook a naval building program calculated to revision or a new treaty during the calendar year 1935. Likewise in the London Treaty, the signatories were committed to meet during 1935 for the purpose of working out revisions dictated by prevailing conditions.

This conference is referred to in various manners by different authorities, the major difference being the year associated with it; e.g., 1934, 1935 or 1936. We prefer the year "1935" because this is the year used in official American government documents of the Department of State and the year established in both the Washington and London Treaties for the convocation of a conference. The Three-Power Treaty, less Japan, was not signed until 1936 and, for this reason, many sources place the conference in that year.
bring her fleet up to the Washington and London Treaty limits by 1936. Slowly, the unsteadiness of the equilibrium in the Pacific increased and over a decade of relative tranquility appeared to have ended.

The hardening Japanese position became solid as early as January 1934, but Washington's reaction was calm and collected. Ambassador Joseph Grew reported from Tokyo that Japan was determined to have her own way at the anticipated conference. Failing this, she would "reject all limitations on naval construction." With the armed forces in power and the liberals out, Grew estimated, "the Navy alone will have the final say." Anticipating that England would soon query the United States about eventual preparations for the conference, Secretary of State Cordell Hull advised Minister Hugh Wilson, America's alternate to Norman Davis on arms control matters, that the United States stood firm by its demand for "maintenance of the present treaty ratio." He cautioned Wilson that while the navy was not prepared to enter into technical discussions, the State Department would entertain any British overtures as to a time and place for initial contacts.²

It was Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald who broached the subject of coordinating Anglo-American planning, first

²FR, 1934, I, 217-220.
through the American Embassy in London in late January and then again in early March to "private traveler" Davis. The English had already begun studying their 1935 naval program, their major objective being to avoid the prospect of equality with Japan, a condition that could jeopardize empire security. But MacDonald feared the possibility of Japanese renunciation of the London Treaty and the outbreak of a naval race. In rebuttal, Davis agreed that the matter was urgent, but stressed American need for further consideration of the whole situation before the adoption of a final course of action. Thus, by early March the naval question approached a state of animated suspension until Washington and London could decide how best to begin talks directed toward reconciling their differences and still not provoke Japan. 3

An acceptable solution was finally supplied by Davis. During his initial talks with MacDonald, he had suggested the English invite the United States to an informal exchange of official views and simultaneously ask Japan, France and Italy to join the discussions later. On April 23, after returning to New York from his Kreuger and

3 *Ibid.*, 15-16, 220-234. The original of Davis' letter to the President, re-printed at pp. 222-225, is found in the Roosevelt Papers.
Toll Match negotiations and another short visit with MacDonald, he advised the President that the Prime Minister had accepted the proposal with only slight changes. All would go as planned, except that England would informally apprise France and Italy of developments and bring them in only as their presence was deemed necessary. The three-power talks eventually got underway according to this formula, but not until Davis was free from the demands of the Geneva Conference and able to devote full time to naval issues.

When he left Washington for Geneva in mid-May, the Government was still formulating a policy on reduction of naval armaments. The final guidelines were simple, forthright and unequivocal, although not necessarily realistic. America wanted some measure of decreased naval strength; the President recommended beginning with a proposed twenty-five per cent cut, later reduced to twenty per cent, and then working from there down to any figure the other powers would accept. By scrapping all obsolete vessels without replacing them and then reducing the existing treaty allowances of both tonnage and numbers, both actions to take place within a specified time period, the total

\[\text{\textsuperscript{4}Tbid., 34-35. Davis to Roosevelt, April 23, 1934; Roosevelt Papers.}\]
justice and protection by some means other than armed conflict. "Realizing this," Davis wrote, "Wilson established two principles, which must be the key to effective disarmament:" mandatory reduction of arms "to the lowest point consistent with national safety:" and international acceptance of "mutual guaranties . . . to justify a nation in making such reduction." Less than a decade later, when he faced a realistic situation containing the factors in Wilson's equation, Davis would realize the significance of the key, but find that recognition of the problem did not necessarily guarantee its solution.

Basic Wilsonian concepts permeated his thinking throughout his career, but in early 1923 he shifted his attitude somewhat with respect to the European situation. His fundamental orientation toward banking and finance initially motivated Davis to emphasize the primacy of economic factors in a European settlement. But in February 1923, he wrote Senator Borah that "the crux of the whole problem in Europe is more political than economic." Referring to the then current question of repayment of debts to America, Davis pointed out that a conference to discuss only economic matters and disarmament would draw

agreed-upon percentage could be realized. Any such reduc-
tion, however, would have to be within the framework of
the existing ratio of naval power: 5-5-3 for the United
States, the United Kingdom and Japan; 1.75 each for France
and Italy. As an alternative to this plan, Japan being
the logical opponent, the United States would demand a
continuation of the present ratio system with no decreases
whatsoever for as long a period of time as possible. 5

Before the talks began in London, Davis encountered
difficulties with Roosevelt and Hull over the nature of his
position. Apprehensive that the Japanese might look upon
the meetings as a preliminary conference, a development
the Administration wished to prevent, and that the naval
discussions might become associated in the public mind
with the nearly defunct General Disarmament Conference, the
President and his Secretary of State decided to confine the
contacts to strict diplomatic channels. To achieve this
purpose, they designated Davis and Ambassador Robert W.
Bingham in London as equal representatives, a move that
highly displeased the chief armaments negotiator. He

5Ibid., 237-238. The general lines of the policy
were worked out according to Roosevelt's formula by Under-
Secretary of State William Phillips, Assistant Secretary of
the Navy Henry L. Roosevelt, Chief of Naval Operations
Admiral William H. Standley and Jay P. Moffat, State
Department Chief of Western European Affairs. See also
Roosevelt letter to Davis, October 5, 1934, in Rosenman,
_op. cit.,_ IV, 481-483.
wrote to Washington on June 12 that the "task assigned me is sufficiently difficult under the best of circumstances" without creating conditions in which there was a "danger of crossing wires." He was not averse to working with Bingham, since they had done so earlier that year when Davis had been in London, however, he believed strongly in the necessity for vesting responsibility in a single individual. But Hull was adamant:

We give you full latitude as to the tactics you choose to follow, but I want to make it perfectly clear that neither the President nor I wish to run any risk of losing control of the talks you are guiding and that what we envisaged was a system of informal talks somewhat analogous to what you and Bingham had worked out last spring.

He finally had to accept the instructions, although Hull did instruct Bingham that the burden of the negotiations would necessarily fall upon Davis as the more qualified representative in the particular field.6

But the disagreement with Washington represented the least of the real issues facing him. The international political climate for the informal meetings in London was fraught with tensions that promised a less than harmonious

6FR, 1931, I, 247-259. Davis even argued his point strongly, but to no avail, by trans-Atlantic phone with Roosevelt and Hull on June 14. The Davis-Bingham talks "last spring" refer to those between MacDonald and Davis in early March and mid-April 1931, when Davis had been on his Sweden trip. Hull's analogy is inaccurate to the extent that during those talks Davis was on leave of absence from his official post and in the interest of formality and protocol had to work through Bingham.
future. First of all, the Japanese, apparently sensing that Anglo-American differences might create advantageous circumstances for their demands, announced that their experts would not arrive until October. This meant no serious negotiations until the fall. The British, on the other hand, sought to tie the political instability in both Europe and the Far East to the naval discussions as a justification for significant fleet changes. If Japan renounced the London and Washington Treaties, England required adequate naval forces to deal with Far East problems, hopefully in coordination with the Americans, but alone if necessary. As concerned Europe, the British already knew they could not count on any United States aid in the form of military force should hostilities break out there.

Reacting to these conditions, Sir John Simon offered technical proposals for a far-reaching overhaul of Great Britain's navy. The final implication of the plans was an increase in overall strength unless extensive modification of individual naval craft could be instituted. Davis refused to discuss any technicalities until the objectives of reduction and retention of the ratio system were accepted by the British. Under no circumstances, according to his instructions, could the talks embrace
any political questions. The London deliberations broke off on this note of stalemate as the American delegation prepared to sail for home on July 19 on board the USS Washington.

In September, more than six weeks before the planned date of resumption of the London talks, the United States learned the broad outlines of future Japanese strategy from the American Naval Attache in Tokyo. Japan's initial and fundamental demand was the abolition of the ratio system. Moreover, she would file a formal renunciation of the Washington Treaty before the December 31, 1934, deadline. This did not mean Japanese objection to a naval agreement per se, but did confirm that Tokyo would no longer accept "second class" status. In fact, Japan was prepared to negotiate a new convention, provided the basis of agreement was a global tonnage system of limitation, i.e., the establishment of a common upper limit for national navies toward which each signatory could build as it saw fit.

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7 Roosevelt telegram to Davis (No. 270), June 26, 1934; Davis reply (No. 363), June 27; Davis telegram to Roosevelt and Hull (No. 367), June 28; Bingham telegram to Hull (No. 369), June 29; all found in the Roosevelt Papers. The first three messages are found in FR, 1934, I, 277-278, 279-280, 282-284.

8 FR, 1934, I, 303-304.
But the most interesting and what proved to be the most frustrating facet of the Japanese policy concerned timing of the announcement of abrogation. The naval segment of the militarist faction dominating Japanese affairs had apparently demanded and achieved the principles it wanted, but Foreign Minister Koki Hirota was empowered to decide when to announce the formal denunciation. Subsequently, when the actual meetings got underway, the Japanese diplomat would hold what Davis came to call this "hammer of denunciation" over Anglo-American heads so effectively as to forestall any common alternative to the Japanese position. Ultimately, Hirota's tactics would even force the abandonment of these preliminary talks.

The formal round of three-power discussions began in October 1934, again in London. Gradually, the pattern of all deliberations over the next eighteen months began to take shape. The essence of the disagreements evolved out of a chain of proposals and counter-proposals. The Japanese, by revealing in October their intention to abrogate the Washington Treaty, gave advance insight into their opposition to quantitative limitation. England then proposed qualitative restrictions within the existing treaty framework in order to insure the continuation of the collective security system provided for in the Washington agreements. But to the Japanese qualitative
limitations were unacceptable in the absence of quantitative equality, a principle not foreseen in the Washington arrangement.

The American position upheld the existing system, while calling for a reduction of naval forces to satisfy the demands of world opinion. Moreover, the United States asserted that equality of armaments, the goal of Japan, did not necessarily mean equality of security. In fact, Japanese equality of weaponry would upset the security balance in the Far East to such an extent as to render the entire world situation more insecure. Thus, the Americans and the Japanese, both relatively secure in their own geographic areas, grew recalcitrant. The British, on the other hand, because of broader unilateral responsibilities in both the Far East and Europe than either of their

9Ibid., 334-350, 368-374, 381-388, 402-403. The references cover Anglo-American meetings on November 14 and 23, and December 4, 1934 in which reviews of the two national policies appear as they evolved along with discussions of Japanese proposals. The final reference is to the Three-Power meeting on December 19, 1934, after which the adjournment of the negotiations was announced. Unless otherwise footnoted specifically, all data on the 1934 phase of the conversations derives from these documents.

"Equality of security" was stressed by Davis before the Association of American Correspondents in London on December 7, 1934 and Hull advised him that domestic editorial reaction "indicated abundant approval;" FR, 1934, I, 392. Department of State press release, December 5, 1934 "for public release on December 6, 1934" with the text of Davis' speech on that date is in the Davis Papers.
opposite numbers, endeavored to reconcile the differences between the United States and Japan, while concurrently safeguarding empire security interests.

Dedicated as American policy may have been to the ideals of collective security and disarmament in the Far East, the spirit of intransigence plus a certain ambiguity that pervaded that policy certainly reduced any hope for its success. Davis had once said that "there are no diplomatic victories; a one-sided trade is a bad trade." Yet, rather than compromise, he was forced to hold out for Anglo-Japanese endorsement of a "percentage reduction within the existing treaty system," knowing full well that Japan could accept such a solution only by abandoning her intended renunciation of the Washington Treaty. Moreover, in answer to British overtures to discuss the potential naval situation after Japan had finally renounced the treaty, he argued that such propositions were purely academic until she actually abrogated. The correctness of his logic is not to be denied, but his inflexibility left the British little room in which to maneuver.

The ambiguity of his own personal position and that of the Administration, in general, was most strikingly revealed when he finally did accede to British requests to

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10Newsweek, June 9, 1934.
examine alternatives. The English, if all else failed, hoped to salvage some sort of qualitative limitation agreement, even though the Japanese might forsake all the Washington Treaties. In answer to this suggestion, speaking in terms of the 1922 success, Davis made a very penetrating, yet questionably realistic, summation of his outlook:

What bothers me is that we were only able to get the agreements we did because we were able to obtain a general settlement of political questions. What I am trying to clear up is whether you think it advisable to have qualitative limitation without any political agreements; because that is what it really gets down to.

In other words, a limit on the specific types of vessels could not be effective without a functioning system of collective security. And the only available such framework was the one created at Washington.

In essence, Roosevelt and Hull were undoubtedly clinging to an outdated scheme of collective security, mainly because it was still heralded by American public opinion and probably would still be acceptable to the Senate. But what about Davis? In 1922 it will be remembered, he had found it politically expedient to attack the Washington Treaties because they "involved" the United States in overseas commitments without providing her the requisite security guarantees in the Far East. Now, however, it was equally expedient in the face of entrenched
isolationism to defend the same system as adequate to national and world needs. What he failed to add, and here is where the realism of his position comes under fire, was that the power position and the political stature of one signatory, Japan, had changed so much in twelve years that the Washington Treaties were obsolete. Or perhaps he was as captivated with the durability of the Four-and the Nine-Power Treaties as the public, and the Executive, seemed to be with the magic formula of 5-5-3 as the abiding solution to international naval apportionment.

On the other hand, perhaps the experience of nearly two years service for an Administration to which he was politically, but not necessarily ideologically, committed was beginning to erode his internationalism. Of one thing we can be certain; this was not the same man who in 1932 had been "willing to go all the way" at Geneva, even for a political opponent in the White House. The ever-present optimism, perhaps under the assault of recurrent setbacks, slowly began to show tinges of pessimism. Either his willingness to seek new solutions and offer or hear alternative proposals gradually began to fall prey to the essentially nationalistic guidelines of the New Deal, or his career began to manifest the ambiguities inherent in the endeavor to serve faithfully the dictates of two masters, one ideological, the other practical.
Convinced by late November that some channel of liaison had to be kept open between the three powers, the British proposed a so-called "middle course," taking into consideration both American and Japanese demands, but requiring some compromise of both. Under this plan, Far Eastern bases would remain unfortified, qualitative limitation would be imposed, naval building programs would be announced in advance, and Washington Treaty clauses calling for due notice upon the laying down of new ships would be retained. This was a salvage operation aimed at getting the talks suspended temporarily to enable delegations to consult with their governments and to forestall a final breakdown. Equally important, the proposition was directed toward saving, if at all possible, some of the naval limitation and collective security aspects of the existent treaties.

The Administration reacted sharply against this suggestion, demonstrating a profound lack of concern for the British position and for the necessity for Anglo-American cooperation. Only the efforts of Norman Davis prevented the opening of a deep cleavage between London and Washington. Hull, with Presidential approval, described the British proposal as "too much temporizing and too little facing of the real implications and consequences of Japan's intransigence." Davis agreed with the Secretary's
domestic public support, but such a limited agenda would prompt European governments to request "cancellation of debts rather than . . . a liberal and constructive solution of the debts." On the other hand, a conference would have educational benefits "to see just what can be done and to show what is necessary." What had to be done was the achievement of rapprochement between France and Germany and what was necessary was the effective negotiation of political solutions to overcome the fears engendered in the French people by militarists and industrialists.\footnote{Davis to Borah, February 1, 1923; Davis Papers.}

The widening breach between France and Germany constituted a major problem in Europe, but minor disagreements also existed. One of them, the knotty Memel dispute, prompted the League of Nations to request Davis' assistance, as a private citizen, in January 1924. After five years of efforts by the Allies—Great Britain, France, Italy and Japan—and no solution, "they finally turned the matter over to the League . . . and the council . . . took it under consideration."\footnote{"The Increasing Usefulness of the League of Nations," \textit{The International Interpreter},'' \textit{III}, No. 3 (April 19, 1924), 79.} This was his own public description
idea that the Japanese should go home with no more than their own unilateral renunciation of the Washington Treaty to show for their efforts. But he argued that without some provision for future talks no nation would "surrender" and lose prestige by asking for a recommencement of negotiations. The United States should agree, in his opinion, to a specified meeting date, not in continuation of the talks currently underway, but in accordance with the provisions of the two naval treaties.

With "little faith in the reality of such a solution but in deference to your views," Hull and Roosevelt agreed to "subordinate our judgment as to the soundest course to pursue." Thus, Davis won his point of avoiding a complete breakdown of the machinery put together at London, although he did not succeed entirely in achieving the exemption of England from the unilateral responsibility for renewed discussions. All the Administration would accept was a British motion for adjournment before Japanese treaty denunciation, with the stipulation for a later three power meeting to which France and Italy would be invited, the date and place to be decided by the British. In Hull's mind, the interim period would give Japan time to choose between her own unilateral direction of Far Eastern affairs and multilateral cooperation in the maintenance of political stability and naval limitation.
Concurrently, the British could retain the initiative and periodically test the international climate through diplomatic channels for signs of an atmosphere conducive to the renewal of contacts. At all costs, however, America would shun any more preparatory conferences, "which have all the liabilities of a conference without the possibility of capitalizing in treaty form" on any meeting of minds.\textsuperscript{11}

The 1934 endeavors to sustain the life expectancy of naval limitation ended on December 19. An outward note of conciliation characterized the final statements issued by the principals to the talks. MacDonald expressed both pleasure that the other delegations would examine the feasibility of the "middle course" and hope that renewed meetings would "achieve peace and cooperation in the Pacific." He called for future negotiations giving full cognizance to the "honor and security of all," thereby underlining the respective importance of equality and mutual responsibility as contributing factors to ultimate success. Ambassador Tsuneo Matsudaira endorsed the Prime Minister's remarks, adding an expression of Japanese willingness to come to terms quickly on the "basis for our next conference." The high point of Davis' pronouncement centered on the need for "agreement to cooperate in

\textsuperscript{11}FR, 1934, I, 388-390, 391-392.
promoting peace and collective security." Thus, each of the representatives acknowledged the value of the London talks and looked expectantly toward the future. But the public manifestations of a friendly and amiable spirit of diplomatic exchange did not completely mask the private feelings that no real basis for subsequent agreement had been reached. This conclusion was only verified on December 29, when Hirosi Saito handed Hull formal notice of Japanese abrogation of the Washington Treaty.

The performance of Davis within the straitjacket of American policy during this initial phase of naval negotiations reflected a consistency not always appreciated by others in the Administration. He still endeavored to press the United States into a role of closer cooperation with England and of increased international responsibility. Always aware of the Japanese threat in the Pacific, he sought to unite Anglo-American pressure to force Japan into conciliation. But diplomat that he was, he realized, perhaps more than many of his superiors, that by pushing too far and too fast the United States could destroy all hope for any settlement whatsoever. And this exercise of restraint, this desire to conciliate, was least understood by his contemporaries. Moffat, for example, noted in his journal that "once again we came back to what I think is Norman Davis' only weakness as a negotiator, namely, the
belief that if he can convince the man with whom he is negotiating, the problem is solved. He tends to overlook the force of circumstances and the power of public opinion.12

If this estimate of the factors Davis "overlooked" was correct, then he had changed more than our study indicates because the impact of public thought and the influence of changing situations always appeared to stand foremost in his mind. It is true that in Europe he was remote from the immediate pressure of public demands and could have miscalculated them due to lack of information, but he was ever wont to make his recommendations subject to the practical dictates of the prevailing domestic political picture. If Davis hesitated in accepting the ultimate exigencies of domestic policy over those of foreign policy, then this is but one more factor in support of his unrelenting internationalism. And if he placed great emphasis on personal diplomacy, then this was only another manifestation of a style he developed with a fair amount of success over some two decades in the international service of the United States.

12Hooker, op. cit., 121. The notation is dated December 8-9, 1931. The "we" refers to Moffat and Stanley K. Hornbeck, Chief of the Far Eastern Affairs Division, Department of State. Both these men would later have their chance to advise Davis at the Brussels Conference and receive their exposure to the rigors of diplomatic negotiation in handcuffs.
Whether or not these were weaknesses is purely a subjective conclusion based on one evaluation of a single, relatively limited sequence of events. We prefer to conclude, and the mass of evidence seems to support us, that, given the confines of the policy he had to pursue, Davis had no alternative but personal diplomacy and only through such efforts, especially with English statesmen, did America escape being branded the perpetrator of the December 1934 stalemate. Moreover, it was only through his relentless demands upon Roosevelt and Hull that the way was held open for further negotiations on the naval limitation issue under conditions in which the exact Japanese position could be exposed to world scrutiny. In the final analysis, considering that New Deal policy was motivated by public opinion demands for American neutrality as a means of avoiding the conditions that led the United States into World War I, Davis was one diplomat seeking to open some eyes to the conditions that were leading to World War II.

The Chief Executive exhibited a comparable awareness of the deteriorating international situation, but out of deference to the volatile nature of the domestic opposition, he clothed his activities with a cloak of secrecy. While publicly espousing the virtues of peace and reduction of naval forces, two days before the December talks broke off he was privately preparing for the eventuality of a
collapse of collective security. In a "highly confidential" memorandum to the Secretary of the Navy, the President directed the initiation of studies for the possible development of new types of ships "on the theory that the Washington and London Treaty restrictions may be entirely removed within the next two years." Roosevelt also asked his Naval Secretary to examine the possibility of locating one or two air bases in the Philippines, a smaller base on Guam, and even smaller ones in both the Midway-Hawaiian and Aleutian chains of islands in the Pacific.\(^\text{13}\) While his public policy failed to accept the denunciation of the treaties by Japan, the Chief Executive retained the presence of mind to provide for the national security come what might. Behind-the-scenes planning against a growing Japanese threat went hand-in-hand with an overt endeavor to place upon Japan the onus for destruction of the collective security and naval limitation system in the Far East.

Reporting to the State Department on the results of the London talks on January 8, 1935, Davis summed up the progress made and offered suggestions for an interim policy until the opening of the formal conference later in

\(^{13}\)Memorandum to the Secretary of the Navy, December 17, 1934; Roosevelt Papers.
the year. He defended the acceptance of the "middle course" originated by the British. Although the ratio system was not included specifically, he declared that "in fact" the announcement of naval construction programs six years in advance served as a satisfactory alternative. From such data, he pointed out, the relative strengths of the major navies could be easily forecast. And, if the Japanese really desired to reach an agreement, the whole proposition could be presented in Tokyo as an actual release from a contractual obligation to the idea of fixed naval ratios.

Only time would tell how the Japanese would react, however, and the major consideration on Davis' mind was that of future American goals. He submitted a recommendation that the United States continue its naval construction program without "publicly tying it" either to the 1934 breakdown of the London talks or the Japanese denunciation of the Washington Treaty. America was perfectly justified in his opinion in building up her navy to authorized treaty limits and no power could imply or charge that such action constituted the initiation of a naval arms race. Before the session at the State Department ended, Secretary Hull thanked Davis for the review of the London deliberations as well as the work of
the American contingent and placed official endorsement on the suggested course of future action.

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A representative sample of official governmental activities during the latter half of 1935 demonstrates a growing intransigence in American foreign policy and an increasing hostility toward any manner of cooperation or coordination in international affairs. In August, after hostilities had broken out between Italy and Ethiopia in July, the growing isolationist sentiment in the United States crystallized in a joint Congressional resolution setting forth guidelines for a national policy of neutrality; the President approved the legislation on August 31. Then in response to recurring inquiries, the Chief Executive issued an official statement on September 27, explaining the objective of American naval building policy: navy strength would achieve existing treaty limits by 1942; and no changes were contemplated, unless those treaties were either renounced or abandoned. Even in such eventualities, the United States would exceed the treaty limits only if other nations did. And finally, on

Rosenman, op. cit., IV, 379.
October 5 the President invoked the provisions of the neutrality legislation against both Italy and Ethiopia and warned Americans against travelling on belligerent transports.

During the same period, "America's only ambassador-at-large"\(^\text{15}\) worked in Washington, Hyde Park and New York, forging out the American approach to the anticipated renewal of the naval armaments talks. Through August and September he conferred with Executive staff, State and Navy Department colleagues on what evolved as a solidification of the position taken during 1934. The only major points left unclarified concerned the reconciliation of Anglo-American differences over technical features of vessels to be constructed in the future. And even these points of contention were smoothed out in informal talks begun on September 27 between the American Naval Attache in London and a member of the Admiralty staff. Effective planning, proper coordination and far-reaching cooperation, instituted on the American side mainly by Davis, appeared to forecast a unified and harmonious relationship between the two major sea powers at the 1935 conference.

\(^{15}\)American Magazine, July 1935. He "likes his toast crisp, his bacon underdone, diplomacy fast and furious," read the caption under a picture of Davis. The description was completed with "canny, even-tempered, deliberate, he's the United States' best bet in European hot spots."
The issuance of the formal invitations by the British on October 24, however, led to an outbreak of disagreement in the American camp, again concerning Davis' position. Convinced that Japanese intransigence dampened the prospects of any extensive results, the English suggested that, rather than send special delegations, the signatory powers to the Washington and London Treaties authorize their accredited ambassadors in London to represent them. In an exchange of telegrams and telephone calls between October 25 and November 8, the President, Davis and Bingham debated the issue at great length. Bingham, exercising due humility, pointed out that his experience over the foregoing ten months had broadened and deepened his knowledge of the field to an extent that he felt qualified to handle the job. He supported the British view that the conference would undoubtedly develop into a rear-guard action and ultimately resolve itself into an effort to solve purely European naval problems, especially since Japan was expected to go home early. The prime consideration, however, was that the sending of a special

16 FR, 1934, I, 131-132, 134-141, 143-144. A draft copy of one telegram, November 1, 1935 (pp. 136-138), was found in the Roosevelt Papers with a notation that it was prepared by Davis and approved by the President. This leads to the supposition that two others cited in FR, 1934 as originating with the Chief Executive may also have been Davis' work. One cable from Bingham to Secretary Hull (pp. 139-141) is also found in the Roosevelt Papers.
of the Memel situation, but his private observations showed that he accepted the chairmanship of the Memel Commission for a variety of reasons.

The assignment offered an opportunity to demonstrate to the Administration the manner in which a detached America could aid the League. "Practical illustrations of the services which an impartial American can render" toward a European settlement, he wrote to Lord Robert Cecil, "even when not supported officially by his Government," might effectively show "how much more would be accomplished by our Government itself." In addition, the League would suffer in American eyes if he refused (Brand Whitlock and Charles D. Warren, mentioned by the League along with Davis as prospective chairmen, had both turned down the offer).

Moreover, he detected an opportunity to chide the Secretary of State about official Department policy. "As an act of courtesy and expediency," he continued to Cecil,

I am going to Washington . . . and shall call upon Mr. Hughes . . . I intend to tell him of the invitation, and to say that while I feel that I should accept it, I wished to talk the matter over with him to ascertain if he had any objections on the part of the Government. . . . I presume that while of course he will not look upon this with any enthusiasm . . . he will not feel justified in requesting me not to accept.13

13 Davis to Cecil, January 10, 1924; Davis Papers.
delegation might unduly arouse public expectations, when, in reality, there existed little hope for success.

The substance of the Roosevelt-Davis replies in no way questioned Bingham's capabilities, but held forth the importance of diplomatic precedent and the desire not to treat naval disarmament casually, regardless of "expected" results. If there was no real basis for a conference, then the British should consider other alternatives. The final decision came in Roosevelt's message of November 8 in which he pointed out that since 1934 the United States had maintained a special staff in an almost continuous state of readiness for naval talks. This group consisted of high-ranking representatives, diplomatically and technically qualified. He added that despite initial indications that other nations were sending lesser dignitaries, current information confirmed these assumptions to have been ill-founded. The United States would not send just Davis and Admiral Standley, but Under-Secretary Phillips as well, at least for a short period, to enable him to view the negotiations firsthand and then report back to Washington. Further, and this was undoubtedly a gesture to placate possible hurt feelings, the conference might not handle just technical problems, but could also get into a wide-range of international political issues beyond the purview of Bingham's exequatur. Apparently the President
considered that the recommendations of his Ambassador in London had to be sacrificed, or at least subordinated, to the greater prospect of demonstrating to the nation and the world that the United States stood in the forefront of the crusade to reduce arms and sustain the peace.

In a final White House conference on November 19, the President and his advisers met with the delegation for a briefing. Both the current situation faced by America and the policy formulated to cope with it were reviewed. Davis summarized the positions of the three major powers. Japanese renunciation of the Washington Treaty meant that on December 31, 1936, the world would be without a pact regulating naval armaments. In an effort to replace the ratio system, the Japanese advocated a "common upper limit" on all naval power and rejected any qualitative limitation in the absence of quantitative equality. In the way of reduction, Japan would accept abolition of capital ships, carriers and cruisers mounting 8-inch guns. Both America and England opposed the Japanese reduction proposal and rejected the "common upper limit" as a move to abolish the ratio system, which they desired to continue "in fact, if not in form." Unilaterally, the British desired an increase in cruisers from fifty to seventy, which would mean a necessary rise in
total cruiser tonnage within existing allocations. Also unilaterally, America rejected any treaties increasing armaments; therefore any increase in a given category of naval craft, as desired by the British, would necessitate a reduction in some other type of vessel.

After Davis' summary, the briefing session heard Roosevelt's comments on the mutual positions of the opposition and his confirmation of American tactics. The Administration would make no concessions to bring about a "common upper limit," to increase the established ratio, or to implement the suggested Japanese reduction. Reacting to an observation that the suggested British increase in cruiser strength might go beyond the limits of existing tonnage allocations, Roosevelt proposed the acceptance of a maximum tonnage expansion by 75,000 T., with a stipulation that at least fifty per cent of the total increase be offset by reductions in other categories of vessels. He also approved the Davis idea of fighting to the last ditch for quantitative limitation before offering, as a last bid, to accept qualitative restrictions, even in the absence of limits on tonnage or numbers of vessels. The Chief Executive categorically overruled the idea of a bilateral treaty with England; he preferred to deal through the medium of an exchange of published diplomatic notes, insuring parity of naval forces and maintenance of
the 5-5-3 ratio in substance. On the other hand, he had no objection to an Anglo-American-French pact with or without Japan.

As pertained to possible discussions of political issues, the President refused to entertain any suggestions of a formal mutual commitment to consult with Great Britain concerning Far Eastern affairs. He preferred a State Department formula emphasizing the existence of a community of interest with the British throughout the world and particularly in the Orient. In that area, he added, the United States and the United Kingdom would be "likely to follow parallel though independent policies." Commenting that he felt he was sending the delegation off on a "Cocos island treasure hunt," Roosevelt finally recommended the use of his October 1934 letter to Davis, calling for reduction of forces and retention of ratios, with necessary revisions as the basis for America's opening position at the conference.¹⁷

Thus, in the final analysis, the passage of fourteen months, replete with both national and international activity, had really done little to change the Administration outlook on the question of naval disarmament.

¹⁷FR, 1935, I, 144-149. For the October 1934 letter, see Rosenman, op. cit., IV, 481-483.
The essential consideration in terms of the long range effects of this policy as well as its applicability to the existent circumstances, centered on an unflinching desire to preserve the Washington-established numerical formula for the regulation of navies. By late 1935, however, the world background against which those magic numbers had originally been projected was fast deteriorating. Less than a year before, Davis himself had pointed out to the British that "political arrangements" had made the Treaties of Washington possible. And he had questioned the feasibility of achieving any sort of limitations, quantitative or qualitative, in the face of unsettled "political questions."

As Elmer Davis had pointed out so perceptively at the time of the Washington Conference, "an estimate of the success or failure of the conference can hardly be made until some decades have passed." To this he added: "And on the wisdom and good sense of future Japanese policy on the Continent of Asia must depend the ultimate estimate of the result of the Washington Conference."18 The Four-Power Treaty, conceived as a balm to Japanese feelings

18 *New York Times*, February 6, 1922. Davis covered the entire conference as Washington correspondent for the *Times*. 
because of the abandonment of the London-Tokyo alliance of 1902, was no longer of significant value, at least in the minds of some State Department advisers. Japan had already breached the Nine-Power Treaty at the time of her 1931 invasion of Manchuria, thus bringing its continued usefulness under question. And in December 1934 she had renounced the ratio system for the regulation of navies by abrogating the Five-Power Treaty.

The American policy drafted in response to these conditions placed all its hopes on salvaging one segment of a complex arrangement, when the circumstances that had motivated the original agreements had long since been altered. All elements considered, the 1935 American approach was little more than a continuation of the guidelines inaugurated under the Hoover Administration and still adhered to by Roosevelt. The United States persisted in seeking arms control on its own terms, but refused to make the concessions mandatory to the effective operation of a collective security system upon which any operational agreement necessarily depended. And the London Conference promised to go the way of its immediate predecessor at Geneva.

19 State Department Memorandum, Far Eastern Affairs Division, initialed "EHD:ABW," April 25, 1934; Davis Papers.
Much in the same manner as she had held the "hammer of denunciation" in December 1934, Japan wielded the "hammer of the common upper limit" with equal effectiveness from December 1935 through mid-January 1936. Midway in the conference Sir Samuel Hoare turned over the conference gavel to Anthony Eden along with the post of British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. And while Hoare had allowed the Japanese to equivocate about bringing the question of ratio system versus "common upper limit" to a formal vote, Eden, with support from Davis, countenanced no such performance.

The British Foreign Secretary was not prepared to let the Japanese dictate the progress of the deliberations. If Japan wanted to discuss naval arms control, then the purpose of the conference could be served. If she stood firm on her demands, then she would have to withdraw and allow the other powers to proceed with the business at hand. And withdraw she did on January 15, when the other delegates disapproved the idea of the "common upper limit" as the prime requisite to further discussions. The Japanese did attend the remaining sessions of the conference, but only in the role of observers.

Thus Japan joined Germany and Italy in the ranks of the "outsiders." Collective security had failed on both land and sea, in both Europe and Asia. Political
irresponsibility, engendered by fears of the outbreak of a world holocaust, prompted freedom-loving nations to recoil in the face of militarism and fascism. The member countries of the eventual Berlin-Rome-Tokyo axis had been effectively ostracized from the world's major councils. But the rear-guard action continued as a valiant effort to revive an arms control spirit that only glowed in the minds of men and did not fire them to the actions necessary to close their ranks in defense of law and order.

The London Conference over the next two months dealt with a multitude of aspects of the naval limitation problem, all generally in the European context. England did press the United States for a mutual commitment to consult on Far East issues, but the matter was quickly dropped when Davis rejected it out of hand. The substance of the negotiations, however, concerned the best method by which to retain some vestiges of the Washington and London Treaties. With Italy embroiled in her war with Ethiopia, all efforts to interest her in any type of accord were fruitless, especially since some of her European neighbors had been instrumental in attempting to rally League action against her because of the African escapade. This left the burden of the efforts on the United States, the United Kingdom and France, although the latter proved a reluctant
partner because of the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of June 18, 1935, which was entered into without her being consulted.20

Events in early March, however, radically changed the attitude of all three powers and accelerated the efforts to achieve a settlement of the naval issue. On March 7, Hitler's army re-occupied the Rhineland and, in effect, the struggle that ultimately became World War II in Europe was joined. All disagreements between America, England and France rapidly vanished and on March 9, Davis reported to Washington that the draft treaty on which the delegates had been working for two months would be completed in ten days.21 This is not to say that the differences would not have been eliminated eventually, but under the pressure of German boldness the impetus toward their amelioration was undoubtedly increased.

The London Naval Treaty of March 25, 1936 represented the maximum that could be achieved under the

20 British Treaty Series No. 22, 1935, contains the full text of the Agreement. Under its provisions, Germany agreed to hold her fleet strength to 35% of the British fleet; in return she received tacit recognition of her right to naval rearmament and the right to build up to 100% of the Commonwealth strength in submarines. It was this latter aspect that caused great apprehension, not just in France, but also in Italy.

21 FR, 1936, I, 87-88.
circumstances, although it was far from ideal because of
Japanese failure to cooperate in its formulation.
Provision was made, however, for Japan or any other nation
that desired to associate itself with the pact. The
principles of general naval limitation and prevention of a
naval race constituted the heart of the convention. Ship
displacement and gun calibers were both limited and
arrangements made for four months notice on the laying
down of new keels. The treaty provided no direct quanti-
tative limitation, but, as Davis had pointed out in
November in Washington, advance notice, even though cut
considerably, did offer the possibility for evaluating the
future configuration of an overall naval force. Then too,
the qualitative restrictions prevented the prospect of
signatories precipitating a new rivalry through the con-
struction of drastically modified or entirely unique types
of naval craft, thereby rendering one another's commissioned
vessels obsolete. In addition to these important specific
features, the treaty also embodied a general "escape
clause" under which any signatory could abandon limitations
exceeded by non-signatories, merely by justifying the
necessity for abandonment through formal notification to
the other signatories.22 In effect, the treaty placed the

22Department of State, The London Naval Conference
of 1935 (Washington, D.C., 1936), contains the formal text
of the pact.
The accuracy of Davis' ideas on the stature of America in the eyes of Europe gained confirmation through the acceptance by the League of the report submitted by the Davis Commission after three months of negotiation and arbitration. Marginal though the effect of the settlement was on American public opinion, the elimination of the dispute closed out one more source of European instability, gave Davis another argument in his running assault on American abstention from European political debates, and enhanced his reputation for statesmanship in Europe.

The Memel agreement contributed in 1924 to the international stature of Norman Davis, but the fact that national elections fell in the same year re-directed his attention to the domestic scene. "The Democratic prospects for winning this year are excellent," he noted to Lord Cecil, "and in fact unless the Democrats overstay the market on investigating scandals and incompetence, I feel very hopeful of their success." Davis' initial "contribution" toward possible victory at the polls consisted of an attack on the Secretary of State and the idea that the United States could cooperate with the League on humanitarian and economic matters without becoming involved in political questions. Davis maintained that such a

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14 Ibid., April 18, 1924.
rest of the sea powers, notably Japan, on notice that the Three-Powers, although seeking to accede to world demands for naval limitation and stability, were prepared to offset any concerted drive for unilateral domination of the world's sea lanes.

Eager as the three powers were to conclude the London Treaty, at least two of them were certainly lax in officially promulgating it. Both France and England allowed well over a year to lapse before filing the formal instruments of ratification; the French ratified on June 24, 1937 and the English on July 29, 1937. In both cases the dates were well past the expiration date of the Washington and the first London Treaties. Thanks to the efforts of Davis and the cooperation of the President and Secretary of State, the Senate approved the treaty on May 18 "without any opposition, enthusiasm or roll call." 23 Roosevelt ratified the document on May 28, 1936, a mere two months after the close of the London deliberations, and the curtain dropped on a decade and a half of relative stability in the sphere of naval armaments.

Writing his own impressions of the treaty for Foreign Affairs, Davis commented that considering the

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23 Leopold, op. cit., 525.
"difficulties which stood in the way ... we were fortunate in being able to negotiate a treaty at all." He admitted that the ratio principle had been abandoned, but asserted that the new convention "is less rigid and less restrictive" than its predecessors. Because of this, he hoped that non-signatories, Japan and Italy especially, would recognize its attributes and agree to obligate themselves to its provisions. Although he in no way discounted the value of the treaty, he saw a greater significance in the conference itself as he wrote:

In contrast to the low spirits with which the conference began, its participants separated feeling that they had negotiated a treaty which did not prejudice the interests or wound the susceptibilities of any nation. They felt, too, that they had demonstrated that with patience and perseverance it is still possible to contribute positively, even under adverse circumstances and in a time of extreme international stress, to the cause of world security and peace.24

For Norman Davis, the American acceptance of the London Treaty of 1936 signified the end of nearly four years spent in an official quest to rid the world of the weapons of war. With the Senate approval and Presidential ratification of the treaty finished, he wrote: "I consider that my work in connection with this matter has been

24"The New Naval Agreement," Foreign Affairs, XIV, No. 4 (July 1936), 583.
completed." In view of this, he asked the Secretary of State to release him from his position as "Chairman of the American Delegation to the London Naval Conference of 1935."^25 Thus he completed his last official mission in the restricted field of disarmament, although subsequent assignments on behalf of Roosevelt would see him deal with arms control as a lesser element of the teeming international political issues that would plague the twilight years before the outbreak of World War II.

It was President Roosevelt, no doubt unknowingly and unintentionally, who rendered a most effective synopsis of the valiant struggle of his "Ambassador-at-Large," his artisan of peace, his diplomat of disarmament. Delivering his famous "I Have Seen War . . . I Hate War" speech at Chautauqua, New York, on August 14, 1936, the Chief Executive recapitulated for his audience the American efforts in pursuit of arms control. And in so doing, he re-charted the course that Norman Davis had traveled so forthrightly and re-counted the ever-recurring disappointments that Davis had endured so courageously:

> We cooperated to the bitter end—and it was the bitter end—in the work of the General Disarmament Conference. When it failed we sought a

^25 Davis to Hull, May 20, 1936; Davis Papers.
separate treaty to deal with the manufacture of arms and international traffic in arms. That proposal also came to nothing. We participated—again to the bitter end—in a conference to continue naval limitations, and when it became evident that no general treaty could be signed because of the objections of other Nations, we concluded with Great Britain and France a conditional treaty of qualitative limitation, which, much to my regret, already shows signs of ineffectiveness.26

26 Rosenman, op. cit., V, 288.
CHAPTER VII

BRUSSELS 1937: PRELUDE TO WORLD COLLAPSE

As Americans closed the book on the first Roosevelt Administration and renewed the Democratic Party mandate at the polls in November 1936, prospects for the future were unsettled and anomalous. Domestically, the New Deal had not produced all it anticipated; hence further action was the order of the day. Continued Administration emphasis on expansion of domestic programs already underway and the projection of similar programs into as yet untouched areas might increase confidence and order on the national scene. But not so with the field of foreign affairs. Internationally, the Executive Branch in the four preceding years had bowed to the will of the people, and America was neither "entangled" nor "involved." A continuation of this approach, given the incipient attack on democratic institutions in both Europe and Asia, foreboded not only further United States withdrawal from world affairs, but also an accelerated decline in the already reeling system of international order.

By January 1937, when Roosevelt asked his secretary to "put Norman H. Davis on the preferred list for an appointment after Inauguration," the armies of Hitler had

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1Roosevelt memo to Marvin McIntyre, January 4, 1937; Roosevelt Papers.
restored German control to the Rhineland. Il Duce's triumphant forces had made possible the addition of Emperor of Ethiopia to the titles held by King Victor Emmanuel of Italy. On the Iberian Peninsula, the pathos and tragedy of civil war gripped Spain. Great Britain and France announced policies of non-intervention toward the opposing sides, while Italy and Germany granted recognition to the Franco regime and Soviet Russia came to the aid of the Loyalist cause. Under January neutrality legislation yet to be passed, the United States would invoke embargo restrictions against both Spanish governments. From Asia, on the other side of the world, Japan had established a link to Europe through adherence to the Anti-Comintern Pact with Germany. While continuing entrenchment operations in Manchuria and East Hopei province, the Japanese increased the pressure on their Asian neighbor with threats of immediate invasion of North and Central China. And as part of the sustained effort to dislodge the Japanese, Chinese Nationalist and Communist forces reconciled their differences in the interest of unified resistance to the invaders. All in all, the world appeared to be on the brink of international anarchy.

If the United States was to play an effective role in averting world collapse, Administration action against the neutrality legislation was mandatory. But none came. The President in January asked for and received Congressional approval of expansion of the arms embargo to civil wars.
Public clamor then broke out anew in support of invoking the neutrality rules in the Sino-Japanese conflict. Knowing full well that the Chinese cause would be jeopardized severely if he moved, the Chief Executive resisted. But he did not openly attack the basic issue of the neutrality laws, their applicability or their effectiveness, although he did seek to bring about their revision.

Davis took a view of this fundamental problem that the President might well have used in taking the case to the people. "I am greatly interested," he wrote in refusing an invitation to speak before the Washington Cosmos Club, "in such practical and constructive neutrality legislation as will minimize the risk of involvement in war." He added, however, that the Constitution empowered the President alone to conduct foreign relations and, this being true, "attempts to determine what the action . . . should be in every unknown future contingency" seriously handicapped the Chief Executive and could "prove harmful to the interests of the American people." He concluded that demands for the transfer of control of diplomatic affairs to the Congress were "based on historic myth and a fallacy as to what got us into the last war and what should keep us out of the next war." Although this was a conservative view in support of the

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2 Davis to Brent D. Allison, Council on Foreign Relations, January 26, 1937 in reply to Allison's letter, January 23, 1937; both in Davis Papers.
traditional checks and balances, his intent was not veiled. While he left the words unsaid, Davis undoubtedly sought release for the President from the dictates of Congress in the hope that America could then deal cautiously, but intelligently and effectively, with the myriad problems facing both her and other democratic nations.

But the President soon had external rather than internal matters for Davis to deal with. As a result of discussions held during 1936, the Executive Committee of the London Economic and Monetary Conference (1933) invited a number of interested nations to a conference in London in April 1937 to discuss coordination of production and marketing of sugar. "The buck has been passed to me to attend," Davis wrote to his friend Ray Atherton, American chargé in London. And attend he did, although the working press, in both America and Europe, found it hard to believe that the President's foremost troubleshooter was going to Europe just to negotiate sugar matters.

Both the Chief Executive and the Secretary of State were hard pressed to dispel rumors that Roosevelt had come up with a grand plan for world peace. Hull sought to kill the speculation in a meeting with newsmen on April 1. Then the President found it necessary to discuss the issue at his

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3 Davis to Atherton, March 22, 1937; Davis Papers. A summary of the Sugar Conference activities is found in FR, 1937, I, 931-951, including Davis' final report dated May 19.
own April 2 press conference: "Mr. Davis has not gone over to London to enter into any agreement of any kind or to propose any agreements of any kind outside of his official and well-defined connection with the London Conference."

Afterward, Roosevelt added, the Ambassador would have to examine the possibilities of attending a meeting of the Disarmament Bureau, but again no American proposals were forthcoming for any type of world conference.

Typical of the reports, however, was one in Scholastic, after the convocation of the London discussions. It is indicative of the interest generated by the appearance of Davis in foreign capitals and the manner in which his presence always brought up the subjects of arms control and peace efforts:

One of the most tireless workers for world peace is Norman H. Davis, America's only roving Ambassador-at-Large. This silver-haired, soft-spoken Tennessean has toured Europe as the spokesman for one Republican and two Democratic Presidents. Sounds of war and rearmament have drowned out his voice at times, but Davis keeps on the job. He is now attending the general sugar conference in London. At a time when European statesmen are urging President Roosevelt to call for a world conference for economic cooperation and the preservation of peace, this is an important conference.

We cannot remain at peace just by hoping to do so, he explains, ... The only time we can be positive that we shall not become involved in war is when there is peace throughout the world.5

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4 Record of Presidential Press Conference, April 2, 1937; Roosevelt Papers.
5 Scholastic, XXX, No. 11 (April 24, 1937), 24.
"While my mission on sugar is sweet," Davis wrote to a colleague, "it is not an easy one. Sugar, as you know, is about as difficult to deal with as navies." Nor was sugar the only matter upon which he worked. He exchanged letters with Wilson and Atherton on the Disarmament Bureau meeting; with Hull on the naval situation which he discussed with both Chamberlain and Eden; and with Ambassador William Dodd and Ferdinand Meyer at the Berlin Embassy on the political situation on the continent. He reported to the President on a combination of political and economic developments and their relationship to the disarmament picture. "I am convinced," read his letter to the Chief Executive, "that there can be no political appeasement or stability without opening up the channels of trade and stopping the suicidal increase in armaments . . . . Europe has a haunting fear of catastrophe . . . . They hope that someone will somehow save them from themselves and feel that you are the one person who can do it . . . . Europe is in a helpless state of mind such as that of a sick person who can not get his mind off of his malady."

The importance of the sugar issue in the economic sphere was considerably overshadowed by the Far East naval

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6 Davis to Ambassador Phillips in Rome, April 10, 1937; to Atherton, March 22; to Wilson, April 1; to Hull, April 5 and 13; to Dodd, March 31; to Meyer, April 8; and to Roosevelt, April 13, 1937; Davis Papers. Additional evidence of "non-sugar" talks is found in FR, 1937, I, 72-74, 625-629, 933-935, and III, 975-978.
DEDICATION

In the undying hope that this work may atone, in some small measure, for three years in which my understanding for their problems was in short supply and in which the common amenities of life were often subordinated to the demands of study and research, I humbly dedicate this study to my wife Juliette and my sons Patrick and Jack, with the profound assurance that all their uncomplaining forbearance did not go unnoticed and with the sincere promise that the future will see them reap the rewards for their infinite patience.
division of the affairs of state was an illusion. The American stake in the peace of the world equalled or exceeded that of any other nation. "The last war," he asserted caustically, "was not caused by a lack of cooperation in humanitarian undertakings, or because of a failure to control traffic in opium." The failure to outlaw war, in his opinion, plus the absence of an effective organization to settle disputes pacifically represented the real causes. Rival ambitions went uncurbed and bayonets prevailed in lieu of "peaceful processes."15 In effect, he accused the Administration of blindness to the realities of international relations and history.

Davis concentrated much of his campaign criticism on a presumed Republican disregard for future uncertainties, drawing his conclusions from Administration activity in the field of foreign relations. He deprecated the Government search for a substitute for the League as a political expedient calculated to satisfy the divergent wings within the party. But the dilatory and almost dilettantish way in which the Republicans had dealt with disarmament drew his sharpest barbs. The Administration had apparently satisfied

15"Lack of a Foreign Policy," New York Times, Letters to the Editor, May 11, 1924. The letter was dated May 3, 1924. Hughes' statements, quoted in the Times of April 16, 1924, were made at the Republican State Convention in New York on April 15, 1924.
situation in the political realm. Davis discussed the prevailing conditions in late April with Ambassador Shigeru Yoshida in London. The Japanese emissary suggested that Japan could be demilitarized only through an intensive process of industrialization and commercialization. A world economic conference called by the United States might divert Japanese public attention and open international trade channels, reduce tension between nations and induce decreased arms expenditures. In rebuttal, Davis answered that the Japanese government had not demonstrated a willingness to cooperate by adhering to the ban established on all naval guns over 14-inch caliber in the London Treaty of 1936. "I wondered," he noted in his memo of the conversation, "if they realized that the only practicable way to avoid a naval race is to avoid suspicion and to adhere to the accepted types of naval armaments." Yoshida claimed to have endeavored to convince his government of just those points, but without success. After the pending election, "he thought it would be advisable for Great Britain and the United States to take this matter up again."

The subject of conversations took another tack when Davis met with his English colleagues. Chamberlain, preoccupied with Europe, was asked how the "vicious circle" of political adjustment, including arms control, as opposed to

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7 Davis memo of conversation with Yoshida, April 23, 1937; Davis Papers.
economic collaboration could be broken. Disarmament, said the Prime Minister, would have to come last, at least until the present rearmament phase was completed. The English "were trying to do what they could towards a beginning in the way of political appeasement" and economic cooperation. Davis discussed the political and naval situations in the Far East with Eden and Hoare and the final conclusions in both cases was that a unified approach to Japan was desirable. If Italy could be convinced to accept the London Treaty, the Four Powers could then go to Tokyo with a request to know her intentions. Hull approved this line of reasoning, subject to one additional British stipulation that no contact be established with Rome until after completion of English negotiations with Moscow and Berlin.

By the time British naval pacts were sealed with Russia and Germany on July 17, 1937, however, Davis was back in the United States.

Ten days before those agreements were signed, halfway around the world a clash took place at the Marco Polo Bridge near Peking and the Sino-Japanese conflict again broke into full-scale hostilities. Secretary Hull felt it necessary on July 16 to make a clear declaration of American policy, not as it concerned any particular situation, but as

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8 Davis memos of conversations with Chamberlain, April 26, 1937, and with Eden, May 4, 1937; Davis Papers. See also FR, 1937, I, 625-629.
a general matter of interest in answer "to inquiries and suggestions arising out of disturbed situations in various parts of the world." In effect, what Hull told the world was that the United States "advocated" many things, "believed" in many others, and "stood for" still others; "these doctrines," he later wrote, "were as vital in international relations as the Ten Commandments in personal relations." National self-restraint, denial of the use of force, pacific settlement of all disputes, unerring adherence to international agreements, all these were among the ideals to which the United States subscribed.

But the real answer to the world's questions came in the final sentence of his pronouncement: "We avoid entering into alliances or entangling commitments but we believe in cooperative effort by peaceful and practicable means in support of the principles hereinbefore stated." A little over a month later, he elaborated on his remarks, applying the principles specifically to the Far Eastern situation. In short, the United States was prepared to proffer the highest possible ideals to the world for its consideration and approval. But America was not ready to participate actively either in the achievement of those ideals by other nations or in the protection of those principles against incursions by less-idealistically inclined forces.

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Events in the Far East and American reaction to them moved rapidly through the months of August and September. Ambassador Grew offered American good offices to China and Japan without success in early August. Then marines were sent to Shanghai later in the month to protect American citizens and property. This led to increased domestic pressure for imposition of the Neutrality Act, which had been renewed and expanded on May 1, 1937. Still Roosevelt resisted and the Administration went on a "24-hour basis," continually reviewing the developing circumstances in lieu of directly applying the statute. The President did stop shipments of arms in government-owned vessels to either belligerent and placed private carriers on notice that they would transport weapons at their own risk.

On the international scene, the Sino-Japanese conflict eventually provoked action by the League of Nations. On August 30, the Chinese delegate at Geneva presented an informal report on the current status of affairs, which China described as a continuation of the Manchurian incident of 1931. In response, the League sent the matter to the Advisory Committee that had been active from 1931 to 1933 in examining the dispute. The United States, although not a voting member of the committee, had maintained an observer at all its meetings. And as a safeguard, League members again desired to have America associated with any mutual efforts undertaken.
Assistant Secretary of State Hugh Wilson told the British chargé in Washington that an American representative would sit with the committee under the same conditions as in 1931. Nevertheless, the United States "wished to remain free to adopt such course as might be called for in the circumstances." It was under the force of this policy that Hull instructed Leland Harrison, newly-appointed Minister in Berne, to exercise extreme caution at the meetings because "conditions in China may at any moment render it essential to apply" the Neutrality Act. Accepting the invitation to continue working with the committee was "a political act of visible importance," but Hull was really telling Harrison to avoid being pushed to the fore on any chosen or discussed course of action. "It appears to us," the Secretary wrote to his Berne emissary on September 11, "an eminently tenable position that some 50 states should make up their minds and express themselves on a given problem before any one state, outside their organization, is asked to commit itself."

Thus, it became apparent that the Gaston and Alphonse act would soon get underway again as it had in 1931 with Manchuria, and from 1933 through 1936 in the general and naval disarmament negotiations in Geneva and London. The United States would not chart an independent course and reveal it to the world, allowing other nations to subscribe

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10 FR, 1937, IV, 9, 14-16.
to it if they so desired. Nor would America sit down and work out a coordinated course for fear this would be interpreted domestically as "involvement" or "entanglement."

What the Administration wanted was independently arrived-at policies, alike in every respect, to be implemented through parallel action by other nations in concert and by the United States alone. But this again was a "chicken and egg" impasse; which side would make the first move? Certainly not the United States. Hull had already made that plain. The Department had also suggested that neutrality measures might have to be imposed, yet how realistic was this, or meaningful? If Roosevelt did invoke the statute, his action could be interpreted as "taking the lead," a move that might influence other nations along similar lines, thus abandoning the cause of China altogether.

On September 21, acting upon Chinese notes requesting League action, the Assembly referred the whole question to the Advisory Committee for the formulation of a policy. Japan rejected an invitation to attend the committee meetings and the body had to do its work without the advice and participation of one of the parties to the dispute. Moving through its sessions rapidly, but with considerable haggling, the committee produced a recommendation approved by the Assembly on October 6. China was offered moral support in her plight, while Japan bore the burden of the blame for the prevailing conditions. While the truth of the conclusion
was undoubtedly uncontestable, the verdict had still been reached without the defendant being heard. Japan's consistent stand was that the whole matter was a bilateral problem that could be settled without the intervention of outside parties, if China would only agree to negotiate. But the League finding, in a further effort to bring about Sino-Japanese diplomatic confrontation and keep the dispute within the framework of existing treaties, invited the signatories of the Nine-Power Treaty to meet as early as practicable and deliberate further on the questions at issue.

Before any formal plans for a treaty meeting, Secretary Hull made one more official, public pronouncement that added American endorsement to the League position on Japan. On October 6, elaborating still further on his July and August statements, he concluded "that the action of Japan in China is inconsistent with the principles which should govern the relationships between nations." Moreover, Japanese actions were contrary to both the Nine-Power Treaty and the Kellogg-Briand Pact. Why Hull felt this unilateral announcement was necessary is not clear, since the United States was already associated with the League viewpoint by virtue of having helped draft it in committee. In his memoirs he dismisses the event with a curt remark about the Department issuing a clarification that America "was in
general accord with the League's conclusions." Nevertheless, Japan now stood branded as an aggressor by both the League and its most powerful non-member.

Hull, however, was not the only major Administration figure who commented on the decaying world situation. "President Roosevelt's speech influenced several delegations which might otherwise have abstained," read the report from America's representative at Geneva with regard to the League vote. This, of course, was the Chief Executive's "quarantine" speech in Chicago on October 5, 1937. The address is significant for our purposes in that it apparently gave the final impetus needed to bring about a conference of powers interested in Far Eastern affairs. If this be true, then the eventual course followed by the United States at Brussels is even more inexplicable. That is, unless we understand that the President evidently did not want a conference at all. But the lead was taken away from him by the League action, which his speech helped push through.

What Roosevelt really did want still remains clouded. At Chicago, he had said: "America actively engages in the search for peace" and a week later he used exactly the same words in a message calling Congress into special session.

11 Ibid., IV, 62-63; Hull, op. cit., I, 544.
12 Record of Presidential Press Conference, October 6, 1937; Roosevelt Papers. Excerpted in Rosenman, op. cit., IV, 423.
prefacing them with some even more opaque phrases:

I want our great democracy to be wise enough to realize that aloofness from war is not promised by unawareness of war. In a world of mutual suspicions, peace must be affirmatively reached for. It cannot just be wished for. It cannot just be waited for.

In the same message, however, he added another interesting dimension, that of cooperation with other nations, as "one of the possible paths to follow in our search for means toward peace." Perhaps he sought a free hand in the international field, unfettered by concerted moves by other nations, until the full impact of his Chicago remarks and their implications had a chance to sink into the American mind. There is little doubt that he anticipated measures of some kind, as we shall see, but the nature of his ideas and the results they might have produced remain subjects of pure conjecture.

The League recommendations provoked an immediate response. On October 16, the Royal Belgian government, acting on behalf of the United Kingdom and the United States, extended invitations to a conference to be convened two weeks later "in virtue of Article 7 of the Nine-Power Treaty of Washington of 1922." All the treaty signatories and other interested nations were asked to meet in Brussels "to examine the situation in the Far East . . . and to consider

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friendly methods for expediting the end of the present regrettable conflict in that part of the world." The British later requested a postponement until November 3, in order to allow the Japanese to respond and, based on that response, to extend invitations to Berlin and Moscow. Japan returned her refusal on October 27, after which Germany also refused, while Russia accepted. Thus, the stage was set for the last act in the pre-war efforts to restore law and order to a world torn by political, economic, and ideological strife.

Norman Davis was named on October 18 to represent the United States at Brussels. The substance of his instructions dealt with the sustained American efforts to maintain peace and stability in the world and particularly in the Far East. "The primary function of the conference," read Secretary Hull's letter to him, "is to provide a forum for constructive discussion to formulate and suggest possible bases of settlement, and to endeavor to bring the parties together through peaceful negotiation." Under no circumstances was Davis to take the lead in the meetings, but he should coordinate closely with the British without

Department of State, The Conference of Brussels, November 3-24, 1937 (Washington, D. C., 1938), 6, 8, 16-20. The powers in attendance were the United States, the Union of South Africa, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Canada, China, Denmark, France, United Kingdom, India, Italy, Mexico, Norway, New Zealand, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, and Russia.
its appetite and exhausted its resources in a special con-
ference, encompassing both arms control and Far Eastern
affairs. In his view, the Washington Conference, a
"partial and half-hearted step," proved two things:
sporadic, extraordinary international endeavors produced
ineffective and incomplete results; and a limited number of
nations could not promote disarmament. Moreover, limiting
certain weapons only increased competition in other weapons
that defied limitation by intelligently fixed ratios,
specifically, new inventions in chemical warfare.
"Organized, careful, continuous conferences and cooperation
can deal with these matters. Occasional showy conferences
of plenipotentiaries cannot." 16

In spite of an appealing platform drawn and a hard
battle waged, the Democrats went down to defeat. But Davis
could take heart from such congratulations as those from
George G. Battle: "I know how hard you worked in the cam-
paign. . . . It was a source of gratification to all of us
Democrats to feel that our candidate nothing common did or
mean in the memorable scene through which he has just
passed." In replying, Davis expressed both disappointment
at the outcome and hope for the future, but his source of
inspiration was Whig not Democrat. Paraphrasing Henry

16 "American Foreign Policy: A Democratic View,"
Foreign Affairs, III, No. 4 (July-September 1924), 27-28.
becoming "a tail to the British kite." Several guidelines served as the framework within which he was to work: the Secretary's July and August statements of the "Ten Commandments" of international affairs; the Departmental announcement of American support for the League position on Japan; the Presidential address of October 5 at Chicago; and his radio broadcast of October 12 from Washington, calling the Congress back into special session. It is most significant to note that the foregoing document was dated October 18, since the latest data available to Davis came as a result of two final meetings with the Chief Executive at Hyde Park two days later. In other words, Davis received instructions from Roosevelt that post-dated the official communication from Hull.

A number of subjects were discussed at both Washington and Hyde Park by Roosevelt, Hull, and Davis. Among them were the quarantine speech, possible amendments to achieve more flexibility in the neutrality laws, the position of the United States should Japan declare war on China, and Con-

Draft instructions prepared by Stanley Hornbeck, October 14, 1937, and forwarded to Davis in New York the same date; final instructions from Hull, October 18, enclosing the pertinent policy statements already enumerated; Davis Papers. See also FR, 1937, IV, 84-86, which is a reproduction of Hull's final letter. Davis was the sole delegate to the conference; his chief advisers were Moffat for European affairs and Hornbeck for Far Eastern matters. It should be noted that File #2981, containing material pertinent to the selection of delegation members, in the Roosevelt Papers is closed and was not available for examination.
gressional reaction to the Chicago speech. Most important, however, was a broad outline of the objectives to be pursued at Brussels. Davis suggested, and apparently Roosevelt agreed, that American policy should be determined by the "extent to which we think the conquest of China by Japan would affect the vital interests of the United States and increase the danger of ultimate war with Japan." He then alluded to the two existent schools of thought in the State Department with regard to the implications of this approach. The one held that Japanese domination of China would be followed by further penetrations into the British and Dutch possessions and then the Philippines, thus making war inevitable. The other, as Davis described it, insisted Japan would exhaust herself against China and "not become a threat to the United States." Even if Japan should conquer the Chinese, she would still have to trade with America and "could not attack us in this hemisphere." Finally, the second line of thought continued, "we have no interests in the Far East that would justify a war."

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Two memos of conversations, October 20, 1937, to one of which is appended an undated note dictated by Roosevelt; Davis Papers and Roosevelt Papers. In one memorandum, specifically referring to a meeting at Hyde Park at 4:00 PM on October 20 (the other memo refers to a conversation earlier the same day "at tea"), Davis summarized the general discussions held the previous week in Washington with the President and Secretary Hull. The undated note is reproduced in FR, 1937, IV, 85-86. Unless specifically noted otherwise, the substance of these conversations, as recorded here, comes from these two cited memoranda.
Roosevelt's position, as noted in Davis' memo of the conversations, was clear in its support of the "first school" and of the principle of sanctity of treaties. Ignoring international agreements, the President declared, would create a situation of international anarchy and "inevitably endanger our own security and stability." He desired that Davis concentrate on bringing about a truce and then a peace settlement between China and Japan. Failing that, the President added, the United States "cannot quit, but must consider other steps." Both Hull and Davis pointed out that England and Holland would undoubtedly decline to coerce Japan in any way out of fear of retaliation unless the United States would "agree to protect them with their navy." On the other hand, they added, if the Japanese were convinced America meant business, they still might not come to terms and settle the China issue, but it would be futile for them to attempt retaliation in the face of a firm United States stand. Both men were quick to express their doubts that domestic public opinion would support such a vigorous Administration policy.

Roosevelt's response to these arguments revealed the apparent faith he had in the responsiveness and flexibility of the American people and in his own capacity to shape their fundamental outlook. "The President said," reads the Davis resume of the Washington conversations, "that if as a result of all efforts to bring about a cease-fire and peace
between China and Japan the Japanese refused to be reasonable and persisted in their determination to dismember and conquer China, public opinion of the world and of the United States by that time would most probably demand something be done."

Later at the Hyde Park meetings, at which Hull was not present, questions of procedure and general tactics were discussed. The President rejected any allusions to sanctions—a word he thought should be discarded from the language—"unless and until all efforts at mediation had failed." If the Japanese refused outright to attend the conference, Davis should promote the formulation of incisive inquiries by the delegations to ascertain Japan's objectives. Roosevelt hoped such queries would prove increasingly embarrassing to the Japanese and simultaneously "continue to mobilize public opinion and moral force." Moreover, Davis should entertain no alternatives to this course of action as long as such pressures were being exerted. "In case this effort failed," quoting again from Davis' memo of what Roosevelt said, "all of the countries which wish to stop this war and to protect themselves from its consequences, or in other words the so-called neutral countries, should bond together for their own protection against this contagion." The President was still bent upon rallying international and domestic opinion and facilitating cooperation to "quarantine" the "contagion" that plagued the world.
While the Chief Executive momentarily concentrated on initial American tactics for the conference, Davis began to suggest alternatives, should the opening approach fail. If Japan rejected all attempts at conciliation, he proposed that the other powers might agree to give all-out military aid to the Chinese cause, "although the United States could do nothing because our laws would not permit." Another alternative lay in the mounting of a force of neutrals to ostracize Japan by breaking off relations with her—in effect, quarantining her. Davis admitted that "overwhelming support" from the nations of the world would be necessary in order for this plan to work. The President himself enlarged upon this latter suggestion with the addition of an idea for "neutral cooperation, short of the obligation to use force," such as was foreseen in the Buenos Aires protocol on non-intervention, subscribed to by Western Hemisphere nations in 1936 in re-affirmation of the Argentine Anti-War Pact of 1934. Such action, in the President's view, would center upon a constructive program worked out by neutral powers, "acting together" to make their combined opinion and influence felt in support of pacification of the Asian dispute.

Although not specifically mentioned in the October 20 memos, cited in footnote 16, supra, this idea may have stemmed from a Davis letter to Roosevelt, February 4, 1937, to which he appended an argumentation based on historical precedent for presidential discretionary powers and pointing to the Buenos Aires Conference as an indication of increased realization by United States public opinion of American responsibilities in international affairs.
Roosevelt's last enjoiners to his trusted emissary were to cooperate when unity appeared possible, but to guard against the United States being pushed aside or to the forefront in the deliberations. If England, France, Italy, and Germany decided to do nothing constructive, "because they are ready to jump at each other's throats in Europe, then begin a leisurely trip home, giving them a chance to reconsider." But he should shy away from all cooperative efforts that appeared one-sided, _i.e._, in which the point of view of the many depended entirely upon the stand taken by a single nation. Rather than accept the full responsibility for any Brussels action, Roosevelt preferred to see the Sino-Japanese question returned to the League unsolved. This, the Chief Executive felt, would bury the matter and put the onus of failure on the European powers. Any successful settlement of the Far Eastern problem, as it was viewed by Roosevelt, must come as a result of almost unanimous opinion and action by all the nations concerned. The important factor was that, even though the United States might support the other delegations in agreeing to a practical solution, Davis should strenuously avoid an isolated position in the forefront.

Opinion in the United States was not only mixed, but in a state of extreme flux as the American delegation made its way to the Brussels Conference aboard the *USS Washington*, a vessel that had become as familiar to Norman Davis as the
backyard of his country home at Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Dr. George Gallup reported a growing sympathy in America for the Chinese cause. In early September, one-half of those polled were "unable or unwilling to sympathize with either side," while the other half leaned toward the Japanese. The most recent poll, specifically labeled as having been taken after the quarantine speech and the State Department "branding of Japan as an aggressor," revealed on October 24 that 59% of the populace supported the Chinese and only 1% still backed the Japanese. A sizeable 40%, however, expressed reluctance to take a stand either way. Examining the opinion from another angle, Gallup reported only 37% of the nation was prepared to boycott goods from Japan, while 63% either balked at boycotting Japanese imports or refused to express an opinion.

An indication of the type of public news media bombardment that undoubtedly contributed to the development of such a large segment of undecided opinion is easily perceived from the following penetrating analysis of the Brussels mission; this message was carried over radio station KMOX in St. Louis on October 16:

Norman Davis has faced many problems and solved them, but there's hardly one--since the war--that's been more difficult or momentous than this one of the Nine-Power Pact. It's an issue that must be

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18 Washington Post, October 24, 1937, syndicated article by Gallup; Davis Papers.
faced without this nation or the other Great
Powers of Europe coming with clean hands—since
we opened the Far East to trade and helped
establish the foreign spheres of influence in
China at the point of the bayonet and the battle­
ship gun. It's a situation that, right now,
seems impossible of any more results than the
empty gesture of censure for Japan—but in any
case we can safely depend upon this man of ex­
perience and unusual skill, this man who's given
his life to serving his country and the cause of
peace among nations—our ambassador without port­
folio, Norman Hezekiah Davis. 19

The relative points of view of the two forces
operative at the Brussels Conference were made clear at the
outset. The Japanese, although not in attendance, repeated
their evaluation of the conflict as a bilateral affair
between them and China and beyond the purview of the Nine­
Power Treaty. Publicly, Japan insisted that the conference
had resulted purely from the League denunciation of her and
the subsequent American endorsement of the League stand.
Japanese acceptance of the invitation to Brussels would
actually have constituted a reversal of their position in
1931 when they had chosen to ignore the treaty. Since 1931,
in fact, the Japanese had been engaged in consistent en­
deavors, marked by their walkout from the 1935 London Con­
ference, calculated to divest themselves of the "second
class" status placed upon them in 1922. No conference over

19
Manuscript, entitled "The Nine Power Conference
and Norman Davis," of the program, Harry Flannery Views and
News, Radio Station KMOX, St. Louis, October 18, 1937;
Davis Papers.
their clash with China seemed destined to alter the direction of their chosen course.

Confronting this Japanese attitude was an amorphous body of conference delegations, attempting to argue principles in an effort to reverse faits accomplis. Some of the countries had Far Eastern possessions; others sought the substitution of peace and stability for havoc and unrest. China was represented, but her adversary was not. Italy emerged as the defender of Japanese interests, partly because of her own Ethiopian experience, but mainly because of a growing affinity for the German-Japanese axis. The majority viewpoint, at least at the outset, was one of hesitancy to undertake any definitive measures to impede Japan. The motivations were diverse. The smaller nations realized the vulnerability of their own international prestige and status in the event larger nations failed to follow their suggestions. Countries with colonial possessions feared Japanese retaliation against which they felt impotent to act alone.

The United States labored under the combined burden of neutrality legislation, handcuffing the Executive, and a divided national opinion in which the forces of isolation were more vocal, therefore more dominating, than the feeble

20 On November 6, three short days after the conference opened, Italy announced her own adherence to the Anti-Comintern Pact, thus completing the alliance of fascism and militarism that ultimately launched World War II.
voices of internationalism. If the United States pushed Japan too far and she declared war on China, the President would be forced to invoke the neutrality statute, thereby damaging further the Chinese cause. Over and above the neutrality legislation, the Administration was plagued with an economic recession, the vestiges of reaction to the President's attack on the sacrosanct Supreme Court, the mixed response to the quarantine speech, and growing congressional opposition, perturbed because of non-imposition of the embargo against both China and Japan. This combination of circumstances seemed destined to perpetuate the long standing sterility in American foreign policy.

But Davis continued his endless endeavor to project the real power and stature of the United States into international relations in spite of the formidable background of opposition against which his adept diplomacy had to operate. At the outset of the conference, he sought to clarify the American position along the Hyde Park lines. Briefing the press, he asserted that all nations came to the meeting as equals, although any practical observer could discern that there was no real equality among the conferees. Some had to lead, others would only follow, but the statement guarded against the possibility of responsibility being pushed off on any one nation. He attempted to dispel the idea that any nation, least of all the United States, had come to Brussels to end up with a solution based on the use of
Clay's 1839 emotions, he wrote:

While there is not much satisfaction to be had from even a temporary defeat, there is much consolation in feeling that we stood for what was right, and that the principles for which we stood must ultimately triumph. I would rather have stood up and made a courageous fight, as John Davis did, and be defeated, than to stand for what Coolidge has stood for and be President.17

Or perhaps Davis recalled the high idealism of Wilson from whom he drew so much of his philosophy, especially that Wilson, who, rather than compromise the principles of Versailles and the League Covenant, fought the Senate to the last ditch before finally going down to defeat.

The Woodrow Wilson Foundation perpetuated the memory and tradition of the war-time President not just for devotees of his teachings and policies, but for posterity. Norman Davis, in his capacity as the body's first president, presided in December 1924, less than a year after Wilson's death, at ceremonies commemorating Wilsonian ideals. On that occasion, he presented the first Foundation award to a long-time friend and colleague Lord Robert Cecil. As he had done in the past and was to do so many times in the future, Davis drew an analogy between world conditions and those of an ailing patient in his remarks about the career of Cecil:

17Battle to Davis, November 8, 1924, and reply, November 10, 1924; Davis Papers.
force. The points in contention should be argued toward the achievement of a higher dedication to principles and ideals in the conduct of international relations. In other words, the "issue is between arbitrary action and the prevalence of law and order."

In answer to a query from one correspondent, he admitted that the progress of the deliberations would serve to educate an American public, unwilling to take risks because of disillusionment over wasted efforts to invoke peace in the aftermath of the World War. He added his hope that, if Japan should prove recalcitrant, United States opinion would accept a firm policy and "be ready to face the possibility of doing something else." No alternatives would be discussed, however, until a concerted effort had been made to place the meeting on a plane higher than that of a military response to an armed conflict. A converted American public, he felt, would brace up to the Japanese position and thereby avoid any risks because Japan would have to capitulate in the face of a universal demand for law and order.

But, during the course of the conference, State Department policy underwent a change. Several indices point to the causes. Initial responses to delegation inquiries were issued, during the temporary absence of Hull, by either

21 Memorandum of press conference at the Hotel Metropole, Brussels, November 5, 1937; Davis Papers.
Hugh Wilson or Sumner Welles, the former as close a confidante of Davis as was the latter of Roosevelt. Essentially, during the first ten days of the conference, Davis had the assignment of merely keeping the meetings in session until the "embarrassing questions" had been put to Japan, the time originally predicted by the President as necessary to rally public response.

In this same period, there was some adverse press commentary, but Roosevelt sought to minimize it and changed the policy of supplying news comment to overseas missions. On November 10, the Department forwarded Davis some quotations from editorials in the Baltimore Sun, the Washington Post, and the New York Sun. In a memo to Welles, the Chief Executive expressed doubt that "these newspapers carry any particular weight as expressions of public opinion," especially since individual editorial writers lacked all the facts available to the Government and were prone to express personal opinions or those of the owners. He suggested that an "average of news opinion" might be more helpful and, even then, he feared wrong impressions might be created in the minds of ambassadors and ministers. Roosevelt closed the note with a cogent comment, evaluating the reliability of the press in matters of prognostication: "It is well to remember newspaper opinion and prophecy in the summer and autumn of 1936." Welles answered immediately that future telegrams would be "limited to summaries of the general trend of
editorial and newspaper opinion and omit any direct quotations for the reasons set forth in your memorandum." No evidence was developed that this policy was altered in any respect during the life of the conference, although Hull demonstrated later that he was extremely susceptible to adverse editorial comment.

John McV. Haight, writing on the aftermath of the quarantine speech, has observed that "Hull probably had certain misgivings when he sent Davis," but was comforted by the fact that Moffat "could be counted upon as a restraining influence." This probably overstates Hull's attitude toward Davis, since they were long-time friends. It is true that they did not see eye-to-eye on international economic policy, but Hull could otherwise have been doubtful.

22 Roosevelt to Welles, November 12, 1937, and reply, November 13, 1937; Roosevelt Papers.
23 FR, 1937, IV, 188-189, 197-198, 203-204, 217-218, 225-226. These citations are telegrams in which the New York Times, New York Herald Tribune, Washington Post, and Baltimore Sun are all mentioned for specific editorial comment, although as stated no evidence was found of a rescission of the Presidential directive to Welles. On November 19 (pp. 212-214), Davis answered Hull, pointing out that the delegation received no evidence of adverse commentary until either November 15 or 16 and then via a telegram from the Department. The Hearst press was cited by Davis as being extremely critical of all delegation activity regardless of its nature. Moffat noted that most American newsmen came to the conference looking for a strong American attitude because of Roosevelt's Chicago speech, but lost enthusiasm and became critical when a firm policy did not evolve; see Hooker, op. cit., 186-187.
of Davis only because he pushed hard for the concepts of internationalism. At any rate, no concrete evidence to confirm or refute the supposition was discovered.

Moffat himself, describing the delegation members, testified to the "steadying nature" of his own position, while at the same time revealing a basic three-way difference in outlook between the delegates. According to Moffat, Davis believed, and this was undoubtedly correct, that the existence of the British Empire was essential to American national security. This necessitated close cooperation between Washington and London, but never an acquiescent response to every British lead. Stanley Hornbeck, Davis' adviser on Far Eastern affairs, in Moffat's estimation, reacted to every situation in terms of how the Orient would be affected and what adjustments would have to be made in American policy toward Far Eastern nations. "My personal preoccupation," Moffat admitted with apparent aplomb, "is to prevent at any costs the involvement of the United States in hostilities anywhere, and to that end to discourage any formation of a common front of the democratic powers." Thus, Davis did not have just the trials and tribulations of justifying his recommendations to the State Department; he also had a problem of coordinating divergent views within the very heart of his own small group in Brussels.

The success of Davis in restricting the work of the initial phase of the conference to the dispatch of further overtures to Japan came about only after resistance to considerable pressure from other delegations. Eden advised him that the English were prepared to join America in any positive action to which they could both agree, but would go no further than the United States. The Italians endeavored to have the conference adjourn without any action whatsoever. Setting a trend for dealings outside the framework of the meetings, the French sought to exact Anglo-American guarantees of their Far Eastern possessions. Maxim Litvinov pushed for closer relationships between Russia, England, and America to confront Japan and force her to cease hostilities. All this tended to indicate that the call for high principles issued by Roosevelt and Hull had registered little impact on the European nations. Except for Italy, they supported some sort of collective action and, barring this, as it turned out, they were prepared to abandon the conference.

The conference note of November 7 to the Japanese resulted from Davis' insistence that real progress could be facilitated only with Japan in attendance. The note was not conciliatory toward the Japanese, but it left the door open for them in the event they desired to "save face" by dis-

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cussing the issues with a group smaller than that assembled at Brussels. The requirement that even such a meeting operate within the treaty framework apparently prompted the second and final Japanese rejection of an offer to deliberate the Sino-Japanese dispute and work toward an amicable settlement. Receipt of the negative reply of November 12 made it necessary that the conference turn to any next steps that were to be taken. The period of Davis' "holding action," as suggested by Roosevelt, had run out.

Upon receipt of the final Japanese refusal, the conference went into temporary adjournment. Eden even suggested an indefinite pause in the deliberations to avoid the anti-climax of a meeting a week later at which he predicted no definitive action would be taken. Under his instructions from Washington, Davis had to reject this proposal. As an alternative to a sine die deferment of proceedings, the British Foreign Minister then urged the adoption "of a resolution reiterating a policy of non-recognition of the fruits of aggression, supplemented by a pledge to withhold loans and credits." Because any response to this suggestion would have exceeded his instructions, Davis asked the State Department for an official statement of new policy.

28 Davis' Official Report to the Secretary of State, December 16, 1937; Davis Papers.
At this point Hull began to part ways with Davis, who strove to get the conference off dead-center. The Secretary developed a closed mind to the thought of anything except conference endorsement of his "Ten Commandments" and issuance of a call for their universal acceptance. He turned down Davis' suggestion that the United States support Eden's proposal, while reminding Davis that the League Assembly, when it had been seized of the question, had not adopted any of the ideas now offered by the British. While the Secretary had been quick enough to associate the United States with the League findings on Japan, he apparently was not prepared to have America subscribe to any action not approved in advance by the League.

This development was tragic enough, but the real tragedy was the position of Davis while all this transpired. He had kept the conference operating, when the other delegates had been ready to bury it, using the justification that Japan must be put on the spot. Now he was pledged to keep it alive under instructions to convince his counterparts of the necessity for adopting a program in which they had no faith and which they argued would produce no noticeable results. Hornbeck, although restricting his remarks to an analysis of the relative positions of the United States

and the United Kingdom, provided keen insight into the
general nature of the impasse that faced the Brussels Con-
ference:

On the side of political theories and practices, any attempt at cooperation between the United
States and Great Britain is difficult because of the fact that the United States leans toward
principles, whereas the British lean toward "realities," and, the United States leans toward
independent action on parallel lines, whereas the British lean toward joint action. To obtain
and maintain a meeting of the minds and a common front with simultaneous advancing in one direction
may be impossible, but, if achieved, will have required a tremendous effort.²⁰

In the philosophy of Davis, a "one-sided trade" was bad diplomacy and that is what Hull sought. Furthermore, if all parties to a discussion hold back and wait for each other to make the first move, then the inevitable result must be no action at all.

Dissatisfied though he was with the chain of development, Davis persisted in his efforts to do the bidding of the Secretary of State, although he felt "he had been left out on a limb." The "steady" Moffat rejoiced: "Personally, I am delighted, though in view of the personal instructions given to Norman Davis by the President at Hyde Park he is going to have a somewhat difficult time in retreating quite the length that the Department wants him to." "I bow to your judgment," Davis wrote to the Secretary, expressing hope that "a strong re-affirmation of the principles which

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²⁰ Hornbeck memo, summarizing the Brussels Conference, November 29, 1937; Davis Papers.
underlie international relationships . . . will not fall flat." He reported the general doubt prevailing in Brussels that only firmness with Japan rather than offers of good offices or mediation could bring about a constructive settlement. He argued again that non-recognition of the fruits of aggression and the suspension of loans did not fall outside the purview of the conference, as Hull claimed, but were in keeping with the idea of measures short of war. Moreover, he pointed out that "the situation has further unrolled" since the League had passed the issue to the conference; thus the existing conditions could not be compared to those that had prevailed the preceding September, when the League Assembly action had been completed.

A review of the official documents tends to indicate that at this juncture Hull began to take over direction of the Brussels policy completely from Roosevelt. The Chief Executive's name or initials fail to appear on the guidelines to Davis. This resulted in him being placed in an extremely untenable position. Motivated by public opinion hostile to the exertion of any pressure on Japan, the Secretary strove to bring the conference to a hasty end without America bearing the blame. Attacked on the other side by a press corps that charged the United States with killing the conference by refusing to move on suggestions for

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Hooker, op. cit., 182, 184; FR, 1937, IV, 201-203.
collective action, Hull blamed poorly coordinated press relations by the Brussels delegation. With this as background, he instructed Davis to offer a recess solution coupled with a summary report on conference progress. But he also wished Davis "not to take the initiative in the formulation of the report," although he simultaneously supplied him with a seventeen-paragraph suggested text. What he did not tell his Ambassador was how the American delegation could offer any such proposal without the press ascertaining its origin and compounding the already mounting evidence of American hesitation to join in any mutual effort to restrain Japan.

Davis succeeded on November 21 in selling to the English the idea of a report to the conferring governments. Included in the report would be Hull's declaration of principles plus a resolution appealing for an early cessation of hostilities. The conferees would agree to hold themselves in readiness to assist in a final settlement should the conflict end. The ensuing three days were spent in working out the final formulation subscribed to by all participants. The result was a bland statement, officially released on November 24, reaffirming that the Sino-Japanese hostilities constituted a breach of the principles governing the conduct of international relations and a threat to universal security. Further the disagreement lay within the

His work for disarmament has been both practical and constructive. He has succeeded to a great extent in making clear the simple fact that armaments are not so much a disease as a symptom, and that a substantial reduction in armaments can be brought about by reducing feeling of fear or insecurity and by establishing international justice and safety.18

Two and one-half years previously, Davis had called for "vaccination" of United States public opinion toward greater toleration of an active American role in world affairs. But in 1924, invoking the spirit of Wilson, he made arms reduction contingent upon mutual international security guarantees supported by a system of international law. His argument stood on a sound basis in theory, but he left two important practical questions unanswered: which should come first, guarantees or law; and how should American participation be facilitated? The former consideration plagued the world until it exploded in the thirties, but before another year passed the entry of America into the deliberations of the Preparatory Committee for the World Disarmament Conference resolved the latter issue.

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18 Pamphlet issued by the Woodrow Wilson Foundation (n.p., 1925), 11; Davis Papers. The pamphlet contains the texts of speeches by Davis and Cecil at the official award banquet on December 28, 1924.
scope of the Nine-Power Treaty and "no possible step to bring about by peaceful processes a settlement of the conflict should be overlooked or omitted." And finally, the conference was adjourning only "to explore all peaceful methods" and stood ready to reconvene at the call of the chairman and two of its members.

The trend of world events leading up to the Brussels Conference had been discouraging. The freedom-loving nations appeared impotent in the face of rising militarism, fascism, and national socialism. Then the news of the consultative effort to be undertaken under the provisions of the Nine-Power Treaty had injected new hope in the world community. Finally, it seemed, a collective endeavor would be launched to stem the tide of aggression and restore law and order, re-establish the sanctity of international agreements. But the wide acclaim over the Brussels venture proved unwarranted and disaster ensued.

The major powers had failed to stand up to the rising tide of Japanese militarism, thereby spelling the practical end of the League of Nations. Along with that development went the collapse of the inter-war effort to achieve a universal system of collective security based on the ideas of reduced arms and peaceful solutions to international disputes. Japan's apparent success in flaunting

the endeavors of the Brussels conferees and in ignoring the provisions of her treaties only inspired the other two members of the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo axis, Germany and Italy, to follow her lead. After Brussels, the road traveled by the nations of the world after World War I reached a fork. One set of nations, already converted into armed camps, proceeded down the way toward further aggression. The others, most of which were in various stages of rearmament, but still dedicated to peaceable settlements, chose to wage a rear-guard action along the alternate path. Ultimately, the two routes would again converge and the final determination of the course of world affairs would be decided by the sword. Thus, the battle begun at the Marco Polo Bridge spread into a world conflagration that would rage on until the final cessation of hostilities in September 1945.

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Norman Davis did not suffer remorse or feel overly disappointed at the Brussels outcome. He was so given to demonstrations of optimism that it apparently never occurred to him to abandon faith. "I rather have a feeling," he wrote in response to a letter from Arthur Cadogan of the British Foreign Office, "that within the next two or three weeks Japan may be in a frame of mind which may enable us
to do something, and I am glad to be going home to have full consultation before that."  

Even the tenor of his official report to the Secretary of State pointed to the positive rather than the negative aspects of the conference. He did reiterate his feeling that advance condemnation of Japan by the League and the American Government had made the task of the conferees "additionally difficult." The American press, he found, had viewed the Sino-Japanese conflict as a struggle between ideologies—Fascism versus Democracy—and "almost to a man" exhibited sympathy for China and hostility toward Japan "to a point of wanting decisions directed toward amplification of pressures," on the Japanese to settle the Asian dispute. There followed a recitation of Presidential instructions and a blow-by-blow description of the progress of the deliberations, replete with the guidelines that evolved out of the State Department and the action instituted to comply with them.

All in all, he made a good case for his mission and defended his actions, while giving cognizance to the domestic pressures that altered the Administration approach as events had developed. In summarizing the impact of the conference and his part in it, he submitted a listing of the "outstanding achievements" in the "work thus far":

34 Cadogan to Davis, November 30, 1937, and Davis reply, December 3, 1937; Davis Papers.
Exchange of views between nineteen nations on an issue of major significance.

Effective demonstration of Japanese rejection of conciliation.

Clarification of the opposed views of the conflict with the Japanese considering it a bilateral matter and the conferees judging it an issue of multilateral concern.

Reaffirmation of the principles of the Nine-Power Treaty.

Notification to the disputants that any settlement must be consistent with the treaty.

Announcement of the continuing concern of the treaty signatories with the situation.\footnote{Davis' Official Report to the Secretary of State, December 16, 1937; Davis Papers.}

The Brussels Conference represented the last major diplomatic mission undertaken by Norman Davis. It had been fully twenty years since he first entered the service of his country during World War I. Two decades later he finally abandoned the struggle to settle questions that had grown out of the aftermath of that "war to end all wars." The national inequities resulting from that conflagration created frictions not to be allayed by appeals to reason. The differentiation in the Versailles Treaty between "winners" and "losers," especially with respect to armed forces, constituted one of the foremost inequalities. Convinced that the alleviation of this source of resentment
might lead to the emergence of a higher standard of world order, Davis had waged an unrelenting battle to rid the world of its armaments. He worked on the premise that only after such an accomplishment could an atmosphere be created conducive to the amelioration of international disagreements without resort to force.

He re-entered the official stream of events in 1931 at a time in history best characterized as one of contradictions. Fifty-nine nations had agreed, after five years' deliberations, to confer on a treaty to disarm, yet forces at work within most of the major countries demanded the acquisition of arms as an important attribute to national power. France and Germany contributed the dispute between security and equality to the paradoxical complexion of the world. England espoused a firm course against the rising forces of militarism, but only if joined by the United States. And Americans evinced a strong plea for disarmament, while refusing to accept the fact that it was their own refusal to act responsibly in an international context that made the achievement of a disarmed world improbable, if not impossible.

Because of the peculiar circumstances of the time, Davis did not succeed either in his efforts to disarm the world or to institute an effective mutual security system. He failed, not in his personal services to his country, his dedication to his ideals, or his belief in the righteousness
of his causes, but in his inability to realign the conflicting ideas prevalent in the world. The deep-seated emotions dictating national policies ignored the potential value of international cooperation. Harmony, coordination and mutual confidence grated against the traditional concepts of suspicion, distrust, mutual enmity, and blunt power.

He served two basically opposed Administrations. His influence in the Hoover era has been abundantly demonstrated and the force of his point of view persisted into the Roosevelt period. But this achievement is best credited to his own attributes of character, his international reputation, his availability and his thorough knowledge of the arms control issue. His weathering of the political storms in Washington, however, did not mean acceptance by either Administration of the total scope of his arguments in support of extensive world disarmament. In fact, it was in defending the viewpoint that a material reduction of armaments could be inspired only by American participation in mutual security arrangements that Davis encountered the "isolationist tornado" that swept America in the thirties.

He would have committed the United States, through the medium of a multilateral pact, to consultation with other powers in the event of a threat of aggression. But neither Hoover nor Roosevelt had the courage to implement such a policy, the former undoubtedly because of his basic
pacifism and the latter because of a marked subordination of foreign to domestic affairs in the interest of economic recovery. Roosevelt did approve a unilateral declaration to consult, but this proved insufficient to meet the demands of France. To surmise what might have happened had Davis' recommendation been followed is no doubt futile. Perhaps Japan would have been forced to withdraw from China, Italy might have desisted from overrunning Ethiopia, and Hitler's move into the Rhineland might have been impossible.

Nevertheless, Americans were not prepared to wager the protection provided by their geographic isolation on the highly speculative prospect of joining in collective security efforts. Investigations "proving" they had been duped by the arms manufacturers into saving Europe in 1917 hardened already-formed suspicions of European duplicity and chicanery. Domestic demagogues attacked the virtues of the capitalistic system, questioning the ability of democracy to cope with the economic phenomena of the modern world. Pacifism appealed to widespread masses convinced that an absence of morality in Europe prompted the nations of that continent to pursue courses always eventuating in war. And latent nationalism was re-kindled by cries of "America First." Diverse though these forces were, they achieved their unity in outspoken demands for a policy of neutrality, free of the pitfalls of that other neutrality which had led to World War I. Decision making could not be left entirely
to the Chief Executive, unless he was adequately harnessed by legal statutes barring any action that might implicate the United States in any way in disputes between other nations. Under such pressures, no Administration could have granted Davis the license he sought.

In negotiating the question of arms control Davis was thus caught in a domestic web of interest and disinterest. Land forces meant little to Americans and tradition dictated the maintenance of a relatively small army, especially in peace time. Friendly nations bordered on the United States and no nation in the Western Hemisphere threatened the potential might of America. It was this whole philosophy which Hoover, Roosevelt, and Davis reflected in defending the standpoint that America had no interest in the essentially European problem of land-based forces and armaments. To the nations of Europe, however, the question of size and equipment of armies was the paramount issue.

The navy on the other hand, represented the United States' first line of defense, yet both Hoover and Roosevelt were prepared to follow the tradition established at Washington in 1922 by reducing sea forces. National self-interest, of course, held sway over the policy, since a continuation of the ratio system guaranteed America the upper hand along with England. Davis' arguments against Japanese demands for parity were well-founded; equality in
arms did not mean equality in security. But like most of his contemporaries, both in government and out, he underestimated the full value given by Japan to the question of national pride.

In the final analysis, had either Administration been willing to allow Davis to trade a consultative pact for European disarmament, he undoubtedly would have been prepared to negotiate toward the reconciliation of the major differences separating the various nations. But aversion to "entangling alliances" still raged strongly in the United States and would not die out until brought under assault during the course of World War II.

The real cause of the failure of Norman Davis to achieve his two foremost aims undoubtedly lay in the tenor of the times. His proposals of idealistic solutions to the major world ills registered little impact upon statesmen dealing in the realities of treaties and alliances. Conversely, his appeals to Americans to convert them to a course of greater responsibility in world affairs fell on ears deafened by the incessant demands for neutrality and isolation. Even his incorrigible optimism and his enduring idealism were probably defects that prompted him to see solutions where, in fact, there were none, to generate hope when, in fact, there was no cause for it. Like his mentor and idol, Woodrow Wilson, he was out of step with the era
in which he represented his country. Norman Davis was a high-minded idealist and ardent internationalist pursuing causes for the betterment of mankind and the world in a period dominated by realism and isolationism.
Isolationism in the United States during the twenties undoubtedly was the primary consideration that dictated a somewhat lethargic foreign policy. The security of two oceans gave an air of remoteness to affairs outside the Western Hemisphere and independence of action was a dream still entertained by broad segments of the American populace. Norman Davis sought to allay prevailing suspicion and to bolster courage by referring to the record of the past as evidence to refute these widely-held convictions. Speaking before the United States section of the International Chamber of Commerce in May 1925, he questioned the relevance, in view of current conditions, of arguments against American entry into or support of plans to prevent war, when the premise was that the United States would thereby limit its freedom of action. This line of reasoning, he declared, ignored the fact that a war of any importance automatically restricted national courses of action, regardless of whether or not a country was involved in the hostilities. "As we know from experience, war limits both individual and national freedom." Of even greater consequence, however, was the fact that the United States still refrained from sitting in conference with other nations, dealing with problems, whose implications increase the probability of war. And an outbreak of war,
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The basic purpose and limited scope of this study recommends the compilation of a selected bibliography. The role of Norman H. Davis in the formulation and representation of American arms control policy has not been previously studied. Moreover, the general literature on disarmament in the twenties and thirties contains little commentary on the part he played. For this reason, the major research effort associated with this work focused upon the primary sources.

The bulk of the factual material derives from two significant collections: The Davis Papers in the Library of Congress; and the Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, the volumes of documents released annually by the Department of State. His letters and papers reveal his political points of view, his personality and traits of character, his manner of expression, the importance of friends and acquaintances with whom he exchanged ideas, and, most important of all, his basic attitudes on disarmament and arms control as well as the manner in which his concepts changed under the pressure of
evolving world and domestic situations. The documents contained in Foreign Relations served to place Davis within the official State Department and Foreign Service circles working on the formulation of arms control policy. The Roosevelt Papers, a third collection utilized in this work, served as a cross-check on much information developed from the two major sources.
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he reminded the group, most certainly would again "diminish our freedom of action."19

But it was not just the limitation of American independence that concerned Davis. He was gravely aware of the horrors that another war would bring, especially to the younger generation. It was this idea, combined with the concept of the growing interrelationship of the affairs of the nations of the world, that he sought to emphasize in a commencement speech at Choate on May 30, 1925:

Since the world has become so interdependent that the employment and nourishment of human beings . . . depend upon keeping the channels of trade and commerce open, and since the modern inventions for destroying human life by warfare are such that this civilization cannot survive another world war, the progress and preservation of the present civilization will depend upon the ability of the people and the nations to solve the social problems growing out of their industrial development, coordinate the economic activities of life, and establish harmonious relations between nations by organizing the world for peace.20

By the close of 1925, signs indicated that the world was "organizing for peace." Ratification of the Locarno Pact enabled Germany to enter the League, whose Council then issued invitations for membership on a Preparatory Committee to formulate an agenda for a World

19Speech text, May 19, 1925; Davis Papers.

20Speech text, May 30, 1925; Davis Papers.
I, Thomas Casey Irvin, was born in Danville, Illinois, October 5, 1927. I received my secondary-school education in the public schools in Covington, Indiana, after which I entered the United States Army. While in Germany, both in the military and as a civilian employee of the Department of the Army, I began my undergraduate education in the University of Maryland Overseas Program. After returning to the United States in 1958, I continued my training at The Ohio State University, which granted me the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1961. In March 1961 I was appointed a Mershon Fellow in the Department of History under Professor Foster Rhea Dulles. I held this appointment for two years, while working on the completion of requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree.

I have accepted a position as a Foreign Affairs Officer in the Political Research and Analysis Division, International Relations Bureau, United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Washington, D. C.
Disarmament Conference. Both these developments provoked comment from Davis, the long-time advocate of disarmament and exponent of a greater role for the United States in world affairs. He saw in the Locarno Pact the opening of a new era in which Europe was taking away from America the moral leadership of the world "because we were swept by a wave of blind materialism from the heights of human vision and endeavor to which we had risen."

Perhaps it was a good thing that Europe had taken the first great steps in solving her problems without American assistance. But what bothered Davis now was that the United States might embark upon a course of reactionary nationalism that would entrench itself and alienate America even more. He believed in nationalism, but considered that "blind nationalism" impeded progress by obscuring the fact that ultimately a nation "must concede something that it may prosper, must give that it may receive." He maintained that international cooperation and concession in political relationships was not "internationalism," as many claimed, but "plain common sense." Joining with other nations for the common good of all did not connote loss of national individuality, but opened the way for its further development.

His basic plea was for a responsible United States role in the international arena. But he did not want his
voice joined with those who called for world government. Conversely, he did not seek identification with the hard-shell isolationists. His call went out for reliable and accountable national policies consistent with the theory of independent, federalistic control. "As the world becomes more crowded," he wrote, "the need for local self-government becomes greater." He likened a nation to a firmly-rooted tree: "the roots are local self-government, and the healthier the roots, the healthier the tree."21 Locarno represented to Davis the culmination of efforts by European statesmen to break down age-old enmities on the continent and to launch a constructive endeavor toward political, economic and moral solutions to the world's plight. He held the same hope for disarmament parleys, although he doubted America's readiness to participate fully in their planning.

A significant contribution by the United States to effective solutions depended upon rejection of rampant materialism and dedication to a higher level of morality. And the "roaring twenties" certainly left much room for moralizing. Davis attempted before partisan and non-partisan audiences to instill the idea that American refusal

to assume a more responsible international role endangered the prospect of continued prosperity. Exhibiting missionary zeal and evoking high idealism, he sought to re-kindle the crusading spirit that inspired people during World War I. If America had abdicated to Europe her hold on moral leadership of the world, then Davis considered the time had arrived to retrieve the helm and plot the future course toward peace.

With all the skill of an evangelist, he flavored his speeches with homilies and analogies, especially his favorite comparison of the nation to the human body, in order to insure full understanding and the widest possible appeal. "If the moral fibre of this nation is to remain healthy and its material interests are not to suffer," he told a group of Democratic women in March 1926, "we must assume and discharge our moral obligations by working for a just and lasting peace, which was our chief aim in the World War." Every effort and every sacrifice had to be made to achieve the eradication from the world of both physical and spiritual conflict. But, he emphasized, there must be a positive motivation in the movement. It must take cognizance of the existence of "a brotherhood of man and . . . nations." Cooperative efforts among these forces would lead to the "flowering of every individuality
and every potentiality of the entire human race."  

Davis was no less forceful in pointing out to a nonpartisan group in Boston that peace and disarmament represented the most vital problems confronting the world. But he likened arms expenditures to economic burdens on the world's peoples and thereby gave a new dimension to his ideas. Recalling the heritage from Wilson, he suggested that nations bankrupt as a result of the war "cannot be restored to healthy life" until freed from the financial impediments arising from both the last war and the threat of future wars. Only international action in the form of security guarantees could clear the way to international peace and thereby insure "protection against potential enemies." In defense of his arguments, he cited a salutary wave of domestic opinion, pressing for cooperative efforts to establish peace and good will and for extension of America's circle of foreign contacts. This popular expression required nurturing because the expectation of "enduring peace" would be fulfilled only if the populace launched its undertakings filled with the same zeal "with which they entered and waged a war to end wars." And Davis doubted that either the conscience or the aspirations

22 Speech text, March 22, 1926, entitled "The United States: A Member of the Family of Nations" and delivered before the Women's Democratic Luncheon Club of Philadelphia; Davis Papers.
PREFACE

The idea for this work sprang from two distinct roots: an abiding interest in the historical evolution of American disarmament policy in the inter-war years; and a cautious hope that a study of this developmental process could be centered around one individual. The record of American policy during the period has been abundantly documented and studied. Most such examinations represent either expanded analyses of the whole United States effort or restricted monographs of selected conferences or policies. Some of the treatments include limitation of armaments as just another aspect of the total American foreign affairs spectrum. None of the works, however, centers on a single individual. Although my study includes a certain amount of well-known information, its function is that of providing a framework. Working within this structure, I have attempted to demonstrate how one man exerted a significant influence on the growth, formulation, continuity, representation and, finally, abandonment of American arms control policy from the late years of Hoover's term in office through the early years of Roosevelt's second administration. That man was Norman Hezekiah Davis.
of the American people would ever be satisfied with anything less than universal peace and justice.\(^\text{23}\)

The moral convictions and peaceful desires of Americans undoubtedly experienced satisfaction when President Coolidge named a diplomatic delegation to the Geneva disarmament negotiations to begin in early 1926. But European statesmen immediately injected the complicating factor of war debts into the deliberations. Minister Hugh S. Gibson occupied the uncomfortable position of representing the Administration. He recommended economies by European governments in order that they might fulfill their World War I obligations to the United States and concurrently suggested arms reduction. He refused, however, to acknowledge any American responsibility in the equally important problem of European national security. On the other hand, those same European nations sought some form of mutual security that would enable them to reduce arms expenditures and thereby meet their financial indebtedness to the United States. Out of this impasse arose the European cry for debt cancellation in recognition of continental payments in "blood, sweat and tears" during the war. The classic reply from America's Chief Executive had

\(^{23}\)Speech text, April 13, 1926, of a speech delivered that date before the Massachusetts Branch, League of Nations Nonpartisan Association in Boston; Davis Papers.
been noteworthy only in its manifestation of an attitude reminiscent of the usurious money-lenders of the Dark Ages. But the vital question remained that of whether Calvin Coolidge's, "They hired the money, didn't they?" reflected American public opinion or influenced it.

The Presidential attitude caused some consternation within the circle of friends and acquaintances around Norman Davis. European desires to link the debt and disarmament questions and equally strong American arguments that the two issues were in no way intertwined constituted the heart of the debate. In response to a letter from Newton D. Baker, Davis agreed that tying up debt cancellation with disarmament would be unwise, although he doubted that the majority of Americans would ever recognize any moral obligations to annul the debts without some signs of progress toward European recovery. He perceived an American popular apprehension that savings realized from debt invalidation might be diverted into increased arms appropriations and not into financial and economic rehabilitation. Then reiterating a favorite argument, he submitted that "if the United States were cooperating with the other nations" the people's frame of mind would be more receptive to constructive solutions of problems of such magnitude and complexity.  

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24 Davis to Baker, September 8, 1926; Davis Papers.
Under the pressure of newly-emergent circumstances, Davis had the courage to part company with Wilsonian thought, thereby revealing a basically pragmatic flavor in his own philosophy. The war-time President had rejected debt cancellation and set the trend followed by both Harding and Coolidge. But Davis now detected some of the more complex ingredients in the European situation as well as an American public outlook that failed to appreciate fully the ramifications of the European plight. The sum total revealed an apparent impasse. More precisely, European nations, suffering from internal economic strife, sought relief through the termination of war-contracted financial burdens and through reduced expenditures for armaments. The first contingency called for United States action, while a security program for the continent necessitated European negotiations.

Davis was aware of American fear, justifiable to a certain degree, that unilateral relaxation of debt requirements, which he favored, would not be accompanied by multi-lateral approval of a mutual security program, but rather by a diversion of European savings into increased arms. The alternative he offered was more effective United States cooperation, not only to exert its influence, but also to assure the American people of responsible representation of their aspirations. Certainly the logic behind his analysis
appeared sound, but, as so often is the case, suspicion and fear are not parts of logic. Europe cried out for relief from debts and armaments, but was unable to dispel the apprehensions growing out of the war. On the other hand, traditional American concepts held all European actions to be suspect; equally as important, Americans feared European duplicity that could bring on another war. And the events of 1927, when American diplomats met with European statesmen in two conferences, did not tend to reassure Americans in the least.

The International Economic Conference, held under League auspices in Geneva from May 4 through May 23, 1927, offered America an opportunity to cooperate with Europe in the important fields of economic stabilization and world trade. Coolidge condescended to send delegates, among whom was Norman Davis, holder of "many positions of high rank in public as well as private affairs." But the President refused to empower the men with any authority to negotiate agreements. These "ears without mouths," as they became known, listened to pleas for tariff reductions and sympathized with their European counterparts, but were powerless to aid them. "The biggest problem before the conference, certainly the most vexatious and intricate," read a contemporary account, "was that of trade barriers," handled
by the important Commerce Commission of which Davis was a member. A free flow of trade, argued the Europeans, would enable them to dispose of their excess commodities and allocate the profits to further industrial expansion and amelioration of unemployment problems. But the protection-minded Republican Administration thwarted all endeavors and rebuffed all overtures and, in the absence of American assistance, the conference ended without achieving the anticipated success.

Writing later of his experience, Davis coupled the economic difficulties with the issue of arms control: "the only hope for the reduction of the burdens and dangers of excessive armaments is through some form of international agreement." Governments could not continue the customary fixing of tariff and military policies "as an isolated, individualistic act of sovereignty." The inevitable result of such action, he asserted, was retaliation by other nations and the "pyramiding of tariffs, the piling up of armaments." Relief lay only in a more enlightened view that respected the importance of "give-and-take cooperation." Even the least perceptive reader could

25 Review of Reviews, June 1927, 565; Current History (New York Times), XXVI, No. 10 (July 1927), 582.

detect the applicability of his remarks to the United States. Suffice it to say, however, that the Coolidge reaction to the general conference recommendation for lowering prohibitive tariffs and similar trade barriers was extremely cool. The Chief Executive, in spite of the conclusions of his emissaries, was not prepared to commit the United States to any manner of coordinated action in the world economic field.

Nor, as it soon became apparent, did the Coolidge Administration exhibit any imagination, ingenuity or diplomatic finesse in the realm of naval limitation. Five years earlier, criticizing the Washington Conference, Davis pointed out that "poorly organized" conferences, "called suddenly," would never produce disarmament; the Geneva (or "Coolidge") Naval Conference of 1927 qualified on both counts and justified his contention. Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg was not Secretary Hughes and American retrenchment of naval building had left the United States with no navy to destroy as Hughes had boldly done. The President also ran into League endeavors to effect worldwide disarmament; Italy and France declined invitations, basing their actions on prior obligations to the League program (on which the United States itself was working). Coolidge's Conference staggered through late June, all of
July and into early August, before the principals—America, England, and Japan—finally broke off deliberations.

The American people were disappointed with the Geneva failure, but it was their Chief Executive who had to accept a large share of the blame. American-British differences over parity of cruisers, a dispute that evolved out of the Preparatory Committee talks, and the diversity of security requirements of all three powers should have been coordinated in preliminary diplomatic exchanges. Discovery in advance of the absence of a spirit of compromise could have spared the world the shock of detecting the deep cleavage between the major sea powers. More important, the Anglo-American breach created at the conference would not be closed until Hoover met with Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald at Camp Rapidan in October 1929. Little wonder then, after two successive failures, that the American people found small satisfaction in the Administration record in 1927 in international negotiations.

But Norman Davis could take heart from the fact that with the New Year came another election and a renewed opportunity to change the Washington situation by the ballot. Although he deeply believed in the League and always fostered the hope that the United States ultimately would join, he was enough of a practical politician to realize the depth of isolationist and anti-League sentiment.
Reacting to a draft Democratic platform sent to him by R. R. Bowker, publisher of *Publisher's Weekly* and an "idea" man in the party, Davis confirmed his support of League membership, but expressed pessimism about getting a party declaration advocating it. In fact, he even questioned whether the party should endorse indiscriminate cooperation with the League on all matters. Would it not be better, he suggested, "to say that we favor cooperation . . . to whatever extent we may rightfully and usefully do so under our Constitutional practices?" But this was the same type of reasoning employed by Senator Henry Cabot Lodge in submitting his "Fourteen Reservations" to the Versailles Treaty. Was it equally plausible in 1928? Possibly; yet it is doubtful that Davis looked to Wilson's ardent opponent for arguments to support American affiliation with the League on selected issues. Therefore this was undoubtedly a manifestation of his propensity for adjusting his outlook to the exigencies of a practical situation.

Other Democrats on the national level also sought advice from Davis during the 1928 campaign. New York gubernatorial candidate Franklin D. Roosevelt queried him for suggestions "on our international relations. . . .

27 Davis to Bowker, December 22, 1927 and February 1, 1928; Davis Papers.
a large rough hewn Democratic platform plank, out of which a highly finished carving can be made," the objective being a partisan stand in a *Foreign Affairs* article. Davis cited naval disarmament to Roosevelt as the key issue on which to attack the Republicans because of the lethargy instilled in the American people as a result of being "grossly misled by Hughes." Moreover, if the United States neither wanted to cooperate with other nations nor desired to join the League, then this country must not stand in the way of contemplated action by other states aimed at limiting activities of given countries or punishing violators of international obligations.

Turning then to the Kellogg-Briand negotiations on the universal outlawing of war, Davis observed that the legal status of an individual within a country largely governed that country's concept of the status of a nation within a group of nations. More specifically, since all national states recognized that an individual had the right to defend himself, then it followed that all nations would accept as justifiable a national right of self-defense. Unfortunately, social and legal practice had not advanced sufficiently for nations to renounce war altogether, although Davis considered the Briand proposal to be as "constructive" as the times allowed.
In a most penetrating piece of advice, he told the future President that the United States now faced a set of circumstances that made a choice between possible foreign policies mandatory. Basing his considerations on the adverse reaction registered with Congressional leaders on an increased naval building program, Davis submitted that the United States must choose between isolation, independence or cooperation. "If we are not going to cooperate, then we ought to arm to the hilt." Codifying into international statutes an agreement that war was illegal would not prevent war because of the inherently negative connotation embodied in the action. The sole possibility for the prevention of hostilities lay in the mobilization of positive moral forces, cooperating in international agencies, to insure constant vigilance and to guarantee removal of sources of conflict. He believed further that the time had come when the nation could be awakened to a realization of the need to mobilize "in the cause of peace." Again the combination of missionary zeal and persuasive argument can be detected in the Davis standpoint; however, his ever-present optimism appeared to override his usually perceptive analyses of the public scene.

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28 Roosevelt to Davis, March 30, 1928, and two replies, April 12 and April 17, 1928; Davis Papers. Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Our Foreign Policy: A Democratic View," Foreign Affairs, VI, No. 4 (July 1928), 573-586.
The only other known study of Davis was done by Harold B. Whiteman, Jr., in 1958 under Dr. Samuel Flagg Bemis at Yale University. Whiteman, the husband of Davis' granddaughter, takes credit for completing the first exhaustive examination of the Davis Papers in the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. I, too, concentrated my research efforts on the Davis Papers, supplementing them with material from the Roosevelt Papers in Hyde Park, New York, and from memoirs of contemporaries of Davis, both friendly and hostile. Other productive sources proved to be the published reports of the League of Nations Preparatory Committee for the World Disarmament Conference and of the World Conference itself, as well as the annually-released series of Department of State Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States. The published articles and speeches of Norman H. Davis in numerous newspapers and periodicals provided valuable insight into his attitudes and thoughts on current issues during the period. Undoubtedly some of my work retraced that done by Whiteman, but his work on Davis is broader in scope than mine and does not deal with the evolution of arms control policy in depth. Whiteman describes his efforts as a "political biography of Mr. Davis."

This present study is not a biography. It seeks rather to trace the influence of Norman H. Davis on American
The Democratic National Convention in Houston represented the next stop for him in this election year. He attended as a delegate from New York's 19th District; the delegation was led by Roosevelt. The official convention report lists Davis as the sixth-highest, single contributor in the amount of $25,000, his total outlay for the party cause from January 1925 until convention time. Without downgrading the size or importance of his monetary donation, it was far exceeded by the value of his experience and knowledge of the international situation and the domestic scene.

A comparison of some of Davis' ideas, especially those passed on to Roosevelt, with Democratic foreign policy planks in 1928 reflects in some measure his influence at the convention. The platform called for restoration of the United States "to its former position as a leader in the movement for international arbitration, conciliation, conference and limitation of armament by international agreement." Until achievement of the latter goal, the party endorsed "the maintenance of an army and navy adequate for national defense." Moreover, the party idea of "full, free and open cooperation with all other nations for the promotion of peace and justice throughout the world" seemed to echo the words of Davis through the years. And the Democratic condemnation of Republican negotiation
of the Washington Treaty as a "gesture towards peace . . . because it merely substituted one weapon of destruction for another" seemed reminiscent of the 1924 campaign stand he took against the Coolidge Administration.29

But all the effort was again for naught. In November 1928, the Democrats went down to their third successive defeat. Davis supported Alfred E. Smith valiantly and worked hard during the campaign only to see all they stood for rejected at the hands of the electorate. In a letter to Bowker, his disappointment and disillusion were evident: "I do not know where it will finally wind up, but I hope it will result in making the Democratic Party a genuine liberal party. Franklin Roosevelt may serve as the unifying force."30 This reference to the successful New York Governor was undoubtedly serious, but before he obtained the nomination in 1932, Davis entertained grave reservations about him and offered to support a succession of different candidates in preference to Roosevelt. All that was four years away, however, and in the interim,


30Davis to Bowker, November 27, 1928; Davis Papers.
matters of more immediate import, such as the Pact of Paris, which the Senate approved on January 15, 1929, demanded consideration.

In a private expression of satisfaction over Secretary Kellogg's success, Davis wrote to him after the Senate fight over the Kellogg-Briand Pact to outlaw war ended: "Now that it is all through, I want to congratulate you on the Pact . . . and what you have done to get it formulated and accepted. As a matter of fact I believe that the opposition of the irreconcilables in the Senate has resulted in more good than harm." And, displaying an affinity to give praise where and when due, he was no less laudatory in his public appraisal of the Republican contribution to the peace effort. He told the Academy of Political Science that the pact "embodies in a general treaty the great ideal that nations, instead of trying to destroy one another, shall find orderly ways to compose their differences and to work together for their own and the common good." In fact, he found that wide acceptance of the treaty and its incorporation into the corpus of international law gave the agreement great potential as an inspiration for disarmament.

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31 Davis to Kellogg, January 17, 1929; Davis Papers.

Without further analysis, these two separate statements do not appear consistent with Davis' previous stands on the "peace pact." Yet closer examination reveals an estimate of the treaty as a stimulus to increased international cooperation or, in other words, the transformation of an initially negative concept into a highly positive force. No realistic basis existed for such a conclusion by Davis and his eternal optimism again has to be looked upon as the key factor in his reasoning process. His disposition to hope for the best probably exceeded his better judgment, although in later years he frequently used the Paris Pact principles in argumentation and negotiation because of their stature as international law. And time alone would demonstrate that the treaty instead of stimulating world cooperation would have the reverse effect of lulling the world into complacency.

The ratification of the Kellogg-Briand Pact heralded the end of the Coolidge Administration and, while Davis was complimentary about its curtain act, certain of the ideas of the new Chief Executive proved unappealing to him. In his Armistice Day speech of 1929, Hoover called for international adherence to a creed, guaranteeing food ships free passage in time of war, thereby serving humanitarian needs. Davis exhibited extreme causticity in his criticism of the President's appeal because it ignored the
experience and knowledge Hoover had gained from dealing with wartime hazards to shipping. Most of all, however, he abhorred the plea for humanizing warfare instead of abolishing it. "It is discouraging," he wrote, "to have the President, who has had so much experience and has given so much thought to international problems, get out of step with all of the forward-moving forces who are trying to do away with war as an institution." Before all too long, Davis would get a chance to exert his own influence on the Hoover Administration, if not toward strengthening the world's resolve against war, then at least toward abetting the movement to reduce arms. But one more chapter in the inter-war disarmament efforts had to be written prior to the official entry of Davis into the flow of events.

The London Naval Conference of 1930 opened with expectations of succeeding where the "Coolidge" Conference had failed. Considerable planning preceded the meetings to insure Anglo-American agreement on parity and a further naval reduction based on the Washington Conference formula seemed to be in the offing. Norman Davis was vitally interested in the outcome as demonstrated in a letter to Under-Secretary of State Joseph P. Cotton while the conference was in progress. The communication reflects

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33Davis to Thomas G. Chamberlain, November 29, 1929; Davis Papers.
Davis' determined drive for close consultation between nations at set intervals. But it also exhibits an idealistic desire to capitalize on the high tenor of world opinion in favor of peace and to satisfy the demands of popular sentiment with a far-reaching agreement. He endorsed the wisdom of "settling disputes by peaceful processes" to avoid having to settle them by violence. "It is easier to prevent war than to control it after it breaks out, and it is better to confer beforehand than afterwards."

Even if the conference resulted in increased naval building, the world would not sustain a failure, provided definite ratios governed all categories of vessels and recognition was given the principle that the size of a nation's navy concerned not just that nation alone.

Davis also took the occasion to suggest the expansion of the conference beyond the single issue of arms control. He even formulated a preamble calculated to facilitate the conference work and to interject the Kellogg-Briand principles directly into the negotiations. Renunciation of war reduced the need for naval vessels and, in fact, presented the possibility for limitation of naval expansion. Moreover, restriction of naval tonnage would "remove suspicion and reduce competition" by extending to naval warfare the same defensive concepts that the Pact of Paris introduced to land hostilities. But
the height of idealism and optimism broke through in his summary: "As the transformation from the old war basis to the new peace basis proceeds, as is now taking place with much promise," every expectation pointed toward even further reduction, a goal desired by all nations.34

Even Davis admitted his ideas were "a little platitudinous," a conclusion that could well be drawn with respect to various of his earlier idealistic pronouncements. But how much more appealing and possibly more effective the London Treaty might actually have been through introduction of Davis' "platitudes." Perhaps the real tragedy is that, although Cotton confirmed to Davis later that his suggestions had been sent along to the London delegation, the tone of the recommendations is not reflected in the treaty.35 The dry phrases about carrying-forward the work of the Washington Conference and preventing the dangers of and expenditures for armaments did not capture the popular imagination.

In contrast, the ideas of Davis, if they had been codified into a treaty, might have rallied and sustained a

34Davis to Cotton, March 31, 1930; Davis Papers.

35Cotton to Davis, April 21, 1930; Davis Papers. For the full text of the treaty see U.S. Senate, Disarmament and Security: A Collection of Documents, 1919-1955 (Washington, D.C., 1956), 30-43, 84th Congress, 2nd Session, Sub-Committee on Disarmament.
popular outcry to deter Japan or Italy from launching their subsequent imperialistic adventures or to force a greater spirit of compromise between a recalcitrant France and an uneasy Germany. Certainly he must have envisioned a potential universal appeal in his arguments, else he would not have sought to make his thoughts known to key policy makers. Nevertheless, the suggestions were ignored and the conference completed its work in April 1930. The final treaty sustained the ratio system between America, England and Japan and set an upper limit in all categories of vessels, thus lessening the chances of an outright naval race. All in all, however, the London Conference saw disarmament score only a partial victory.

The major arms control problem that faced the Hoover Administration after London centered around the World Disarmament Conference. In December 1930, the League's Preparatory Committee had approved a draft treaty and adjourned its activities, setting February 1932 as the date for the full-dress conference. The treaty represented some four years' work in innumerable public and private, general and technical sessions. Fifty-nine nations participated to greater or lesser degrees in formulating treaty provisions either acceptable to all countries or negotiable by all countries in a proper atmosphere of compromise. The successful culmination of the efforts in a formal treaty
for national ratification depended upon the outcome of the deliberations scheduled for Geneva.

To the Hoover Administration fell the task not only of establishing the guidelines of American policy, but also that of selecting the delegates to represent the United States. At least in general terms, the government attitude was clear: American national security demanded full participation in all agreements affecting naval armaments; America's geographic isolation in the Western Hemisphere and her traditional refusal to enter into "entangling alliances" dictated reticence as regarded reduction of land armaments, a matter of primary concern to the European nations. The finite details of the policy, on the other hand, had to await the designation of delegation members.

Paramount among the Hoover considerations in selecting delegates was that of bipartisanship. He desired to send to Geneva a delegation that enjoyed the support of both political parties as insurance of Congressional and public acceptance of any treaty that emerged. At least initially, however, obtaining qualified personnel proved difficult. Dwight Morrow, originally chosen to head the group, died in October 1931 and former Vice-President Charles G. Dawes replaced him. Then Dawes withdrew to direct the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. Hoover finally decided upon Secretary of State Henry Stimson for
delegation chairman, leaving the bulk of the negotiations to Hugh S. Gibson, a career Foreign Service Officer and the American representative at the Preparatory Committee meetings. Serving with Gibson was Hugh R. Wilson, also a career officer, who was named as an alternate delegate. Dr. Mary E. Woolley, President of Mt. Holyoke College, provided the delegation with a voice from the highly-organized women's peace movement. Representing the Democrats was Senator Claude Swanson, then ranking member of the all-important Foreign Relations Committee.

The final member of the delegation was Norman H. Davis. After nearly a decade of speaking out on matters of foreign and domestic concern to the nation, he was to have the opportunity to exchange his role of partisan, private critic of world disarmament efforts for that of bipartisan, public representative of American policy. During years past, he had not always seen eye-to-eye with Hoover nor had he always been kind to the Republicans. Yet the sharpness of his criticism was dulled by personal qualities that made him highly acceptable as an American delegate to one of the most important international conferences during the interwar period. He had varied experience in diplomacy and he enjoyed a fine reputation in European and League of Nations councils. A known and vocal Wilsonian idealist, he was honored and respected within the Democratic Party. Even
disarmament policy from 1931 to early 1938. I have no particular axe to grind or case to argue. History has already done that work for me. Despite Davis' best efforts, some of which were feasible, others of which were unquestionably inadequate, but forcibly so, given the nature of the problem and the tenor of the times, world order collapsed in both the Far East and Europe. There seems little doubt that Davis, an avid and out-spoken member of the internationalist wing of the Democratic Party, was a casualty of an era in which domestic considerations far outweighed the demands of remote foreign developments. Be that as it may, it has been my intention to recount as accurately and as fully as possible the disarmament record of Davis. In many instances, his policy recommendations are reflected in alterations of the American position. In others, his advice went unheeded. Considered in their entirety, his plans and programs either fell short of or far exceeded the demands of the inter-war era. By no means was this necessarily his fault.

The fabric of world order had begun to unravel before Norman H. Davis undertook the task of negotiating away the weapons of war. All barriers and obstacles considered, the amazing fact remains that he sustained his optimism. He suffered disillusion, but regained his cheerful outlook; endured set-backs, yet renewed his
more noteworthy, however, were his profound loyalty and dedication to the fundamental American principles of peace, justice and freedom as well as his abiding sense of fair play. All these attributes combined to qualify Norman Davis eminently for appointment by President Hoover as a worthy "adviser to the opposition."
CHAPTER II
THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, THE WORLD’S GREAT HOPE

The delegations to the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments at Geneva in February 1932 carried with them the hopes and aspirations of the entire world. It is doubtful that any of the delegates or their constituents even remotely imagined that the deliberations, once commenced, would extend over nearly four years. But a deteriorating world political situation, first in Asia and then in Europe, and a growing emphasis on national security prompted the emergence of policies of naked national self-interest. The hope for mutual cooperation and coordination on the topic of arms control grew steadily more frail. The armament-building holiday proclaimed in November 1931 to improve the atmosphere for the conference rapidly disintegrated into a race to rearm and to strengthen existing armed forces. In theory and in people’s minds the world over, the first really major and perhaps best-planned venture toward arms control afforded a genuine opportunity for the diversion of expenditures on weapons of war into the challenging task of ameliorating the world economic plight. In reality, however, the
chances that the conference would ever succeed were extremely remote from the outset. And the Hoover-Stimson policies that bound the American delegation were not the least of the causes for the ultimate failure.

The essence of the Hoover-Stimson approach to the world armaments dilemma consisted of discounting American interest in reduction of land arms, emphasizing United States concern for continuing naval limitation, and praising the economic advantages of lowering weapons expenses. This outlook envisioned American freedom from "entangling alliances" with Europe, where land forces were a prime consideration; American cooperation in reducing world navies, yet retention of the same relative proportion of the total naval forces; and American diversion of capital to spur domestic economic recovery without any forfeiture in national security. There is little doubt that these ideas fulfilled popular demands for non-involvement and for an end to the depression, but they also meant continued rejection of any American contribution to the cause of international security. Rather than seeking to transform the isolationistic outcries into public support of responsible American cooperation or even participation, the President and his Secretary of State acceded to them. In short, Hoover and Stimson apparently wanted the rest of the world to achieve political stability without United
States assistance, although the best evidence, the experience of World War I, indicated the existence of an international power situation in which America held the balance.

Speaking before the International Chamber of Commerce in May 1931, Hoover set forth the fundamental views that were to guide his Administration's initial arms control efforts. The atmosphere for disarmament, he declared, had improved after the signing of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, which renounced war, established self-defense as the right of all nations, and reduced the power of the offense within national armies. This general observation would subsequently gain importance as a feature of American policy, but Hoover was even more specific in referring to the upcoming disarmament conference: "Of all the proposals for the economic rehabilitation of the world, I know of none which compares in necessity or importance with the successful result of that conference." He offered America's demobilized army as evidence of her lack of "direct interest" in land armament reduction, while asserting an "indirect interest in greater assurance of peace, order and . . . economic prosperity."¹

¹U.S. Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1931, I, 494-495. Subsequent references are limited to the short-title: FR with the appropriate year, e.g., FR, 1931.
Nor was this emphasis on the strictly economic attributes of international disarmament an ephemeral thing to the Hoover Administration. William R. Castle, Under-Secretary of State, struck a similar note in August 1931 in a memorandum to the American Minister in Switzerland. Replying to a report of threatened postponement of the planned Disarmament Conference, Castle indicated that the United States had no course of action if the issue were taken up in the League Council, but

... we should feel very sorry to have it postponed. At this time of economic depression everywhere, it seems to me that the saving that might be accomplished by a successful disarmament conference is even more important than it would be in ordinary times.2

On the eve of the conference in his 1931 Message to Congress, the Chief Executive reiterated the American position, while adding the hope for further progress in naval arms reduction and the initiation of limitation procedures for land arms. Hoover pointed out that taxes for armaments exceeded the pre-World War level. These expenditures and the arms they produced were definitely a partial cause of the prevailing economic instability. Therefore,

2Ibid., 521. A memo in the same volume, p. 521, of a conversation between Castle and the President asserts the latter's view to be that conveyed to Minister Hugh R. Wilson.
the world should allow nothing to discourage restrictions on weapons of war by sane and reasonable means.3

President Hoover established the general framework for American policy, but Secretary Stimson filled in the details. He exuded scepticism from the beginning. In his memoirs stands the candid statement:

. . . his own conviction was that armaments were less a cause than a result of international insecurity, and he was not optimistic about the prospects for disarmament unless and until the major political difficulties of Europe should have been materially eased.4

In fact, Stimson viewed the whole arms problem as European in nature. He rejected an offer of an American vice-presidency of the conference. Openly and vocally, he expressed his disgust that the European nations were not solving their disputes in advance. "We therefore propose to hold ourselves free from commitment in respect to the conference," he wrote to his Minister in Switzerland in January 1931, "until we ascertain whether this initial, fundamental necessity for direct negotiation between the interested Powers is underway."5 In other words, the United States might not even go to Geneva, if the proper

3Ibid., xxv.

4Henry Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Duty in Peace and War (New York, 1947), 266.

5FR, 1931, I, 485.
climate for productive parleys failed to materialize.

As the conference loomed closer, Stimson did not change his attitude. During July and August 1931, he traveled through Europe on vacation and took advantage of the opportunity to make his convictions known to European statesmen. He told Arthur Henderson of an unwillingness "to let American participation be made a scapegoat for non-preparation by Europe." But the United States would, he added, use moral influence to bolster any progress in the deliberations and would work hard to seek ways for exerting such influence.6

Speaking at a press conference shortly after returning to America, Stimson denied any direct concern with the problems before the Disarmament Conference, all of which were essentially bilateral between the nations of Europe. And then he wrote again to Minister Wilson in Geneva: "In preparing for the . . . Conference, therefore, our function must be necessarily to encourage others to come to grips with their own problems just as we did when similar problems were at our doorstep." The expression of any opinions in advance would "involve us in entanglements," however, America would use her influence "toward just and effective disarmament in cooperation with . . .

6 Ibid., 509.
Europe. Thus, from an evaluation of pronouncements of both the President and his Secretary of State, it can be readily seen that they envisioned America's role at Geneva to be that of an inactive participant, willing to suggest, ready to encourage, yet reluctant to intervene, loath to intermediate.

It was no wonder then, when Norman H. Davis and his colleagues gathered for luncheon with the President in early January 1932, that Administration guidelines were couched in general terms. The navy being America's principal arm and naval limitation being covered by the Washington and London Treaties, the delegation would play an essentially passive role at Geneva. Following the theory that armaments served a defensive rather than an offensive purpose, the President and his Secretary of State agreed on the desirability of limiting purely aggressive weapons. As concerned the air forces, considerable dispute existed within official circles as to the potential value of commercial aircraft for military uses, but the consensus suggested that Europe need not fear United States air might nor did America harbor any fears of European air strength.

7 Ibid., 523.
8 Memorandum, prepared by Theodore Marriner, Department of State, of a luncheon conversation of the American delegation with the President on January 5, 1932; Davis Papers.
It was at the subsequent State Department briefing of the delegation that Theodore Marriner outlined the President's feelings: "The principle purpose of the Conference is to arrive at a general treaty limiting or reducing all armaments, thus removing the menace of competition in arms and relieving the world of the monstrous burden of unproductive expense." Seen in practical terms, such a treaty implied new bases of relativity between nations and altered the essential requirements for national defense. America had always maintained a "policy of reasonable posture of defense" and the delegation should not accept any restrictions of this general guideline. In short, the delegates could agree to reductions all along the line until the relative position of the United States became affected, at which juncture national self-interest should be asserted.

These first two orientations represented only the beginning. Through the middle of January, three of the delegates, Davis, Swanson and Woolley, underwent intensive briefings in Washington in preparation for their departure for Geneva. There they would join Acting Chairman Gibson.

9 Memorandum, probably prepared by Noel H. Field, Department of State (the paper bears the initials: "NHF"), of a Department briefing of the delegates on January 5, 1932; Davis Papers. Stimson echoed the same line in a telegram of instructions to Hugh Gibson on January 19, 1932; FR, 1932, I, 1-11.
and alternate delegate Wilson. Considered in its entirety, the United States group provided an interesting study in personalities as noted by Dr. Woolley, a candid and observant recorder of daily events at Geneva:

The four members of the Delegation represent four types; Mr. Gibson, friendly, witty, somewhat cynical; Mr. Wilson, thoughtful, quiet, hardworking, not over optimistic; Senator Swanson, genial, warm-hearted, extremely nationalistic; Mr. Davis, eager to go all the way, but realizing that it is a condition, not a theory which confronts us, bringing all his international experience to bear on these questions, caring only for accomplishment, not an iota for recognition.

Another frank and outspoken observer of the delegation, Jay Pierrepont Moffat, State Department adviser on arms control, noted the relaxed, yet attentive attitude of Davis: He sat "slouched in a chair, occasionally speaking in a low measured voice, which commanded attention."10

The contributions of Norman Davis to the American role in the international deliberations on arms control throughout all of 1932 and into early 1933 were second only, if not equal, to those of Hugh Gibson. If the entire spectrum of American relations with Europe is viewed, one can easily advance and defend the conclusion that Davis' efforts exceeded those of the Acting Delegation Chairman.

courageous endeavors. He was the personification of perseverance until the very end, when, after suffering nearly two decades of defeat, he finally abandoned the cause of disarmament for the less political and more humanitarian position of President of the American National Red Cross. Had his rear-guard action restored world stability? Hardly; however, the ultimate collapse might have come sooner, but for his valorous struggle.

Norman H. Davis may never receive the full laurels of posterity in recognition of his valiant quest to rid the world of its arsenals of destruction. By documenting and recording Davis' search, it is my earnest hope that the experience he contributed to the evolution of American arms control policy may serve us well in our present deliberations of the problem and assist us in avoiding the pitfalls that plagued the inter-war generation of diplomats of disarmament.

I should like to express my deepest thanks to Professor Foster Rhea Dulles, whose advice, counsel and friendship have been invaluable and whose patience has been limitless. My gratitude also goes out to Mr. George S. Franklin, Jr., Executive Director of the Council on Foreign Relations, for granting me the privilege of using the Davis Papers. I am indebted to Messrs. John de Forry,
From February through mid-March, he participated in conference plenary sessions and in most "behind-the-scenes" meetings with envoys from the four Great Powers—Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany. Concurrently, he served as American member of the Air Committee, one of the five committees—political, naval, military, air, and national expenditures—established by the General Commission to deal with technical facets of the overall issue of arms control. In late March, Davis returned to the United States in an attempt to forge out a more effective policy for the American delegation. He returned to the conference tables in April, accompanied by Secretary Stimson. Subsequently, Davis was instrumental in formulating the United States proposals of April 11 and in the drafting and presenting of the Hoover Plan, submitted on June 22 to the conference.

After the July 23 adjournment, Davis anticipated a temporary escape from official duties until January 1933, when the conference would again convene. He returned to the United States, fully expecting to participate in the election campaign. Davis conferred with Roosevelt in August, but forfeited the opportunity to plead the Democratic cause to the people by answering Hoover's September call to represent the United States at London in planning the World Economic Conference. Then, after Germany walked out of the disarmament discussions, Davis
worked to bring about, and also took part in, the December talks which led to the recognition of German objections and her ultimate return to Geneva. Sandwiched in between parleys related to the Economic and Disarmament Conferences were conversations in London on prospective revision of the existing naval limitation treaties. Even though the economic and naval issues, as well as the impasse with Germany, were largely negotiated after the Republican defeat in the November elections, Davis remained at his post and sustained the policies set forth by the "opposition."

* * * *

When the Disarmament Conference opened formally on February 2, 1932, the privilege of establishing the American position fell, of course, to Hugh Gibson. Using the issues on which the Preparatory Committee had developed general agreement, on February 9, he outlined a nine-point program that provided the framework for endeavors by the American delegation: prolongation of the Washington and London naval treaties contingent upon Italian and French adherence to the latter; proportional reduction of naval tonnage consistent with the tenets of existing treaties; abolition of submarines, lethal gases and bacteriological warfare; and acceptance of the Preparatory Committee draft convention as a basis for discussion.
Three of the points mentioned represented a change from the previous American stand in the Preparatory Committee: Limitation of expenditures as a preventive for qualitative competition in arms once a quantitative race had been ruled out; division of armed forces into police and defense categories with the former regulated by an irreducible formula and the latter subject to reduction on a basis of relativity; and imposition of special restrictions on "peculiarly aggressive" arms. In reality, only one of these points, budgetary limitation, constituted a concession because the United States had been the sole remaining opponent to such limitation when the Preparatory Committee adjourned. The other two "new ideas" represented little more than logical extensions of concepts set forth in the Kellogg-Briand Pact of which the United States was already a signatory.

In developing the program within the conference framework, Davis first sought to bring American philosophy to bear on his European counterparts. Only three days after Gibson's speech before the General Commission, he encountered opposition from France in the person of Andre Tardieu. The French Premier sympathized with the idea of curbing aggression by eliminating aggressive weapons, yet

he conceived the root of the problem to be the establishment of a political foundation for peace from which disarmament would automatically follow. Davis agreed with the recalcitrant Frenchman that ultimately the world had to be organized for peace, nonetheless, "progress in every possible direction" was of paramount importance. He also endorsed the desirability of settling political questions, as he always had, but he emphasized that current impediments to political solutions should not impede the disarmament effort. Relief of tension from inequality in armaments, he added, would "foster good will, improve political relations and reduce the danger of armed conflict."

Evaluating the total conversation to the Department later, Davis found Tardieu on the defensive and uncertain about French ability to dominate Europe, even with superior military strength. Because of this fact, there existed a French desire to make peace, "to be accompanied by or followed by a substantial reduction in armaments." This report exhibited the optimism that was ever to characterize both Davis' manner of reporting and his approach to problems, old or new. Yet try as he might, he was unable to overcome French obstinacy and interject the degree of experimentation he desired into the initial Geneva meetings.

\[12\textbf{Ibid.}, 34 \text{ and } 39.\]
Nor was the American delegation successful in getting a freer rein from the Administration to take advantage of prospective openings in the negotiations. After the bulk of the fifty-nine stations had delivered themselves of a variety of appears for a productive conference, the meetings had progressed into early March. The Americans unanimously agreed that the United States had to undertake a bolder approach or risk the chance of the doldrums setting in. Thus, under the pretense of going home for the birth of a grandchild, Davis sailed on the Bremen on March 18 with the mission of making delegation views known in Washington. "Primarily (entre nous)," wrote Dr. Woolley in her diary, Davis was going "to confer with the administration. The delegation wishes to go further than it is authorized." Having heard, she added, that "when Norman once gets his teeth in, he never lets go, you can visualize the scene in the White House about next week. . . . Here's good luck to Mr. D's. dental efforts." And Davis proved to be just as tenacious as predicted, when he arrived in Washington. Nevertheless, he encountered considerable opposition in both the White House and the State Department, although the delegation had documented its arguments well.

13Marks, op. cit., 141. Mrs. Davis, who revealed the family evaluation of her husband to Dr. Woolley, traveled with Davis on nearly all of his foreign assignments.
Hugh Gibson outlined the views of the delegation to Stimson in a telegram marked: "For consideration during the visit of Norman Davis." Whether supported by domestic opinion or not, the delegates had reached the conclusion that the United States had to supply leadership and ideas to the conference because no other nation had either the prestige or courage to come forth. Unless a simple and fair plan originated from the American group, the conference, upon reconvening after Easter, would flounder around in debates on issues of principle, which in themselves offered no solution to the dilemma. In addition to presenting a new definition of "security" for Department consideration, Davis' duty proved to be that of giving credence to the delegation argument in the face of expected resistance on the part of the policy makers.

The tenor of public opinion in the United States had undergone a marked change since the beginning of the year, forcing the Administration to re-evaluate its policies. A most candid analysis appears in Moffat's diaries: "Since the Delegation sailed two months ago or more, there has been a noticeable increase in the isolationist sentiment in the country." Moffat identified

14 Copy of Gibson telegram to Secretary Stimson, March 26, 1932; Davis Papers. See also FR, 1932, I, 59-62.
the pressure with pacifist groups, bankers favoring dis-
association of the American from the European economy,
Congressmen talking of increasing rather than decreasing
the tariff and news editorial comment, such as "we are
sufficient unto ourselves and . . . our policy of co-
operation has not borne fruit."

In explaining this development to Davis, Moffat used
as an example the paradoxical public outlook on aviation.
The people registered strong antipathy to the bombardment
of cities, but at the same time they felt a sentimental
attachment to the growth of the air force as an arm of
service in which the United States excelled. Davis sus-
pected, no doubt with a fair amount of accuracy, that this
situation was Army-Navy inspired and "maintained that if
the President and the Secretary of State should inform War
and Navy that certain lines of thought were the American
policy, the armed forces would promptly fall into line."
In reality, the War Department had already agreed on March
11 to the abolition of all military aviation, but Davis,
apparently ignoring this, favored a frontal attack to
silence all governmental arguments not supplying whole-
hearted support to the American arms control program.

The efforts of Davis to gain greater Administration
backing for its delegation's ideas were not fruitless,

15Hooker, op. cit., 59-60. FR, 1932, I, 52, con-
tains the statement of army policy.
although he did not succeed in getting all the delegation wanted. Foremost on the list of goals stood authorization for the American envoys to assert responsibility and leadership into the conference. Gibson and Davis conceived that this could be done by coupling together into one bold speech to be delivered by Gibson the already-expressed Hoover idea of dividing armed forces "effectives" into defensive and offensive components and a Gibson-Davis devised definition of security. This latter concept revolved around reducing fear of invasion through the abolition of all massive weapons designed purely for carrying the burdens of aggressive war. On March 31, Davis could report to Gibson that the proposal was being "looked upon most favorably by the President and the Secretary." By April 2, however, Acting Secretary Castle, in a telegram to Gibson, outlined a basic position that dampened Davis' hopes:

We are inclined, as regards the computation of effectives, to believe that it would be more effective to use the draft speech and the tables in technical committee as a means of persuasion instead of advancing it dramatically in the General Commission as an American plan. No final decision has been reached on this point, but in any event, I do not wish that the speech be made

16 FR, 1932, I, 68-69.
during the early days after resumption of the Conference.

Try as he might, Davis was unable to overcome Administration reluctance to endorse an "American plan," even though Gibson submitted additional strong arguments from Geneva. The Acting Chairman hoped the "plan" could be introduced "with the fullest publicity, and flying of banners, so that its substance may come to the attention of the peoples of the Continent, as well as their governments." To argue the ideas in technical commissions, Gibson declared, would mean delaying and watering down their effect, because experience demonstrated that the technical bodies always awaited General Commission guidelines before proceeding to substantive discussions.

Seizing this alternate approach, Davis continued to apply pressure for Administration approval, but the most he succeeded in obtaining were concessions necessary to the formulation and presentation of the Gibson-Davis security idea. On April 2, the State Department approved a new American position advocating the abolition of tanks,

17Copy of Castle telegram to Gibson, April 2, 1932; Davis Papers. See also FR, 1932, I, 70-71.

18Copy of Geneva telegram signed Wilson with Gibson's concurrence, April 4, 1932; Davis Papers. See also FR, 1932, I, 71-72.
mobile artillery over 155 mm., and all toxic gases. This was quickly supplemented on April 4 with an agreement to support the abolition of submarines provided all bombers also were prohibited. In long sessions with the President, the Secretary of State, the Chief of Staff and the Chief of Naval Operations, Davis' arguments on the re-definition of security ultimately prevailed.\(^{19}\)

Concurrent with the negotiations on the Gibson speech, which was finally scheduled for April 11, Davis also conferred on two other matters. The first concerned a speech planned by the President on disarmament and the other related to a trip to Geneva by Secretary Stimson. Davis first informed Gibson of the President's intentions on March 31, adding that "I have expressed the opinion that if he confined himself to ... the thesis of dividing the forces into the component parts of police and defense without going into details ... it might be all right."

The Acting Chairman responded that the President should not "use his great influence now, when it will undoubtedly be necessary at a fairly early date." Gibson argued that the persuasive powers of the President be held in reserve until the United States was prepared to inject a more

\(^{19}\)FR, 1932, I, 70 (April 2) and 73 (April 4). Moffat confirmed the negotiations with General Douglas MacArthur and Admiral William V. Pratt in Hooker, op. cit., 64-65.
Roger W. Preston and J. Sullivan, who made my work at the Library of Congress both a professional and pleasurable experience. Likewise, Dr. Edgar Nixon and Mr. Jerome Deyo gave me much valuable assistance during my stay at Hyde Park. And last, but far from least, I must pay tribute to Mrs. Jane Gatliff and Miss Sylvia Foreman of the Inter-Library Loan Service, William Oxley Thompson Library, The Ohio State University, both of whom met my myriad requests with dispatch and good humor.

The Ohio State University

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Thomas C. Irvin
definitive point of view into the conference. Davis saw the logic of Gibson's argument. Acting immediately, he advised Hoover not to enter the public forum on the arms control issue and the President acceded to the suggestion. The visit of Davis to Washington and the effects that it achieved, however, proved to be superficial and ephemeral. As early as April 13, Moffat confided to his diary that the Department of State, "whose policy was motivated by the state of public opinion at home, had...

Davis succeeded in convincing Stimson to return with him to Geneva, thus revealing not only his powers of persuasion, but also confirming the nonpartisan approach he took toward foreign affairs. Writing after the fact to Newton D. Baker, Davis admitted that he had urged Stimson to make the visit and added that he "did his part in fine shape" in conferences with MacDonald, Tardieu, Bruning and Grandi. But Dr. Woolley seemed to capture the real Davis spirit: "It is good to have Mr. Davis back again. He is enthusiastic about Mr. Stimson, rather fine for a former Under-Secretary of State in a Democratic administration."

The visit of Davis to Washington and the effects that it achieved, however, proved to be superficial and ephemeral. As early as April 13, Moffat confided to his diary that the Department of State, "whose policy was motivated by the state of public opinion at home, had...

\[20\text{FR, 1932, I, 69 and 71.}\]

\[21\text{Davis to Baker, June 16, 1932; Davis Papers. Marks, op. cit., 143; The entry is dated April 16, 1932. Davis and Stimson sailed together on the Ile de France.}\]
arrived... at a clear-cut difference with its delegation." The Department felt that

... we must stand on our position unless and until some affirmative action were taken by the land powers. There is too much feeling in the country that we are ready on all occasions to take the lead in offering to throw away anything and everything.22

In addition, on May 4, Hoover, reversing his agreement to hold presidential influence in abeyance, authorized Under-Secretary Castle to deliver a major executive pronouncement. Speaking before the American Conference of International Justice, Castle said that a "Hoover Doctrine" and a new dictum of international law had emerged in the concept of non-recognition of territorial gains made by any nation guilty of breaking the terms of the Kellogg Pact. Coupled with this was the American rejection of the use of embargoes against such nations as "an act which would surely lead us to war." Thus, a new doctrine moved forth to cloud the "Stimson Doctrine" that the Administration had announced during the Manchurian crisis.23 All in all, rather than grant the Geneva delegation more latitude, Washington

22Hooker, op. cit., 67.

23New York Times, May 5, 1932. Moffat was told by Castle on May 4 that "the text was personally checked by the President and approved three or four days ago;" see Hooker, op. cit., 66. Moffat also noted, 66 fn, from a later conversation with Stimson that the Secretary did not resent Hoover's usurpation of the "Doctrine."
tightened the reins and decreased the prospect of American leadership in disarmament.

Norman Davis was not unaware of the fact that the cleavage between the Administration and the Geneva delegation had not been fully closed. After he and Gibson returned to Geneva in early May from conversations in London and Paris, a ray of hope for progress seemed to break through, only to be obliterated quickly. The Americans had reached agreement with MacDonald to exert moral Anglo-American influence on Japan and to cooperate in bringing about Franco-German talks. Davis briefed Dr. Woolley on the course of the talks and their outcome, but she was pessimistic in recording her own reactions:

If only our government would allow us to go as far as they, the British will: I have absolute confidence in our Administration but I think it is awfully cautious... To speak frankly, there seems to be in the world today, no outstanding leader of men. Well, perhaps we shall "arrive" with one. There is a quiet, determined effort by men like Mr. Davis which does not figure in the press reports, but which is going steadily forward.24

In late May, Davis was sufficiently disillusioned to write a personal letter to "My dear Mr. Secretary" in which he expressed concern over the delegation's "lack of a coherent and inclusive plan" and because of "the restrictions

24 Marks, op. cit., 146.
placed upon us. In essence," he wrote, "it boils down to this--the President has said we can't have too much re-duction for him; you have said the sky is the limit." But, if a new, comprehensive and fair plan for reduction of armaments was submitted to the conference, "what position is the American Delegation in if acting on present instructions it cannot heartily approve?" His appre-hension was further confirmation that the Administration had lost touch with the Geneva group, after a measure of initiative had been exhibited in the April 11 speech of Gibson. And it was the Davis letter which exerted the initial pressure to get things moving again in Washington.

But he was not alone in his concern. The percep-tive Dr. Woolley noted that she could not

... understand the Administration. ... Mr. Gibson, Republican, Mr. Davis, Democrat, have the greatest confidence in the President and the Secretary. The Senator sometimes growls about "not having enough confidence in a Delegation to give them a free hand"; Mr. Marriner murmurs impre-cations on "back seat driving"; and Mr. Wilson discreetly says nothing. "Me too"--but I think a lot.27

The forecast by Moffat was proving to be extremely accurate. Demonstrating the tenacity that had marked their efforts

25FR, 1932, I, 143-144.
26Ibid., 76-83.
27Marks, op. cit., 146-147.
up to that point, however, the delegation united their ideas into a demand to the Department for explicit instructions setting forth the American position on all aspects of arms control thus far discussed at Geneva.28

Reaction from the State Department was not only immediate, but detailed. Stimson, in secret instructions, outlined an American policy in depth and included a justification for hesitancy in the immediate negotiations.29

The real strength of America's position in the movement for peace today does not depend upon her taking the initiative in the Conference. On the contrary you are facing what is primarily a European peace conference.

There was nothing novel in this conclusion, since Davis had predicted in late March, while in Washington, that such would be the ultimate development at Geneva.30

What did ring new was the Stimson idea of "two hemispheres . . . of peace and disarmament." The one centered around the pressing problems of arms control in

28 FR, 1932, I, 145-150. The telegram was dated May 28, four days after Davis' letter to Stimson in which mention was made of a possible telegram to follow.

29 Ibid., 153-157. Details here and through the next two paragraphs, unless otherwise specifically footnoted, are taken from this reference.

30 Hooker, op. cit., 59; Moffat recorded on March 28, 1932 the following note: "In his [Davis'] view, the disarmament conference will eventually develop into a great European peace conference."
Europe, while the other involved the challenge of preventing war's spread in the Far East. "America sits between these two . . .," wrote Stimson, "and her position at Geneva is in some respects limited by her responsibility on the Pacific." Without bothering to elaborate on this "responsibility," he submitted that the American fleet, in spite of being well below treaty limits, was performing a peace duty in the Pacific and minor changes could disqualify the navy from continuing that mission. The essential concern in Europe was land armaments, except for English considerations, but American "naval power really has no influence in preventing European land disarmament." At all costs, the Secretary wanted to guarantee that the Geneva conferees did not drift away from . . . the necessity of finding a solution for the burdens and dangers of the land powers of Europe. Without offering any substantial concessions themselves, spokesmen for the land powers have spent much energy in trying to drive us to further concessions which are really irrelevant to the real problem.

In spite of the firm line, the Secretary offered to yield on a variety of matters, but only after personally approving each issue and if "there is a genuine proposal of general disarmament." The United States would not agree to abolish battleships under any conditions. Within given frames of reference, abolition of aviation and carriers would be considered. Provided France and Italy
agreed to accept the naval limits set at London, America would entertain up to a twenty per cent cut in cruiser and destroyer tonnage, except for 8-inch cruisers. The United States would also demand a concurrent one-third cut in submarines and a limit of 250 tons for individual subs. All these naval curtailments had to be accompanied by a "minimum reduction ... of at least 33 1/3 per cent of ... defense contingents, calculated upon the basis of our formula for land effectives." In toto, the Stimson instructions contained an "irreducible minimum" in naval reduction and "were not to be put forward even to friendly powers until we are assured of a strong probability of success." Thus, the American delegation had achieved its goal. Now it had a definite basis upon which to continue its work albeit the restrictions on maneuvering remained stringent. What the delegates did not know and what Stimson did not reveal to them was that the new policy constituted the heart of what the entire world would soon herald as the Hoover Plan.

The true genesis and evolution of the Hoover Plan is obscure. How long it took the combinations in the plan to crystallize in the Chief Executive's mind and how the ideas took their final shape are both points of conjecture. No doubt Hoover's Quaker background and his fundamental pacifism motivated him toward striking a blow against
rampant militarism in both Europe and Asia. He had refused to commit the United States to any type of sanctions in association with the League in the Manchurian crisis. But disarmament represented an area where the relative American national security position could be guaranteed without international commitments to the use of force, thereby satisfying both isolationists and defenders of "fortress America." In addition, economic savings from reduced armaments might produce a salutary effect on the domestic, and possibly the international, economy. And the argument that excessive armaments constituted a financial burden supported in part Hoover's theory of the international origins of the depression.

Certainly the contribution of the Geneva delegation to the plan's developmental process cannot be discounted. Of specific importance seems to be the constant pressure by Davis and Gibson to compel the abandonment by the Administration of the unrealistic American role of rendering hopeful advice and exerting moral influence from the seclusion and solitude of the wings in favor of a policy of actual coordination and real cooperation acted out with candor and vision under the spotlights on center stage. The transformation of the American role at the conference from one of passivity to one of activity occurred largely as a result of this unrelenting pressure. And Davis'
visit to the United States in the Spring had served to accentuate the dismay in Geneva and to demonstrate the need for action.

The political considerations, both domestic and international, which motivated the Hoover Plan, still remains obscure. At various junctures, at least to the Geneva delegation, the President emphasized the nonpartisan nature of the plan. And we have seen that in late March and early April, when domestic political gain was not a paramount factor, Davis, Gibson and Stimson combined to dissuade the Chief Executive from delivering "an important speech" on disarmament. Yet the very identification of the plan with his name and the final timing of its release after the Republican, but before the Democratic, National Convention gave the plan political overtones whether the President wanted them or not. Internationally, the plan carried weighty implications for the impending Lausanne Conference on German reparations and general European economic and financial affairs. The complicated political ramifications of the plan, however, are possibly best revealed through the chain of developments in May and June 1932.

31 The Hoover Plan was announced on June 22, after the Republicans had met in Chicago on June 14-16. The Democrats did not convene until June 27-July 2, also in Chicago.
Mention has already been made of the general influence of the Geneva delegation on the gradual conversion of the Administration to a more active role. In addition, Davis and Gibson supplied specific data that must have affected Hoover. The already-cited Davis letter to Stimson and that of the delegation to the Secretary post-date Hoover's submission of his outline to the cabinet on May 24. Therefore, these two pieces of correspondence must be discounted as sources of inspiration to Hoover, despite striking similarities between some suggestions in those communications and elements of the final plan. Perhaps this coincidence only demonstrates that Washington and Geneva were much closer together than they realized. Be that as it may, however, Hoover did not communicate with his cabinet until after Gibson and Davis had conducted and reported upon important talks in London in mid-May with Stanley Baldwin, leader of the Conservative Party, and Sir John Simon, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and in Paris with Tardieu and Louis Aubert, a French delegate to Geneva.

There emerged from the London meeting a far-reaching proposal by Baldwin to abolish military aviation, capital
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ships, carriers, heavy mobile guns and tanks and to reduce drastically the land forces of all nations. Baldwin advanced the outline motivated by the consideration that the present unfavorable course of disarmament was leading "straight toward the destruction of our civilization and that something radical had to be done about it."33 In Paris, however, Davis and Gibson were less successful because of the political interregnum occasioned by Tardieu's fall from power and Herriot's temporary inability to take over. Tardieu saw "no prospect of dealing effectively with fundamentals," although there were signs of growing British reasonableness at Lausanne. "Something substantial" might even be achieved at Geneva with the United States and Great Britain acting as conciliators.34 Although the Paris results were less than pleasing, they did lead to the opening of a channel of contact between Davis and Herriot.

Close on the heels of the conversations in the French capital, Davis received an invitation through a mutual acquaintance to a meeting with the new French Premier, a long-time friend. Accompanied by Hugh Wilson, Davis drove to Lyons on May 22 for a luncheon engagement

33 Ibid., 121-125.

34 Ibid., 127-128.
with Herriot. The subjects covered during the informal encounter at the Restaurant Carillon ranged from the reputation of Woodrow Wilson in France through reparations and debts to the topic of disarmament. Concentrating on the need for "achievement of limited objectives" in arms control, Davis sought to convince Herriot of the efficacy of agreement in the near future, leaving "the balance of the disarmament question for discussion some months later, after tangible proof had been given that a measure of disarmament was possible." He limited the "objectives" to those aimed at solidifying the defense and weakening the offense. Herriot was equivocal about what might be possible, Davis reported, "nevertheless the idea was sympathetic to him." One point that the Frenchman returned to consistently was that of the necessity for French-English-American collaboration and cooperation, as Davis put it, "in the frankest and friendliest way." Commenting on the meeting later, he summed up his impression of Herriot:

... a good man who wishes to do the right thing but who does not feel quite certain of his grasp of certain problems and their relation to others. I feel, however, that we have established a contact that may be most valuable.35

35 Ibid., 132-139; Davis' summation is in a separate letter to Stimson, already cited under footnote 25, supra.
Subsequent developments demonstrated the importance of Davis' observations both to the formulation and implementation of the Hoover Plan.

The rationale behind President Hoover's decision to assert the authority of the United States directly into the Geneva deliberations may have been divided between concern for European political divisions that militated against a constructive arms control program and interest in American and world morale that suffered from a generally deteriorating economic situation. Perhaps the most remarkable factor involved is a noteworthy deviation, illusory though it proved to be, from the traditional American position of isolation. The implications of this new approach in terms of limited American involvement in European affairs are apparent from Hoover's own May 24 memorandum to his cabinet:

In view of the continued economic degeneration of the world and of the ineffectiveness of accomplishment at the . . . Conference, it may be desirable to consider a change in American policies. . . . It has been the well considered policy . . . not to take the leadership . . . because the problems are so essentially European, but to endeavor as a friend of all parties to secure that the governments primarily concerned should accept their real responsibilities and confine American activities to encouragement. . . . If it could be properly formulated some bolder constructive suggestion might help pull the world from this morass.

To convert these considerations into action, Hoover suggested the reduction of the world's naval forces,
specifically battleships, destroyers and cruisers, and its land armies by one-third, thereby deviating from Stimson's formula as supplied to Geneva. In addition, he advocated the total abolition of carriers, submarines, military aviation (except scouting planes), mobile land guns above 6-inch calibre, tanks and poison gas. He asserted that "armament is both a cause and effect of political instability," but added that the world was unprepared to accept political agreements needed to reduce international frictions. "But one of the contributions to cure," he told the cabinet further, "is the dissolution of fear which haunts the world as a result of its massed armaments."36

Sincere though Hoover may have been in taking the initiative toward instilling hope and inspiration into the Geneva Conference, he ignored the lessons that were available to him from the Washington Conference. Desire and expectation do not suffice in the international arena. Politicians make policy under the pressure of national self-interest and majority public opinion; disarmament had resulted from the Washington negotiations because the delegates there translated popular interest into both political rapprochement and naval limitation. The fact that the

36 Ibid., 180-182.
Washington agreements ultimately broke down and were, in fact, in a state of decay in 1932 is not chargeable solely to the pacts themselves, but to the failure of the signatories to revise them in accordance with changing national self-interests and international contingencies.

Hoover's extreme caution, undoubtedly dictated by an isolationistic citizenry, constituted a surrender, when a really bold approach would have sought to transform the public outlook into acceptance of its responsibilities in world affairs. "Civilization is seriously jeopardized," he wrote in the cabinet memo, "by continuation of its present arms." Yet the plan that he put forth brought the United States only to the threshold of that greater civilization of which he apparently was speaking; the plan did not put the country into the middle of the fray with both a courageous recognition of, and a valiant solution to, the political divisions in Europe, whose existence the Chief Executive only acknowledged. In the final analysis, however, the decision-making process placed the burden on Hoover and, at least, he opened the way.

Secretary Stimson, generally sympathetic to the President's purpose, registered strong opposition to the method proposed. He discounted the idea that dramatization of the arms control issue would exert any "compelling influence." Moreover, he feared the unpopularity of a
proposed reduction in our navy. He repeated his previous assertion of America's indirect relation to the land armies' problem of Europe. Only because of the relationship of the British navy to French Mediterranean operations and the community of interest between the Anglo-American fleets could America be even remotely linked to continental security questions. "In no other point," he wrote to Hoover on May 25, "does our armament touch or affect that of Europe at all and experience has unfortunately shown that the mere moral effect of a fine example by America" failed to produce European disarmament.

Continuing his disputation and centering on Hoover's claim that the emergence of only a minor agreement at Geneva would be a "calamity," the Secretary resorted to somewhat opaque citations of "experience" to prove that nations progress toward disarmament by partial steps only. "Each such step leads to another and . . . the removal of suspicion and rivalry, which is attendant upon competition, is one of the most effective steps toward further progress." The "experience" and "steps" justifying his conclusions are obscure. Perhaps he alluded to the expressions of general approval at Geneva on elimination of poison gas, abolition of bombers, etc., as "agreements," although the unified opinion on such points only enabled the delegates to continue deliberations. No ratified pacts ever emerged.
Unfortunately, Stimson was much too general in the elaboration of his ideas for any additional speculation to be undertaken.

What then were the methods that Stimson would employ? He expressed certainty that the conference was already on the road to agreement, basing his conclusion on his own visit to Geneva, when he had found that "helpful private discussions," not "dramatization or publicity," abetted action. Even the "quiet pressure of poverty" was forcing the issue along. Stimson also pointed to Davis' conversations with Herriot as indicative of "hopeful possibilities." Rather than a new plan, he advocated the issuance of an executive pronouncement, enjoining strict adherence to the Kellogg Pact and outlining "our action in case of a struggle between a combined Europe and an aggressor nation." He entertained no illusions about the political difficulties attendant to such a proclamation; however, he believed in "the effect it would have. If nothing more, it would give certain proud, stubborn nations an opportunity to back down without losing face."37

In spite of his Secretary's recommendations, the President continued with his plans to deliver "a

37Ibid., 182-185. The Geneva delegation registered its unanimous support of extension of the Far East application of the Kellogg Pact into the Geneva negotiations on June 21, the day before the issuance of Hoover's statement; see FR, 1932, I, 202.
sensational speech on disarmament." As late as June 18, Stimson attempted to persuade him "that it would be better to let negotiations follow their normal course." Once before, Stimson and Davis had succeeded in dissuading Hoover, using this same argument, but the Chief Executive now decided that an absence of action on his part would be interpreted, domestically, as "selling out to the reactionaries." Moreover, "if he could show the world that Europe could save billions in armaments," a salutary influence could be exerted on the Lausanne Conference and discussions of debt cancellations might be dropped.

Stimson felt that the risks involved outweighed any gains to be realized: at American insistence the Geneva talks had been taken into private sessions which, without being given a real chance, would be killed as a consequence of the Hoover Plan; and British confidence in the United States would be shaken badly because Baldwin had outlined a dramatic new approach, whose effect would be lost as a result of American pre-emption. Furthermore, the Secretary argued, the United States could be accused of torpedoing the conference entirely, if reaction proved unfavorable, or of using the conference for purely domestic gains. Hoover admitted that the announcement "might undo the Secretary's work of conciliation through personal contact, but on the
other hand it 'might do the trick'." On this account, he decided to make the speech as planned.\textsuperscript{38}

In contrast to the position of Stimson, the Geneva delegation was jubilant at Hoover's action: "... a cable had just come from the President, granting all that we want and more!" wrote Dr. Woolley; "... as Mr. Gibson says--'The President has taken the bit in his teeth and gone as far as he wanted to go'. ... the President--for whom he has great admiration--has broken loose from advice or 'caution' and has asserted himself."\textsuperscript{39} It is apparent from this that the Geneva group was not unaware of the differences of opinion between the White House and State Department. On the other hand, it seems evident that the delegation was less than overjoyed at the progress being made in the private sessions, which their nominal chief the Secretary of State had instituted, else there would have been some indication of displeasure at the unexpected turn of events.

In order to accelerate final arrangements in Geneva and to meet the President's self-established deadline of June 21 for delivery of the plan to the public, direct

\textsuperscript{38}Hooker, \textit{op. cit.}, 72-73; on the same day that Moffat confided in his diary, June 18, 1932, Stimson sent a copy of the proposed speech to Gibson and the American delegation.

\textsuperscript{39}Marks, \textit{op. cit.}, 148.
telephone contact was established on June 19 between Washington and Geneva. Conversing initially only with Gibson, the President asked specifically that Davis join in "to hear the rest of this because it depends on conversations with him." This remark, as it gradually became evident, had not only international implications because of the importance of Davis' personal relationship with both MacDonald and Herriot, but also domestic political overtones in view of his stature in the Democratic Party. For the time being, however, Hoover pointed out that the plan was "calculated to precipitate that situation [the degeneration of both Geneva and Lausanne] so as to put us in an offensive position and force some measure of real disarmament."

Davis then advised the President on the current state of affairs and suggested some future moves. He had already explained to MacDonald the indefensible position the United States and England would occupy if no immediate arms control agreement was signed. He now pushed for coordination with the British in advance of the announcement because "if they agree with us and it is done with their consent, it simply increases tremendously the probabilities of pulling a good big success out of it." In answer to Stimson's suggestion that Herriot be contacted and briefed, Davis expressed scepticism "because of the tenuous