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LAYING THE LEGISLATIVE FOUNDATION: THE HOUSE NAVAL
AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TREATY
NAVY, 1926-1934

The Ohio State University

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LAYING THE LEGISLATIVE FOUNDATION:
THE HOUSE NAVAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TREATY NAVY, 1926-1934

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Michael A. West, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1980

Reading Committee:
Dr. Harry L. Coles
Dr. Allan R. Millett
Dr. Gary Reichard

Approved by

Harry L. Coles
Advisor
Department of History
TO MY WIFE ELIZABETH
My inspiration and closest
confidant, whose encouragement
and assistance made this task
easier and more meaningful.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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that might have otherwise occurred.

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From the foregoing, it is clear that many have contributed to whatever positive virtues this study might possess. I alone, however, am responsible for its shortcomings which would certainly have been far more serious and extensive without the benefit of such assistance.
VITA

1966-1970.......... San Jose State University, San Jose, Ca., B.A. 1970
1970-1972.......... The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, M.A. 1972
1974-1976.......... Executive Secretary, House Armed Services Committee
1976-1980.......... Research Assistant, House Armed Services Committee

PUBLICATIONS


FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Military History

Civil War and Reconstruction. Professor Merton Dillon
U.S. Diplomatic History. Professor Alfred Eckes
Japanese History. Professor James Bartholomew
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INTRODUCTION

The highest defense priority for the United States in the early 1930's was the adoption of a consistent, comprehensive naval building program to redress a continuing erosion in American naval capabilities vis-a-vis Great Britain and Japan. Sporadic U.S. naval construction since World War I failed to match the more balanced and coherent programs of its closest maritime rivals. This failure not only had an adverse quantitative impact, but raised the prospect of serious American qualitative deficiencies in the near future unless the bloc obsolescence of destroyers and submarines built during or immediately after the war was offset by a major replacement program. In addition, domestic shipyards had suffered through the lack of naval orders which caused the loss of skilled personnel that would be sorely missed in any future upswing in naval construction. American shipbuilders were also denied the opportunity to keep abreast with advances in the state of the art and incorporate the latest technology into their designs. Together, these developments raised grave doubts about the Navy's capability to safeguard vital American interests abroad, or to fulfill its assigned policy objectives in an increasingly
troubled world scene.\(^1\)

This unfortunate situation did not occur through any failure on the Navy's part to appreciate the nature and extent of the problem or to provide sound guidance for corrective action. Naval authorities had long argued that failure to adopt a comprehensive, long-term approach to shipbuilding would have dire consequences. Beginning in the mid-1920's, the Navy Department, through its General Board repeatedly prepared and submitted proposals for such a program.

These efforts were not sufficient, however, to overcome the combination of executive opposition to increased naval expenditures, Congressional indifference and the absence of widespread public concern. The failure, then, was political.

\(^1\)Necessarily a study of the evolution of a legislative mechanism for the implementation of a consistent, comprehensive shipbuilding program must focus upon procurement strategies, industrial capabilities, fleet composition, and vessel characteristics. Obviously, these factors are not the only elements in an equation for naval readiness. Also included are the number and quality of commissioned and enlisted personnel, their training and morale, and the existence of satisfactory, adequately funded operations and maintenance procedures to maintain the material condition of the fleet. Nevertheless, the transcendent importance of the acquisition of modern warships for a hardware and technical intensive service justify such an approach. Moreover, it is a historical rarity that qualitative and quantitative deficiencies in the composition of the fleet would not also be accompanied by like deficiencies affecting personnel, training, and the overall material condition of the forces afloat and the Shore Establishment. Such was certainly the
Also complicating the Navy's task was the existence of a postwar framework of naval limitation treaties concluded at the Washington and London Naval Conferences. Technically, these treaties were not responsible for the relative decline in American naval strength, since the United States never actually built up to treaty limits and nothing in the treaties actually forbade a replacement program for overage naval vessels. Nevertheless the treaties mirrored and helped to perpetuate attitudes hostile to increased naval construction. The result was that the United States was less able than Japan or Great Britain to accommodate itself to the naval limitation treaty structure in attempting to fashion realistic naval policy.

The most visible reason for the political failure of the United States to address its naval deficiencies was a consistent pattern of executive opposition. Such opposition was strong during the Hoover Administration and became implacable with the onset of the Great Depression. Severe retrenchment measures coupled with increased emphasis on negotiating more stringent naval limitation agreements allowed Navy readiness to fall to its lowest point in the interwar period. It also forcefully drove home the point case during the first half of the interwar period. So while the procurement of modern warships was not the sole factor in the correction of U.S. naval deficiencies it was an indispensable ingredient of any solution.
that little could be accomplished without at least tacit executive support. Nevertheless there was some solace in the realization that the solution was straightforward and effective—the election of a President more favorably disposed toward the Navy. By the end of 1931 this seemed to be a distinct possibility.

The remedy for Congressional indifference would not be as simple. The use of the term indifference is a reflection of the difficulty in attempting to characterize the absence of Congressional involvement. In part the reason was political in that a Republican Congress was not disposed to confront a Republican administration on naval policy while domestic issues were at the forefront of national concern. This indifference also stemmed from the character of the institution. Even in the best of circumstances, Congress is ill suited to make independent decisions on basic policy questions like the institution of a long-term, comprehensive naval building program. Obviously, a political environment characterized by executive opposition to Navy budget increases, widespread public support for naval limitation and disarmament, and the occurrence of the Great Depression did not represent the best of circumstances. Lastly, expertise and concern about naval affairs in Congress were narrowly concentrated and had to contend with general legislative indifference stiffened by a vocal anti-Navy contingent.
It is clear that many more factors had to be taken into consideration in attempting to change the pattern of legislative behavior. Wholesale changes in personnel like that occurring in the executive branch after a change in administration was a rarity. Even changes in party control of Congress, which often did not include both houses, usually did not produce dramatic reversals. Power and influence were fragmented and personalized; change partial and incremental in nature. In the last analysis, it was not just a question of changing personalities to bring about major policy departures, although this was important, but also the substantial modification of legislative procedures and perceptions. Thus, even with a change of administrations, all the Navy could reasonably expect were incremental adjustments which would ameliorate, but not correct its deficiencies.

Yet three years after the Democrats assumed power in the House of Representatives, policy recommendations on naval construction had been substantially translated into legislation which served as the basis for an American naval renaissance. The topic of this study is the "translation" process and, more specifically, the enactment of the Vinson-Trammell Act which authorized a naval shipbuilding program to build up to treaty limits for the replacement of overage vessels. This program represented more than a purely legis-
lative remedy to a particular naval problem. It also brought about a fundamental change in Congressional attitudes and approach toward weapons procurement which was validated in two major wars and endured for nearly three decades.

The factors in the equation producing this outcome included a dominant legislative figure in the person of Representative Carl Vinson (Democrat, Georgia); a suitable institutional environment within Congress; cooperation and competent guidance from the Navy Department; and the tacit support of a sympathetic President and his key advisors. Each one of these elements will be examined in an attempt to evaluate their respective contribution and the interaction between them.

Studies of U.S. naval policy in the interwar period are not lacking, but most of these have been undertaken from the perspective of the Navy or executive branch. Aside from the obligatory, passing reference to Congress when a major bill or appropriation must be dealt with, little attention is given to the legislative environment and the influence it exerted. It is hoped that approaching this subject from a legislative perspective will make a contribution to the corpus of knowledge regarding the formulation of naval policy in the 1930s, and also shed light upon the legislative aspects of national security decision-making since that time.
CHAPTER I
"THE DECADENCE OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY"

"Since the administration of President Wilson and the signing of the Washington Treaty in 1922, our Navy has progressively declined." Thus began a broadcast address by Rear Admiral William A. Moffett, flamboyant Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics, at the Annual Dinner of the Naval Academy Graduates of New York in February, 1933. The root cause of the Navy's plight, the Admiral said, was that "Uncle Sam" had been "hoodwinked and bamboozled" by a coalition of wily Europeans and inscrutable Orientals and had "lost everything but his shirt tail when he signed the Washington Treaty." Pointing to the subsequent failure of the United States to match the efforts of its most serious maritime competitors, Great Britain and Japan, Admiral Moffett proclaimed the decadence of the American Navy. He concluded with a solemn warning that "by allowing your Navy to become decadent, as you have done, you are risking not only the honor and glory of America, but her very existence."¹

¹Speech by Rear Admiral W.A. Moffett, Chief of Bureau of Aeronautics, delivered over W.O.R. New York and at the Annual Dinner of the Naval Academy Graduates Association of New York, Commodore Hotel, New York City, on February 17, 1933, 1, located in the Dudley W. Knox Papers, 1933 File, Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress (Hereafter cited as MDLC).
Despite Admiral Moffett's reputation as a maverick because of his zealous advocacy of naval aviation, flair for publicity and political connections, the sentiments he expressed were widely shared by his fellow officers. The vehemence of his presentation was also indicative of the exasperation welling up in naval circles since the signing of the London Naval Treaty in 1930.

In view of their condemnation by American navalists as the root cause of the material problems besetting the Navy in the 1930's, the Washington and London treaties deserve examination in some detail. Such scrutiny will also be instructive as by extending the principles of quantitative and qualitative limitation to nearly all classes of combatant vessels, those agreements served as a reference point for all subsequent efforts to devise and initiate a systematic and comprehensive naval construction program.

The spectre of a postwar naval race in capital ships provided the impetus for a naval limitation conference at Washington in November 1921 with delegations from the United States, Great Britain, Japan, France, and Italy. Financially exhausted by World War I, and believing that Anglo-German naval competition had been a major cause of that conflict, the assembled delegates were amenable to American proposals for a substantial reduction in dreadnought tonnage. They also agreed to a ratio system among themselves establishing
the relative proportion of capital ships and aircraft carriers each could possess at 5:5:3:1.75:1.75, respectively.\(^2\) In return for its acceptance of a lower ratio, Japan extracted from the United States and Great Britain an agreement that they would not build new fortifications or establish additional naval bases in their possessions located in the Western Pacific. Specifically, this provision applied to the Philippines, Guam and Hong Kong, but excluded the Hawaiian Islands and Singapore.\(^3\)

The Washington Naval Treaty also specified, with significant exceptions, a ten-year ban on the construction of battleships.\(^4\) Qualitatively, future dreadnoughts were limited to 35,000 tons and 16-inch guns, while the tonnage ceiling for carriers was established at 27,000, with main batteries not to exceed 8-inch guns.\(^5\) Strong French and

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\(^3\)Ibid., Chapter I, Article XIX.

\(^4\)Ibid., Chapter I, Article II; Chapter II, Part 3, Section II, both Britain and the United States were allowed to build two new battleships to compensate for Japan's retention of the MUTSU. France and Italy were also allowed to begin replacement of their battleships after 1927 in recognition of their inability to undertake significant naval construction in that category during World War I because of the diversion of needed resources to support land forces.

\(^5\)Ibid; Chapter I, Article VII-X.
Italian resistance blocked the extension of quantitative limitations to auxiliary vessels. Nevertheless, in order to preclude the development of some form of "pocket" battleship, cruisers were limited to 10,000 tons and 8-inch ordnance. Similarly, attempts to place quantitative or qualitative limits on submarines were unsuccessful, but an accompanying treaty was signed by the five powers restricting their employment against noncombatant vessels so as to avoid a repetition of their "immoral" unrestricted use. As submarines were viewed by inferior naval powers as indispensable in offsetting enemy superiority in surface vessels, this treaty was not likely to persuade them to forego the use of this potent asset to its greatest effect—destruction of commerce. In any event, after France's refusal to ratify this treaty, it became little more than an expression of pious

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6As used during this period, the term "auxiliary vessels" had two meanings. In its broader sense, an auxiliary vessel was a warship other than a capital ship since it carried out functions auxiliary to and supporting the functions of the capital ship, especially the battleship. The term was also employed in a narrower sense in naval circles to apply to the noncombatant vessels which provided auxiliary services of fueling, repairing, and carrying supplies for the fighting fleet. For the sake of clarity, for the purposes of this study, the term auxiliaries will be used in its broader sense while the term "naval auxiliaries" will be used to refer to noncombatant vessels which service the fleet.

7Washington Naval Treaty, Chapter I, Articles XI-XII.
Related developments at the Washington Conference were the negotiation of two other major treaties. The first of these, the Four Power Treaty, signed by the United States, Great Britain, France and Japan on December 13, 1921, guaranteed the status quo and mutual respect for each other's insular possessions in the Pacific. Essentially, this was an ingenious device whereby Great Britain would be able to terminate the twenty year Anglo-Japanese Alliance, by transmuting it into another arrangement that would preserve great power stability in the region without inflaming Japanese sensibilities. This formal military bond between these two powers had long been a source of deep concern for the United States and its dissolution a major goal of the American delegation. Also influencing Great Britain's decision to terminate the alliance were strenuous objections by Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, who feared Japanese expansion and saw the United States as the prospective guarantor of their security. Thus the Four Power Treaty permitted the British to withdraw gracefully from this

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long-term military/political arrangement while retaining Japan's friendship and crucial support for naval limitation agreements.  

In addition, on February 6, 1922, a Nine Power Treaty was signed by the United States, Belgium, China, France, the British Empire, Italy, Japan and the Netherlands solemnly pledging to uphold the Open Door and affirming Chinese sovereignty. Although this pact did not resolve salient outstanding issues such as extraterritoriality and Japan's continued occupation of Shantung, it was the best agreement that could be obtained at the time. Little more than a moral commitment, it was still hoped that the treaty would encourage greater restraint and magnanimity toward China by the great powers and it did establish a framework within which future violations of its provisions could be collectively addressed.  

As can be inferred from Admiral Moffett's remarks, the Washington Treaty generated a great deal of rancor among Navy professionals and their civilian allies. To conform   


with the tonnage limits it established, the United States would have to suspend a building program that promised to make it the strongest naval power in the world. This meant the scrapping of a number of super dreadnoughts which had been substantially completed and represented a great investment of human and material resources. Conversely, the British and the Japanese reciprocated with the scrapping of blueprints as war weariness and financial constraints had delayed or reduced their postwar capital ship construction programs. In effect, the United States opened the conference with a commanding position of strength and then proceeded to forfeit this advantage without receiving comparable concessions from the other parties.

But what really cut to the quick and left smouldering embers of enmity for years thereafter was the claim that the leadership of the U.S. delegation had been unwilling to solicit or heed the advice of their professional naval advisors. This is not to infer that the U.S. delegation lacked competent naval advice, or that it rejected all suggestions put forward by Navy professionals. But Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes did not abide by the recommendations of fervent navalists within the Navy Department whose sentiments were best reflected by the General Board. Aided by Assistant Secretary of State Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., Admiral R.E. Coontz, and Captain William V.
Pratt, Hughes was able to frustrate virtually every effort by the Board to influence the proceedings. When the General Board recommended a 2 to 1 ratio of superiority over Japan, Hughes opted for 5 to 3. Later when the Board recommended successive limits on battleship tonnage for the United States of 1,000,000; 820,000; and 600,000; Hughes chose the figure 500,000 tons. Finally, when the General Board argued strongly for the retention of the right to establish additional naval bases and new fortifications on American insular possessions in the Western Pacific, Hughes agreed to a ban on such activities in return for Japan's assent for the 5:3 ratio in capital ships.

These decisions created in the minds of the majority of Navy professionals a lingering resentment mingled with wounded pride. To them it seemed that the Washington Naval Treaty had been obtained by the betrayal of the Navy's interests by a group of political amateurs and turncoats willing to sacrifice national security requirements on the altar of political expediency and personal advancement. Conversely the political leaders of the U.S. delegation came through this experience confirmed in the belief that naval experts should always be on tap and never on top of conference proceedings. The General Board and those of its ilk were viewed as narrow minded professionals incapable of appreciating the larger issues at stake in naval arms.
limitation negotiations.

Neither of these perceptions was wholly correct. The General Board and naval professionals were sincerely concerned about ensuring the security of the United States and its vital interests from external naval aggression. For them the solution was the achievement of clear naval superiority capable of deterring or defeating any likely threat. Consequently, there could be no agreement to any arrangement which did not grant complete parity with Great Britain and sufficient superiority over Japan to offer a fair prospect for successful operations in the Western Pacific. While political leaders recognized the logic of the Navy's position, they believed that failure to compromise would scuttle any chance for agreement on naval limitation. Thus, the aims of the two groups hopelessly diverged as naval professionals would rather have no treaty than one not meeting their criteria, while civilian negotiators were committed to drafting a treaty that would be acceptable to other major naval powers and the Senate. The political leaders were acutely aware that American public opinion favored naval limitation and realized that the failure to negotiate a treaty would be a severe liability for the Harding Administration. Such divergent attitudes did not admit of easy reconciliation and none was to be effected during the interwar period.
As could have been foreseen, the failure to place tonnage or numerical restraints on auxiliaries spawned a naval race in those categories. Although this competition was not as expensive as in the case of capital ships, it nevertheless imposed a serious burden on the countries involved and threatened to undercut the spirit of the Washington Naval Treaty. A general desire to avoid the negative aspects of such rivalry led to the atmosphere that had prevailed at Washington, the powers could not submerge technical differences beneath general accord on political issues and a hopeless deadlock ensued.  

Failure to reach agreement in 1927 primarily stemmed from the inability of the United States and Great Britain to resolve their differences on absolute parity and the number and type of cruisers each could possess. At Washington the ambiguous definition of parity had sown the seeds of later discord. The Americans interpreted it to mean full numerical equality, while Britain restricted its application to the battle fleets. It was absurd, they argued, for the United States to expect equality in all categories, as the naval needs of the British Empire far exceeded those of a power whose responsibilities were largely confined to the Pacific and Caribbean. The Navy

David Carlton, "Great Britain and the Coolidge Naval Disarmament Conference of 1927," Political Science Quarterly, LXXII (December, 1968), 596.
naturally rejected this contention, pointing out the fleet's duty to protect American interests and commerce around the globe.

Disagreement over cruisers was the result of the differing operational needs of the two navies. The General Board, noting the scarcity of naval bases and emphasizing the probability of a campaign over the vast Pacific Ocean, recommended that the United States lay down 10,000 ton, 8-inch gun cruisers. These vessels would have tremendous range and would be as powerful as any craft they could not outrun. The Admiralty, on the other hand, having much more territory to patrol and possessing numerous bases, was inclined to favor smaller ships mounting 6-inch guns. These recommendations exacerbated the discussions on parity as the British felt they could not grant equal cruiser tonnage to the United States if it were all going into the construction of these more powerful vessels. It would present the Royal Navy with a nasty dilemma. Should it continue laying down the smaller types, it would be overmatched and if it responded to the American program by building heavy cruisers, its tonnage allowance for cruisers might prove to be insufficient to provide the number of units required for Imperial defense. Conversely, the General Board maintained that the 6-inch gun cruiser was wholly unsuitable for the U.S. Navy's needs and it would be an unjustifiable misuse of scarce resources to build them. It also suspected that the
underlying British motive for pressuring the United States to reduce the number of 8-inch cruisers was to enhance the effectiveness of the potentially large number of auxiliary cruisers that would augment the Royal Navy in wartime.¹³

The announcement of an Anglo-French naval agreement in 1928 seemed to confirm the Navy's worst fears about British motives. That such a rapprochement had come about was primarily due to British concerns that French-Italian differences could not be reconciled within the treaty system and would inevitably lead to a naval race between those two countries. As any French buildup would be prejudicial to British interests an effort was made to devise some sort of accommodation that would meet French objections while preserving the basic elements of the existing naval limitation framework. Following lengthy negotiations, a compromise was reached on July 31 whereby the French agreed to abandon their insistence upon the linkage of land and naval armaments in exchange for British assent that small surface auxiliaries and small submarines should not be

¹³Great Britain had provided through legislation that her swift merchantmen be capable of mounting 6-inch guns to be able to serve as auxiliary cruisers in time of war. The United States, on the other hand, made no such provision and could mobilize far fewer vessels for conversion to auxiliary cruisers. This British superiority became a stock argument in favor of heavy cruiser construction by navalists in the United States.
subject to limitation. After the United States received clarification about the fine print, it became evident that the intent of the agreement was to exclude from limitation all surface vessels mounting guns of 6 inches or less and submarines of less than 600 tons surface displacement. This meant that 8 inch cruisers favored by the United States would be subject to limitation, but 6 inch cruisers favored by Britain would not. While the United States was not a party to this agreement, there was concern that it was a portent of things to come at the next naval conference with the French and British jointly opposing the American position. Notwithstanding vigorous British disclaimers, the spectre of "Perfidious Albion" had been raised and contributed to the Navy's success in securing congressional passage of the 15 cruiser authorization bill in 1929.14

Despite these differences, the intervention of a number of countervailing forces led to the arrangement of another naval conference in 1930. First of all, elections in the United States and Great Britain brought to power chief executives committed to the extension of naval limitation to all warship categories. Both Herbert Hoover and Ramsay McDonald viewed continued naval competition in unrestricted categories

as inherently destabilizing and posing a serious threat to the survival of the treaty system. Moreover, as each sought to respond to the onset of the depression, reductions in naval expenditures seemed an attractive way to curtail government spending. They were also able to draw upon a pervasive spirit of pacifism in the wake of the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928. By their ratification of this treaty, virtually all major nations solemnly pledged to renounce "war as an instrument of their national policy."15 Adding to this antiwar sentiment in the United States was the disclosure that a representative of certain American shipbuilding interests had been instrumental in the failure of the Geneva Naval Conference of 1927. To many it seemed as if the "merchants of death" were up to their old tricks and that decisive action was required to ensure that they would not again be permitted to disrupt world peace through the pursuit of their selfish interests.

Eager to seize the initiative in bringing about another naval conference, President Hoover hinted that the Americans had devised a naval "yardstick" to compute parity by taking into consideration other factors besides tonnage and armament. The exact nature of these additional criteria proved

elusive and further study revealed that meaningful comparison would be impractical on any other basis than displacement and firepower. Nonetheless, the promise of a comprehensive solution by way of a "yardstick," visionary as it later proved to be, served as a catalytic agent bringing the two nations into closer agreement on outstanding issues. Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald reciprocated by eliminating another major obstacle when he withdrew British objections to numerical parity with the United States. The success of the preliminary conversations seemed to justify a conference at London in January 1930.

During the preparation of instructions for the American delegation, the Navy outlined its two major objectives. The first was to be allowed to build at least 21 heavy cruisers. This number was regarded as the absolute minimum consonant with fleet operational requirements and Congress had already authorized their construction. Of much more importance was


19 Ibid., 104-108; 160-166. Congress authorized 8 heavy cruisers in 1924 and 15 more in 1929.
the General Board recommendation that the existing ratios assigned to capital ships be extended to cover all other categories. This proposal clearly mirrored the Navy's anxiety about the rapid growth of the Japanese fleet. The developing rapprochement with Great Britain had served to channel strategic planning toward meeting the requirements of operations in the Western Pacific. As noted previously, before the Washington Conference it had been estimated that the very minimum required for successful campaigning in those waters was a 2-1 superiority in capital ships. Consequently, naval circles had been distressed by the subsequent 5-3 ratio and the accompanying agreement not to upgrade the fortifications on Guam or the Philippines. In addition, the Navy was highly skeptical of the ability of the "Nine Power" and "Four Power" treaties to protect American trade and possessions in the Far East. A further increase in Japanese ratios would give the Imperial Navy an immense advantage in the Western Pacific due to shorter lines of communication and numerous excellent bases athwart possible routes of approach through the Central Pacific.

Although the London Conference culminated in a treaty satisfactorily addressing outstanding naval issues between

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20 For more on this development see Gerald E. Wheeler, Prelude to Pearl Harbor (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1963), see also his "Isolated Japan: Anglo-American Co-Operation, 1927-1936," Pacific Historical Review, XXX (May, 1961) 165-178.
the United States, Great Britain, and Japan, this accomplishment was marred by the refusal of France and Italy to sign it. The French felt they could not accept inferiority in both auxiliaries and capital ships. Great Britain's policy of maintaining a fleet as large as the combined strength of her two closest European rivals was incompatible with the desires of her cross-channel competitor and an impasse resulted. The Italians, whose goal was parity with France, could not assent to a limitation pact her Gallic neighbor was not a party to. Therefore, to protect the British from frenzied building by those two powers, the treaty contained an escalator clause which would allow a participating nation to exceed its limits if its security were endangered by the actions of a nonsignatory state.21

The remaining three powers reaffirmed the existing ratios for capital ships with a number of them to be scrapped to better conform to the tonnage quotas. New building in this category was averted by the extension of the battleship construction holiday through 1936.22 In addition, 


22Ibid., Part I, Articles 1 and 2.
carrier provisions were modified to reduce their maximum armament to 6.1 inch guns and set a minimum displacement at 10,000 tons in an effort to limit the number of these vessels.23

The crucial provisions of the London Naval Treaty, however, dealt with cruisers. They were divided into two subcategories: "(a) cruisers carrying a gun above 6.1 inch caliber; (b) cruisers carrying a gun not above 6.1 inch caliber."24 The United States received 180,000 tons of (a) category cruisers (not to exceed 18 in number); Great Britain 146,800 tons (not to exceed 15); and Japan 108,400 tons (not to exceed 12).25 The number of American heavy cruisers, however, was further restricted by the terms of the Reed-Matsudaira Agreement which set the limit at 15 though 1935, with the balance not being completed before 1938.26 The (b) category cruiser tonnage was apportioned

23Ibid., Part I, Articles 3-5.
24Ibid., Part III, Article 15.
25Ibid., Part III, Article 16.
26Ibid., Part III, Article 18; see also O'Connor, Perilous Equilibrium, 82.
respectively, 143,000; 192,000 and 100,450.\textsuperscript{27}

Destroyers were also divided into two subcategories, the first being destroyer-leaders displacing up to 1,850 tons and not exceeding 16 percent of the total destroyer tonnage.\textsuperscript{28} The remainder of the class was limited to 1,500 tons, mounting guns no larger than 5.1 inch caliber. The United States and Great Britain each were allowed a tonnage total of 150,000, while Japan received 105,000. All three navies were given equality on submarine tonnage with a ceiling set at 52,700.\textsuperscript{29} (See following table).

\textsuperscript{27}\textit{Ibid.}, Part III, Article 26.

\textsuperscript{28}The British had pioneered this type of vessel to serve as flagships for their destroyer divisions and their greater size was chiefly to accommodate this command function.

\textsuperscript{29}\textit{London Naval Treaty}, Part III, Articles 15-16.
## TABLE 1: TREATY (under the terms of the Washington and London Treaties the various categories are allowed)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>British Empire</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>American</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capital Ships (not to exceed 35,000 tons, with guns not in excess of 16 inches)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>525,000</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>525,000</td>
<td>315,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aircraft Carriers (not to exceed 27,000 tons except not more than 2 of not more than 33,000 tons allowed with guns not in excess of 8 inches; 10,000 tons carriers restricted to guns not in excess of 6.1 inches)</td>
<td>see A below</td>
<td>135,000</td>
<td>see A below</td>
<td>135,000</td>
<td>see A below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruisers (not to exceed 30,000 tons, with guns in excess of 6.1 inches)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>180,000</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>146,800</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruisers (not to exceed 16,000 tons, with guns not in excess of 6.1 inches)</td>
<td>see A below</td>
<td>141,000</td>
<td>see A below</td>
<td>192,200</td>
<td>see A below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destroyers over 1,500 tons (not to exceed 1,850 tons with guns not in excess of 5.1 inches)</td>
<td>see A below</td>
<td>24,000</td>
<td>see A below</td>
<td>24,000</td>
<td>see A below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destroyers not over 1,500 tons with guns not in excess of 5.1 inches)</td>
<td>see A below</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>see A below</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>see A below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submarines (not to exceed 2,000 tons with guns not to exceed 5.1 inches, except 3 not exceeding 2,800 tons, with guns not in excess of 6.1 inches allowed)</td>
<td>see A below</td>
<td>52,700</td>
<td>see A below</td>
<td>52,700</td>
<td>see A below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,180,200</td>
<td>1,201,700</td>
<td>763,050</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(A) Not limited as to number of vessels, but limited to tonnage

(Source: *International Record, LXVIII, 1937*)
Rules concerning the age and replacement of auxiliary vessels were also included in the London Treaty. Cruisers begun prior to January 1, 1920, would become overage in sixteen years, those laid down after that date would be considered obsolete in twenty. In the case of destroyers, the respective age limits would be twelve and sixteen years. All submarines could be replaced after thirteen years. These provisions were to have tremendous influence on future naval construction as replacement programs, for the first time, could be accurately calculated. Arguments based on the replacement clauses were primarily responsible for later congressional acceptance that such building was necessary and did not conflict with the spirit of naval limitation.

Except for the attainment of parity with the Royal Navy, naval circles had little cause for satisfaction with the results of the negotiations. Instead of the rock bottom estimate of 21 heavy cruisers, they were given 18 and could build only 15 of those before 1936. Light cruiser tonnage was regarded as a useless commodity the Admiralty had succeeded in foisting upon the Americans. Naval officers viewed the significant improvement of the Japanese quotas as a crushing blow to the Navy's chances for success in the Western Pacific. Japan had shattered the 5-3 ratio barrier

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30 Ibid., Part II, Article 13, Annex I.
set by the General Board by attaining a 10-7 ratio with the United States in light cruisers and destroyers, while achieving full submarine parity. Although the Imperial Navy technically accepted the Washington ratio in heavy cruisers, by virtue of the Reed-Matsudaira Agreement it would actually receive 72 percent through 1935. As the Senate took up the treaty, Admiral Henry Hough succinctly summed up the prevailing Navy view:

We have given up our right to build a type of ship that we need. We have abandoned the 5-5-3 ratio. We have accepted subdivision of the cruiser category. We have surrendered the principle of no replacements until 1936. We should have gotten one more capital ship out of it. We did not press as hard as we might have for actual parity. We gave up our superiority in destroyers. We granted parity in submarines to Japan. We did not insist upon modification of the base and fortification clause of the Washington Treaty when granting an increase of ratio to Japan.31

This assessment demonstrated a failure to appreciate a number of factors which had combined to make American naval aims at London unrealistic. In the first place, the desire to attain the capability for successful naval operations in the Far East ran counter to the raison d'être of the naval limitation treaties. If they did nothing else,

these pacts assured each party supremacy in certain waters. For Japan this had meant the Western Pacific. There could be no question of that nation accepting a limitation agreement which gave the United States the ability to challenge the Imperial Navy there. Such a capability would necessarily be a threat to Japan itself. It was equally unreasonable to expect that the Japanese capital ship ratio could be extended to auxiliaries in light of that country's vigorous program of naval construction during the 1920's. This activity sharply contrasted with the feeble American efforts and compliance with the General Board's wishes could have required Japan to reduce her fleet. As Admiral W.V. Pratt, the incoming Chief of Naval Operations, candidly pointed out, "It is the ships that are built and building that count at a conference, and we could hardly expect another nation to sacrifice tonnage already in existence in order to come to a ratio inferior to that which they already possessed, and would appear from the results that the United States came out very well in the ratios obtained."32 Moreover, most critics overlooked the fact that while treaty limits merely recognized Japan's actual strength, the United States had been given quotas which, with the exception of

32Ibid., 366.
destroyers and submarines (see Table II), the Navy had not attained. Thus, while the Japanese program would come to a virtual standstill until the treaty's expiration in 1936, the Americans had the opportunity to correct fleet deficiencies.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>United States</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Built</td>
<td>Building</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Built</td>
<td>Building</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Ships</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>532,400</td>
<td>550,400</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>606,459</td>
<td>626,459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonnage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aircraft</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>76,286</td>
<td>76,286</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>115,350</td>
<td>115,350</td>
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<td>Tonnage</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruisers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-9 inch guns</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>22,000</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>149,426</td>
<td>151,426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonnage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruisers</td>
<td></td>
<td>70,500</td>
<td>70,500</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>177,685</td>
<td>177,685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-inch guns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonnage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destroyers</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>290,304</td>
<td>290,588</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>170,240</td>
<td>186,865</td>
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<td>Tonnage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submarines</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>75,520</td>
<td>85,520</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>50,154</td>
<td>56,154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonnage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>7,520</td>
<td>8,940</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>4,750</td>
<td>5,980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Tonnage</td>
<td>1,065,010</td>
<td>115,460</td>
<td>1,180,470</td>
<td>1,269,995</td>
<td>72,116</td>
<td>1,347,111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Naval Affairs, Building up of the United States Navy to the Strength Provided by the Washington and London Naval Treaties, Hearings, Senate, on S. 51, 73rd Congress, 1st Session, 1932-3.
The chances of the Navy achieving its aims at London were further diminished by President Hoover's attitude toward treaty limits and naval adequacy. Instead of viewing treaty limits as the absolute minimum consistent with national security, he saw them as a temporary phase line for further reductions at future conferences. Subjected to intense pressure to reduce federal spending in the midst of a worsening Depression, Hoover sought partial remedies through cuts in the Navy budget. This could be done, he felt, by limiting the Navy's mission to guaranteeing that "no foreign soldier will land on American soil." Consequently, he rejected the General Board's naval policy guidelines which contemplated operations in the Western Pacific and stressed an obligation to protect American lives, interests, and commerce around the world. Hoover felt these aims were unrealistic, unenforceable, and the funding required to give the fleet such capabilities fiscally irresponsible. He was quite willing to recognize the naval supremacy of Japan in the Western Pacific and to rely upon international agreements to protect our vital interests there. In the unlikely event of war with Japan, the President felt that the industrial

33 The Army Navy Journal, LXX (October 1, 1932), 1.

capacity of the United States would ensure eventual triumph. Hoover's narrow views on naval policy also help explain the compromises he was willing to make at London contrary to the counsel of his naval advisors. He did not believe that disagreement over the number of heavy cruisers justified jeopardizing the success of the conference. Furthermore, he was confident increased Japanese ratios still did not give them the ability to seriously threaten, let alone successfully invade, the United States. Despite vocal 'Navy opposition throughout the Senate's ratification proceedings, Hoover's position, buttressed by widespread public support, ultimately prevailed.

Recent studies of interwar naval policy have concluded that the Navy's opposition to naval limitation ignored the fundamental causes of American naval decline and failed to recognize the treaty system's potential as a framework for future remedial action. They rightly point out that the Navy never actually built up to treaty limits in all categories and nothing in those agreements specifically

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prohibited the inauguration of a comprehensive building and replacement program. Rather, the Navy's plight stemmed from a combination of executive opposition to increased naval expenditures, congressional parsimony, and the absence of widespread public concern about the Navy's decline.

Indeed it is argued that the treaty system exerted a positive influence upon naval development, prevented an even more precipitous decline in naval strength, and ultimately provided the framework and compelling rationale for corrective action in the 1930's. The limitation on battleship construction forced the Navy to examine and exploit the potential of naval aviation. The tonnage limitation on cruisers and other vessels compelled the necessary tradeoffs between speed, protection, and armament that were to pay impressive dividends in World War II, while advancing the state of the art in ship design and construction techniques. Finally, having to live with limited resources imposed the necessity of devising and exercising new tactical and strategic doctrine for extended operations associated with a major transoceanic campaign long envisioned by naval planners.

Such assertions, while partially true, fail to take into account the indirect influence naval limitation treaties exerted in the political realm. Irrespective of their technical provisions, the Washington and London treaties mirrored and perpetuated attitudes hostile to increased
naval construction and effectively discouraged positive political action to that end. The Navy persistently advanced the argument that these provisions should be viewed as the baseline for a building and replacement program and that the Navy's acquiescence to them was part of an implicit political bargain involving in return a national commitment to maintain the fleet at those levels. Such claims were unavailing as long as there was a fair prospect that further naval arms limitation could be achieved. Political leaders sympathetic to that goal for philosophic or economic reasons saw current limitations merely as temporary way stations on the path to further reductions. In their minds, therefore, there was no obligation to build up the fleet to treaty levels as it would not be consistent with their desire to negotiate future agreements. In view of the commitment to naval limitation by Republican administrations during the 1920's, aided and abetted by budget conscious Congresses, the Navy's failure was inevitable. The most the Navy could elicit during this period were two naval construction authorizations, one in 1924 for eight cruisers and another in 1929 for one aircraft carrier and 15 cruisers. As valuable as those acquisitions proved to be for the Navy, they could in no way be construed to be a balanced or adequate program for maintaining the overall quality and size of the fleet.
In sum, while it is undeniable that the Navy never had much sympathy for naval limitation, its opposition and frustration with the Washington and London treaties cannot be written off as simple obstinancy or a myopic lack of appreciation of their potential virtues. The Navy had to live with the political realities that produced and were perpetuated by these treaties and those realities were not kind to efforts to frame and implement a rational naval policy in the 1920's. Whatever the virtues of the treaty system in providing a framework for future corrective efforts, events at the time were not such as to make the Navy sanguine this opportunity would be translated into action. In fact, events were to prove that remedial action did not become politically viable until the belief in the efficacy of naval limitation had been substantially eroded by disturbing developments in the Far East and Europe.

A related assertion that has been advanced was that Navy appropriations during the period were roughly double prewar totals and therefore sufficient to belie claims that the fleet was being starved of the funding it needed to maintain a satisfactory material condition.\textsuperscript{36} The

weakness with this claim is that it focuses only upon the total size of the Navy budget, not its composition. For example, looking at the makeup of the Navy budget for the years 1906 to 1916 and between 1922 and 1932 discloses significant changes in allocations that fundamentally impacted on the Navy's overall readiness and capabilities. As the following table indicates, in the earlier period the relative proportion of the annual appropriation allocated for increase of the Navy averaged 26.2 percent and fell below 20 percent only once. Conversely, between 1922 and 1932, the average percentage for increase of the Navy and major alterations was merely 15.1 percent.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>TOTAL NAVY APPROPRIATION</th>
<th>AMOUNT FOR INCREASE OF THE NAVY*</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL NAVY APPRO.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>107,836</td>
<td>42,414</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>107,427</td>
<td>33,926</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>109,683</td>
<td>25,864</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>125,747</td>
<td>30,458</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>135,792</td>
<td>39,025</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>135,733</td>
<td>33,770</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>130,289</td>
<td>26,005</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>126,518</td>
<td>20,569</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>144,142</td>
<td>35,326</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>149,099</td>
<td>41,197</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>174,826</td>
<td>47,460</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,956,101</td>
<td>533,824</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>508,155</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>330,607</td>
<td>61,050</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>302,856</td>
<td>34,097</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>308,810</td>
<td>48,950</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>310,591</td>
<td>15,444</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>332,071</td>
<td>58,770</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>348,332</td>
<td>49,117</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>383,143</td>
<td>62,401</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>364,693</td>
<td>48,800</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>403,243</td>
<td>66,800</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>359,199</td>
<td>38,306</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3,951,699</td>
<td>597,729</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes alteration of naval vessels

This trend is further borne out by a comparison of the average number of vessels under construction between 1906-1916 and 1922-1932. During the former period the annual average was 39 vessels under construction compared to 21 in the latter decade. Yet even this match-up is too favorable to the 1922-1932 period as many of the vessels under construction in 1922 and 1923 were never actually completed as a result of the Washington Treaty. This comparison clearly indicates a marked dropoff in the tempo of shipbuilding that is especially significant when it is kept in mind that the size of the fleet in 1930 was roughly double what it had been in 1916.37

Another aspect of the postwar shipbuilding activity was its lack of balance. Although the United States Navy had traditionally been regarded as top heavy in capital ships, the earlier construction programs were more balanced than those after World War I. This imbalance was partially mitigated by the fact that the wartime building program turned out a large number of destroyers and submarines that did not require early replacement. Likewise, the emphasis upon heavy cruiser construction is understandable in that the shortage of these vessels constituted the Navy's most

serious deficiency vis-a-vis other major naval powers in the early and mid 1920's. Nevertheless, the breakdown of the post-Washington Treaty naval building programs demonstrates their extreme imbalance:

1925 - 2 heavy cruisers; 2 submarines
1927 - 6 heavy cruisers
1929 - 5 heavy cruisers; 1 submarine
1930 - 1 aircraft carrier; 1 heavy cruiser
1931 - 1 heavy cruiser; 8 destroyers; 2 submarines
Total - 1 aircraft carrier; 15 heavy cruisers; 8 destroyers; 5 submarines (Source: Paul H. Silverstone, U.S. Warships of World War II (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1972), 13).

The Navy paid a number of penalties for this imbalanced, spasmodic, and deficient building program. Economically, construction under such conditions was more expensive as it created uncertainty in the shipbuilding industry resulting in layoffs of skilled personnel who would be sorely missed should there be an upswing in naval construction. Thus, when a surge of renewed building occurred, companies had to retool extensively, expand and retrain their labor force, and draw up new plans. Without the benefit of a continuous program accompanied by aggressive research and development, American shipbuilders were denied the opportunity to keep up with the state of the art and incorporate the latest
technology into their designs.\textsuperscript{38} It was with these things in mind that Captain Emory S. Land, future Chief of the Bureau of Construction and Repair, was able to estimate in 1932 that the Government could save between 10 and 20 percent in construction costs by adopting a long-range approach.\textsuperscript{39} The imbalanced building also led to the grotesque situation the Navy faced concerning replacement. In 1934, all 254 destroyers in the fleet would be overage along with 64 submarines.\textsuperscript{40} Although this definition of obsolescence established by the London Treaty was frequently attacked as being artificial, it was well founded in this case. Constructed during and shortly after World War I, U.S. destroyers were qualitatively inferior to the vessels being built by other major powers during the 1920's and a generation behind those possessed by Britain and Japan. Diplomatically the occasional fits and starts associated with the

\textsuperscript{38}While it is true that domestic orders after 1929 largely offset the drought in Navy shipbuilding, different skills were required for naval orders. Furthermore, as the Depression deepened domestic orders dried up and without a significant infusion of naval orders by 1934, private shipbuilders would be in desperate straits. By 1931, the Navy was even having difficulty finding work for government shipyards due to a lack of authorized construction and cuts in naval appropriations. Robert E. Levine, "The Politics of American Naval Rearmament, 1930-1938". (Unpublished dissertation, Harvard University, 1972), 51-55.


\textsuperscript{40}Carl Vinson, \textit{The Washington Herald}, January 7, 1932, 1.
U.S. building programs and the strident authorization debates in Congress made these actions appear more threatening than they really were. The Japanese, British and French programs dwarfed American efforts yet never seemed as conspicuous due to their steady, incremental nature. Finally, the lack of a consistent, comprehensive program made extended projections on which to base a coherent naval policy impossible.

The upshot was that the Navy was indeed suffering from a lingering and pernicious deprivation of funding insofar as the material condition of the fleet was concerned. Furthermore, the negative consequences stemming from this situation compounded the Navy's difficulty in rectifying its deficiencies through the imposition of increased costs and additional delays. Under the circumstances, the Navy certainly can be pardoned for its emotional response and distrust of naval limitation efforts which it correctly perceived as contributing to its present difficulties and obstructing remedial political action. This frustration was further heightened as the Navy came to sense that the opportunities afforded by the London Treaty for it to improve its position vis-a-vis Japan and Great Britain by 1936 were slipping away as a result of presidential opposition and congressional inaction. The disappointment within the service was all the more keen with the growing realization
that competing naval powers had been better able to accommodate themselves to the naval limitation treaty structure in attempting to fashion realistic naval policy.

Of course the 1920's were not without their positive aspects insofar as Navy material readiness was concerned. Intermittent shafts of light broke through the gloom to offer hope and point the way for the reversal of the Navy's declining fortunes. The authorization bills passed in 1924 and 1929 provided fine heavy cruisers and largely remedied one of its most glaring quantitative deficiencies. Moreover, the Navy had been successful in securing from Congress the necessary funding to carry out the modernization of its battleline. Through these efforts, American battleships were able to extend the range of their main batteries by modifying their turrets to achieve greater gun elevation. Defensively, they enhanced their survivability from aerial and underwater attack through the addition of deck armor and torpedo bulges, while upgrading their steaming performance by changing from coal to oil fired propulsion. There were also the energetic efforts by dedicated aviators and the Bureau of Aeronautics to demonstrate the utility of naval aviation and fashion a doctrine for its employment from aircraft carriers in support of the
And although its recommendations were never fully implemented, the General Board continued its vital work devising balanced and rational construction programs for the time when political conditions would permit their realization.

Doubtless, however, the most significant positive development affecting Navy material policy was the Act of June 24, 1926. Authorizing a five year program for the procurement of 1000 aircraft, this law demonstrated how effectively a serious material deficiency could be addressed through executive-legislative branch cooperation. Moreover, this initiative was to validate the concept of a long-range, comprehensive naval procurement program able to simultaneously reconcile service needs and industry requirements. The fact that it also established an attractive precedent having possible application in the realm of shipbuilding did not escape the notice of ardent navalists.

In large part the enactment of this legislation stemmed from the work of the President's Aircraft Board, more commonly known as the Morrow Board after its chairman, Dwight W. Morrow. Charged by President Calvin Coolidge with

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studying "the best means of development and applying aircraft in national defense and to supplement the studies made by the War and Navy Departments," the Morrow Board began its three month investigation on September 17, 1925.42

As was implied by the nature of its instructions, the Morrow Board represented an extraordinary initiative on the part of the president to resolve an acrimonious controversy on the nature and status of military aviation that had raged since the war. Thus, the overriding goal of the board was to reconcile divergent attitudes on this issue and develop recommendations for realistic courses of action that would address the myriad problems besetting military aviation. Given the wide differences of opinion existing among various aviation proponents and the service establishments, this was no mean task.

The most volatile aspect of this issue was the question of whether there should be an autonomous air service controlling all military and naval aviation. Within the Army this had become a very bitter controversy and, even as the Morrow Board met, Col. Billy Mitchell was facing a court

42 Report of the President's Aircraft Board, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1925), 1. Other members of the board were: Major General James G. Harbord (ret.); Rear Admiral Frank F. Fletcher (ret.); Judge Arthur C. Denison; Mr. William F. Durand; Mr. Howard E. Coffin; Senator Hiram Bingham (Republican; CT); Representative James S. Parker (Republican; NY); chairman, House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce; and Representative Carl Vinson (Democrat; GA) ranking minority member House Committee on Naval Affairs.
martial involving, at least indirectly, his efforts to bring about a separation of the Army Air Service and the creation of a Department for Air. The Morrow Board strongly recommended against such a course of action, but did offer proposals to give the Army Air Service greater autonomy and equality with other branches within the Army.\textsuperscript{43}

Within the Navy the internal debate over aviation had been spirited, but stopped short of a call for the establishment of a separate service, if for no other reason than the legitimate fear that Army aviators would dominate such an arrangement. Rather, the questions concerning Navy aviators centered on better opportunities for promotion and command of naval aviation billets. As in the Army's case, the Morrow Board recommended a series of changes toward improving the status of naval aviators and giving the Bureau of Aeronautics more autonomy and authority in the management of naval aviation.\textsuperscript{44}

Causing less controversy, but just as serious was the matter of redressing growing shortfalls in available aircraft while at the same time nurturing the nations' growing, but still fragile aviation industry. What was required was

\textsuperscript{43}\textit{Ibid.}, 19-21.

\textsuperscript{44}\textit{Ibid.}
a course of action that would insure a steady flow of military orders to allow the industry to keep abreast of rapidly advancing technology while preserving an industrial capacity to meet wartime requirements. In the course of its hearings, it became obvious to the Morrow Board that the answer was a consistent, comprehensive procurement program over a number of years. Accordingly, it strongly recommended "adoption of a policy of continuity of orders and of a standard rate of replacement."\(^45\) Aided by active administration support, Congress quickly translated these recommendations into substance by approving legislation later known as the Act of June 24, 1926. As remarkable, however, was the Navy's subsequent success in securing from Congress the necessary appropriations to complete the program on schedule, despite the onset of the Depression.

Nevertheless, as 1931 drew to a close and the Navy surveyed political developments since the ratification of the London Treaty, the positive accomplishments in the previous decade were overshadowed by the continuing decline in the material condition of the fleet and the growing realization that the prospects for a reversal of this trend were bleak. Any hopes that the approval of the treaty would be the precursor of vigorous efforts by the United States

\(^{45}\text{i}b\text{i}d., 29.$
to correct its quantitative deficiencies under that agreement were quickly and rudely dispelled. The test case involved H.R. 12283, introduced by Representative Fred Britten (Republican; Illinois), chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee, which authorized the Navy to build up to treaty limits by 1936 (see appendix 57). Able to secure only belated support from the Navy Department, the prospects for favorable congressional action appeared so remote that the bill was never even reported from committee.46

At the Navy's instigation, in the following session Britten took another tack and introduced legislation authorizing appropriations for a more modest one year program providing for the construction of an aircraft carrier, flying-deck cruiser and four submarines (see appendix 57).47 According to its proponents, this legislation represented only the first year of a planned succession of one year authorizations designed to bring the U.S. fleet to treaty

46H.R. 12283 was introduced on May 8, 1930.

47H.R. 14688. A flying deck cruiser was a 10,000 ton light (6-inch gun) vessel with a landing deck aft and capable of handling a dozen or so planes. The London Treaty had permitted them and their tonnage was not applied against that allowed for true carriers. The Navy toyed with this concept, but had decided against it by 1934, deciding that these ships embodied all the flaws of the types they were to replace and few of their virtues.
strength by the mid-1930's. Although Chairman Britten was able to get his bill reported out of committee, administration opposition prevented floor debate on the measure.

More representative of the House's attitudes toward naval building were the remarks of Representative Will R. Wood (Republican; Indiana) following a meeting with President Hoover when he told reporters, "Why should we build the navy to London Treaty limits when it will have nothing to do after we have built it... No wars are on now and no war is in sight." Lending force to this statement was the fact that Wood was chairman of the House Appropriations Committee and backed his opinions with deeds. Furthermore, he had been a major architect of the notorious Navy Appropriation Act for fiscal year 1932 that reduced expenditures $22.3 million below the previous year's levels and cut naval construction funds by 20 percent.

This was just the most recent instance in a pattern of meat-ax cuts throughout the previous decade. None of these incremental reductions were in themselves crippling, but


their cumulative impact by 1931 was such as to raise grave doubts about the Navy's capability to safeguard vital American interests abroad, or to fulfill its assigned policy objectives in an increasingly troubled world. As noted earlier, ship construction had been singled out as a special target by Representative Wood and his chief lieutenant Burton L. Franch (Republican; Idaho), chairman of the Naval Subcommittee, but no Navy activity had been spared. As a result, commissioned vessels were seriously undermanned, training suffered due to a lack of funding and restricted steaming days, routine overhauls were deferred and general upkeep of the fleet suffered. Characteristically, as Navy readiness deteriorated there was no effort on the part of civilian policy-makers to make corresponding reductions in its mission responsibilities. Thus, there was an increasing negative relationship between what the Navy was to do and its ability to accomplish those tasks.

Representative of the problem the Navy faced because of the widening between its combat capability and mission requirements was the situation following the Japanese takeover of Manchuria and the truculent tone of the American diplomatic response. For the Department there was a perverse irony in being forced to contemplate the prospect of a naval confrontation in the Pacific for which the United States fleet was woefully ill-prepared.
Contrasted to the inaction and antipathy encountered by naval construction initiatives were the vigorous efforts by the White House and State Department to prepare for the Geneva Disarmament Conference. President Hoover was determined to make the most of this opportunity to effect significant reductions in the U.S. military and naval establishments while furthering the cause of world disarmament. Although the Navy Department was given the opportunity to participate in these preparations, there seemed little to suggest that the President would be more willing to follow the recommendations of his naval advisors now than before the London Conference.

Under the circumstances, it was not surprising that President Hoover would be unusually receptive to the idea of a naval holiday when it was first suggested in September by Dino Grandi, the Italian Foreign Minister. It appealed to the President first of all because it would help create a congenial atmosphere for the Geneva Conference the following year and might even provide sufficient momentum to bring about a significant new naval limitation agreement. In addition, a naval holiday would enjoy a great deal of popularity in the United States through its appeal to American idealism and by raising the prospect that federal spending could be reduced or redirected to more positive ends like public works projects and unemployment relief.
Finally, this initiative would undercut prospective efforts within the Navy Department and Congress to enact a major naval construction program.

Largely as a result of Hoover's efforts, the major maritime powers agreed to a one year holiday on naval construction on September 30, 1931. Specifically, the naval holiday prohibited the laying down of any new warships between November 1, 1931 and November 1, 1932. It did not, however, apply to vessels already under construction, those already contracted for, or those being built to replace overage tonnage under the terms of the London Treaty. The authorization and appropriation for other vessels was also permitted as long as they were not laid down prior to November 1932. Consequently, unless the holiday were extended, its actual impact on the Navy building program would be largely symbolic.

Nevertheless, the naval holiday's symbolism was not a neutral factor and its existence complicated the Department's efforts to alleviate its material deficiencies. It was all very well for naval experts and diplomats to recognize that the naval holiday was a rather nebulous agreement, but the man on the street was inclined to accept it at face value. For him the naval holiday meant an agreement where none of the parties would build warships for a year. As had been the case with the treaties, it
proved almost impossible to educate the public about the nuances and technical intricacies of the naval holiday. The upshot was that while this agreement was in force it would be very difficult to generate popular support for naval authorization legislation. It was another instance where the Navy could not quarrel with this agreement in principle, but found it intolerable in practice.

Whatever the Navy's true feelings about the naval holiday, it outwardly continued to exercise restraint in the face of adversity. The same could not be said for the Navy League. Publicly critical of a naval holiday from the first, the League's officialdom became convinced that the President and his Secretary of State, Henry L. Stimson, were either abysmally ignorant or wilfully blind when it came to naval affairs. To bring Hoover's record of irresponsibility or ignorance to the attention of the American people, the Navy League issued a stinging indictment on October 28, 1931, entitled "The President and the Navy." Among the President's sins catalogued in the sixteen page document were his surrender at London on increased Japanese ratios and acceptance of useless small cruiser tonnage; his holding up construction of 5 out of 15 cruisers authorized; an order to cut the fiscal year 1932 Navy Budget by $61 million; and his agreement to the
naval holiday.\textsuperscript{50}

Stung by these charges, President Hoover reacted by announcing on the following day his intention to appoint a committee to look into the "untruths and distortion of fact" contained in the Navy League release.\textsuperscript{51} As a result, the Navy found itself drawn into what was turning into an unedifying exchange between Hoover and the President of the Navy League, William Gardiner. Loyally, Secretary of the Navy Charles F. Adams came to the President's defense and publicly castigated the Navy League for its actions. In addition, Assistant Secretary of the Navy Ernest L. Jahncke and retired Admiral Hugh Rodman served on a five man committee of inquiry investigating the League's charges. As all the members except Rodman were personal friends of the President, the outcome of the inquiry was never in doubt. After deliberating for just four days and calling no witnesses, the committee issued a report on November 6, unanimously finding that "Mr. Gardiner's statement contained many inaccuracies, false assertions, and erroneous

\textsuperscript{50}Rappaport, \textit{The Navy League of the United States}, 144.

conclusions and that his assumption as to the President's attitude toward the Navy is wholly unwarranted."52

Notwithstanding this verdict, neither of the principals in this dispute came out unsullied. Hoover's high-handedness, and sensitivity did nothing to enhance his image. Moreover, while his handpicked committee of inquiry rightly pointed up various errors in the Gardiner press release, its basic contentions were not expressly refuted. On the other hand, whatever the merits of the Navy League's case against the President, a frontal assault on his integrity was not the way to proceed. Such an approach was counterproductive and only served to alienate the League in the eyes of many of its friends while confirming the worst suspicions of its detractors. There emerged a growing perception that the Navy League was either a well-intentioned but unrestrained advocacy group, or an irresponsible pawn of unscrupulous shipbuilders and armament makers.

Equally unfortunate was that the Navy actually suffered as a result of this unhappy episode. Its long and faithful ally, the Navy League, needlessly discredited itself when its assistance and influence were most needed. Unlike the League, the Navy had to continue to work with

President Hoover and it is certain that this affair left a residue of ill will toward the Department. Despite the strong support he received from Secretary Adams and Assistant Secretary Jahncke, the President would always entertain suspicions that some sort of Navy involvement had precipitated the League's attack upon him. It made it all the more difficult for the Navy and its legislative allies to secure the President's acquiescence or neutrality toward naval construction legislation.

Thus, as 1931 drew to a close, it became abundantly clear that the Navy could not look to Republican leadership at either end of Pennsylvania Avenue for a remedy to its growing material deficiencies. There was, however, potentially significant development involving the House of Representatives. Several Democratic victories in special elections during 1931 resulted in the loss of Republican control of that body. Although there was little to indicate that a change in House and committee leadership would result in dramatic policy changes, the Navy was determined to carefully examine any possibilities that might improve its fortunes. Foremost among these initiatives was a meeting between departmental leaders and the incoming chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee, Representative Carl Vinson.
CHAPTER II
THE GENTLEMAN FROM GEORGIA

As he savored the return of Democratic control of the House of Representatives when it organized on December 7, 1931, newly installed Majority Leader Henry T. Rainey (Democrat; Illinois) may well have reflected upon his talent for prophesy. Although the Republicans had weathered the bitter 1930 Congressional elections with razor thin majorities in both chambers, Rainey had been convinced that their control of the House was too tenuous to survive the thirteen month interval until the convening of the 72nd Congress.

Writing earlier in 1931, he noted with satisfaction to Earl C. Smith of the Illinois Agricultural Association that:

The chances are that the deaths which will occur between now and the first Monday in December may give the democrats a clear majority in the House. Almost any Republican district will go democratic this summer, and ten or twelve Members of Congress will die between now and first Monday in December, in all probability - three have already died - two democrats and one progressive-republican. . . .Whenever a republican member dies there is a chance during the present depression, for a democrat to carry the district."

1Letter to Mr. Earle C. Smith, April 14, 1931, Henry T. Rainey Papers, Box 3, MDLC.
While the grim reaper was unable to completely fulfill Rainey's morbid prediction, enough Republican members succumbed to produce the desired outcome in the resulting special elections.²

This somber ebbing of Republican strength brought to a close a period of continuous control of the House extending back to 1919 and also signalled the end of a seventy year era of relative dominance in Congress. Another sixteen years would pass before the next Republican majority, during which time the party would experience its nadir as an effective force in national politics.

The Democratic organization of the House of Representatives also brought with it the elevation of Carl Vinson (Democrat; Georgia) to the chairmanship of the Committee on Naval Affairs. In an appointment process dominated by the seniority system, the selection of the forty-eight year old country lawyer and ranking minority member on the committee since 1923 had been expected. Although he was respected for his considerable expertise in naval matters and his conscientious committee work, there was little reason to believe that his appointment represented a watershed in Congressional attitudes or legislative activity involving the Navy.

Indeed, the new chairman must have cut a pale figure beside his flamboyant predecessor, Fred A. Britten (Republican; Illinois), a hard-nosed ex-pugilist whose sartorial taste was only matched by a flair for the striking pose and knack for controversy. In contrast, normally attired in a conservative, three piece suit, set off with a flashy necktie, Vinson projected a rustic image. Customarily found on the House floor lounging on a bench in close proximity to a spitoon, chewing on an inexpensive cigar or working a chaw of tobacco, Vinson would be engaged in folksy dialogue or regaling his colleagues with wry anecdotes. Altogether, he appeared to be the typical rural, "good old boy" Southern politician.

Furthermore, Vinson's selection seemed incongruous inasmuch as he represented Georgia's landlocked, predominantly agricultural 10th District. Thus, the incentive provided by direct constituent involvement in Navy related business, or concern over the wellbeing of a local naval facility was lacking. The absence of district-related incentives caused some observers to question Vinson's ability to exercise consistent, informed, and effective leadership without such motivation.

These doubts would be quickly allayed, but there were other surface indicators which suggested a more positive appraisal to a discerning observer. First, there
was the robust, erect, six foot frame which was animated by the remarkable vigor of an indefatigable worker. Then, there was a penetrating gaze beneath an impatient frown which bespoke a quick, incisive mind that chafed under delay or digression once a course of action had been chosen. A firm mouth mirrored a strong sense of purpose and tenacity in the pursuit of goals. Less tangible, but no less real, was a commanding presence which invariably sought to dominate those around him. This determination and sense of purpose were partially masked by a wry smile and droll wit that deflated or diverted unwary opponents and earned for him the sobriquet, "The Swamp Fox," from his appreciative colleagues. Nevertheless, no amount of external scrutiny would disclose Vinson's true feelings or intentions. He kept his own counsel and jealously preserved his freedom of action until it was time to act. In sum, one could sense a combination of strong conviction applied to aims with subtlety and pragmatism in the selection of means.

This same personal reserve is largely responsible for the paucity and fragmentary nature of the information about Vinson's early life. Nevertheless, an examination of what is known about his background and apprenticeship yields valuable insights into his choice of a legislative career and the reasons for his success.
Carl Vinson made an inauspicious entrance upon the world scene on November 18, 1883 at a farm in Baldwin County, Georgia, three miles south of Milledgeville. As one of the first areas of central Georgia to be settled, Baldwin County had a rich past. Milledgeville had been the antebellum center of the cultural, political and educational life of the state and served as its capital from 1803 to 1868. Although Milledgeville survived the Civil War and a restrained visit by General Sherman in 1864, its importance subsequently declined. Georgia's future and that of the "New South" was shifting away from this rolling farm country to developing urban-industrial centers like Atlanta, the new state capitol. Still, Milledgeville retained a degree of its former prominence and this, together with its proud heritage, provided fitting surroundings for Carl's early development.  

With an improvement in family fortunes, Edward Storey Vinson and his wife Annie bought a house in town a few years after Carl's birth so that he and his seven brothers and sisters would be able to attend Middle Georgia Military  

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and Agricultural College. Despite its imposing title, the "college" was essentially a modest, coeducational, combined primary-secondary private school. Most significant from the standpoint of Carl's future was the fact that it was housed in the old State Capitol Building. The school chapel, where he practiced public speaking every Friday afternoon, had formerly been the legislative assembly hall and the very chamber where his great uncle had once served. Under the circumstances, it was not altogether surprising that by the time he was thirteen, Carl had made up his mind he wanted to be a Congressman.5

Certainly, he did not see his future in farming. His father, who continued to work the family farm, was a strict disciplinarian and firm believer that the hard work was the only true foundation of success. Accordingly, when school was not in session, he gave his sons the choice of coming out to the farm to help him, or finding jobs in town. Without hesitation, Carl opted to stay in town and spent his summer vacations soda jerking, delivering papers, or working in a department store. The latter position had a

4Ibid.

fringe benefit in that his youthful co-workers periodically became captive audiences for Carl's initial attempts at political oratory in the cellar of Joseph's Department Store.  

Completing his instruction at Middle Georgia Military and Agricultural College, in 1900 Carl Vinson entered Mercer University law school in Macon. Benefitting from some preparatory reading at a local law office, he graduated two years later (29th in a class of 50) and was simultaneously admitted to the Bar.  

Returning to Milledgeville, he became junior partner in a local law firm at 18. Although his new position afforded him the opportunity to observe first hand the practical aspects of courthouse politics, the mundane nature of country legal practice did not satisfy him. His career aspirations were much more ambitious—to become a prominent lawyer in Atlanta, or get elected to Congress. Unsuccessful in his efforts to join a large Atlanta law firm, Vinson turned to politics in earnest.  

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7Ibid.  
His first rung up the political ladder came with his appointment as Baldwin County court solicitor in 1904, a post he held for four years. It was during this time that he established a solid legal reputation while mastering the intricacies of local politics. In 1909 he was ready to take his next step when he successfully campaigned for election to the Georgia Assembly.

Vinson's two terms in Atlanta amply demonstrated two things—that he was an apt student of legislative politics and that he still had his sights on Capitol Hill. The first was evidenced by his rapid rise to the position of Speaker pro tempore and the second by his wangling an appointment to the committee to reapportion Georgia's Congressional districts in the wake of the 1910 census. With an eye on improving his prospects, he managed to transfer Baldwin County from the 6th to the 10th District. The 6th District, traditionally dominated by Bibb County and Macon, seemed to present insuperable difficulties for the rising Milledgeville-based legislator. Election to the seat in the 10th District would be no easy task, but at least it was achievable through hard work and a little good fortune.

The rather transparent nature of his accomplishment did not, however, sit well with the voters in Baldwin County. It was primarily responsible for his narrow (five vote), and only, election defeat in 1912 as he ran for a
third term in the General Assembly. Taking his loss with good grace, Vinson managed to secure appointment by the Governor as Judge of the Baldwin County Court and settled back to await his opportunity to run for Congress.

As it happened, he did not have to wait long. On February 14, 1914, Senator Augustus O. Bacon died and shortly thereafter, incumbent Congressman Thomas W. Hardwick of the 10th District opened his successful campaign for election to the vacant Senate seat. Hardwick's elevation to the Senate, in turn, set off a scramble by aspirants seeking to succeed him in the House of Representatives. Closely watching these developments, Carl Vinson announced his candidacy and embarked on a whirlwind campaign that would result in his election as the country's youngest Congressman at age 30.

Arriving in Washington, Vinson was able to derive additional benefit from Hardwick's successful Senate campaign as the youthful Congressman-elect was sworn in, on November 3, 1914, to fill out his predecessor's unexpired term. This would give him an advantage in seniority over other newly elected Members who would have to wait until March to take their oaths of office.

Having achieved his longtime career goal, he now became subject to the grueling pressures exerted upon freshman Congressman to justify constituent expectations
and secure reelection. Vinson shared the same handicaps as any first termer--lack of influence, non-prestigious and largely irrelevant committee assignments (Pensions and District of Columbia), and unfamiliarity with the system. In addition, he represented a district known, for good reason, as the "Bloody 10th." Although it would later be asserted that Vinson's success was largely attributable to the security of a safe seat, his first reelection campaigns were as difficult as any in the nation. While it is true that he never faced serious Republican opposition, the Democratic primary campaigns more than made up the difference. And it should be noted that Vinson was not just facing local lightweights. In 1918, he was challenged by that redoubtable old agrarian populist, Tom Watson. Only an iron constitution, youthful vigor, shrewd campaigning and a record of careful attention to constituent concerns allowed him to survive these early races.  

Apart from the obvious self-interest involved in the efficient handling of constituent business, Carl Vinson demonstrated throughout his career a deep sense of responsibility toward the people he represented. The most

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notable example of this sense of responsibility was his purchase, in 1926, of a small farm outside Milledgeville, later known as "River Ridge Plantation." Although we have seen that he had no love for farming, agriculture was the primary occupation in his district and he believed the only way he could fully appreciate the problems of his constituents was to experience them first hand.\(^{10}\) And while other Congressmen were often engaged in travel when the House was not in session, Vinson invariably returned to the district to handle constituent concerns. There was always a strong sense of the patriarch in Carl Vinson and it was by no accident that he acquired the affectionate nickname, "Uncle Carl." As time went on he became the venerable "father figure" to whom his constituents could repair for advice, assistance, or a sympathetic hearing.

Although Vinson's solicitude for his constituents may have seemed excessive at times, he retained a surprising degree of independence. A case in point was that while it was a common practice for a congressman to introduce legislative proposals drafted by influential constituents or prominent district interest groups, he would have none of it. With alacrity he returned such proposals to their authors and, in one case involving his powerful

\(^{10}\)Stockstill, "Backstage Boss of the Pentagon," p.690.
future political opponent, Tom Watson, accompanied it
with the emphatic statement that he "wore no man's collar".\footnote{Ibid.} This independence was even more pronounced on ques-
tions involving national defense. Embued with the small
town patriotism of his native Georgia, and proud of the
emergence of the United States as a world power following
the Spanish-American War, Carl Vinson became an unabashed
nationalist. Thereafter, in addressing national security
questions, considerations involving political expedience
or constituent interest were invariably subordinated to
those of paramount national interest. Moreover, unlike
some of his contemporaries, he refused to use his position
to benefit his district or party if such actions were not
justified on the basis of military necessity, or shown
to be cost-effective. It is significant that he first
enunciated these principles prior to his appointment to the
Naval Affairs Committee during the acrimonious partisan
debate on the 1916 Naval Appropriation bill. With an
earnestness born of conviction, he told his colleagues that
\footnote{Ibid. This behavior seems all the more remarkable
today when this practice has become so common that it has
been institutionalized by inserting after the name of the
Representative sponsoring such a legislative proposal the
words "by request" to inform his colleagues of the charac-
ter and true origin of the legislation.}
"a nation can maintain peace only if its defenses are strong" and preparedness "is a non-partisan question." While these sentiments have become commonplace in the political arena, they have never been adhered to as consistently or with greater sincerity than during Carl Vinson's half century of public service in the House of Representatives.

While he carried out his initial committee responsibilities with his characteristic conscientiousness, questions involving federal pensions and the operation of the District of Columbia held little appeal for him. Accordingly, he eagerly sought a more prestigious and personally satisfying committee assignment when the opportunity presented itself in 1917. No member could afford to approach this decision lightly as appointment to a major standing committee represented the most crucial factor in his subsequent legislative career in the House of Representatives. A member's inability to secure appointment to a ranking committee generally had irreversible consequences which permanently placed him at the periphery of the House's fundamental legislative transactions and thereby denied him the opportunity to "perform effective and influential

12Ibid., 687.
Without doubt, his district's choice would have been for a seat on the Committee on Agriculture, but instead Vinson applied for membership on either Judiciary or Naval Affairs. Although Judiciary was his first choice and would have allowed him to use his legal talents, fate intervened to decree otherwise. It so happened that a Georgia member of the Naval Affairs Committee died and in order to retain state representation, Carl Vinson was appointed to that important committee at the beginning of the 65th Congress.14

As previously noted, his choice of Naval Affairs appeared somewhat incongruous when the biggest body of water in his district is the languid, red-brown stream grandiloquently named the Oconee River. Even though the 10th District could hope to gain from an expansive naval policy supporting the opening and retention of overseas markets for surplus agricultural products, it would be an indirect and uncertain benefit at best. Nevertheless, if


Naval Affairs did not represent his constituents' first choice, it was consistent with their patriotic nationalism. As a result, Carl Vinson's tireless efforts to provide and maintain a strong national defense received their unwavering and enthusiastic support throughout his career.

For his part, however, Carl Vinson considered his choice a natural one, recalling that he had always been interested in naval matters. Moreover, in the early part of the Twentieth Century, before the nuclear era and the advent of strategic delivery systems, the Navy had a strong appeal for those interested in shaping national security policy. Touted as America's "first line of defense", it received far more national attention than the Army. There was also the satisfaction Vinson would derive from being able to see the tangible results of his efforts. A new vessel, aircraft, dirigible, navy yard or facility would provide a gratifying sense of accomplishment that would have been absent on the Judiciary Committee. In addition, Vinson had always wanted to deal with issues that were truly national in scope while in Congress and the Naval

15Interview with Hon. Carl Vinson which took place in Milledgeville, Georgia, on March 22, 1972. Two sessions took place on that date and another on the morning of March 24. (Hereafter cited as Vinson Interviews.)

16Ibid.
Affairs Committee provided a suitable forum to realize this ambition. Finally, it must be suspected that naval affairs held an attraction for him in that his efforts would have constituent support while avoiding their direct interference.

As was the case of the House of Representatives as a whole, seniority governed committee activity and junior members, like Vinson, were expected to listen, remain silent unless spoken to, vote "correctly" and learn. For those like Vinson who applied themselves diligently to mastering the details of naval affairs, there was an important payoff in increased effectiveness, both within the committee and House of Representatives. Development of special expertise provides a crucial power base which is generally deferred to by less knowledgeable members—so long as circumstances justify this trust. As would be clearly demonstrated throughout his career, Carl Vinson was a quick and thorough learner with an unusually retentive mind which allowed him to take positions on naval and national defense questions that were sound and sustained by later developments.

As would be the case at other critical points in his career, fate again intervened to permit him to play a much larger role in committee affairs. Events were to prove that the loss of control of the House of Representatives in
1919 merely presaged a more precipitous decline in Democratic strength. By 1923, eight senior committee Democrats had either died, resigned, or were defeated to pave the way for Vinson's rise to the position of ranking minority member after only six years of committee service.

This was an extremely important development for the thirty-nine year old Georgia legislator. As ranking minority member, Vinson was someone to be reckoned with in conducting committee business. Customarily, the chairman seeks to establish good rapport with the ranking minority member to facilitate operation of the committee and to secure needed bipartisan support on important issues. In return for cooperation and support, the ranking minority member is usually kept well informed about significant developments and contemplated actions by the House and committee leadership. Representative Thomas C. "Old Tom" Butler was a chairman wise in the nuances of this relationship which he was able to pass on to his younger Democratic colleague. He and Vinson enjoyed a positive and effective working association which fostered and perpetuated a strong sense of bipartisanship in the committee's handling of naval issues coming before Congress. In addition, by virtue of his position, Vinson was given many chances to develop and hone his parliamentary skills as he normally controlled half the time allotted to the committee for floor debate.
on measures that it reported to the House. In the process, he was to master the techniques that would make him one of the most successful and feared floor managers in the annals of the House of Representatives. In sum, it was indeed fortunate that the responsibilities of leadership came to him early in his career, but more noteworthy that he proved to be equal to the challenges they presented.

As ranking minority member, Vinson was in the forefront of the limited legislative activity involving the Navy in the 1920's. He deserved a full share of credit for the infrequent successes in the cases of the "Eight Cruiser Bill" of 1924, the "Fifteen Cruiser Bill" of 1929, and various battleship modernization measures. The intensity of the legislative struggles to secure the passage of these bills is attested to by the fact that, in one instance, the strain precipitated the untimely death of Chairman Butler in 1928.

For the most part, however, these were years of frustration for the Naval Affairs Committee and its efforts to authorize a more consistent, comprehensive naval construction program. In the face of persistent executive opposition, Congressional parsimony, and public apathy, little could be accomplished. And while much attention has been given to Vinson's almost unblemished record of legislative
victory as chairman, it should be remembered that as a committee stalwart, he shared in these disappointments during his apprenticeship in the 1920's. Yet this experience also laid the foundation for his later success in that it caused him to reexamine the reasons for the committee's failure and survey the limitations on legislative involvement in national security policymaking. This introspection induced him to explore new approaches and devise methods that would compensate for institutional shortcomings while permitting legislative action to meet escalating national defense requirements. The committee as a whole also benefited from this period of adversity insofar as it strengthened its bipartisan character and solidified the determination of its members to strengthen the Navy as soon as more favorable circumstances presented themselves.

Another notable event during Vinson's apprenticeship was his appointment to the President's Aircraft Board chaired by Dwight D. Morrow. As one of the three Members of Congress and sole Democrat on the distinguished nine member panel, Vinson had a signal opportunity to become thoroughly familiar with the problems besetting military aviation at the time and take part in a thoroughgoing effort to map out a course for remedial action.

Thus, Carl Vinson came out of this experience with a greater appreciation of the role and potential of naval
aviation that would prove invaluable during his chairmanship when these issues would again have to be addressed. Moreover, his expertise in the field was unequalled in Congress which further enhanced his effectiveness. Finally, he was to become acutely aware of the military and industrial requirements for consistent, comprehensive, long-term procurement programs and this consciousness was later manifested in the shipbuilding authorization legislation he was to sponsor.

Looking back over Vinson's development and apprenticeship, a number of qualities stand out which contributed to his success as chairman. First, was his unswerving sense of purpose directed toward an ultimate personal goal—election to the House of Representatives and to achieving a position of influence within that body permitting him to shape policy in an area of national importance and scope. His legal training, service as county attorney, tenure in the Georgia General Assembly and appointment to the bench were but intermediate objectives calculated to assist him in the realization of his larger ambition. Once in Congress, his next priority became assignment to a major committee dealing with issues of national significance, which was fulfilled through his appointment to the House Naval Affairs Committee. His attention then shifted to developing an acknowledged expertise in naval matters while acquiring
the necessary seniority to enable him to assume a position of influence and power within the committee. After becoming ranking minority member, he focused upon learning and perfecting the myriad parliamentary and management skills required for committee leadership he eventually expected to exercise as chairman. With his selection as chairman, Vinson's remaining task in the fulfillment of his basic goal was the formulation and implementation of a scheme of legislative and oversight activities to fundamentally and positively alter the structural policy of the U.S. Navy.  

Complementing this sense of purpose was a deeply ingrained pragmatism. As is attested by his becoming a lawyer at 18 and election to Congress at 30, Vinson wasted neither time nor effort in the attainment of his ends. Basically a problemsolver, he never let philosophic consistency or doctrinal perfection constrain his efforts to fashion satisfactory solutions to the problems he faced. Congress, he firmly believed, had an overriding responsibility for the timely enactment of essential legislation.

Albion, Robert G., "The Naval Affairs Committees, 1816-1947," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, November, 1952, 1229. Structural naval policy was largely the province of Congress and involved the number and types of ships, the number and status of personnel, the extent and location of the Shore Establishment, and the administration of the Navy Department. In contrast, operational naval policy rested with the Executive Branch and was concerned with how the Navy should be used.
and he would not countenance delay in pursuit of a perfect remedy. This is not to imply that Vinson was not committed to highest quality in legislative craftsmanship. In fact, Speaker Sam Rayburn was later to remark that Carl Vinson "was the best legislative technician in the House." Rather, his attitude was based on his recognition that the legislative process was incremental in nature and subject to severe time constraints. Therefore, it was essential to select those issues amenable to legislative remedy, quickly acquire and survey sufficient evidence to serve as the basis for effective legislation capable of commanding enough political support to be enacted by Congress. No committee, despite its best efforts, could draft perfect or enduring legislation and Vinson did not trouble himself with these abstract goals. Corrective modification could safely be left to future legislative action as it became necessary. But he could not condone inaction on pressing problems as this involved the total loss of options, not a choice among them, and for which there was no remedy or excuse.

"Man was made to wear out, not rust out," was a favorite observation by Carl Vinson and revealed his belief

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in the necessity and efficacy of hard work. Instilled in him by his father, his characteristic vigor and industriousness contributed mightily to his record of accomplishment. In some instances, like his early election campaigns, he simply overwhelmed his opposition by sheer energy. Through his career in Congress, his penchant of sustained work was a source of comment and admiration by his colleagues. In short, Carl Vinson was a confirmed workaholic.

Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that what made his efforts so productive was the fact that his sense of purpose channelled his immense energies toward specific goals and his pragmatism permitted him to maximize his return on effort expended. In sum, he was able to accomplish so much because he knew what he wanted, the most efficient approach to his objective and possessed sufficient energy to persist in his efforts until he prevailed.

Carl Vinson also displayed the faculty to quickly and thoroughly assimilate relevant information which was complemented by an extremely retentive memory. The combination of these attributed allowed him to acquire great expertise in naval matters and to apply what he learned. As specialized knowledge provided the basis of power and influence through the operation of the legislative norms of expertise and reciprocity, Vinson's authority on naval affairs was an important ingredient in his legislative
success.

More important than his mastery of facts and figures was the knowledge he gained about how the Navy Department actually functioned and the power relationships involved in its operation. In the years ahead, this practical knowledge was to allow him to make the Navy establishment work for him and provide him with the means to exert subtle influence over its activities. In like manner, he learned the finer points of committee leadership as a result of his tenure as ranking minority member and his tutelage by Chairman Thomas C. Butler.

The nature and extent of Vinson's accomplishments prior to his chairmanship demonstrated that he possessed a shrewd understanding of politics and human nature. From his beginnings in local politics, he seemed to have a sixth sense which gave him a sure feel for his political environment and its potentialities. Once in the House of Representatives, this faculty accounted for an uncanny sense of timing that was to be responsible for much of his success in committee and on the House floor. More importantly, it permitted him to economize his time and effort while minimizing risk by making it possible for him to accurately identify those issues which could or could not profitably be addressed within existing political realities.
Associated with his keen insights into human nature was Vinson's mastery of the art of personality management. Actually, this is not an uncommon attribute for politicians and few members could be elected to the House of Representatives and remain there successfully without the ability to deftly massage egos to gain support without engendering rancor. Although it would be edifying to believe that major issues coming before Congress are resolved on their own merits, the fact is that success is largely contingent upon effective interpersonal relationships among legislators to establish a winning consensus through persuasion and accommodation. While the institutional norms of deference to expertise and reciprocity facilitate this process, they also prevent it from becoming capricious.

That Carl Vinson was abundantly endowed with this talent is supported by his capacity as a young man to achieve prominence in the rough and tumble arena of Georgia courthouse politics, his election to the position of Speaker pro tempore of the Georgia General Assembly after a single term and the influential role he was to play as a relatively junior ranking minority member on the House Naval Affairs Committee. In addition to his acknowledged expertise in naval matters and considerable parliamentary skill, he possessed a real flair for consensus
building within and outside of Congress. His authority, vigor, businesslike demeanor, and engaging manner were extremely persuasive in securing support or muting opposition. Furthermore, he had the ability to recognize the significant players in the formulation and implementation of naval policy inside Congress, the Executive Branch, and the Naval Establishment. Accordingly, he was able to optimize his influence by directing his efforts where they would do the most good. As a result, he gained an enviable reputation as a proficient legislator and recognition as a leading player in Congress's deliberations on naval issues.

A listing of the elements contributing to Carl Vinson's success would be incomplete without also mentioning that he benefited from a generous share of good fortune along the way. This was most apparent in the circumstances surrounding his election to Congress, his appointment to the Committee on Naval Affairs and subsequent rise to the position of ranking minority member. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that his hard work and forethought—as in the case of his efforts to redistrict Baldwin County within the 6th Congressional District—allowed him to take full advantage of fortuitous developments. It should also be said that he rarely failed to seize opportunities that unexpectedly presented themselves, or to exploit them fully. An important collateral benefit of this pattern of good
fortune throughout his career was that it gave him greater assurance and reinforced his belief that he would ultimately prevail in spite of the obstacles in his path. Thus, good fortune contributed to his success and created a state of mind which bred future success.

In conclusion, Carl Vinson was assuming a position he aspired to, was confident he could handle, and possessed the requisite skills and expertise to discharge his responsibilities as chairman. Moreover, he was animated by a firm resolve to substantially and positively shape U.S. naval policy during his tenure. It remained to be seen whether his institutional environment and the nature of the Navy's dilemma would permit him to realize his aim.
CHAPTER III
THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

In assuming the post of chairman, Carl Vinson became a member of the power elite in Congress. He was taking his place among a group of proud barons, each unchallenged in their jurisdictional domains and merely paying lip service to the concept of fealty toward official party leadership. Viewed within the context of the institutional evolution of the House of Representatives, 1931 was a very propitious time for the appearance of a new chairman with Vinson's impressive personal attributes, acquired knowledge and legislative skill who was also capable of recognizing, seizing and exploiting the advantages offered by this situation.

From the beginning, power within the House of Representatives had been shared between the leadership, party caucus, and committee chairmen with relative supremacy alternating among them according to circumstances. In 1931, the power of the committee chairmen was predominant. Still, that power was not without limits and some degree of cooperation with the other power blocs remained necessary.

While the Speaker never regained the power and influence
he wielded prior to the Revolt of 1910, he remained a force to be reckoned with. No longer able to arbitrarily fore­
stall House consideration of specific legislation, he con­
tinued to play a major role in the clearance of bills for floor action. If the Speaker did not believe that enactment of a piece of legislation was politically expedient or in the best interests of the nation, he could make his views known beforehand in the hope that the committee involved would make desired modifications or defer action. Should this be unsuccessful, he could then exert indirect influence through the Rules Committee. While the Speaker was denied membership on the Rules Committee as a result of the Revolt of 1910, prior to 1937 he could still count on the coopera­tion of that panel to bring major pieces of legislation to the House floor consistent with his wishes. In the unlikely event that a rule was granted in the face of his opposition, the Speaker could simply refuse to schedule debate on the measure.

Should the prospect of a full-fledged floor fight against the Speaker and his lieutenants--the Majority Leader and Whips--fail to deter a challenge by a committee chairman, there was always the implicit or explicit threat of retali­
ation. Although the Speaker lacked his former power to assign members to standing committees or appoint chairmen, he was able to exert considerable influence in the party caucus
when it came to the nomination and selection of members to fill these positions. Moreover, he retained the power to appoint select committees and was a dominant force in the distribution of various preferments and campaign funds. Far from capriciously brooking the Speaker's disfavor, committee chairmen recognized that his position was one of great influence and assiduously courted his good will.

There were times when the party caucus exercised a great deal of control over the activities of the House of Representatives, but they were infrequent and of relatively brief duration. By 1931, the Democratic Party was composed of so many diverse political attitudes and differing regional outlooks that a truly powerful caucus was out of the question. To have attempted to thrash out broad policy questions in such a forum and come to binding determinations would have torn the party asunder. Thus, aside from its rather pro forma function of making committee assignments and choosing party leaders, the Democratic Caucus remained dormant.

In conclusion, while Carl Vinson enjoyed a position of relative independence insofar as the operation and orientation of his committee was concerned, this freedom was tempered by the necessity for interaction with the House leadership to arrange the floor action required to translate committee recommendations into law. Recognition of the
importance and need for this interaction would exert considerable influence over the means he would employ and the timing of his actions to maximize his ability to garner leadership concurrence and build a winning consensus in the House.

The House Naval Affairs Committee

As chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee, Carl Vinson was at the helm of what was generally regarded as the single most important congressional body affecting U.S. naval policy. To better appreciate the complex relationship between Congress and naval policy, further elaboration of that term is required. Accordingly, Professor Robert G. Albion has divided naval policy into two categories: "external" or "operational" as opposed to "internal" or "structural."\(^1\)

External or operational naval policy, which involves the application of existing naval resources and capabilities in peace and war has long been recognized as almost exclusively an executive branch function. Even if Congress were to wish otherwise, it simply cannot match the capacity of the President and his chief diplomatic and naval subordinates to provide the continuous supervision and centralized leadership

the conduct of external naval policy requires. Moreover, Congress traditionally avoided assuming the degree of visible responsibility involved in the direction of naval operations, preferring instead to oversee and react to specific executive initiatives.

Just the opposite has been the case, however, with regard to questions involving internal or structural naval policy. There Congress has long claimed for itself both the legitimacy and aptitude to decide such issues. Encompassing a wide range of questions involving the size, composition and manning of the fleet and Shore Establishment, internal naval policy has had five major aspects. First, "was the matter of size; how many ships (and eventually planes) were to be built, and, of course, how many were to be kept in active operations, with the latter point involving the number of officers and men." Second, "was the determination of the types of ships upon which to concentrate." Third, what new technological developments would be accepted. The fourth aspect involved "the Navy's share of national resources and industrial facilities at critical periods when there were not enough to go around." Lastly, there were matters related to "the major aspects of naval administration, particularly within the Navy Department in adjusting the respective roles of professionals and civilians."²

²Ibid., 57-59
Not surprisingly, the practical delineation between what constituted internal or external naval policy has never been so clearly drawn to avoid creative tension between the executive and legislative branches through the years. Consequently, this has produced a dynamic relationship marked by periodic adjustments in the extent and manner in which they have exercised influence over naval policy.

Fundamentally, Congress's jurisdiction over internal naval policy stems from Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution which states that Congress shall have the power "to provide and maintain a Navy." In discharging this responsibility, Congress has relied upon five legislative devices. First, through general legislation, Congress exercised its control over naval administration. The twin requirements for authorization and appropriation of funds governed matters pertaining to the size of the Fleet, the type of its component units, the makeup of the Shore Establishment and the number of officers and men, and their conditions of promotion and pay." Through investigation, Congress conducted critical oversight of any aspect of the operation of the Naval Establishment. Although not applicable to the House Naval Affairs Committee, its Senate counterpart played a primary role in the confirmation process by which the Senate approved those nominated for flag rank and the top civilian posts in the Navy.³

³Ibid., 184
As was true with other functional areas, the House at a relatively early date found it necessary to delegate much of its responsibility for naval policy to various internal subgroups, leading ultimately to the establishment of a standing committee on Naval Affairs. For the most part, its evolution paralleled that of other House standing committees and shared many of the same institutional characteristics.

Drawing upon British parliamentary practice, House consideration of naval matters initially rested in the hands of the Committee of the Whole, augmented by various ad hoc special committees appointed to examine specific legislative proposals and claims. Subsequently, the House initiated the practice of designating a select committee "to consider so much of the President's [ annual ] message as refers to (some particular subject)." Although this approach occasionally resulted in the amalgamation of naval matters with those involving other defense and maritime issues, it represented a major step toward a standing Naval Affairs Committee. While remaining technically a select or special committee, for all intents and purposes it operated as a standing committee, subject only to periodic renewal. Nevertheless, its temporary status could not prevent the occasional appointment of another select committee to investigate some particular naval matter.\(^4\)

\(^4\text{Ibid.}, 251\)
From this point the transition to a permanent standing committee was merely a short, logical step for which the ground had been well prepared. Accordingly, the House formally established a standing committee on Naval Affairs on March 13, 1822. Thereafter, virtually all legislation—and for a time even appropriations—relating to the Navy was immediately referred to the House Naval Affairs for screening and further consideration.

As set forth in the House rules, the committee's jurisdiction included all matters relating to the "increase or reduction of officers and enlisted men and their pay and allowances and the increase of ships or vessels of all classes of the Navy." Reinforcing this formal statement of jurisdiction was the operation of the twin legislative norms of reciprocity and deference to expertise. This combination of official and unofficial sanction confirmed the House Naval Affairs Committee as the principal arbiter of naval questions coming before the House.

Throughout its subsequent development, the House Naval Affairs Committee mirrored the same institutional patterns that were experienced by the House as a whole. The most significant of these were the growth in careerism and membership patterns favoring certain interests—in this case

5Rule XI, Clause 13; Hinds, IV, 4189; Cannon VII, 1906-1913.
those associated with shipbuilding, government naval establishments and maritime commerce.

Prior to 1845, the Naval Affairs Committee, like the House itself, experienced a fairly rapid turnover in membership. However, the subsequent growth of careerism in the House of Representatives, combined with the observance of practice of allowing members to retain their committee memberships in succeeding Congresses (party ratios permitting), there was a corresponding increase in the level of continuous service. Thus, when Carl Vinson became chairman the average tenure on the House Naval Affairs Committee was nearly three terms. And this despite an influx of seven new members (32% of the total committee membership) in the wake of dramatic partisan shifts in the House which culminated in the restoration of Democratic control.

This is not to say, however, that significant turnovers in committee membership were unusual. As the following table indicates, there was a consistent pattern of substantial first term appointments to the House Naval Affairs Committee between the 65th and 72nd Congresses. Overall, this averaged around 32%, peaking at 45% during the 67th Congress but at no time falling below 19% of the total membership. It must be emphasized, however, that the statistical size of these infusions of new members far exceeded their actual significance in an era when a chairman, in concert with the
ranking minority member and a handful of senior members, dominated committee activities.

TABLE 4:
NEW MEMBERS APPOINTED TO THE HOUSE NAVAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE—
66th THROUGH 72nd CONGRESSES (1919-1933)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Congress</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Membership</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>66th</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67th</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68th</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69th</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70th</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71st</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72nd</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of far greater significance would have been turbulence at the highest echelons of committee membership as this might have undercut the influence of the chairman or disrupted established leadership patterns. In fact, such turnovers actually took place within a number of committees in the wake of the return of Democratic control in 1931. The relatively junior chairmen produced by this phenomenon often did not possess the expertise or experience—and in some cases the desire—to prevent inroads into their committees' influence.⁶

As is evident from the following listing of key senior Republican and Democratic members between 1917 and 1933, the House Naval Affairs Committee did not suffer such instability. Outgoing chairman Fred A. Britten (Rep., Illinois) had been ranking majority member since the 66th Congress and chairman from the 70th Congress. As noted previously, Carl Vinson had become ranking minority member in the 68th Congress. Thus, insofar as the House Naval Affairs Committee was concerned, well established leadership pattern was followed which was consistent with committee expectations.

TABLE 5: LEADERSHIP OF THE HOUSE
NAVAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, 65th THROUGH 72nd CONGRESSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REPUBLICANS</th>
<th>DEMOCRATS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65th</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas S. Butler (Pa.)</td>
<td>Lemuel P. Padgett (Tenn)</td>
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<tr>
<td>William J. Browning (N.J.)</td>
<td>J. Fred C. Talbott* (Md)</td>
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<td>Albert Estopinal (La.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>66th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas S. Butler (Pa.)</td>
<td>Lemuel P. Padgett (Tenn.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>William J. Browning** (N.J.)</td>
<td>Daniel Riordan (N.Y.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fred A. Britten (Ill.)</td>
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<td>67th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas S. Butler (Pa.)</td>
<td>Daniel J. Riordan (N.Y.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fred A. Britten (Ill)</td>
<td>Carl Vinson (Ga.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>68th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas S. Butler (Pa.)</td>
<td>Carl Vinson (Ga.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fred A. Britten (Ill)</td>
<td>James V. McClintic (Ok.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>69th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas S. Butler (Pa.)</td>
<td>Carl Vinson (Ga.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fred A. Britten (Ill)</td>
<td>James V. McClintic (Ok.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>70th</td>
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<td>Thomas S. Butler*** (Pa.)</td>
<td>Carl Vinson (Ga.)</td>
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<td>Fred A. Britten (Ill)</td>
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<td>71st</td>
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<td>Fred A. Britten (Ill)</td>
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<td>George P. Darrow (Pa.)</td>
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* Died October 5, 1918
** Died March 24, 1920
*** Died May 26, 1928
The House Naval Affairs Committee's autonomy and influence through the growth of continuous service and stable leadership patterns was accentuated further by its status as an exclusive committee. First designated as an exclusive committee in the 64th Congress, this meant that its chairman could not serve on any other committee and discouraged the assignment of other members to additional major committees. Consequently, members of the Naval Affairs Committee focused their attention upon naval matters and avoided the distractions experienced by their Senate counterparts who served on several major committees. More importantly, it contributed to the House's perception of the committee's overall expertise and effectiveness.

As would have been expected, given the nature of the committee's business and the House's solicitude for member preference toward committee assignments, membership patterns on the House Naval Affairs Committee favored those states and districts having a naval or maritime orientation. As the following table shows, this has been especially true insofar as the original navy yard states were concerned—New Hamshire, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia.
TABLE 6:
STATE DISTRIBUTION OF MEMBERS ON
THE HOUSE NAVAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
65th Through 72nd Congresses (1917-1933)

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<th>65th</th>
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<th>69th</th>
<th>70th</th>
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**Designates states with major government and private naval yards

Underlined States: Original navy yard states
### TABLE 6:
STATE DISTRIBUTION OF MEMBERS ON
THE HOUSE NAVAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
65th Through 72nd Congresses (1917-1933)

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Calif.**
N.J.**
New York**
Oregon
S.C.**
Mass.**
Florida**
Rhode Is.**
Virginia**
Wash.**
Hawaii
N.H.**

Kansas
Missouri
Michigan
Miss.
Tenn.
Alabama
Indiana
Oklahoma
Designation of coastal states is somewhat arbitrary with Georgia so classified because of the fact that it is on the Eastern Seaboard and the relative importance of the state. As has been demonstrated, Carl Vinson's constituency could not logically be construed as maritime or naval in orientation. Likewise, Louisiana is designated as a coastal state because its representation on the committee from New Orleans, together with recognition of the great economic significance port upon that state and the whole Mississippi Valley. On the other hand, Texas, Alabama, nor Mississippi have been classified as coastal states principally due to the fact that members serving on the Naval Affairs Committee represented districts far removed from coastal influence.

The states with major government and private naval yards and facilities are:

- California
- New York
- Oregon
- S.C.
- Florida
- Rhode Island
- Virginia
- Washington
- Hawaii
- Massachusetts
- Missouri
- Michigan
- Illinois
- Tennessee
- Alabama
- Indiana
- Oklahoma

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20 20 20 21 23 21 22 TOTAL

States with major government and private naval yards and facilities:

- California
- New York
- Oregon
- S.C.
- Florida
- Rhode Island
- Virginia
- Washington
- Hawaii
- Massachusetts
- Missouri
- Michigan
- Illinois
- Tennessee
- Alabama
- Indiana
- Oklahoma

United States: Original navy yard states
Admitting that self-interest was never absent in the deliberations of the House Naval Affairs Committee, it does not necessarily follow that it was a controlling force in itself. There is no doubt that district considerations contributed to member interest and attention to committee business, but it cannot wholly account for the impressive level of expertise and dedication exhibited by veteran members.

Also at work was a prevailing committee norm of bipartisan support for national defense and naval preparedness. At a time when the United States had established itself as a world power with global interests, the wellbeing of its Navy Establishment was not simply a matter of local or regional concern. Maritime commerce flowing to and from every corner of the globe assumed an even greater importance and exerted widespread influence following World War I. Emerging from that conflict as the premier economic, industrial and agricultural power in the world, the United States could not afford to stand aloof from events abroad which might significantly impact upon its foreign commerce. In addition, the United States possessed significant overseas colonies, most notably the Philippines, which required naval protection.

Most importantly, however, the Navy represented the first line of defense against foreign military aggression
directed at the United States. Possessing a military tradition hostile to large regular standing forces, the Navy would have to serve as the shield behind which the United States could mobilize its industrial and human resources. If the Navy was not sufficiently equipped, prepared and trained to perform its screening role on short notice, the assembling American forces would be unready and vulnerable to attack.

Furthermore, there were crucial differences in what was required to achieve a satisfactory level of readiness between military and naval forces. Even as late as World War I, experience continued to demonstrate that land forces could be raised fairly quickly and would perform adequately after a relatively brief, intense regime of training. In addition, most weaponry associated with land warfare could be developed and manufactured after comparatively short lead times. Finally, if there were an occurrence of coalition warfare such as that in World War I, American equipment shortfalls could be offset by drawing from allied military stocks.

Such an approach certainly would not suffice to provide and maintain naval readiness. A major warship in 1920 represented the ultimate in weapon system sophistication and required several years for its design and construction. These vessels—battleships, aircraft carriers, and cruisers—
could not be built on short notice, regardless of the money and ingenuity applied to the task. Moreover, manning the fleet presented greater challenges as sailors had to be carefully trained to skillfully operate and maintain the uniquely complex naval equipment and weaponry. Likewise, training was imperative to perform the precise tactical evolutions required to effectively fight at sea. The proficiency and integration necessary to attain this capability did not come easily or quickly. Thus, in contrast to the Army, the Navy had to be prepared to fight a "come as you are" war and be able to defeat or delay a foreign naval threat.

Keenly aware of naval requirements through long familiarity, the members of the Naval Affairs Committee endeavored to provide the necessary resources to maintain an effective Naval Establishment in a high state of readiness. In discharging this responsibility, they were willing to brave political expediency, executive opposition, and public apathy. This attitude was best exemplified in the words of Chairman Thomas S. Butler:

These ships are above and beyond mere politics—national or international. They represent something far greater than policy alone. They stand for the thing that every officer of the Government is pledged to uphold— the protection of this country. And to me personally they mean more than either
party or career. Why, dash it all, they're my life—my official life.  

Moreover, by the time Carl Vinson became chairman, the naval advocacy of the House Naval Affairs Committee was especially strong, being tempered in the fires of adversity in the 1920's. The relatively high level of committee cohesion that existed from that time on only served to reinforce this climate of opinion.

Contributing to the committee's pro Navy stance were several legislative proclivities that were enhanced through close and extended association with the service. The first was a general fascination with gadgetry. The Navy, as noted above, had the most sophisticated equipment and its efforts represented the cutting edge in the evolution of military technology. Consequently, congressmen found a special allure associated with these activities, especially if couched in terms of potential cost savings and increased efficiency. This was not an unmixed blessing, however, as congressional and naval emphasis and orientation on emerging technologies did not always coincide. Aviation is a case in point. On the one hand, the Navy wanted to encourage congressional support for its efforts to pioneer the development of naval aviation and its integration within a balanced
fleet structure. On the other hand, it had to fend off legislative efforts instigated by air power zealots who claimed that naval surface combatants were obsolete and should be replaced by land-based aircraft controlled by an autonomous air force which would assume the role of the nation's first line of defense. This struggle and those involving submarines and lighter-than-air ships placed heavy demands upon the Navy to educate and persuade Congress, but the end result was usually a better appreciation of the practical limitations on the application of new technology. Most important was the recognition that this process generated greater interest and understanding about the Navy and its mission within Congress.

Another factor was the celebrated congressional penchant for identification and solicitude for the "troops." Although constituent involvement contributed to this attitude, there was a broader concern by committee members that the system did not emphasize enough the wellbeing of naval enlisted personnel. Too often, it was felt that the Navy Department or the Bureau of the Budget were willing to sacrifice personnel issues to secure force modernization or effect economies. Worst of all, there was suspicion that officers were getting too much preferential treatment at the expense of the sailors. Thus, the committee, and Congress in general, maintained close scrutiny over such
matters and were always prepared to take up the cudgels in the sailor's behalf when inequities presented themselves.

Finally, there is something unforgettable appealing to the average legislator about a heaving deck, salt spray, the company of mighty warships, and the pomp of naval protocol. Acceptance of an invitation to go on a cruise or observe naval maneuvers almost invariably left an indelible mark upon the attitudes of those participating. Being with the officers and sailors manning the stately warships who might be called upon at any time to protect the farflung American possessions and interests could only impress upon committee members their responsibility to provide the necessary resources.

The cumulative effect of special interest, concern for national security, and legislative proclivities produced one of the most formidable and informed advocacy groups in Congress. With the proper leadership, Navy support, and executive branch assistance, the House Naval Affairs Committee could hardly fail to become a dominant force in Congress's efforts to shape naval policy.

Yet as impressive as was the influence of the House Naval Affairs Committee in 1931 and what it was to become, for thirty-five years it had wielded substantially more power over naval affairs. For between 1885 and 1920 it had jurisdiction over annual appropriations as well as general
legislation relating to the Navy.

This development resulted from one of those periodic shifts of power to redress serious excesses on the part of certain individuals or committees. In this instance it involved the House Appropriations Committee and its powerful Chairman Samuel J. Randall. Established toward the close of the Civil War in recognition that the financial workload imposed by that struggle was more than Ways and Means could cope with, the House Appropriations Committee was given jurisdiction over all annual supply bills. However, this concentration of power in the hands of a succession of powerful chairmen led to a certain degree of arrogance and arbitrary exercise of authority. Predictably, a reaction set in as the House transferred a half dozen major annual supply bills from jurisdiction of the Appropriations Committee to the relevant legislative committees.

As one of the primary beneficiaries of this development, the House Naval Affairs Committee made good use of its enhanced authority to contribute to the rise of the United States Navy from relative obscurity to a great naval power. It is surely more than coincidence that this era represented the golden age in Congressional-Navy relations. With appropriations, legislation, and oversight in the hands of basically sympathetic congressional bodies--principally the House and Senate Naval Affairs Committees--it could hardly
have been otherwise.

After 1900, however, the growing movement toward more centralized budgetary control and responsibility with the executive and legislative branches brought an end to this idyllic arrangement. Concerned over the unprecedented Federal expenditures associated with World War I, in 1920 the House consolidated all appropriations in the hands of the Appropriations Committee. For veteran members of the Naval Affairs Committee this development was a traumatic experience. Representative of these feelings was Chairman Butler's mournful observation, "Well, we might as well close up shop, now that they have taken our appropriations away."8 Although this despair proved to be exaggerated, the House Naval Affairs Committee's effective adjustment to this change was one of its greatest challenges over the next decade.

Admittedly, the committee did retain its power to authorize appropriations for new programs. Consequently, the Appropriations Committee could only provide funding for those vessels, shore construction and major improvements previously authorized by Naval Affairs and only within the amount specified. In practice, however, this was poor consolation for the inability of Naval Affairs to compel

8Albion, "Makers of Naval Policy," 240.
Appropriations to fund programs it had authorized at the recommended levels.

There were a number of other practical problems this new relationship created for the committee, especially in its efforts to push a major shipbuilding program through Congress. First of all, it meant that congressional debate would occur twice—once on the authorization legislation and again on the annual Navy supply bill providing the necessary funding—instead of simultaneously as had formerly been the case. With something as controversial as a naval building program, consensus building was a formidable task once a session, but to attempt it twice was a dubious enterprise. Moreover, the separation of authorization and appropriations denied the committee the advantage of placing the building program within the annual supply bill. There was little prospect that a Navy appropriations bill would be defeated and if the shipbuilding provisions were inextricably bound to other special interest features common to such legislation, parochial pressures for floor consideration and enactment would be well nigh irresistible.

Finally, there were fundamental and substantial differences in the orientation and approaches of the two committees. As has been shown, the House Naval Affairs Committee, while concerned with parochial Navy-related interests, emphasized the need for a strong effective Naval
Establishment and was generally willing to accept the costs associated with achieving and maintaining that posture. Conversely, the House Appropriations Committee, almost by definition, placed its emphasis upon protecting the Federal Treasury from all comers, while carefully apportioning tax dollars among contending interests.

It is nonetheless true that the House Appropriations Committee appointed a Naval Subcommittee to specialize in handling the Navy Budget. However, its familiarity with naval matters did not nullify the pervasive influence of committee norms as it measured its success by the number of cuts it made and the waste it discovered. Contributing to this attitude was the fact that membership on the subcommittee favored interior states and districts without naval or maritime orientation. Another factor was the small size of the subcommittee—five members—and the nature of the task confronting it. Within the short space of a couple of months these five men had to grapple with one of the most complex and involved annual appropriation bills coming before Congress. It was not simply the greater technical and specialized character of the bill that created difficulty, but its logic defying, convoluted structure. Evolving over the years in response to the incremental development of Navy bureaus and offices, the Navy supply bill became rigidly compartmentalized and
contained over two hundred and fifty separate appropriation headings by 1931.

Laboring under these handicaps, the Naval Subcommittee found itself fighting a tight deadline to bring forth an appropriation bill which made the pretense of reconciling committee norms and Navy requirements. As often as not, the end result was across-the-board meat-ax cuts. There was simply not the time, energy, nor, one suspects, the inclination to undertake a rational reordering of the Navy budget. Little wonder that the Naval Subcommittee did not delve deeply into policy issues, or seek to fashion a logical framework for its deliberations.

It must be conceded, however, that the Naval Subcommittee gave away nothing in its skill for fashioning a politically expedient appropriation package capable of House passage. As was earlier the case with the Naval Affairs Committee, it could tailor the Navy supply bill to accommodate the myriad tradeoffs necessary to command the requisite legislative support for enactment. Under the circumstances, it was difficult for the Naval Affairs Committee regardless of its stature or expertise, to amend successfully the Navy Appropriations Bill during floor consideration, especially if it involved increased expenditures.
Further compounding the difficulty faced by the Naval Affairs Committee was the creation of the Bureau of the Budget within the Department of the Treasury in 1921. Operating under a charter to centralize control of the Federal budget and bring about greater fiscal responsibility, the Bureau of the Budget allowed the President to tighten his control over budget preparation and execution. Inevitably, this reinforced the orientation of the House Appropriations Committee as that committee and its Senate counterpart were faced with the challenge of appearing no less fiscally responsible than the executive branch.

In sum, being deprived of its jurisdiction over naval appropriations represented a serious loss of influence for the Naval Affairs Committee. As a result, it was forced to share with three additional participants—the House and Senate Appropriations Committees and the Bureau of the Budget—the determination of the size and nature of resource allocations for the Naval Establishment. Working successfully within such a framework presented an unwelcome and difficult challenge.

The Naval Affairs Committee, from Carl Vinson's appointment in 1917 until his chairmanship, had a membership of twenty-one (excluding the assignment of the delegate from Hawaii in the 70th and 72nd Congresses). Internally, the committee was functionally subdivided into a number of
subcommittees which varied slightly from Congress to Congress. Nevertheless, its most significant deliberations were reserved for the full committee under the watchful eyes of the chairman.

For the chairman was the hub around which all else orbited. He occupied a position dominating virtually every aspect of committee activity. Essential to the success of any endeavor requiring the committee's imprimatur was his foreknowledge and acquiescence. Indeed, a formal listing of his powers would have warmed the heart of any self-respecting despot.

Foremost among them was his power to determine which legislation would be acted upon by the committee. At his discretion, a bill would be referred to a subcommittee or full committee for further consideration or consigned to a limbo where it would languish for the remainder of the Congress. Even his choice regarding the nature and sequence of committee action could be a decisive factor governing its chances for enactment. The forum of debate could also influence the likelihood and extent to which it is amended. Thus, marginal or uncongenial legislation might be referred to an apathetic or unsympathetic subcommittee chairman, while higher priority, favored measures would receive the attention of a full committee dominated by a benevolent chairman.
Beyond the formal exercise of this power, there were any number of subtle, informal permutations available to the chairman. Among the most notable options was the use of departmental comments and recommendations. Routinely, all measures not originating in the Navy Department were referred to it from the committee for comment and recommendation. Apart from the Navy's attempts to anticipate the chairman's wishes on marginal matters, a few hints from him were certain to elicit a suitable recommendation. This would be especially true with regard to private bills and proposals involving district self-interest, both of which the Navy generally had little sympathy for. In any event, an adverse departmental recommendation usually sounded the knell for the legislation in question.

If the chairman had reason to avoid a confrontation with a powerful sponsor of a proposal he opposed, he could utilize key subordinates to do the "dirty work." In the ensuing debate this surrogate opponent might experience little difficulty in securing recognition in the full committee and receive a great deal of latitude in presenting his case. Those familiar with the workings of the committee would draw the appropriate conclusions and act accordingly. In those cases where it was a question of party regularity, an obliging ranking minority member could usually be prevailed upon to play the heavy and
thereby permit the chairman to escape the appearance of disloyalty. Needless to say there was never a dearth of members willing to do the chairman a favor in exchange for specific or implied future consideration. However, an astute chairman could keep his obligations to a minimum through an awareness and exploitation of internal rivalries and competing interests.

If the chairman enjoyed a good relationship with the Speaker, Majority Leader, and chairman of the Rules Committee he would enjoy increased leverage in controlling the flow of legislation. A word from those powerful House leaders relative to the desirability of a certain bill and its prospects for being scheduled for House debate could be decisive. There was no point in reporting out a measure that would not receive floor action. On the other hand, notification that prompt House consideration was assured could overcome opposition within the committee to a bill, especially in the waning days of the session.

Finally, as committee spokesman, the chairman could make his views known on certain legislative proposals to a broader audience—officially or off the record. For example, there might follow a rash of convenient press stories conveying these sentiments. Moreover, by making the proper remarks to the appropriate contacts, the chairman could see that the Washington, D.C. rumor mill, with
its terminals across the nation, would be abuzz with this information. Interested parties would be alerted and galvanized into action. By virtue of his unique and authoritative position, the chairman possessed a clear advantage in getting his point across.

Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that the chairman's screening of legislation was necessarily selective. If he had attempted to evaluate personally the over five hundred measures referred to the committee each Congress he would have had time for little else. In fact, all these bills were not of equal importance and many simply did not require or deserve the chairman's attention. Moreover, devices existed to facilitate the screening of certain types of bills on a routine basis. In the last analysis, the chairman's intervention had a substantial personal, political, or policy significance.

The chairman also controlled the establishment of subcommittees and the appointment of their chairmen and members. In the case of the Naval Affairs Committee, however, there was more symbolism than substance in the exercise of this power. Regularly some eight to a dozen subcommittees were appointed at the beginning of each Congress, supposedly having jurisdiction over such subjects as Shipbuilding and Repair, Yards and Docks, and the Naval Academy, to name just a few. Yet, of this number, usually no more than three or
four would ever actually meet to exercise oversight or legislative responsibilities. Seemingly, the others had no other function than to adorn the inside cover of the committee's legislative calendar or to provide personal gratification for the members assigned to an impressive sounding, but dormant subcommittee. An examination of subcommittee meetings taking place in the first session of the 70th Congress supports this observation. Out of twenty-four subcommittee meetings, the Subcommittee on Private Bills met twenty times, Yards and Docks three times and Naval Academy just once. The other six subcommittees met not at all.

The basic reason for this relative lack of subcommittee activity was, of course, the busy schedule of full committee activity which filled the short legislative sessions of that period. Contributing to this was the chairman's understandable desire to exert strong control over all aspects of committee activity through the extensive use of full

9 U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Naval Affairs, Minutes, 1st Session, 70th Congress, RG 233, NA.

10 U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Naval Affairs, Legislative Calendar, 2nd Session, 70th Congress (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1929), 2. The other subcommittees were: Personnel; Construction, Repair, and Engineering; Supplies and Accounts; Marine Corps; Aeronautics; and Submarines.
committee meetings. It is, however, suggestive that subcommittee activity in the 70th Congress should be concentrated in two areas—private bills and special interest legislation involving the Shore Establishment. In the first case it probably indicated no more than the necessity for an internal mechanism to handle the laborious task of evaluating the large number of private bills coming before the committee. In the latter instance it may have reflected conflicting considerations inherent in handling something as politically sensitive as special interest legislation. On the one hand, it may not have been politically possible for a chairman to prevent a special subcommittee, whose deliberations he could not directly control, from handling these pork barrel measures. On the other hand, this arrangement initially insulated him from the pressures generated by this process prior to full committee consideration and permitted him to avoid personal responsibility for the screening performed at the subcommittee level.

But it was as presiding officer that the chairman reigned supreme. Having the absolute power of recognition he used it to confine the debate to the upper echelon of the committee membership. Likewise, the questioning of major witnesses was performed by the chairman and his senior colleagues so that the interrogation could be better orchestrated to elicit the desired responses for the record.
During mark-up, amendments and other procedural motions were customarily offered by senior members recognized for that purpose. Throughout, the chairman was able, by the use of his procedural powers, to direct the consideration and disposition of these motions. Although this might seem high-handed in retrospect, it actually generated little resentment at the time as most members accepted a business-like, firm chairman. His relationship with senior members was so ingrained that these correographed actions seemed natural. Given existing House norms, junior members had no reason to expect anything but to remain quietly on the periphery.

Once the committee approved a piece of legislation, the chairman would designate himself or another senior member to see to the preparation of the legislative report and serve as floor manager.\textsuperscript{11} On major bills it was customary for the chairman to be the floor manager, but in the case of lesser measures he would usually delegate this task to a subcommittee chairman or interested senior member. If it were necessary to go before the Rules Committee, the committee's floor manager would request a hearing and attempt

\textsuperscript{11}While the chairman could theoretically decide not to report a bill favorably acted upon by his committee, such action was quite rare. Aside from the understandable bitterness such arbitrary action would engender, if he felt that strongly about the measure in question, he could have prevented its consideration by some other means beforehand.
to secure the type of rule it desired for floor action.

As floor manager the chairman enjoyed a number of important procedural prerogatives. Together with the ranking minority member, he allocated the time allotted for debate among committee members and interested congressmen as he saw fit. If debate was being prolonged through the introduction of dilatory amendments, he could secure recognition to offer a unanimous consent motion to limit debate. Should all else fail, he enjoyed precedence for being recognized by the presiding officer to move the previous question to bring about a vote on final passage. Conversely, if it appeared that the bill would be defeated, he could use his privileged position to move that the Committee of the Whole rise and thus prevent further consideration for the time being. Naturally, the very fact that the chairman was personally leading the effort to secure favorable floor action usually minimized procedural difficulties while enhancing the legislation's prospects for passage.

After floor passage had been accomplished, if differences existed between the House and Senate versions, the chairman would normally be selected by the Speaker to head a House delegation to resolve these differences in a joint conference committee. As the chairman was usually joined by about a half dozen of his senior colleagues on the committee, his influence over the delegation and the
subsequent conference with the Senate was considerable. In the event of an impasse, it was not unusual for the House and Senate committee chairmen to confer and come up with a compromise that was then ratified by their respective delegations. Following the drafting of a conference report incorporating the decisions reached, the chairman would be responsible for securing its approval by the House. As a rule this was a pro forma ratification.

Procedurally, then, the chairman controlled every phase of a bill's consideration from full committee through enactment. There was simply no viable alternative for his active participation in this process. Consequently, members were obliged to some form of satisfactory accommodation with him. Therein lay a major source of the chairman's influence.

Another of the chairman's powers which was to assume greater importance after World War II was his selection and utilization of committee staff. In 1931, however, the total staff of the Naval Affairs Committee consisted of a clerk, assistant clerk and a janitor. Their duties were almost wholly administrative, involving setting up for hearings, handling routine correspondence and preparing minutes. Moreover, due to the short legislative sessions, the committee staff was expected to help out in the chairman's congressional office. Although the clerk or assistant clerk naturally developed a degree of expertise by virtue of
their exposure to naval matters, it was not sufficient to represent an independent, in-house analytical capability. As a result, the committee was obliged to rely on two other resources to fill this deficiency—the expertise of its own members and that of the Navy Department.

Lacking a professional committee staff, members were obliged to do much of their own homework and investigating. For those who applied themselves conscientiously, the greater expertise they developed increased their effectiveness within the committee and helped prepare them for future responsibilities when they achieved the requisite seniority.

Despite the individual abilities and energy of the members, additional human resources were needed to handle the detailed work and fact gathering necessary for the committee to discharge its legislative and oversight responsibilities. Outside experts, industry representatives, and interest groups, such as the Navy League, were able to provide valuable assistance from time to time.

There was, however, no substitute for the expertise and overall resources found in the Navy Department, and the committee freely drew upon them. Navy personnel were assigned to the House and Senate committees to advise
them and serve as liaison between the Department and Congress. Great reliance was placed on the various technical bureaus to perform the special analysis necessary to evaluate complex issues coming before the committee, such as aeronautics and shipbuilding details. Figuring even more prominently was the Judge Advocate General's (JAG) office in providing a great deal of detailed legal support to the committee. The Navy JAG was routinely called upon to draft legislative proposals, check over bills for possible points of order, edit transcripts, and write legislative reports. Although these various duties placed a heavy burden on limited JAG resources—especially when it is remembered that it was already responsible for evaluating a large number of bills routinely referred to it—the Navy did not discourage committee requests for assistance. Such close collaboration produced the basis of an intimate and involved relationship between the House Naval Affairs Committee and the Navy Department that only further reinforced the advocacy orientation of the members. Moreover, it permitted the Department to subtly attempt to influence committee action, while keeping a finger on the pulse of

12Albion, "Makers of Naval Policy," 360-361; Interview with James Deakins, April 14, 1979. This pattern of Navy support for the committee was to expand even more and climax during World War II with 3 Navy personnel assigned to the committee.
the Congress. Conversely, however, this association permitted the committee to establish a very useful conduit of information, develop additional service contacts, and endeavor to shape indirectly Departmental policies and practice. Thus, while the chairman's power over a small, limited staff was not impressive, the fact that he was the formal contact point for Navy support to the committee provided him with a potent resource.

Carl Vinson also had the advantage of following a succession of strong chairmen. Lemuel Padgett (Democrat; Tennessee), Thomas S. Butler, (Republican; Pennsylvania), and Fred Britten (Republican; Illinois) exerted a strong, active influence over all facets of committee activity in their tenures. In the first two cases, particularly, Vinson had before him examples of consummate committee leaders and skilled legislative craftsmen. They had recognized fully that in a political/legislative setting, the exercise of power is rarely straightforward or unequivocal. In an arena characterized by fluid power relationships, perception and nuance were no less important than substance. It was also a totally success oriented environment in which the committee, to remain effective, needed to be perceived as being successful, the repository of institutional expertise, and united in the pursuit of basic goals.
Irrespective of formal powers and prerogatives, a rank autocrat could never successfully fill the position. Arbitrary behavior for its own sake could never build the consensus within the committee upon which so much of its success depended. Moreover, no chairman could run roughshod over vital member interests as political survival was non-negotiable and this principle was well understood by all those concerned. Any arbitrariness had to be localized, episodic and capable of being rationalized on the basis of institutional constraints. Vinson never forgot the dictum, "Don't make them all mad at the same time."\(^\text{13}\) This articulation of the concept of divide and rule provided a sound basis for the exercise of the chairman's power.

But the use of power was not to be totally directed toward the negative end of avoiding insurgency. Its ultimate purpose was to facilitate the consensus building within the committee and the House toward the realization of basic policy goals. To accomplish this the chairman had to be able to discern existing political realities to focus his efforts most productively. In order to be persuasive, he also had to be a master of interpersonal relations within a population of legislators with independent power bases and diverse interests. Although the use of the chairman's resources had

\(^\text{13}\) Vinson Interviews.
to be purposeful, he had to have a deft touch in applying them in a discriminating fashion. Complacency, arrogance or lethargy would not suffice for this task.

Viewed as a whole, then, the powers, functions and prerogatives of the chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee were awesome. In the hands of a shrewd, vigorous, and skilled legislative tactician, these advantages seemed to assure success. But their exercise had to be tempered by realization of institutional constraints and the awareness that they represented the finite means to greater ends. Carl Vinson learned this precept early and, once learned, he never forgot it.

The Senate Naval Affairs Committee

This committee, the Naval Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee notwithstanding, represented the most serious institutional competitor of the House Naval Affairs Committee. Although established six years earlier, in 1816, the subsequent development pattern of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee lagged somewhat behind that of its House counterpart. For example, it did not gain jurisdiction over the annual Navy supply bill from the Senate Appropriations Committee until 1899 and did not relinquish it until 1922—fourteen and two years, respectively, after similar action had occurred in the House of Representatives.
Attempting to assess the power relationship between the two committees, Professor Albion made the following judgment:

The relative influence of the two Naval Affairs groups fluctuated from time to time, depending in part upon the qualities of the chairmen and most active members. In the thirty years preceding World War I, leadership tended to rest with the Senate group, but thereafter House Naval Affairs was usually more potent.

Nevertheless, he later indicates that this pattern had not become irreversible by 1931 due to a resurgence of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee under the able direction of Chairman Frederick Hale (Republican; Maine).

It may be well, however, to question the validity of such direct comparisons. For while the two committees functioned within a similar legislative environment, they had substantially different organizational and operational characteristics which makes a simple match-up difficult. A closer examination of these differences may yield greater insight into this complex relationship between the House and Senate Naval Affairs Committee and its policy implications.

Most noticeable was the difference in the respective size of the two committees. Whereas the House panel usually had a membership of twenty-one, the Senate Naval Affairs increased from sixteen to eighteen members between the 65th and 72nd Congresses (1916-1933). The size of this differential in absolute terms did not reflect its true significance, as the following table shows.
TABLE 7:
MEMBERSHIP OF THE SENATE NAVAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, 65th THROUGH 72nd CONGRESSES, INCLUDING ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS AND THE NUMBER OF MEMBERS HOLDING CHAIRMANSHIPS ON OTHER COMMITTEES.

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<tr>
<th>Congress</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Average number of additional committee assignments</th>
<th>Members holding chairmanships</th>
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<td>65th</td>
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Clearly displayed by the table are the differences in the number of outside committee assignments held by members of the two naval panels. Whereas formal constraints in the House limited Representatives to one or two major standing committees, Senators were normally appointed to anywhere from one to eleven additional committees—averaging over five for the entire period. Facing the same time deadlines as the House and unable to be in more than one meeting at the same time, the Senators on the Naval Affairs Committee could not match the degree of specialization of their House colleagues.

This situation was further exacerbated by the fact that many—ranging from three to fourteen—Senate Committee members were also serving as chairmen of other committees. The increased responsibilities and restructuring of priorities occasioned by such service inevitably reduced their participation in Naval Affairs activities. What made their absence even more keenly felt was the fact that they usually possessed greater seniority and overall familiarity with naval matters. Finally, as was the case in the House, there was no staff structure to compensate for this lack of consistent personal involvement. It was this problem that the House attempted to address in 1920 by prohibiting the chairman of an exclusive standing committee from serving on any other committee so that he could devote his undivided attention to seeing that his committee carried out its
legislative and oversight responsibilities.

Intense competition for member attention in the Senate manifested itself in the number and nature of hearings held by the Naval Affairs Committee. Not surprisingly, there were far fewer formal hearings than those conducted by the House committee and they were usually less thorough. Moreover, they were marked by sparse attendance—often only one or two members present—and conducted with greater informality. To clear its docket, the Senate Naval Affairs Committee had to resort to telephone polls and the frequent use of proxies from absent members. By contrast, proxies were discouraged on the House side and Vinson later prohibited them entirely. Although the House panel occasionally polled its members by mail when Congress was adjourned, this practice was not used during the legislative session. In fact, Vinson placed a great deal of stress on member attendance and the level of success he achieved in this regard was a source of considerable pride for him.

While the House's greater degree of specialization has generally been conceded, it has been asserted that this is partially offset by the longer service of senators as the greater continuity of membership on the Senate Naval Affairs Committee. As the following table demonstrates, however, the available data does not support that contention.
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<th>Congress</th>
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<th>Percentage of Total Membership</th>
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<td>72nd</td>
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While only a portion of the senators on the committee were subject to the vagaries of reelection in any Congress, there were substantial changes in committee membership between the 66th and 72nd Congresses. Except in two instances the number is lower than what occurred in the House, but the differential is not great enough to support the claim that the Senate panel enjoyed appreciably greater continuity. Even more remarkable, in the 72nd Congress the mean numbers of Congresses served by members of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee was actually less than on the House side—2.5 to 3. As was the case with the House committee, however, it should be kept in mind that mean terms and fluctuations in the number of new members were not actually as significant as they appear statistically. Leadership patterns were stable and there remained throughout this period a nucleus of key members who played a primary role in shaping committee actions.

Insofar as the state distribution is concerned, Senate coverage of coastal states with a maritime orientation is more complete as is shown in the following table.
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While the House Naval Affairs Committee, by virtue of its exclusive character and larger membership, may have possessed greater overall expertise in naval matters, along with the capacity for more intensive and diversified activity, this did not necessarily translate into greater effectiveness throughout the legislative process. Aside from the obvious fact that legislative success is largely dependent upon specific circumstances and the interaction of personalities, the Senate Naval Affairs Committee had a number of important advantages.

Chief among them was the advantage of timing. This usually meant acting after the House had done so. This was partially an acknowledgement that the House committee was better able to take the initiative on major policy measures and conduct the lengthy hearings necessary to assemble the relevant facts and establish the basic record. Accordingly, when the Senate Naval Affairs Committee took up legislation passed by the House, it could focus attention on its salient and more controversial aspects. Proceeding in this manner, whatever general lack of familiarity that might exist on the Senate side would not be a major shortcoming and easily compensated for by only having to concentrate on selected features in the bill. Moreover, the Senate would benefit from fully mobilized special interest lobbying and formal Navy reaction to the House passed bill. Thus, by following
the House lead, the Senate Naval Affairs Committee was able to conserve its energy while functioning as a court of appeals.

This scheduling advantage also worked to the Senate's benefit in the joint conference committees designed to reconcile differences in the bills passed by both chambers. House conferees would find themselves confronting decisions ostensibly made on the basis of more current information, the fruits of fully mobilized special-interest activity and carefully articulated Navy reservations. Although these factors could seldom bring about fundamental changes in the House passed legislation, they were frequently capable of compelling certain modifications needed to secure Senate concurrence.

A second advantage was the benefit the Senate committee derived from interlocking membership with the Appropriations Committee. Throughout this period between one and three members served on both committees. In fact, Senator Frederick Hale held a dual chairmanship of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee and the Naval Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee for a number of years. Furthermore, Senate practice allowed at least two other committee members to take part in the deliberations of the Naval Subcommittee as ex-officio members. This arrangement, the absence of which was keenly felt in the House, permitted the Senate
to orchestrate the activities of the legislative and appropriations committees after their formal separation in 1922. It also permitted members on the two committees to develop a greater appreciation of the policy and fiscal aspects of naval issues coming before Congress. As it happened, the Naval Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee was generally a more sympathetic audience for the Navy than its House counterpart. And since it took up the annual Navy supply bill after House action, it functioned as a court of appeals in much the same manner as Senate Naval Affairs.

From the foregoing, it should become apparent that attempting to generalize broadly about the relative influence exercised by the House and Senate Naval Affairs Committees risks serious distortion. Indeed, looking back at Albion's assessment, it seems that the criteria he used to measure relative effectiveness was legislative initiative. There is no gainsaying the importance of legislative initiative but it does not automatically translate into overall effectiveness.

We have seen how the Senate committee, without the initiative, was able to selectively intervene at various points in the legislative process to good effect. Acting as a court of appeals on reservations expressed by those affected by the House's prior actions, the Senate Naval Affairs Committee served as a useful counterfoil. It is only
by keeping in mind the differences in the organizational and operational characteristics of the two bodies, the way they specifically interacted, and the particular circumstances in each instance, is it possible to evaluate their relative effectiveness. This requires focusing on the total legislative process on a case by case basis.

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Moving from the legislative to the executive sphere, interwar naval policy deliberations assumed a different character. Unlike Congress's almost exclusive focus on the internal aspects of naval policy, executive branch policy-makers also had to take into account operational considerations. The primary task for them, then, became the harmonization of the ends and means of naval policy. In practice this meant reconciling operational requirements with the need for the efficient management of limited resources. It also entailed resolving differing views on the nature and extent of civilian direction of Navy administration, programs, and activities.

The principal executive branch entities engaged in this process were the President, Navy Department and the Bureau of the Budget. Their respective roles and functions within this process will be examined in an attempt to better understand their relationships with each other and Congress, as well as providing additional insights into the complex nature of naval policy-making.
The President

As both Chief Executive and Commander-in-Chief, the President had the constitutional power to influence decisively virtually every aspect of naval policy. As a practical matter, however, presidential intervention was infrequent and largely symbolic. When his active involvement did occur, it was almost invariably the result of serious policy differences between subordinate agencies that could not be resolved by a lesser authority. Occasionally, the President was called upon to settle disputes between contending factions within the Navy Department itself. Generally, however, the department sought to resolve its internal strife without burdening the President, or risking the uncertain consequences of his involvement. Finally, the President would periodically assume the role of a symbolic participant in departmental administration by placing his imprimatur on major policy initiatives or changes in procedure, thereby giving them greater legitimacy and stature. The most notable examples of presidential intervention in the 1920s were related to naval limitation activities which encompassed all three of the above categories of involvement.

Apart from occasional intervention, Presidents traditionally confined their interest to nominating senior civilian officials, approving command slates and providing annual budgetary guidance. With the exception of Theodore
Roosevelt, they had been content to leave the administration of the Navy Department to the Secretary of the Navy, assisted by his senior civilian and professional advisors. Nevertheless, the pattern of presidential involvement had not been conclusively established and the department was well aware that a future incumbent, if he were so inclined, might exercise the latent power he possessed to assume a more active role in directing the Navy's activities.

Navy Department

Naturally, the principal executive branch entity involved in naval policy-making was the Navy Department itself. From its establishment in 1798, the institutional development of the Navy Department had been characterized by continuing efforts to devise an organizational structure and administrative procedures that would produce a positive and coherent relationship between the means and ends of naval policy. Fundamental to this endeavor was the interplay of three sets of competing influences within the department: the Line, the bureaus, and the nature of civilian participation.

Complicating the task of arriving at a satisfactory and enduring arrangement to balance these conflicting influences was the wide disparity between wartime and peacetime requirements. In wartime the emphasis was upon operational needs and the drive for military effectiveness superseded peacetime fiscal constraints and subordinated management considerations. Moreover, during hostilities professional advisors came to
the forefront to dominate the consideration of naval policy questions. Under these circumstances, the Naval Establishment most closely approached the military ideal of a monolithic, strictly hierarchical organization with victory as its fixed and compelling purpose. Nevertheless, the dynamism of war prevented this structure from becoming ossified as the stern criteria for military efficiency and success produced a high degree of receptiveness toward new methods and leaders.

Conversely, in peacetime, operations requirements had to be tempered by considerations involving the availability of resources and their efficient application. The fleet lost some of its ascendancy over the shore establishments as military effectiveness, while still paramount, had to be weighed against resource constraints, political considerations and institutional friction. Moreover, civilian leaders were no longer willing to defer to professional advisors whose aims, in all likelihood, did not conform with peacetime realities and whose expertise within these changed circumstances became suspect. Examining this situation a recent student of the interwar Navy observed:

Within the peacetime navy power is diffuse. Decision making is a matter of reconciliation and coordination among diverse groups of specialists. Like a Machiavellian state each bureaucratic sub-unit maneuvers to enlarge its sphere or resist encroachment. Running the navy calls less for the qualities of a fighter than those of a politician and diplomat. . . . Always there is value in maintaining a common front and
preserving and imparting traditions. Peacetime navies are conservative, complex institutions.14

Related factors also contributing to the difficulty of devising a suitable organizational/administrative formula were the relative frequency of periods of peace and war and the ability of a democratic system to rationally respond to gradations on the spectrum between those two conditions. From its inception until 1931, the Navy found itself engaged in hostilities in less than 20 of its 133 years of existence. Thus, although wartime operations received greater national attention and resulted in the consumption of resources on an immense scale, peacetime activity was the norm. Furthermore, the political, economic, and social costs of trying to administer the Navy Department on the basis of wartime operational needs were insupportable within a democratic context. The resulting tradeoffs injected a greater management and efficiency orientation in the running of the Navy Department, thereby creating institutional inertia which had to be overcome anew at the outset of each succeeding U.S. naval conflict.

Another problem was that while a democratic form of government like that existing in the United States could generate enormous economic and military power in wartime, it proved less able to respond to situations short of actual hostilities. Historically, adequate naval preparedness had been an alien concept. Although there had been some awareness that a naval force in being had to be better prepared than armies on land, this had not been translated into effective action. Naval professionals had long been keenly aware of the importance of fleet readiness and the need to keep abreast with technical advances in naval warfare, but this appreciation was not widely shared outside the department. The anxiety these officers felt over material readiness was heightened in the 1920's by the recognition that the next war would make even larger demands upon the forces in being and that the lead time for the conversion of resources into weapons and capabilities was increasing. There was also the realization that America's principal naval competitors, Great Britain and Japan, were addressing this problem in a more consistent, effective manner. These concerns spurred professional Line officers to step up their efforts to increase the operational orientation of the interwar Navy through the perpetuation of wartime procedures, prioritization, and command arrangements.

By 1931, the competition between operational and management oriented factions produced a "bilinear"
organization of the Navy Department. Essentially, this meant that both the military and civil/material components separately reported to the Secretary of the Navy who had the responsibility for reconciling the differences between them.\(^\text{15}\)

In reality, this apparatus was only able to function through what has been described as "administration by genial conspiracy" meaning that:

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\text{In the best of times all the separate agencies of the Department...perform together within a framework provided by tradition and habit. The essence of such an administrative system is mutual debate and voluntary agreement. In these good times there is a disposition on the part of all to explain that the system works well...But in the worst of times the spirit of cooperation breaks down and the separate agencies, reinforced in many cases by their own money and in every instance by their own specialized sources of information, tend to travel more independent courses. At such times the charade of unity is abandoned and the realities of the situation are revealed.}\(^\text{16}\)
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**Secretary of the Navy**

As the apex of the department's organization structure, the Secretary of the Navy, by every legal and formal criteria, possessed the authority to actively supervise all aspects of

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\(^\text{16}\)Elting E. Morison, "Naval Administration in the United States," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, LXXI, October 1946, 1309 (Hereafter cited as Morison, "Naval Administration in the United States").
its administration. In fact, secretaries were never able to play the decisive unifying role nominally ascribed to them. The reasons for this failure are found in the manner of their selection, tenure patterns, and radical changes in the art of naval warfare which took place in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Until 1820, Secretaries of the Navy were chosen largely on the basis of their familiarity with maritime matters. Appointees were merchants and, as there were great similarities between the commercial vessels and warships of the time, expertise in one sphere was readily transferrable to the other. Thereafter, however, the position increasingly assumed the character as a "political payoff" to be filled by deserving party leaders who could geographically balance the Cabinet. As a result, practically all those appointed after 1818 had little, if any, prior knowledge of naval affairs or the intricacies associated with the administration of the department. The upshot was that as the Navy became more professional and technically oriented, the expertise gap confronting each successive Secretary grew wider.

In the absence of acquired expertise, compensation for lack of knowledge had to be found in the appointment of the most able public official available, or through an extended length of service that would permit mastery of
the subject matter. Unfortunately, with respect to the former, the relative prestige of the position of the Secretary of the Navy within the Cabinet was too low to attract the most able and influential political aspirants. Conversely, even if a less capable appointee were to make a diligent effort to master the details of his department, most secretaries left office in less than three years. This brief tenure pattern afforded most with scarcely enough time to gain a rudimentary knowledge of departmental administration, let alone develop a firm grasp of the nuances.

Yet only the Secretary possessed the authority to coordinate the activities of the Navy Department and resolve recurrent internal disputes between the Line and Staff and professionals and civilians. With his limited knowledge he thus became "an umpire with not a very certain grasp of the rules of the game."\(^ {17} \) Unable to effectively serve as a unifying force within the department, the Secretary could not stem the increasing diffusion of knowledge, fiscal control, and responsibility that was taking place. Consequently, it was "inevitable that the administration of the Navy had been entrusted primarily to the individual bureaus. The supreme civil authority, in ordinary times, is, in practice, isolated

\(^{17}\) Morison, "Naval Administration in the United States," 1308.
from the real activity of the organization over which he
presides."18

It would be wrong to conclude from this, however, that
the Secretary of the Navy did not contribute importantly to
the administration of the Naval Establishment. First of all,
he came to his position with a fresh perspective which
allowed him to "detect needs or defects to which the veteran
professional minds were accidently or deliberately closed."19
Often his previous association with business familiarized
him with the most advanced management techniques which a
number of progressive Secretaries sought, with various
degrees of success, to apply to the administration of the
Navy's material resources. A Secretary also often played the
role of an honest broker untainted by prior institutional
bias so that he might "lend an ear to suggestions that might
never have fought their way up 'through channels.'"20 Fur­
thermore, as the supreme civil authority he acted as a
"minister of the people sent to the department to represent
their opinions and prejudices in naval counsels. He mediated
between the people and the navy."21

18 Ibid., 1307.
19 Albion, "The Administration of the Navy, 1789-1945,"
295.
20 Ibid.
21 Paullin's History of Naval Administration, 438.
His principal value to the Navy, however, was the possession of an acute political awareness. This quality was assured by the very nature of his selection. He, better than any of his professional subordinates, understood the tenor of the administration he represented and the art of the possible for the Navy within that context. As the principal conduit between the President and the department his position was a delicate one. He had to balance his loyalty to his chief with his role as the service's advocate at the highest policymaking level. The Secretary's political background and experience in the art of accommodation were indispensible in reconciling these often conflicting roles.

A Secretary's political acumen was also valuable in representing the Navy on Capitol Hill. As a fellow politician, he was able to discern practical political realities and structure the Navy's dialogue with Congress accordingly. In turn, members of the House and Senate acknowledged him as one of the guild by treating him with courtesy and attention they accorded no other departmental representative. They also demonstrated an unfailing protective interest in preserving his authority from professional encroachments. For his part, the Secretary was able to draw upon his special relationship with the Hill to successfully intercede for the Navy at critical junctures.
Finally, the Secretary of the Navy could influence departmental administration through studied inaction—a negative virtue to be sure, but not to be taken lightly as he alone could sign the regulations, General Orders, and other documents necessary to implement major policy and procedural initiatives. In spite of his technical and administrative limitations, at some point he had to be apprised of significant contemplated action and his acquiescence secured. At that juncture he could use his position to modify, if not completely forestall, those actions about which he entertained reservations. As long as he possessed such authority, the Secretary of the Navy could not be relegated to the periphery of naval policymaking and would remain one of the principal, if not most knowledgable, participants.

The Assistant Secretary of the Navy

In 1931, the duties of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy included "matters pertaining generally to the management of navy yards, their civilian personnel, and labor." To assist him in discharging these responsibilities, the Director of Navy Yards and the Navy Yard Division of the

Office of Naval Operations were placed under his direct supervision. In effect, with the "bilateral" organization of the Navy Department, the Assistant Secretary became the head of the civil/material side of the establishment.

Aside from thus being able to relieve the Secretary of the routine details associated with the management of the Shore Establishment, the Assistant Secretary played an important role in the department's relations with Congress. As questions involving the navy yards and their civilian personnel inevitably involved political sensitivities, an astute senior political appointee was well suited to appreciate their particular significance and see that they were handled "appropriately." In addition, the Shore Establishment derived a collateral benefit from the active involvement of a succession of ambitious Assistant Secretaries who introduced a number of management innovations that enhanced efficiency.

Another interesting characteristic of this position after 1898 was that it became a stepping stone to higher political office--most notably in the cases of Theodore and Franklin D. Roosevelt. Thus, while this infusion of fresh ideas and vigor was generally a positive contribution to the Navy Department, it also obliged the Secretary to keep a weather eye open for challenges to this authority by a flamboyant Assistant Secretary harboring further political aspirations.
Chief of Naval Operations (CNO)

As the Secretary's senior professional advisor, the Chief of Naval Operations was charged by law with the preparation of war plans and coordinating the operations of the Fleet. In somewhat the same way that the Assistant Secretary supervised the material side of the Naval Establishment, the CNO sought to better integrate its operational activities. The very creation of the position of Chief of Naval Operations and the Office of Naval Operations in 1915 was a clear manifestation of growing emphasis within the Navy Department on military efficiency and the need for greater formal professional input. The subsequent expansion of the CNO's authority and corresponding increase in the size of the Office of Naval Operations over the following decade and a half was indicative of the growth of Line influence over departmental administration and the formulation of naval policy.

By 1931, the CNO presided over a dynamic Office of Naval Operations which was steadily enhancing its power and stature within the department. The office itself was functionally divided among these following divisions: Central, War Plans, Intelligence, Naval Districts, Fleet Training, Inspection, Material, Ships Movements, and the Office of Naval Communications. Through these divisions the Chief of Naval Operations was able to
acquire up to date knowledge of departmental activities and open channels to the bureaus and other offices, thereby facilitating his efforts to improve overall coordination. Nevertheless, he labored under a number of serious limitations in this endeavor as he could:

... prepare plans, but he possessed no authority over the activity of the subordinate agencies which fulfilled the requirement of the plans; and while he was charged with the operations of the fleet he possessed no authority over any of the agencies designing, constructing, manning or maintaining the fleet. Furthermore, his control over operations was shared, in a fashion not defined with the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Fleet who by regulation, was responsible for the "indoctrination, drill, training, and efficient administration and operations of the fleet." 23

In attempting to work around these constraints, the CNO was able to draw upon a number of compensating special advantages that accrued to him by virtue of his unique position. The first of these had to do with the fact that, due to his responsibility for the coordination of the activities of the Fleet, he developed—or more importantly was perceived as having developed—a broader perspective for placing the activities of the department within an overall operational context. Thus, while he could not match the technical expertise of the bureau chiefs, they were not qualified to address issues outside of their specific areas

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of competence and were not able to effectively challenge his claim for establishing operational priorities and making comprehensive recommendations.

The CNO also benefited from the special status and authority he derived from being the ranking professional in the Navy. Irrespective of their particular views of his policies and their solicitude for the bureaus, Members of Congress felt obliged to give him a careful hearing. Moreover, as the department's chief military spokesman, his utterances to the press, various special interest groups and other national and international forums were received attentively and evaluated carefully for their implications on U.S. naval policy. Finally, within the department the CNO's position and the recognized importance of his function elicited a good deal of cooperation and support, provided it did not seriously jeopardize ingrained parochial interests. The delicate nature of his efforts to maximize the level of coordination within the department while minimizing friction was recognized, at least implicitly, in the manner in which post World War I CNO's were selected. The result was that the Navy benefited from a succession of leaders well versed in departmental politics who were able to develop an internal consensus at the same time they expanded the influence of the Office of Naval Operations.
Lastly, the CNO was seen as heading a dynamic organization with every prospect of becoming a larger force in the administration of the Navy Department. Given the increasing complexity of naval warfare through technical advances accompanied by stringent treaty and fiscal constraints on naval resources, it was difficult to see how the demand for improved coordination of operational activities would not grow apace. Thus, when those within and outside the Naval Establishment surveyed the actions of the CNO it was not just on the basis of his position at the time, but also what it was becoming. And although the Secretary was able to avoid overt demotion and the bureaus actual subordination, the fact remained that the CNO's stature, comprehensive perspective, and knowledge had steadily eroded their influence and freedom of action. The Secretary and the bureaus were never to recover the ground they lost in this process.

The Bureaus

The establishment of the bureau system in 1842 was an event of paramount importance in the institutional history of the Navy Department. The resulting organizational structure and administrative patterns were to serve with some modification as the basic framework for the conduct of the Navy's personnel and material oriented activities for over a century. The creation of the six original bureaus permitted for the first time a clear functional delineation
of responsibility. Subsequent fiscal practices paralleled this division of responsibility with the apportionment of annual Navy appropriations among the bureaus by specific line items. Practically, this gave bureaus effective control over the expenditure of funds irrespective of the legal abstractions ascribing this authority to the Secretary. Each bureau chief reported directly to the Secretary of the Navy and jealously preserved this prerogative in the face of repeated attempts to subordinate their authority to that of some type of general staff apparatus. As noted previously, this administrative arrangement did not provide for any sort of unifying authority short of the Secretary himself and his limitations ensured that coordination would remain sporadic and largely ineffectual.

Although bureaus had originally been manned and administered by Staff officers, this monopoly did not long survive the Civil War. In 1868, as the size of the Navy was dramatically shrinking due to demobilization, a General Order was issued requiring that Line Officers alternate fixed periods at sea with fixed periods of shore duty. As a result, new shore billets were created and Line officers began to be assigned to various bureaus to fill out their mandatory time ashore. Consequently, the amount of Line influence within the bureau system was progressively increased.

Looking at the role and relative influence of the bureau system in the interwar period, a noted authority on departmental administration observed:

"...It is in the nature of things that power has shifted away from the Secretary who has insufficient knowledge and from the Chief of Naval Operations who has insufficient (and disputed) authority; it has shifted down the slopes of the Department and found its natural angle of repose in the bureaus. The bureaus have legal existence; they enjoy a mutual independence; they have, in peace and in war, concrete well-defined jobs to do; they have docks to build, ships to construct, men to feed, and guns to manufacture. They have also information and they have money. In other words they possess everything which in the world gives purpose, logic, and meaning to action."

Although the above statement contains a kernel of truth, upon analysis it is evident that it is more a reflection of the bitter disappointment felt by general staff proponents than an accurate appraisal of the power relationship existing between the bureaus and the Secretary of the Navy and CNO. It appears even more remarkable in view of the increased operational emphasis generated during and continuing after World War I which made substantial inroads into bureau authority and freedom of action in the 1920's. It was true enough that the bureaus had been able to avoid outright subordination to the Chief of Naval Operations, but his presence, along with the creation of the Office of Naval Operations, subjected them to greater external pressure.

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and direction in the conduct of their affairs. The separation of the ends and means of naval policy was never complete and the emergence of a strong, active apparatus directing operational activities inevitably impacted on the material side of the Naval Establishment. The bureaus retained their control over the allocation of funds, but their budgetary activities were complicated by the creation of the Navy Budget officer and resulting new procedures. Their special expertise remained essentially unchallenged, but the evolution of naval warfare placed a higher premium on the ability to assimilate this knowledge and effectively direct it toward operational priorities.

One major reason for the continued vitality of the bureau system and its ability to limit the encroachments by the Line was the political acumen of several bureau chiefs. Chiefs such as Admiral William Moffett (Aeronautics), Emory S. Land (Construction and Repair), Harold Bowen (Engineering), and William D. Leahy (Ordnance and Navigation), were among the most accomplished politicians in the Navy's history. Not only were they able to hold their own in the spirited bureaucratic infighting characteristic of the period, but they also cultivated powerful and enduring constituencies within Congress. Their abilities, combined with Congress's solicitude for the well-being and independence of the bureaus proved to be an unbeatable combination. This
natural alliance to preserve "civil" influence within the department ensured that, despite some diminution of stature, the bureaus would continue to play a key role in departmental administration and policy-making.

A final, and essentially unanswerable, argument favoring the retention of the bureau system was that it worked. Whatever the collective sins attributed to it by its detractors, the bureaus, individually, enjoyed an impressive record of accomplishment. Clearly, much of the growth and quality of the U.S. Navy had been due to the technical excellence of the various bureaus. To fundamentally alter the source for such excellence in the pursuit of possible collective effectiveness was not sufficiently compelling to elicit the necessary support from Congress.

The General Board

Created in 1900 as the successor to the Navy War Board, the General Board of the Navy has been characterized as "the balance wheel and coordinating body which advises the Secretary of the Navy in maintaining a sound and progressive program for the development and strategic functioning of the United States Navy." Although benefitting from the professional clamor for a general staff arrangement, the General Board was strictly an advisory body from its

26 Albion, "Makers of Naval Policy," 156.
inception and was never to have any administrative or operational responsibilities. Rather, it served as an internal "think tank" available to analyze various policy issues referred to it by the Secretary and to make specific recommendations. Traditionally, the General Board concentrated its activities in three areas: strategic planning; the annual development of building programs, including the more technical details of ship characteristics and fleet composition; and the drafting of a formal statement of U.S. Naval Policy which was periodically revised.

In 1931 the General Board was coming off a traumatic decade. Its defiant opposition to the Washington and London treaties and persistent advocacy of naval building in an atmosphere favoring arms limitation and disarmament cost the Board dearly. For the most part it had been engaged in the largely sterile task of updating a formal naval policy statement having little actual relevance and devising annual ship construction programs that were never enacted. To add insult to injury, in 1922 the General Board was divested of its strategic planning function which was transferred to the War Plans Division of the Office of Naval Operations. More and more, the Board was relegated to the examination of technical questions involving ship design or other specialized issues. The General Board managed to retain the semblance of its former prestige, but its opportunities to
participate in major policy debates were becoming progressively less frequent.

In summary, the Navy's administrative structure in 1931 could be characterized as increasingly centralized, operationally oriented, and coming under the influence of Line officers. These patterns, although unmistakable, had not resulted in the clear subordination of the bureaus and the Staff, let alone overcome the traditional decentralization within the department. The incompleteness of the success thus far achieved was a source of deep dissatisfaction to some observers (primarily Line reformers within the department) as in their eyes the existing structure was not in accordance with the rules of management and was untidy from the standpoint of organizational flow charts.

Part of the reason for the persistence of old patterns, arguments of Line reformers notwithstanding, was that the existing organization continued to possess functional utility and remained viable. A good deal of it was also attributable to bureaucratic resistance and sheer inertia within the Naval Establishment which could only be overcome through the passage of time, or a dramatic change of circumstances like the onset of war. But another source of difficulty for Line reformers in their efforts to remake the Navy Department into a highly centralized, operationally oriented, militarily efficient organization was Congress itself. In this instance
their aims did not coincide with the needs of a democratic legislative system's desire to preserve civil control over the Navy and retain an active role in its administration. The same degree of centralization and discipline required to command a warship left no room for involvement by external groups. Congress fully appreciated this fact and recognized that its ability to share in the administration of the Navy and exert control over its activities resulted from the internal fissures created by bureaucratic and professional-civilian conflict within the department. It may not have been theoretically efficient, but there was an abiding skepticism by legislators that the Line solution was the best in terms of the Nation's security. And there were a number of convenient episodes handy to reinforce this belief--most notably the Line's resistance to the expansion and exploitation of naval aviation. Besides, there was no compelling argument that the basic system of naval administration and its accompanying organizational structure had not functioned satisfactorily in the past or would not, with selective modification, be adequate in the future. In reality it was a sterile debate as Congress would not willingly or consciously give the Line what it desired. It was an imperfect system, but sufficient for the task at hand and it would be up to the participants to apply their talents and cooperative powers to see that it functioned
well enough to produce the desired result—the upbuilding of the Fleet to treaty limits in underage combatants and auxiliaries.

**Bureau of the Budget**

The enactment of the Budget and Accounting Act of 1921 constituted a watershed in the evolution of fiscal management in the United States. For the first time there was to be a national budget system requiring the President to transmit to the Congress "during the first fifteen days of each regular session" an annual budget based on the estimated receipts and expenditures of the executive departments. To assist him the act also provided for the creation of a Bureau of the Budget. Although formally located within the Treasury Department, the Bureau was in fact almost autonomous and directly responsible to the President. This interposition of the President and Bureau of the Budget between the executive departments and Congress represented a fundamental departure from traditional federal budgetary practice.

For nearly all of the interwar period the Budget Bureau recommended substantial reductions in the Navy estimates. Individually they were not crippling, but their cumulative impact by 1932 threatened the continued operational readiness and future capability of the Navy. This

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26 Budget and Accounting Act of 1921, 31 United States Code 11, Sec. 201.
tendency toward incremental annual cuts was largely the legacy of the concern over economy prevalent at the Bureau's creation. Charles G. Dawes, the first Budget Director, recognized that to succeed the new agency would have to secure the firm support of the President and quickly demonstrate to him and nation its utility. Although the Bureau had the theoretical choice at its inception of orienting itself toward policy development or spending control, Dawes lost no time coming out decisively for the latter course. By channelling the Bureau's efforts toward producing immediate and substantial cuts, Dawes was able to assure it President Harding's strong backing and the approbation of an economy conscious nation. Throughout the following decade, the fiscal conservatism of three successive Republican administrations only served to reinforce this outlook. Budget reduction became the *raison d'être* for the Bureau's existence. Accordingly, it was not surprising that Navy estimates suffered as a result, especially during President Hoover's term due to his general lack of sympathy and understanding of the Navy.

Nevertheless, there was countervailing considerations which operated to keep the cuts from being too extreme or capricious. While the Bureau could usually count on the executive's support in its periodic confrontations with the Navy Department on budget matters it preferred to make its
revisions without the President's active intervention. Frequent deadlocks would suggest that the Bureau was being unreasonable and that its management was suspect. Furthermore, if the President was called upon to make a determination there was the risk it would not wholly conform with the Bureau's desires. Therefore, it was in the Bureau's interest—as well as the Navy Department's—to keep budget conflicts below the threshold of executive intervention.

Another significant, and, from the standpoint of the House Naval Affairs Committee, more relevant function of the Bureau of the Budget was its clearance of legislative proposals. Initially, the rationale behind this grant of authority was to prevent backdoor spending via general legislation and was confined to those proposals, "the effect of which would be to create a charge on the public treasury or commit the Government to obligations which later require appropriations to meet them." As time went on, however, this came to mean not only those bills with fiscal implications, but virtually all general legislation to ensure that it conformed to the President's program.

In practice what this entailed was the requirement that all legislative proposals originating in the executive branch having fiscal or policy implications be first submitted to the Bureau of the Budget for review and clearance.

27Budget Circular No. 49 of December 19, 1921, RG 51, NA.
If a proposal was judged consistent with the President's program or fiscal guidance, the Bureau approved it for transmittal to Congress. If not, it was sent back to the Navy Department with an explanation of the Bureau's disapproval and suggested modifications. Thereafter, the department had the option of resubmitting a revised legislative proposal to meet the Bureau's objections or dropping the matter altogether.

In fact, however, the Navy Department had another option—that of circumventing established procedures and prevailing upon an obliging Senator or Representative to introduce the legislative proposal as his own. In this way, the bill escaped prior review and clearance by the Bureau. Nevertheless, the Budget Bureau still possessed two mechanisms for influencing such proposals. The first involved the Navy Department's report on legislation referred to it by the Naval Affairs committees. Virtually all of the legislation referred to those committees was subsequently sent to the Department for comment prior to committee consideration. Part of this comment process involved ascertaining the Bureau of the Budget's determination whether the bill was in accordance with the President's program. Irrespective of the Navy's views, a Bureau determination that the legislation was not consistent with administration policy was highly prejudicial to its chances for congressional enactment.
Lastly, all enrolled bills were routinely sent to the Bureau of the Budget for a final review. On the basis of this review, the Bureau would advise the President whether to sign the measure into law or veto it. These procedures, however, were poor substitutes for prior clearance. Once introduced, bills had a constituency in Congress which made a subsequent negative determination by the Bureau and the President more difficult. This difficulty was greatly increased in the case of an enrolled bill as both the House and Senate had passed the measure and institutional pride became a factor. These considerations substantially reduced the Budget Bureau's actual, if not theoretical, ability to thwart or modify legislation the Department "back channelled" to Congress.

Associated with its clearance of legislation was the Bureau's review of statements or witnesses testifying before Congress and major policy addresses by senior Navy Department civilian and service leaders. This was to ensure that such statements did not conflict with administration policies. Furthermore, all Department witnesses before Congress were duty-bound to support administration policy once it had been promulgated.

However, there were a number of gaping loopholes in this restriction. Obviously, no one could monitor all personnel in the Navy Department who had social contacts with
legislators and their associates. These informal contacts constituted a major conduit to those congressional policy-makers involved in naval affairs. Moreover, after dutifully presenting the administration's case to the committee, a member could then ask the witness for his personal opinion. Thus released from his position as a formal spokesman, the witness was free to provide his own assessment of administration policy and its implications without violating any formal prohibition. It nevertheless remained true that breaking with administration policy under such circumstances involved some additional risk which had not been present prior to the Budget Bureau's grant of authority to coordinate and monitor policy statements. This fact was not lost upon those officers and senior civilians having further career and political aspirations who reckoned the cost of deviation in those terms.

For the most part, however, relations between the Navy Department and the Bureau of the Budget were satisfactory. Recognizing early that its ability to force compliance was limited, the Bureau sought to appeal to the Navy's rationality and sense of discipline. It endeavored to devise as reasonable compromises as the President's fiscal guidance would permit. The Bureau also attempted to achieve improved coordination through skillful and enlightened balancing of competing interests within the Department and the executive branch as a whole. Such efforts could not be expected to
please everyone, but the Bureau did succeed in avoiding confrontations severe enough to result in the diminution of its influence or jeopardize its role in the federal budget process.

Likewise, the Navy realized that the new budget system enjoyed widespread public approval and was necessary in a time of fiscal constraints. It could not function effectively if circumvented at will and the Department was determined to avoid being perceived as the culprit responsible for the shortcomings in the new budget process. Moreover, the new budget system developed a sizable constituency within the Navy Department of operationally oriented elements who saw it as a way to diminish bureau influence over naval policy-making and as a rationale for further organizational/administrative reform. Thus, while there was little enthusiasm for the new arrangement within the department, it was accepted and there were those trying to turn it to their own advantage in attempting to shift the internal power relationships.

As might be gathered from the foregoing examination of the legislative/executive context for naval policy-making, it lacked symmetry, clear delineations of power and responsibility, and the contact points between the two branches of government did not mesh perfectly. Consequently, there were gaps, overlap, and a long list of administrative and
organizational sins associated with this arrangement. However, these same qualities which were a source of frustration for management purists and Line officers became the fount of opportunity for Carl Vinson. The imperfections, fissures, rifts and contradictions within this institutional edifice permitted him to insinuate himself into the very center of the Navy's policymaking process to play a substantially larger role than would otherwise be expected. Suited by temperament and accustomed to the eccentricities of the legislative arena, Carl Vinson thrived in this environment and used his extraordinary versatility to range across its landscape and exploit the opportunities it offered. The following chapters are the detailed account of his successful utilization of his working environment to positively shape naval policy.
Carl Vinson did not intend to wait until his formal installation as chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee to begin working toward the enactment of a comprehensive naval building program in the 72nd Congress. On December 1, he held a legislative strategy session with outgoing House chairman Fred A. Britten and Senators Frederick Hale (Republican; Maine) and Claude Swanson (Democrat; Virginia), chairman and ranking minority member of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee. All agreed with Vinson that it was imperative to build the Navy up to treaty limits, that the best way to accomplish this was via a comprehensive, steady ship construction program, and that legislation embodying such a program should be introduced in both chambers in the upcoming session.\(^1\) Unanimity broke down, however, when discussion turned to the nature of the legislation itself. For the most part, these differences stemmed from basic changes in institutional structure and procedures in Congress since World War I. As a result, there developed divergent perceptions regarding the duration, scope, and

\(^1\)New York Times, December 3, 1931, 12. (Hereafter cited as NYT.)
specificity of the statutory provisions required to institute a major, multiyear naval shipbuilding program. Further complicating this picture were a number of personal and partisan considerations.

Certainly not at issue was the question of whether Congress could enact some form of long-term, general naval building program. Precedent for that had been established as far back as the Act of April 28, 1816, which authorized the President to undertake the construction of nine warships and provided an annual appropriation of one million dollars over eight years for that purpose. More recently, there had been the huge, three-year naval building program contained in the Navy Appropriations Act of 1916, authorizing 156 combatant and auxiliary vessels (see appendix 1). This act continued to cast a long shadow even in 1931 as authorization remained for the construction of 11 destroyers.

Thus, the problem confronting Navy advocates in Congress was not establishing a precedent, but in adapting to an altered institutional environment. Prior to 1923 a common feature of comprehensive naval construction legislation had

been the combination of authorization and appropriation provisions in one bill. In the first instance cited here, this occurred because Congress had not clearly differentiated between the two functions before the late 1830's. In the latter case, the two functions were combined because the House and Senate Naval Affairs Committees exercised concurrent jurisdiction over authorizations and appropriations. However, by 1922 this dual responsibility ended with the transfer of jurisdiction over naval appropriations to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations. We have seen how this transfer fundamentally altered the Federal budget process and the power relationships between the committees involved, but it also raised questions about the future utility and character of the authorization process. When naval construction was authorized and actual appropriations made in the same bill there was no ambiguity about congressional policy. Even when appropriations were limited to one year, as in the case of the 1916 act, Congress's intent was clear. A statement of general policy was always combined with implementing action.

In the decade following 1922 this certainty was absent and congressional proponents of naval construction found themselves groping for a legislative mechanism to

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3Hind's Precedents of the House of Representatives, Volume IV, Section 3578.
reestablish that relationship. Some frankly doubted that a multi-year authorization was viable if not linked to an appropriation act. At the very least there had to be prior assurances from the appropriations committees that the necessary funding would be forthcoming. However, deepseated conflicts between those committees over national goals and priorities, combined with recurring jurisdictional disputes, foreclosed such cooperation.

Collaboration being out of the question, the leaders of the authorizing committees were forced to seek an independent legislative solution. Consequently, any proposal they devised would have to be capable of instituting the comprehensive, multi-year approach to naval construction they desired, but avoid alienating the appropriations committees by infringing on their jurisdiction. Further complicating this task was the additional requirement of having to overcome or placate executive opposition to anything more ambitious than limited and sporadic naval authorizations. Under the circumstances, their failure to fashion a satisfactory legislative mechanism before 1932 is not surprising.

In stark contrast was the successful application of this approach to the procurement of naval aircraft. Not only were the Naval Affairs Committees able to secure the enactment of a five-year, 1000 plane procurement authorization in
1926, but they had also been successful in obtaining the required appropriations for its implementation /see appendix 27/. From inception it was a model program. The product of close executive, legislative and industrial cooperation, the 1000 plane program met all of its production milestones, finished on schedule and came in $23 million under authorization. A record of accomplishment like this was bound to foster similar efforts in the field of naval construction and they were not long in coming.

The first opportunity that presented itself came early in 1928 and was triggered by the abortive Geneva Naval Limitation Conference the year before. Angered by what he perceived as British and Japanese intransigence, President Calvin Coolidge submitted to Congress legislation authorizing a five-year, 71 vessel naval building program. As introduced, H.R. 7359 authorized appropriations for the construction of 5 aircraft carriers, 25 cruisers, 9 destroyer leaders and 32 submarines /see appendix 37/. During its subsequent


consideration by the House Naval Affairs Committee, Representative George P. Darrow (Republican; Pennsylvania) offered the following motion:

That it is the sense of this committee that this verbiage on the bill (H.R. 7359) shall provide for a five year program to be completed in eight years, stating the maximum number of ships to be undertaken each year, the maximum cost of same and following the principle of the five year aviation program adopted by Congress and approved June 24, 1926.6

Through its unopposed adoption of this motion, the committee gave its unqualified support to this form of authorization and placed itself in the forefront of those working for its enactment.7 In so doing, it soon found itself engulfed by a firestorm of hostile reaction coming from all sides. The unprecedented stridency of the opposition by peace and disarmament groups, coupled with the formidable cost of the program, rapidly eroded its base of support within Congress. Consequently, H.R. 7359 was superseded by H.R. 11526, a compromise measure authorizing the construction of 1 aircraft carrier and 15 cruisers.8

Even so, proponents had to wage a taxing, prolonged campaign

6U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Naval Affairs, Minutes. 70th Congress, 1927-28, RG 233, NA, January 14, 1928.

7Ibid., the vote was 16 to 0 with one member voting present (Representative McClintic (Democrat; Oklahoma)).
to fend off Senate efforts to further reduce the program and secure its enactment on February 14, 1929.

For the House Naval Affairs Committee this was a traumatic experience. The strain was too much for "Old Tom" Butler, the committee's beloved chairman, and precipitated his untimely death. It also planted the seeds of doubt within Congress about the applicability of the provisions of the naval aviation act to naval shipbuilding. Many viewed the procurement of Navy aircraft as unique and deserving special consideration. Aircraft development was taking place at a breathtaking pace and a continued procurement program was needed to stay abreast of this progress. Another factor was the relative hazards of air operations which required a steady flow of replacement aircraft to maintain inventory levels. Finally, the fragile nature of the fledgling aircraft industry justified greater government support that would be appropriate or necessary for well established shipbuilding firms.

Another naval limitation conference was to be the catalyst behind a second attempt by the House Naval Affairs Committee to enact a multiyear authorization. Responding to widespread dissatisfaction within the Navy Department to the terms of the London Treaty then awaiting ratification, Chairman Fred Britten introduced H.R. 12283 on May 9, 1930. This bill provided authorization for the
President "to undertake prior to July 1, 1936, the construc-
tion of such light cruisers, destroyers, destroyer leaders,
submarines, airplane carriers as were authorized under the
London Naval Conference." Those critical of the treaty had
repeatedly asserted that the failure of the United States
to match the construction programs of its nearest maritime
rivals had placed it in a weak bargaining position at London.
Consequently, the American delegates lacked the leverage to
forestall higher Japanese ratios in cruiser and destroyer
categories, or to prevent parity in submarine strength.
Moreover, U.S. efforts to reduce naval armaments signifi-
cantly were undercut by the obvious fact that while the
British and Japanese would be called upon to scrap ships,
the Americans would merely have to forego construction.

Through enactment of H.R. 12283, Britten hoped to
ensure that the United States would not forfeit its oppor-
tunity to build up to treaty strength and be in a stronger
negotiating stance when the next round of naval limitation
talks took place in 1936. A related aim, certainly, was to
employ this legislation to ascertain President Hoover's
intentions and extract from him a commitment to build to
treaty limits. Britten did not carry a brief for naval
limitation, but if a treaty was inevitable he was determined
to exploit whatever potential advantages it offered the Navy.
Britten's legislative initiative was a doubtful enterprise from the start. Correctly perceiving that the legislation's objectives were diametrically opposed to his own, President Hoover saw that the bill received no official cognizance. Thus, while Britten had received strong informal Navy support, he was not able to shake loose any official comment before Congress adjourned. Without the benefit of formal Navy support, little could be accomplished and the bill died in committee.

Efforts along this line, however, did continue in the Senate during the ratification debate on the London Treaty. On July 19, 1930, Senator David I. Walsh (Democrat; Massachusetts) offered a Senate Resolution which stated:

That the Senate of the United States, in the event that this treaty is ratified, favors the substantial completion by December 31, 1936 of all cruisers mounting guns in excess of 6.1 inches, all aircraft carriers, all destroyers, and all submarines permitted under the treaty . . . 8 [See appendix 67]

While this resolution did not go as far as the Britten bill in that it did not authorize construction of the vessels mentioned, it would have put the Senate on record as supporting that course of action. Regarding it as

8Congressional Record, LXII, 319-320 (Hereafter cited as CR).
inimical to the spirit of the treaty, the Senate floor
managers gave the resolution a frosty reception and suc­
ceeded in tabling it. Undeterred by this rebuff, Walsh
later offered his resolution as a reservation to the treaty,
but was resoundingly defeated by a vote of 11 to 54.9

Although the Navy Department continued to study H.R.
12283 with an eye toward enactment in the following session,
a favorable endorsement was not forthcoming.10 This failure
did not reflect the Department's objection to the basic pro­
visions of the legislation. Rather, it was produced by
administration pressure, coupled with a shift in enthusiasm
toward a different approach.

Following consultations between navy advocates in Con­
gress and their Navy Department counterparts, there was a
decision to abandon the multi-year authorization altogether.
Instead it was agreed that a single year authorization would
be introduced, but with bill language and a legislative
history placing it within the context of a larger, longer­
rangle program. Each year thereafter, an annual authoriza­
tion would be submitted to Congress until the total program

9CR, LXII, 371

10Memorandum from the Chief of Naval Operations to the
Judge Advocate General regarding H.R. 12283, RG 80, A1-3/A18
(300510), NA. This undated memorandum provided for a depart­
mental recommendation in favor of the enactment of H.R. 12283.
Just how close formal endorsement was is shown by the fact
that Secretary Adams' signature had to be crossed out at the
last minute.
had been enacted and executed. Proceeding in this manner, it was hoped that the Navy Department would be able to secure Presidential sanction to submit the modest, first year increment to Congress in the forthcoming session. It was also envisioned that this approach would avoid jurisdictional and procedural sensitivities associated with a multiyear authorization. Another advantage was that the limited duration and modest size of each increment would present a lower profile, thereby avoiding the sensationalism and distortion that would inevitably accompany a larger program. Finally, enactment of even a limited program would establish a constituency through the new contracts and jobs it would provide. At a time marked by widespread unemployment and economic dislocation such a consideration could be a deciding factor in the enactment and perpetuation of this approach.

In line with this thinking, the General Board developed its recommendations for fiscal year 1932 calling for the construction of 1 aircraft carrier, 2 6-inch gun cruisers, 1 destroyer leader, 4 submarines and 12 aircraft. In addition, this shipbuilding increment was set within the context of a five year program designed to correct existing tonnage deficiencies and provide replacements for overage vessels in accordance with the London Treaty. After percolating

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11Serial 1475/G.B. 420-2, October 16, 1930, General Board Records, NOA.
through the Navy Department for a month and a half, a draft proposal was sent to the Bureau of the Budget on December 6 for clearance prior to its formal submission to Congress. The proposal received by the Budget Bureau differed from the General Board recommendation in only one respect—it contained 1 6-inch cruiser and 1 flying deck cruiser instead of 2 6-inch cruisers.\(^\text{12}\)

The Bureau had barely begun its scrutiny of the draft when it became aware that Congressman Britten had introduced an identical measure, H.R. 14688 on December 8 \(^\text{17}\). Troubled by this turn of events, Budget Director J. Clauson Roop directed Henry Wiseman, the Assistant for the Navy Department, to get to the bottom of it. Even before Wiseman was able to respond, on December 10 the House Naval Affairs Committee commenced hearings on the Britten bill leading off with the unequivocable statement that the Budget Bureau approved this measure.\(^\text{13}\)

Thus, when Wiseman reported back to the Director on December 11, his memo contained the details of a well executed bypass of the Budget Bureau by the Navy Department and its


\(^{\text{13}}\)Letter from the Secretary of the Navy to the Director of the Bureau of the Budget submitting a draft of a bill, "To Authorize the construction of certain naval vessels and for other purposes," December 6, 1930, A1-3/A18(301206), RG 80, NA.
allies in Congress. Responding to Wiseman's inquiry, the Secretary of the Navy blandly explained that during a recent conversation with the President, he had gained the impression that the legislative proposal met with his approval. "Acting on this assumption or with the approval of the President a copy of the bill was given to Mr. Britten, who introduced the bill on December 8." The memo went on to observe that this conveniently took place just before the Secretary and several of his subordinates were scheduled to attend a Bureau hearing on that proposal. As if to underscore the careful orchestration of this operation, even as Wiseman was composing his memo, Senator Hale was introducing S. 5288, yet another identical version of the Navy proposal [see appendix 7]. Confronted by a fait accompli, and after checking with the President, the Bureau gave its belated formal approval on December 12. On the debit side of the ledger, however, the perpetrators of this deed did not endear themselves to the Bureau of the Budget and only served to increase its vigilence to avoid being victimized again.

14Henry Wiseman to Colonel Roop, December 11, 1930, Navy, Increase of, Bureau of the Budget Records, RG 51, NA.

15Director of the Bureau of the Budget to the Secretary of the Navy, December 12, 1930, Navy, Increase of, Bureau of the Budget Records, RG 51, NA.
There followed eight days of hearings, at the conclusion of which the House Naval Affairs Committee reported favorably an amended version of H.R. 14688 on January 17, 1931. Up to this point the execution of this strategy had been flawless and the progress had been encouraging; but all to no avail as things developed. Try as he might, Fred Britten was not able to prevail upon the House leadership to schedule his bill for floor debate before Congress adjourned. Despite its initial promise, H.R. 14688 died at the sound of the closing gavel of the 71st Congress.

Nevertheless, it was undeniable that the results had been better than in the previous session and renewed efforts might bring success in the 72nd Congress. In retrospect, it is hard to see how Navy advocates could have achieved more in 1931. Given the Administration's preoccupation with the preparation for the Geneva Disarmament Conference in the following year, actual enactment of a one year authorization seems improbable. President Hoover's support for the proposal probably went no deeper than its exploitation as a trading chip and gesture of resolve going into those talks. Even if enacted, its implementation was dubious as the House Committee on Appropriations had publicly indicated its unwillingness to fund any further naval construction.

Another obstacle was none other than Fred Britten himself. No one could question the sincerity of his pro-Navy
stance or his willingness to champion its cause in Congress. The trouble was that while Britten was long on commitment, he was short on tact. He seemed to have transferred the same attitude he used in the ring as a heavyweight boxer to the pursuit of his legislative objectives. Consequently, he left a trail of bruised egos and resentment that literally spanned the globe. Typical of this behavior was Britten's public castigation of Representative Burton L. French (Republican; Idaho) as a "pacificist." Not only was this a breach of congressional etiquette, but French also happened to be the chairman of the Naval Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations. Exacerbating the already strained relations between the two committees only compounded the Navy's problems. Moreover, Britten's antics damaged his credibility with his colleagues and made them less willing to support measures he sponsored.

Adding to Britten's difficulties was his penchant for using his position for personal gain. In August 1931 a

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17 New York Herald Tribune, February 9, 1931, 1.
particularly blatant instance of such conduct made the front pages. It involved his request that the Scouting Fleet operate out of Montauk Point, Long Island for a week during its annual maneuvers off the East Coast. Inadequate facilities there, coupled with disappointment on learning that there would be no liberty at Newport, Rhode Island, the usual port of call, produced murmurs of discontent within the fleet. This grumbling was picked up by the press and it was then learned that Britten was a major investor in a failing real estate venture at Montauk Point. He had obviously hoped that the Navy's presence there would promote Montauk Point as a possible terminal for fast transatlantic steamship service and thereby raise local real estate values.\(^\text{18}\)

The unfavorable comment this seamy episode produced clearly indicated that Britten was becoming more of a liability than an asset where the Navy's interests were concerned. Consequently, Carl Vinson's elevation to the chairmanship of the Naval Affairs Committee at the close of 1931 came at a particularly opportune time. Not tainted by Britten's ethical myopia nor burdened by his accumulated ill-will, Vinson was in a far better position to exercise effective leadership on behalf of the Navy.

Drawing upon their collective experience since 1926, Vinson, Britten and their Senate counterparts were thus faced with two basic options in fashioning a legislative

\(^{18}\text{Albion, "The Makers of Naval Policy", 302.}\)
vehicle for a comprehensive, multi-year naval construction program—a general authorization of indefinite duration or a specific, one-year authorization with an implicit commitment to the fulfillment of a longer-range program.

Senator Hale favored the former approach and his proposal, later introduced as S. 51, authorized the President to "build up the naval armament of the United States to the strength permitted" by the Washington and London treaties via new construction, replacement of overage vessels, and alterations and conversions of existing vessels [see appendix 127]. Although this would accomplish the basic aims of Navy advocates in Congress, the bill was silent on questions of precisely how or when it would be implemented. It contained no provision requiring executive compliance or any specifics on the configuration or scheduling of the building program. Hale must have been aware of these shortcomings, but presumably believed that nonspecificity was the price that would have to be paid to secure Senate passage. Moreover, he may have harbored some expectation that his fellow Republican, Herbert Hoover, could be prevailed upon to make annual submissions that would enable the Navy to approach treaty limits by 1936. Another consideration that must have influenced Hale was that he chaired both the Senate Naval Affairs Committee and the Naval Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Appropriations.
Consequently, he could be more sanguine about the likelihood that the necessary appropriations would be forthcoming if an authorization were enacted.

Fred Britten displayed a curious ambivalence over the choice of legislative approach. Either of the two methods were acceptable to him, although he appears to have preferred a specific one-year authorization. Thus, it happened that on December 18, he introduced H.R. 6289, a bill very similar to that proposed by Senator Hale /see appendix 37/. The only significant difference was that it directed the Secretary of the Navy "to submit annually to the Bureau of the Budget estimates for the carrying out" of the authorized program to build to treaty limits. In a sense it was a gesture of Republican solidarity in Congress and would establish a constituency within the House of Representatives should S. 51 pass the Senate. Moreover, its lack of specificity on the size, scheduling and configuration of the building program which was left to the President's discretion might make it more acceptable to the administration.

Notwithstanding this expression of support for the Hale approach, on January 13, 1932, Britten introduced H.R. 7621, a bill nearly identical to H.R. 14688 which he had sponsored in the last Congress /see appendix 107/. Concerned that a comprehensive authorization, no matter how nebulous, would attract too much opposition, he wanted to be
able to fall back on a more modest program. Accordingly, H.R. 7621's authorization of 1 aircraft carrier, 1 flying-deck cruiser, 4 submarines, and 150 aircraft was looked upon by Britten as a prudent hedge against the defeat of the Hale bill. It also had an attraction of its own as the enactment of a one-year authorization could become the camel's nose under the tent leading to a series of future annual authorizations. Britten's decision to make the authorization specific indicated that he was less confident than his Senate counterpart that President Hoover could be given total discretion over the implementation of the program.

Carl Vinson was not impressed with either of these approaches. To him they represented a choice between the innocuous and the inconsequential. Both were transparent attempts to avoid or deflect pacifist opposition through dissimulation—ploys that deceived no one and impaired the credibility of pro-Navy advocates in Congress. But their greatest sin was that neither concretely addressed the serious deficiencies in U.S. naval strength that were becoming more critical with each passing day.

Hale's bill was too vague on program implementation and suffered from a dependence upon the discretion of a President openly hostile to efforts designed to build the
Navy to treaty limits. In Vinson's eyes giving this kind of latitude to Herbert Hoover was tantamount to conferring upon him a license to do nothing. Unless Congress mandated implementation and established a construction schedule, Vinson feared that the result would be a paper authorization without substance. He was adamant in his insistence upon a "program which will lay down ships, not blueprints."¹⁹

Conversely, Britten's fallback proposal involving a modest, one-year program was unacceptable because, even if enacted, it would barely scratch the surface of the Navy's needs. Vinson was conscious that the underlying rationale of this approach was to lay the foundation for a sequence of annual authorizations which would bring the Navy up to treaty limits. Where Vinson differed from Fred Britten on this approach was that it did not focus on the totality of the Navy's predicament and that the successful enactment of initial authorizations might foster a complacency undercutting further efforts to achieve a comprehensive remedy.

Vinson wanted a program that was based on and fully addressed the Navy's total problem of tonnage deficiencies and bloc obsolescence. It was only within this context that the public and Congress could be educated on the need and urgency for a major shipbuilding program extending over

¹⁹NYT, December 5, 1931, 2.
a number of years. Once a consensus had been established for such a program, the details and timetable of its implementation had to be clearly specified to insure that they were adhered to. What he had in mind was a program broken down in discrete annual increments whose execution on a year by year basis would be mandated in law. Even if Congress failed to adopt this approach, Vinson wanted to use hearings and floor debate to place before the American people and their elected representatives a sober account of U.S. naval decline, the need for a comprehensive solution and the inevitable risks associated with continued inaction. If this knowledge did not move them to action, at least it would be a conscious decision made with full awareness of the issues and probable consequences.

To Hale and Britten, Vinson's frontal assault seemed to be the recipe for certain defeat. The magnitude and duration of his program were guaranteed to arouse pacifist groups across the nation, while simultaneously alienating those concerned about increased government expenditures. Moreover, they recognized that the inclusion of any provision designed to radically circumscribe executive discretion in the implementation of the program would be totally unacceptable to Hoover—or any self-respecting President—and insure his active opposition. Unlike their colleague from Georgia, they believed it was possible to elicit the President's
tacit support for a modest, flexible program. In Vinson's eyes, Herbert Hoover was unalterably opposed to naval shipbuilding and thoroughly committed to disarmament. Hale and Britten sought to convince the new chairman to adopt a more moderate approach but to no avail. The meeting ended with no agreement on a legislative vehicle. Thus, instead of concerted action, it would be every man for himself in vying for the Navy Department's endorsement for their respective proposals.

Bringing the Navy on Board

The pilgrimage of naval advocates in Congress up Pennsylvania Avenue to the State, War and Navy building was not unexpected. The Navy Department was thoroughly familiar with the proposals to be presented for its consideration and endorsement. In fact, it is probably fair to say that the Navy had made its choice before the formal submission of the proposals by their legislative sponsors.

One reason for this foreknowledge was that what had been transpiring on the Hill was no secret. Persistent rumors that legislation embodying a new multi-year naval construction program was in preparation had been circulating

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20 It was not that Vinson did not try to persuade the President to be more supportive of naval construction, but their fundamental philosophical differences on naval policy were so great that these sessions often resulted in the deterioration of relations between them. Vinson later recalled that Hoover's animosity toward him reached the point where he hesitated to meet with the President alone because "I was afraid he would throw me through a window." Vinson interviews.
since August. These reports were accompanied by speculation that the Navy Department had submitted a new naval building program to the President and that there was some linkage between this and congressional activity. Senior Navy civilian and service leaders steadfastly denied that any new program had been sent to the President while professing complete ignorance regarding efforts underway in Congress.21 These denials notwithstanding, the Department could scarcely have been unaware of the activities of their erstwhile legislative allies to address the Navy's number one priority—fleet modernization and augmentation.22

Another reason for its prescience was that the Navy Department was intimately involved in virtually every aspect of the activities on Capitol Hill. A certain amount of informal collaboration was the rule, but Hoover's

21 Statement of Honorable Ernest Lee Jahnacke, the acting Secretary of the Navy, August 7, 1931; Press Conference with Secretary of the Navy, September 28, 1931; Press Conference with Secretary Adams, November 3, 1931; Press Conference with Admiral William V. Pratt, CNO, November 13, 1931, Press Release File, RG 80, NA.

22 On November 2, 1931, the CNO advised the Navy JAG that enactment of a building program was the Department's number one priority. Nevertheless, Hoover's opposition to the Navy's drafting of such legislation resulted in its deletion from the listing transmitted to Congress for consideration during the 72nd Congress. Obviously, this failure to submit shipbuilding legislation through official channels encouraged unofficial collaboration, QN/A18(310519) and QN/A18(311230), RG 80, NA.
intransigence on the issue of shipbuilding left the Navy with no other choice but to work through its congressional allies. Thus, the Department was being called upon to choose between programs based on Navy numbers, advanced by Navy arguments, reflecting the views of various service factions regarding the substance and form of naval construction legislation.

Naturally, the Secretary, Assistant Secretary and Chief of Naval Operations insulated themselves sufficiently to be able to plausibly deny allegations regarding their direct involvement. Actual collaboration was carried on by second echelon Bureau representatives and staff personnel in the Office of Naval Operations. These individuals had the required technical knowledge, worked closely with senior decisionmakers and were familiar with the players and practices on the Hill. The exact nature and details of this collaboration probably will never be fully documented, but that it actually took place is beyond question.  

No senior Member of Congress is going to

23 The evidence is circumstantial at best, but still persuasive. A case in point involves Captain Emory S. Land. At the time he was working in the Central Division of the Office of Naval Operations which gave him access to a wide range of technical information and knowledge of the views and activities of the Secretary and CNO. Serving previously as Admiral Moffett's liaison with Congress, he had developed into a consummate politician while becoming thoroughly familiar with the legislative process. He had worked closely with Carl Vinson on aviation matters since the Morrow Board and had cultivated intimate and enduring relationships with other prominent Members of Congress. Committed to the
advance a naval construction measure not based upon expert naval opinion or having a powerful constituency within the Department. Thus, expert input must be obtained and informal feelers put out to ascertain the views of senior decisionmakers beforehand.

Consequently, Vinson's and Britten's separate visits to the Navy Department on December 2 were essentially pro forma in nature. The main purpose was to submit their proposals in a highly visible fashion calculated to be as newsworthy as possible. The meetings were also probably designed to facilitate increased Navy collaboration by making it appear as a response to an official congressional request for assistance. Irrespective of the President's hostility toward naval construction authorization legislation, upgrading of the fleet to treaty limits and possessing the daring and nerves of a riverboat gambler, Land would have been a natural and comfortable participant in Navy collaboration with its legislative allies. The fact that he was later instrumental in the drafting of the Vinson-Trammell Act and in preparing the chairman's speeches completes the case for his involvement.

NYT, December 3, 1931, 12. The press coverage of congressional activities during this period is suspiciously positive and complete. The whole proceeding almost assumes the character of a media event and seems calculated to accomplish the purposes of pro-Navy forces in Congress and their Departmental allies. The inescapable conclusion is that press coverage was cleverly orchestrated between these elements and sympathetic reporters and commentators. While these efforts were not sufficient in themselves to achieve eventual success, they were useful in educating public opinion.
the Department could hardly refuse to provide its comments and recommendations on the proposals emanating from Congress. It had an obligation to provide expert guidance to ensure the drafting of the most satisfactory piece of legislation possible.

Apart from the respective merits of the proposals themselves, Carl Vinson enjoyed several advantages over his colleagues in vying for the Navy’s endorsement. As chairman, he alone would decide what legislation the House Naval Affairs Committee would take up, so neither of Britten's proposals was likely to receive committee consideration. Britten's position was further weakened by his recent notoriety and damaged reputation. In Hale's case, Vinson benefitted from the Senate committee's traditional inclination to let the House take the lead on major naval legislation. Senator Hale was also handicapped by having to divide his time and attention between naval legislation and the consideration of the fiscal year 1933 Navy appropriations request. Thus, the Department was confronted with the prospect that House Naval Affairs would be the primary forum for congressional debate on naval preparedness in 1932.

As it turned out, however, the Navy's preference for Vinson's approach hinged less upon the tactical advantages he enjoyed over his rivals than from an appreciation of its merit. No less than its advocates in Congress, the
Department had been searching into the reasons for past failures and declining fortunes. It was engaged in a desperate search for a course of action that was politically feasible, yet capable of remedying its serious tonnage deficiencies and looming bloc obsolescence of destroyer and submarine assets.

From a theoretical standpoint, the Navy found a blanket authorization like that proposed by Senator Hale very appealing. The bill made a general policy statement, provided for a comprehensive construction program and left the Department with a great deal of discretion in the management of the program. As noted before, the practical sticking point was absence of specific guidance regarding program implementation. The size, composition, or even the actual submission of an annual shipbuilding request was solely in the hands of the President. Nevertheless, the Navy had more confidence in its ability to influence annual executive submissions than in securing adequate funding from Congress. It was not simply a question of adequacy in any one year, but that a level of funding be maintained throughout the program. For naval planning and shipyard management did not prosper in a hand-to-mouth fiscal environment. Marked variations from year to year would produce perturbations that negated expected efficiencies from a
comprehensive, steady shipbuilding program and might actually result in increased overall costs. Still, the Navy did not want to prematurely turn its back on blanket authorization before it explored ways to reduce the uncertainty regarding funding associated with that approach.

The most seriously considered proposal was that advanced by Admiral H.E. Yarnell, Chief, Bureau of Engineering, in early 1930. In his examination of the funding that would be required to cover replacement costs through 1942, Yarnell found that the total would be somewhere between a billion and a billion and a half dollars. He also concluded that it was not reasonable to expect that the existing appropriations mechanism would allow the necessary increase in the Navy budget of $100 million over the next twelve years. Yarnell's solution was to institute a "lump sum" appropriation of approximately ten percent of the total Navy budget to be allocated by the Secretary of the Navy in a manner best suited to the needs of ship construction and maintaining the material condition of the fleet. This percentage was actually no more than what was normally dedicated for such activities, but Yarnell believed that a specified percentage centrally administered would be more efficient than the existing practice of funnelling funds through the various bureaus. Thus, if his plan were adopted, a substantial sum would be earmarked for the replacement program he
envisioned, while being relatively immune from departmental parochialism or sudden reversals by the appropriations committees.25

For the next year and a half Yarnell's lump sum proposal went through several permutations and was hotly debated within the Department. Even influential outsiders like President Hoover and Congressman Burton L. French, chairman of the Naval Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations became involved. While it was generally conceded that Yarnell's scheme would be at least as cost-effective as existing procedures, it encountered a number of practical and institutional obstacles.

As a practical matter, the Department found it was virtually impossible to determine which accounts within the Navy budget were dedicated exclusively to ship construction and material maintenance. Close examination revealed that nearly every account was involved in those activities to some extent. Consequently, attempts to distinguish between line items to delimit the scope of the application of lump sum funding led to interminable and inconclusive squabbling among contending entities within the Department.

But even more serious was widespread bureau opposition led by Admiral William A. Moffett, Chief of the Bureau of

25Admiral H.R. Yarnell to the Secretary of the Navy, February 17, 1930, Yarnell Papers, MDLC.
Moffett and many of his fellow bureau chiefs looked upon Yarnell's scheme as a naked power grab by the operational side of the Navy Department. Its implementation would have enormous institutional implications as it would alter without legislative sanction the bureau system established by Congress. The Secretary of the Navy could make a mockery of bureau autonomy as a result of the leverage he would possess through his administration of the lump sum account. Selectively employing this authority, he could gradually expand operational control over bureau activities. Even worse from Moffett's point of view was that it would constrain effective intervention by bureau allies in Congress. After carefully nurturing naval aviation for a decade with the assistance of sympathetic legislators, he feared his opponents would use the lump sum arrangement to raid his bureau's appropriations. As the Bureau of Aeronautics had come to be viewed within the Department as a bumptious upstart owing its survival and success largely to congressional patronage, Moffett's concern was probably well founded. Although Aeronautics may have been a special case, none of the other bureaus could view with equanimity a scheme weakening their special relationship with Congress.

The bureaus also objected to a lump sum approach as a violation of the management precept that those responsible for specific activities should exercise control over the
resources allocated for that purpose. Under the new arrange­ment, bureau chiefs would never be certain exactly what funding they would ultimately receive in a given year, or the extent to which their programs would be disrupted due to the arbitrary allocation of the lump sum account by the Secretary of the Navy. Moreover, the introduction of such a radical change in procedure as Yarnell proposed would inevitably be accompanied by a great deal of confusion and it would take several years to work out the kinks. In the meantime there would be considerable waste, inefficiency, and dislocation adversely affecting the quality of management of bureau activities. Finally, Moffett and his colleagues remained unconvinced that a lump sum approach would necessarily result in a more efficient application of Navy resources, or provide the funding required to sustain a major, multi-year shipbuilding program.26

Beyond internal institutional considerations, there was always the question of how the appropriations committees

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26 Memorandum to the Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics, October 15, 1930, Ll-1(30), RG 72, NA; Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics to the Navy Budget Officer, December 19, 1930, Ll-1(32), RG 72, NA; Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics to the Secretary of the Navy, January 5, 1931, Ll-1(32), RG 72, NA; Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics Memorandum on Lump Sum Appropriations, June 17, 1931, Ll, RG 19, NA; Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics to the Secretary of the Navy, June 21, 1931, RG 72, NA.
would respond to a lump sum approach. Congressman French's interest notwithstanding, there is little reason to assume that the reaction would have been favorable. As a general rule Members of Congress resist radical changes in accustomed procedure, especially those which further complicate the process. The Navy appropriation was difficult enough to deal with without making it more complex. Moreover, the trouble naval experts were having in deciding how to execute a lump sum approach did little to commend it to a group of relative novices. Furthermore, Congress traditionally showed little inclination to provide the Secretary of the Navy with a pot full of money to allocate as he saw fit. Actually, just the reverse had been true, with the appropriations committee exercising progressively closer control of expenditures. This tendency on the part of the appropriations committees would have been reinforced if it were known that approval of a lump sum approach would also work against natural allies in Congress. Finally, such an arrangement would take out of their hands decisions on some politically sensitive expenditures. Not only might this have adverse implications for various district and regional interests, it would also diminish the influence of the appropriations committees with Congress on naval matters.

As it turned out, Congress was never faced with making a decision on a lump sum provision in the Navy appropriation
Yarnell's proposal failed to survive Navy Department scrutiny and was resoundingly defeated by a vote of 8 to 4 at a Secretary's Conference on July 15, 1931. Not only did this episode reveal the existence of major institutional obstacles with the Department to any sort of centralized management of efforts to address Navy material deficiencies, but also fostered a pervasive skepticism regarding the viability of a blanket authorization. Without the assurance of a minimum level of sustained funding, it was feared that such an authorization would be little more than a nonbinding "sense of Congress" pronouncement.

This realization caused many within the Department to join Admiral William V. Pratt, the new Chief of Naval Operations, in falling back to an annual authorization loosely linked with a recommended ten or fifteen year program. Presumably the Congress would provide the necessary incremental authorizations and appropriations to carry out this approach. In addition, Pratt personally favored this approach because of its flexibility as the Navy could periodically restructure the program to conform to changing circumstances.

Support for a single year authorization was by no means universal or immutable, however. More than anything

27Admiral Ridley McLean, Navy Budget Officer, to the Secretary of the Navy, July 16, 1931, Secretary of the Navy Spindle File (1931), RG 80, NA.
else, it reflected the Navy's being resigned to the fact that no alternative existed. The appearance of Vinson's proposal filled that void and caused a shift in prevailing Department attitudes. This acceptance really did not require a major reorientation as there had been a lingering conviction that the Navy's mounting material deficiencies could never be satisfactorily addressed via annual authorizations. In contrast, Vinson's proposal combined a commitment to a comprehensive solution with an explicit implementation framework and schedule. Naturally, Navy experts recognized the inherent rigidity of this approach, but the problems it created could be remedied by imaginative management or periodic legislative amendment. This drawback was more than offset by the benefits resulting from the launching of a major, multi-year shipbuilding program. Thus, while Navy leaders may have approached new congressional building authorization efforts favoring a one year approach, they were only too willing to accept the Vinson proposal.

There being basic agreement on a legislative mechanism and authorization framework, subsequent discussions between the Navy and Vinson focused on the specific details of his proposal. Using charts and supporting data, the new chairman made an elaborate presentation outlining a building program covering a seven or eight year period (1932-1939). It called for the authorization of 85 new ships--4 aircraft
carriers, 1 flying deck cruiser, 7 6-inch gun cruisers, 52 destroyers and 28 submarines. The program also took into account the possible inclusion of 3 8-inch cruisers and 7 destroyers previously authorized but not yet appropriated for.

Close examination of the program revealed two interesting departures from past proposals. Except for the 4 carriers, it was exclusively a "replacement" program aimed at the fast approaching bloc obsolescence of U.S. destroyer and submarine assets. Moreover, this approach reflected a realization that it would be politically impossible and practically undesirable to institute a crash program to correct the Navy's existing and projected material deficiencies before the next naval arms limitation conference scheduled for 1936. Even if the necessary political support for a crash effort existed, thinking in naval circles inclined toward a steady, consistent program that reduced industry uncertainty, permitted shipbuilders to gradually upgrade their designs and incorporate new technology, and avoided the prospect of future bloc obsolescence.  

Regrettably, documentation containing the details of the origin and development of Vinson's program did not survive the rigors of time and congressional indifference towards records management. The inclusion of 4 carriers and a flying deck cruiser point to considerable Bureau of Aeronautics involvement in its formulation, but other contributors within the Department remain anonymous. Nevertheless, it is certain that Vinson did not proceed without drawing extensively upon his many Navy contacts and that the resulting product reflected widespread service opinion.

In any event, Vinson's initiative spurred the Secretary to request the General Board to prepare ten and fifteen year programs to serve as alternatives in negotiating a mutually acceptable compromise. Of the two, Vinson expressed a preference for the ten year program and after a number of conferences he agreed to a 120 vessel authorization. The following chart provides a comparison between the program ultimately contained in the Vinson bill (H.R. 6661) and that prepared by the General Board:
### TABLE 10:

**COMPARISON OF GENERAL BOARD PROGRAM WITH THAT FINALLY INCORPORATED IN VINOSON BILL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aircraft Carriers</th>
<th>8&quot; gun Cruisers</th>
<th>6&quot; gun Cruisers</th>
<th>Destroyer Leaders</th>
<th>Destroyers</th>
<th>Submarines</th>
<th>Gunboats</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Board</td>
<td>3**</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14*</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vinson</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9*</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 1 6-inch gun cruiser was to be built as a flying deck cruiser
** 15,200 ton carrier to replace the Langley

The differences between the two programs were attributable to Vinson's twin imperatives—that the proposal presented to Congress remain predominantly a replacement program and that cost estimates be as low as possible. Accordingly, with the exception of the two 20,000 ton aircraft carriers in the General Board program, all non-replacement (ten gunboats) or previously authorized (seven 6-inch gun cruisers) vessels were deleted. The circumstances surrounding the reduction of submarine construction from 44 to 23 were somewhat different as Vinson arbitrarily chose the latter figure which represented the number of submarines due for replacement before the end of 1936. He also dropped from his proposed bill authorization for aircraft to outfit the RANGER, the new aircraft carrier nearing completion. These aircraft would exceed the 1,000 plane authorization contained in the Five-Year Aircraft Program, thereby interjecting a significant new issue and raising program costs. By eliminating 36 vessels and the procurement of aircraft from the General Board program, Vinson was able to reduce the estimated cost by 25 percent.29

Despite the significant paring of the size and expense of the Navy program, Vinson was still confronted with a formidable pricetag of $775,909,000 for complete costs of the

29 Ibid.
remaining 120 vessels. It so happened, however, that the Navy had two other methods for costing the program—complete and ready for sea and bare ship estimates (including just construction and machinery, ammunition and armament). The first was roughly 10 percent less than complete costs and the latter lower by 20 percent. By choosing to use bare ship estimates, Vinson was able to reduce estimated program costs to $616,250,000, a figure much more acceptable to Congress. Although this use of bare ship estimates had been standard practice in the past, it necessarily produced an artificially low program cost as they failed to include expenditures associated with preparing the vessels for sea and their shakedown phase. Neither did they provide for possible cost escalation due to inflation or production difficulties that were inevitable in carrying out a program of this magnitude.

As finally drafted by the Navy Department and approved by Vinson, the bill authorized a ten year shipbuilding program broken down in the following annual increments:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Carrier 15,000 tons</th>
<th>Carrier 20,000 tons</th>
<th>Flying Deck Cruiser 10,000 tons</th>
<th>6&quot; Cruiser 10,000 tons</th>
<th>Destroyer Leader 1,850 tons</th>
<th>Destroyer 1,500 tons</th>
<th>Submarine 1,130 tons</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 34</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 35</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
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* Section 3 gave the Secretary discretionary authority to
  complete any or all of the 6" gun cruisers in a Flying Deck configuration.
An examination of the program by annual increment reveals that it is significantly "front-end loaded" with 71 of the 120 ships being laid down in the first five years. But this relative imbalance was actually much greater as the program did not include 16 ships already building and 15 others authorized or appropriated for. This meant that the Navy shipbuilding would experience a bow wave effect which at first glance appears out of character for a program supposedly structured to maximize production efficiency, limit cost, and avoid sharp changes in the number of vessels under construction. If this program configuration was done with malice a forethought, what was the motive? Bearing in mind Carl Vinson's desire to present Congress with a saleable commodity based on short term need, yet responsive to the Navy's longer term requirements, a plausible answer begins suggesting itself.

By ramping up naval construction in the first five years through the implementation of this program, combined with the building already underway, authorized and appropriated, the result would be the substantial expansion of the existing production base. In political terms this meant new jobs in the specific states and districts involved. In addition, this construction would require a great degree of subcontracting which would produce a significant economic
ripple effect across the Nation as suppliers of raw materials and components were found in virtually every state. Thus, even though the Vinson program called for substantial reductions in the number of ships laid down in fiscal year 1938, countervailing pressures from industry and Congress would be irresistible. Vinson and his Navy collaborators obviously believed that the momentum and constituency developed in the early phases of the program would carry it to completion and form the basis for additional authorizations. Certainly, they were aware that the authorized vessels in the latter half of the program did not accurately represent what the Navy would need. We have seen how Vinson arbitrarily cut off submarine authorizations after fiscal year 1937 without any logical basis for the assumption that more replacement vessels would not be required. There was also reason to believe that battleship replacements would begin at that time, not to mention the construction of a whole complement of fleet auxiliary vessels. Looking at Vinson's program from this perspective, it is difficult not to conclude that it was clearly configured to generate the political and economic constituency required to sustain naval shipbuilding after fiscal year 1937 and provide the consensus within Congress capable of securing enactment of additional authorizations.
As if to buttress the credibility of the bare ship estimates for the entire program, dollar ceilings by ship and vessel category were enumerated. Given the uncertainties associated with a building program of this magnitude and duration, limitations of this kind were patently unrealistic. It can only be characterized as a ploy to convince Congress that the program costs would be under tight control and keep the shipbuilders honest. Presumably, after enactment and the program was underway, the Navy would request authority from Congress to modify these ceilings as it became necessary.

In contrast to this rigidity on cost, however, the draft provided a degree of flexibility in program implementation by permitting construction to be deferred to the next or any succeeding fiscal year as long as the total program was undertaken by the end of fiscal year 1942.

Recognizing strong congressional support for the Dallinger amendment to the 1929 authorization requiring that construction be split between government and private yards, a similar provision was included in Vinson's bill. In reality, this favored government yards as they already received the lion's share of fleet overhaul work. Equity notwithstanding, however, this was the political price that had to be paid for the support of the influential members from original navy yard districts and states.
Another interesting feature of Vinson's bill was that Section 3 gave the Secretary of the Navy discretionary authority to decide whether additional 6-inch gun cruisers should be constructed as flying-deck cruisers. This was obviously done at the behest of Admiral Moffett and the Bureau of Aeronautics. This action stemmed from a two-fold problem the Navy faced since the Washington Treaty concerning the number and type of aircraft carriers that could be constructed. Under that treaty, the United States was limited to 135,000 tons in that category—a figure derived before the carrier had demonstrated its true capabilities, or acquired sufficient operational experience to validate its optimum size and characteristics. Further complicating this situation was the fact that the United States opted to convert two partially constructed battlecruisers to aircraft carriers. Although the LEXINGTON and SARATOGA later proved to be excellent platforms, their combined tonnage of 66,000 tons constrained subsequent American efforts to design a sufficient number of satisfactory platforms within treaty tonnage quota.

Throughout his long tenure as chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics, Moffett wrestled with this problem and sought alternative means to enhance the number of aircraft operating with the fleet. An approach he grew to favor was to utilize light cruiser tonnage for hybrid vessels that would serve as
platforms capable of operating a limited number of aircraft. At the London Conference, Moffett succeeded in securing the adoption of Article 16 in Part III of the draft treaty which provided that up to "25 percent of the allowed total tonnage in the cruiser category may be fitted with a landing-on platform or deck for aircraft." Following up this success, Moffett pressed the Navy Department to include such vessels within its subsequent building programs submitted to Congress. Never enamored with the 6-inch cruiser that was foisted upon it at London, service opinion was generally well disposed but cautious. Following inconclusive studies by the General Board and the Naval War College, the best that Moffett could accomplish was approval for the construction of one prototype to determine the viability of this concept. Thus, Vinson's language on the interchangability of 6-inch and flying deck cruisers within his bill represented a successful attempt by Moffett to circumvent the General Board and his nominal superiors.

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31 For a more complete treatment of the story behind this hybrid vessel, see Ernest Andrade, Jr. "The Ship That Never Was: The Flying-Deck Cruiser," Military Affairs, XXXII, 132-140.
As a concession to widespread disarmament and naval limitation sentiment within the country, two additional provisions were included in the draft. The first required that all vessels be constructed subject to existing treaty specifications. The second empowered the President to suspend all or part of the program in the event this was required to conform to the terms of a future naval limitation agreement entered into by the United States. This latter provision had been a standard feature of all proposed naval construction legislation since the early 1920's, but assumed a particular relevance on the eve of the upcoming 1932 session of the Geneva Disarmament Conference.

Getting Under Way

With the coming of the new year all was in readiness. A draft bill incorporating Vinson's legislative approach and the Navy's revised program had been prepared and awaited formal introduction by the new chairman as soon as Congress returned from its Christmas recess. That action would initiate a carefully orchestrated campaign which the bill's proponents hoped would result in its early enactment. Focusing attention on Capitol Hill, they hoped that a deftly sequenced succession of actions there would create a favorable bandwagon effect. Accompanied by positive press coverage, the efforts by vocal special interest groups, and the overt, if unofficial, support of the Navy Department,
these actions were calculated to intensify pressure on President Hoover to give his tacit approval or remain neutral. Provided that the President would stay benevolently aloof from the proceedings, it was felt that Vinson's bill had a reasonable chance of being enacted before the peace lobby and other opponents of naval building had a chance to react. If all went well, congressional action would be completed by the end of February so that efforts could then be shifted to securing the necessary appropriations to implement the first increment of Vinson's ten year program.

Introducing the draft bill in the House on January 4, Vinson set forth the rationale behind its introduction and outlined its salient provisions /see appendix 9/. Reading from a prepared statement, he began by stressing that the construction authorized by the bill was almost entirely replacement tonnage which was permitted by the London treaty and the terms of the Hoover one year moratorium on naval building. Even had there been a conflict with the Hoover naval holiday, the new chairman assured his colleagues that no ships authorized in his bill would be laid down prior to the expiration of that agreement in November. Using numerous tables and an impressive amount of data, Vinson next sought to demonstrate the extent to which the United States had declined relative to other major maritime
powers since the World War. Viewed from that perspective, the replacement program such as he had in mind was certainly no more than the absolute minimum required to halt that negative trend. Finally, he pointed out that the inherent economies associated with a steady replacement program would result in a Navy not only "far more efficient and effective but also less expensive to operate and maintain." This carefully reasoned presentation was to become the standard justification for Vinson's bill and sympathetic press coverage insured that it would have a wider audience in the days ahead.33

Not wanting to lose the impact of the publicity surrounding the introducing of H.R. 6661, hearings by the House Naval Affairs Committee were scheduled for the following day. Congressional hearings have traditionally served a number of functions in the legislative arena—to permit all sides involved in a controversial issue to air

32 CR, January 4, 1932, 1248-1250. With the exception of his own introductory remarks, Vinson's statement was prepared by the Navy and a draft was attached to Admiral Pratt's confidential memorandum of January 2, 1932, (SC) Al-3, RG 72, NA. Although a number of officers contributed to its preparation, Captain Land appears to have been the principal author as an undated memo written by him earlier contains several passages identical to those found in Vinson's statement, Emory S. Land Papers, MDLC.

33 NYT, January 4, 1932, 1-2. A reworked statement appeared in the Washington Herald on January 7 under Vinson's byline and a number of other accounts drawing heavily from his floor statement ran subsequently in several major papers.
their views; to serve as an investigative forum in determining the facts regarding various activities, identify problems and develop recommendations for remedial action; and to provide a record justifying a certain course of legislative action to educate the members and public opinion. The hearings Vinson scheduled on his bill clearly fell into the latter category. He and the majority of his colleagues on the committee needed no convincing that enactment of this measure was necessary. They did not expect to benefit from the testimony of Navy experts as H.R. 6661 had been drafted with their advice and reflected prevailing service opinion. And they certainly did not want to hear opposing views. As far as they were concerned the peace lobby and other anti-Navy groups had received more than enough publicity and the committee was in no mood to offer them another public forum. No, the principal purpose of these hearings was to provide the opportunity for expert witnesses—all from the Navy Department—to elaborate on the arguments for the enactment of a comprehensive, multi-year naval construction authorization and see that the requisite supporting data was placed in the public record. It was also hoped that a succession of endorsements from senior Navy Department witnesses would produce a drumbeat effect in the media that would be translated into increased support for the bill.

A matter of some delicacy involved the status of Navy Department witnesses. Ostensibly, they were appearing at
the behest of the committee to give it the benefit of their technical expertise on naval construction during consideration of H.R. 6661. Department witnesses could not come before the committee as official administration spokesmen as the bill had not yet been formally submitted to the Navy Department, let alone reviewed by the Bureau of the Budget. Indeed, the intent behind the hasty scheduling of the hearings appears to have been to have Navy Department witnesses testify before an administration position could be developed so that they would enjoy greater latitude in presenting their views. The task before them, then, was to overtly support the measure, while at the same time avoiding formal endorsement that could later be repudiated and subject those involved to some form of executive displeasure.

As career military men imbued with a reverence for discipline, many of these officers must have found their position an uncomfortable one. Although there had not been any official administration guidance on the Vinson bill and they were obliged to give their best professional judgment to the committee when asked to do so, these officers were also aware that total candor involved significant risk. At the same time, however, the Navy had, implicitly or explicitly, entered into a bargain with Carl Vinson. He was willing to sponsor the type of naval construction legislation the Navy desired to satisfy its most urgent need.
In doing so he risked defeat and a loss of credibility within the House of Representatives—institutionally, not a very auspicious beginning for a new chairman. For him to have any chance of success, it was imperative that the Navy come forth with favorable, authoritative testimony in support of H.R. 6661. Fronting for a comprehensive, multi-year shipbuilding authorization, Vinson needed more than the closet heroics Secretary of the Navy Adams performed the year before in circumventing the Bureau of the Budget. It was time to stand up and be counted. To their credit, despite whatever personal apprehensions they may have had, the Navy Department witnesses threw in their lot with the doughty Georgian and never wavered in upholding their part of the bargain.

The hearings themselves become more intelligible when viewed in terms of the attitude and aims of the salient participants—Carl Vinson, Fred Britten, James V. McClintic (Democrat; Oklahoma), Secretary of the Navy Charles Francis Adams, and Admiral William V. Pratt, Chief of Naval Operations. The differing, often conflicting, motives manifested during the nine days of hearings on H.R. 6661 provide a useful framework for gauging the relative success of the contending parties.

As we have seen, Carl Vinson's objectives were pretty straightforward. First and foremost, he wanted the record
to show that the Navy supported his bill and preferred its enactment to Britten's one year authorization or Hale's blanket authorization. In this he was not to be disappointed, as the following exchanges indicate:

The Chairman (Vinson). You have already stated in your judgment if the program when adopted is to cover a period of years instead of a series of 1-year programs, it would be a better program?
Secretary Adams. That is a better way. 34

** * * **

The Chairman. Does it not give to the Navy an objective toward which to work from year to year rather than just a year-by-year program?
Admiral Pratt. Yes, sir. I think it is a decided advantage over the year-to-year plan. 35

Although the Vinson and Hale bills were never compared in the House committee hearings, their relative merits were discussed during Navy testimony before the Senate Naval Affairs Committee on S. 51 at roughly the same time:

Admiral Pratt. . .This bill is the blanket; and the Vinson bill is what is rolled up inside the blanket. 36

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34U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Naval Affairs, Sundry Legislation Affecting the Naval Establishment 1932-1933, Hearings, 72nd Congress., 1st Session., 1932, 546-547 (Hereafter cited as Hearings on H.R. 6661 and H.R. 8230).

35Ibid., 551

36U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Naval Affairs, Hearings on S. 51, 72nd Cong., 1st Session., 1932, 40 (Hereafter cited as Hearings on S. 51).
The Chairman /Senator Hale/. But, Admiral, if this bill were enacted into law, even without the Vinson bill, provided the Budget showed a disposition to carry out the plan recommended by the Navy, the Vinson bill would not be necessary, would it?

Admiral Pratt. Yes, I think it helps us in this way: That it enables us to look forward and to make a definite plan. Under a blanket authorization nobody is going to know, outside contractors, or anyone else, about what the Navy plans to do, but with this broken down, you may say, into years, then we go ahead; and I think it helps us.

* * * *

The Chairman. And you think some such combination might be advantageous?

Admiral Pratt. Yes.

The Chairman. That is a blanket authorization to build up to treaty strength, and a specific authorization with time limits so that the Navy could know exactly when it was to go ahead and do its building.

Admiral Pratt. Yes; I think it would be an excellent idea. Then, too, having a definite plan I think helps the Budget, because they know ahead of time about what we are going to ask for each year and they have to cut us down any; but if they do not know ahead of time what we are going to ask for in general items, it makes it more troublesome for us to square away with the Budget.37

Thus, while Navy witnesses were generally supportive of S. 51, they did not go so far as to unequivocally endorse

37Ibid., 41
it as was the case with H.R. 6661. In the eyes of the Department, the best solution would have been the combining of the two bills in a manner that would have been mutually acceptable to both sponsors. Efforts were made to bring this about, but were only partially successful.

The next point that Vinson wanted to bring out was the predominantly "replacement" character of his program—that it did not involve an increase in the size of the Navy, but merely its modification:

Admiral Pratt. The first and foremost point of this bill is that it is a replacement program; with the exception of the two 20,000-ton carriers, every ship called for in the bill is a replacement ship.

To preempt expected charges by the peace and disarmament lobbies, Vinson also wanted to establish that his replacement program was wholly consistent with the terms of the Washington and London treaties, as well as the one-year Hoover moratorium on naval construction:

The Chairman. Now, I have seen a great deal in the papers in reference to a naval

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38 Hearings on H.R. 6661 and H.R. 8203, 551.


40 Hearings on H.R. 6661 and H.R. 8230, 548.
holiday. Is there anything in this bill that interferes in the slightest with the naval holiday program?
Secretary Adams. Not in the slightest, as far as I know and believe.41

Admiral Pratt had the temerity to go even further in his assessment of the Hoover naval holiday. He voiced serious doubt that anybody knew "very much about the naval holiday or exactly what it means," and personally believed it was little more than a "very pleasant wish."42

To prove that this interpretation of the Hoover naval holiday was not peculiar to the Navy Department, a letter from Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson to the Secretary of the Navy on that subject was entered into the record, the operative paragraph reading:

In so far as can be seen the proposed truce does not seriously affect the Navy. It permits the completion of ships building, or contracted for; it permits replacement building; and it would seem, by omission of any provision to the contrary, that it permits authorization and appropriation for other vessels provided they are not begun before November 1, 1932.43

Another thing Vinson wanted on the record was that his ten-year replacement program represented the most rational,

41Ibid., 541
42Ibid., 552, 592.
43Ibid., 579.
efficient, and cost-effective approach for meeting the Navy's modernization requirements:

The Chairman. Then Congress should understand that with this replacement program, first, the Navy would be more efficient and, second, it could be operated at less expense than it is being operated today—is that correct? Admiral Pratt. Oh yes; I think so.44

Admiral Pratt's assessment was corroborated by testimony from Admiral George H. Rock, Chief, Bureau of Construction and Repair, and Captain Emory S. Land, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. Admiral Rock believed that ship designers greatly benefitted from a continuous naval construction program that allowed them "to logically develop and progressively improve" their designs through experience.45 Evaluating Vinson's program on the basis of construction efficiencies, Captain Land estimated a savings of between 10 and 20 percent through the adoption of an "orderly, progressive, continuous" approach.46 Consequently, Vinson was able to conclude that "with this replacement program, with the Navy being build up to its treaty strength, it will be less expensive to operate and maintain that type of Navy, both as to personnel and other expenses, than it

44Ibid., 584.
46Ibid., 701.
will be if we drift along like we are going today."\textsuperscript{47}

A collateral benefit which the new chairman wanted to be raised, but not unduly emphasized, was the economic benefits associated with a major shipbuilding program. These included shoring up an ailing shipbuilding industry, an increased demand throughout the nation for raw materials, goods and services, and the creation of new jobs. In fairness, it should be said that Vinson never accepted the idea that providing employment should be a primary justification for naval construction. He earnestly believed that any expenditure of taxpayer dollars in the Navy budget should be validated on the basis of national security consideration.\textsuperscript{48} Nevertheless, the claim that a course of action would put people back to work had a strong appeal to lawmakers in the midst of the Depression--disclaimers notwithstanding--as is evident in the following exchanges:

\begin{quote}
The Chairman. You stated a while ago that the work in the shipyards is only sufficient to keep work till the end of the year?
Admiral Rock. Yes, sir.
The Chairman. Is there any likelihood that thousands and thousands of employees in those yards, when that work ceases, will be compelled to join the already large army of
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{47}Ibid., 701.

\textsuperscript{48}Ibid., 643.
unemployed?
Admiral Rock. That would follow.49

* * * *

Admiral Rock. Visible labor for about 40 percent of the money is spent in building a ship. Of the other 60 percent, about 45 percent is for labor spread throughout the country in manufacture and fabrication in the preparation of the materials and of various auxiliaries to be shipped to the shipyard for incorporation into the ship. The total amount is certainly as much as, and I think slightly more than, 85 percent of the total cost.

The Chairman. Then 85 percent of the total cost will go directly and indirectly to labor?
Admiral Rock. For labor; yes, sir.50

To buttress its claim that a large shipbuilding program would have positive economic consequences throughout the nation, the Navy prepared and inserted into the record the following chart:

49Ibid., 638
50Ibid.
TABLE 12: PRINCIPAL MATERIALS WHICH EACH STATE CONTRIBUTES TO SHIPBUILDING

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<th>State</th>
<th>Machinery</th>
<th>Structural Steel</th>
<th>Iron &amp; Steel</th>
<th>Lumber, Cork</th>
<th>Paint &amp; Varnish</th>
<th>Electrical Equipment</th>
<th>Zinc, Lead &amp; Zinc</th>
<th>Plated Interior Decoration</th>
<th>Joining &amp; Tailing</th>
<th>Gallery &amp; Pantry</th>
<th>Furniture</th>
<th>Building &amp; Lumber &amp; Tools</th>
<th>Fire Prevention &amp; Safety Equipment</th>
<th>Life Saving Equipment</th>
<th>Block &amp; Rigging</th>
<th>Navigating Outfit</th>
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A final point Vinson wished to develop was that there were strong national security and diplomatic justifications for his replacement program, as is reflected in the testimony below:

The Chairman. In other words, from your viewpoint one is justified in concluding that at the London Conference, you naval officers reached an agreement that the defense of the country required certain strength in armament under certain categories.

Admiral Pratt. Yes, sir.

The Chairman. If the country does not comply with that standard, it naturally follows that we have not the security which the needs of the country demand?

Admiral Pratt. That seems very evident.51

* * * *

The Chairman. Admiral, failure to maintain the ratio would upset the balance and the nation that falls below its allowed ratio in comparison to any of the other signatory powers is placing itself in a position whereby its rights and interests can be violated with impunity, is it not?

Admiral Pratt. Quite so.52

After highlighting the potential risk the United States hazarded in lagging behind other signatory powers in building up to treaty strength, the Navy Department prepared the following table showing that disparity in greater detail:

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51Ibid., 559

52Ibid., 581.
### TABLE 13:
ADDITIONAL PROGRAM NECESSARY TO BUILD UP TO TREATY STRENGTH BY DECEMBER 31, 1936

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Great Britain</th>
<th>Japan</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Approx #</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Ships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aircraft Carriers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>55,200</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cruisers A</td>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cruisers B</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>73,000</td>
<td>10-15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Destroyers</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>133,500</td>
<td>57</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submarines</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25,630</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>287,330</td>
<td>79-84</td>
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</table>

(1) excludes three 10,000 ton cruisers that may not be completed until 1936, 1937, and 1938
Altogether, the Navy Department had been very cooperative and responsive to Vinson's needs in establishing a positive record supportive of the legislation he sponsored. The testimony clearly established a persuasive rationale for a replacement program and that the program he contemplated was superior to any of the alternative proposals before Congress.

While Vinson may have been able to orchestrate Navy Department testimony to further his aims, he was less successful when it came to controlling senior members of his own committee. Especially troublesome were the efforts by Fred Britten and James V. McClintic who sought to cast doubt on the necessity, practicability and wisdom of H.R. 6661.

As we have seen, Fred Britten was convinced that the sheer size and cost of a ten-year program would make it too controversial to be politically acceptable. He did not quarrel with H.R. 6661 as a theoretical solution to the Navy's grave material deficiencies, but the prevailing economic and political climate presented insurmountable obstacles to such an approach. Admittedly a single-year authorization would not be as satisfactory in addressing the needs of the Navy, but Britten believed that it at least had some prospect of garnering the required support for enactment.
Britten's attitude also reflected the fact that he was in the midst of an identity crisis. Naturally, he felt keenly his demotion to ranking minority member and the inevitable shifting of Navy Department attention to his successor. It became all the more painful when the clearest manifestation of this change in status was the Navy's decision to drop a one-year construction approach in favor of Vinson's ten-year building program. After being prevailed upon by the Department to champion a single-year authorization in 1931, he felt like a rejected suitor. Fred Britten was not one to bear such an indignity in silence, especially when he believed that the new chairman and the Navy were on the wrong track.

From all this, Britten concluded that the hearings should also serve the purpose of building a case for a one-year substitute proposal when the futility of the longer range proposal became apparent and saner minds prevailed. To accomplish this, he first endeavored to show that Vinson's bill, whatever its theoretical merits, had little chance for enactment;

Mr. Britten. . .the ideal method of promoting and producing a Navy is to have a program running over a period of years so as to tell in advance what you might expect for each succeeding year. But the psychology of a program of that kind is not very good right now. . .I say, the mere authorization for the construction of ships which may total several
hundred millions of dollars is startling to the taxpayers not only of this country, but all over the world. It gives the pacifists, and there are some of them in this room this morning, a lot of food and fuel for talk and for the collection of money for propaganda purposes in the interest of pacifism. It does all that. In the past my though has been, although I have been for large programs, that a 1-year program conditioned upon requirements of the Navy for that year, is advisable. . . . I think the country would be for a 1-year program . . . But when you start to put through an authorization bill for six or seven hundred dollars, it startles the taxpayers all over the country and they would wonder where we are heading. With that thought in mind, I am going to suggest to this committee that we proceed on a one-year program.53

To further substantiate his claim that H.R. 6661 was impracticable and that a one-year program was a logical substitute, Britten sought to bring out two points. First, he wanted to show that prior to the appearance of Vinson's proposal the Navy had confined its efforts to the preparation of a one-year program. As chairman, Britten had been intimately involved in this process and was aware that the Department had devised two similar programs in the hopes that one would be acceptable to the President and approved for submission to Congress. Despite the best efforts of the General Board, Chief of Naval Operations and the Secretary of the Navy, Hoover's approval was not forthcoming and no shipbuilding program of any kind was included in the legislative package the Navy sent to the Hill. If Britten

53Ibid., 542.
could elicit from Department witnesses that Hoover had been the culprit in killing the submission of a one-year program, then it would follow that efforts to secure his approval for Vinson's more ambitious proposal were an exercise in futility.

Britten's efforts to follow this line of inquiry were uniformly met with reticence and evasion on the part of the Navy Department witnesses. He persisted to the point of badgering them, but the best he could elicit was that no one knew for sure why a one-year proposal died after going to the Secretary of the Navy and he wasn't telling.  

Clearly, the Navy Department was not going to provide testimony undercutting the Vinson bill, or point the accusing finger at their commander-in-chief. Navy representatives could reasonably justify giving their professional views on a naval construction proposal when requested to do so by a congressional committee, but implicating the President under circumstances that would inevitably resurrect allegations of his incompetence in naval matters and unconcern for national security was another thing altogether. Not only did it involve some measure of insubordination, but it would irreparably damage the already troubled relationship between the Department and Hoover at

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54 Ibid., 596-599; 622-627.
a time when his tacit support for H.R. 6661 was vital to its enactment. Moreover, those involved in this baiting of the President would assuredly be pouring gasoline over any further career aspirations.

Britten's second ploy was to take at face value Vinson's claim that H.R. 6661 was primarily his handiwork in order to raise questions about the technical merit of the program it called for. Unlike a suitable one-year program, it had not been closely examined beforehand by the General Board and the relevant Bureaus to determine whether it was wholly satisfactory. Since it appeared that enactment of Vinson's bill was problematical at best, Britten argued that the committee would be better advised to withdraw it for further study and consider in its place a one-year authorization:

I think it is very important that the committee know how the 1-year program originated in the General Board, because after all, they are the highest expert naval officers, and we ought to have both of those programs in the record. I think we ought to go into them thoroughly because the psychology of the country is not going to be favorable to this bill of Mr. Vinson's. It has not been drawn by the experts, so far as we know. The Navy General Board, so far as I know, has never even considered the Vinson bill in their capacity as experts to advise the Secretary. . . , It may be found that the next best step is a modest 1-year program,
based on the highest expert naval advice in this country after a very, very serious and mature deliberation, which has not been given to the present bill.55

Admiral Mark Bristol, the General Board witness, admitted that it had not been formally requested to draw up a ten or fifteen year building program until December, but pointed out that the Board was always updating long-term naval construction plans and assured the committee that the Vinson bill was wholly consistent with the Board's latest recommendations. Moreover, he sought to play down the importance of the one-year programs Britten mentioned by asserting that their preparation was routine and represented no more than an annual revision to address changing requirements. In any case, the two programs Britten referred to would, in fact, be carried out through the enactment of the Vinson Bill. Consequently, the General Board greatly preferred the multi-year approach to naval construction.56

While it cannot be said that Fred Britten got the better of these exchanges, he drew blood. The record strongly suggested that President Hoover would never support H.R. 6661. Furthermore, the credibility of that

55 Ibid., 619-626.
56 Ibid.
bill had been damaged by admissions that it had been
drafted without expert assistance and that the Navy's
support of the measure had developed only after it had
become apparent that a one-year program would not be
approved by the White House.

If Britten was attempting to induce Navy Department
witnesses to pour gasoline over themselves, Representative
James V. McClintic's aim was to apply the torch. If
Britten believed that Vinson's approach was laudable but
politically inexpedient, McClintic felt it was outrageous.
At a time when the country was "facing its greatest depres­
sion" with six million unemployed, ten thousand bank fail­
ures, and a Government deficit of $2,000,000,000, short of
war the additional expenditure of over $600,000,000 for
military purposes was simply indefensible. Although a
Democrat, McClintic more closely approached being an admin­
istration spokesman than any of his Republican colleagues on
the committee.

Ever the committee maverick, McClintic's behavior
during the hearings could not have come as a complete sur­
prise to the other members. Nevertheless, he sorely tried
their patience. His first objective was to reveal the
collaboration between the Navy Department and Vinson in

57 Ibid., 563.
the drafting of H.R. 6661 and the orchestration of efforts to bring about its enactment. He dismissed the claim that the bill was Vinson's handiwork and inferred that the new chairman was willingly serving as a stalking horse to further the Navy's militaristic ambitions:

...No member of this committee knows anything about where this bill came from other than Mr. Vinson takes credit for it and we older members are of the opinion that this is the Navy's program.58

In attempting to substantiate his allegation, McClintic closely questioned the Secretary of the Navy and elicited the following revealing responses:

Mr. McClintic. The Navy Department drew this bill did it not?
Secretary Adams. The chairman drew this bill.
Mr. McClintic. I asked you if the Navy Department did not assist in drawing this bill?
Secretary Adams. The Chairman of this committee undoubtedly consulted the Navy Department.
Mr. McClintic. Did I not understand you to tell the committee that this bill is the Navy Department's program?
Secretary Adams. Not in that official sense.59

By the conclusion of the hearings the fact that Vinson was sponsoring an unofficial Navy submission had been pretty well established, although the charade that it was the Chairman's bill continued for appearances sake.60

59Ibid., 543-544.
60Curiously, during his testimony before the Senate Naval Affairs Committee on January 8, Admiral Pratt publicly admitted that the General Board was largely responsible for the drafting of H.R. 6661, Hearings on S. 51, 39.
Turning from his efforts to establish Navy Department involvement in the drafting of the Vinson bill, McClintic next addressed the propriety of Navy witnesses testifying in support of a measure before it had been formally referred to the Department and an administration position had been determined. In McClintic's eyes, the President's subordinates were trying to go behind his back to achieve through deceit what they had been unable to accomplish through normal channels.

Mr. McClintic. Mr. Secretary, the President of the United States being commander in chief of the Army and Navy, I should like for you to tell us whether or not he would approve this program? Secretary Adams. This bill has not gone to the Bureau of the Budget.

Mr. McClintic. I understand, but has the President been consulted as to the wisdom of this expenditure for the purposes outlined in this proposed legislation?

Secretary Adams. The President has not approved this legislation. It has not been taken to him.

Mr. McClintic. Does not the Secretary think that to keep good faith with the President that he should be consulted with respect to matters in which he is the chief officer?

Secretary Adams. I do, certainly.

Mr. McClintic. Then why was that not done?

Secretary Adams. Because this is not a Navy Department bill presented by the Navy Department and asked for in the regular way.\textsuperscript{61}

That being the case, McClintic moved that the committee defer consideration of the bill until the Navy Department

\textsuperscript{61}Ibid., 543.
had the opportunity to take an official position on it. Britten countered with a motion that McClintic's motion be tabled and it carried by a vote of 16 to 3.  

McClintic responded to this rebuff by placing a statement in the record which began:

Mr. Chairman, on yesterday Secretary Adams testifying before this committee made the statement that the President of the United States had not been consulted with respect to the proposed naval building program bill amounting to more than $600,000,000. President Hoover is the commander in chief of all our military forces. If he has not been consulted in regard to the military program then, as I see it, it is the duty of all subordinates to acquaint him with any policy they desire to see put into effect. If Secretary Adams has not done this, then I cannot see how he can appear before this committee and act in good faith to the President. If Secretary Adams is not in accord with the President's views on matters of vital interest to the Nation and the world, then following the precedents established by William Jennings Bryan and others while serving in the Cabinet, he should tender his resignation.

This bombshell brought forth an immediate and vehement denial from Secretary Adams of any policy difference between himself and the President or that he was being deceitful or disloyal in testifying on H.R. 6661:

... I am here with the knowledge of the President that I was going to come here and testify. I want

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62 Ibid., 547
63 Ibid., 562-563.
to assure you that this bill is on its way to the President now. This bill was not prepared by me. It is Mr. Vinson's bill. There is in this no disloyalty to the President that I know of. There is every intention to treat the President as he wishes to be treated. I resent the implication that I am here in any disloyal attitude toward the President of the United States.  

Admiral Pratt was quick to come to his chief's defense and told the committee that he had no knowledge, "that the President had expressed himself as being against this bill. As a matter of fact when Mr. Vinson came down to talk to the Navy, the Secretary of the Navy informed me that he had talked with the President and the President said in effect: 'Tell them everything that is necessary; don't hold anything back, and talk frankly.'"  

Secretary Adams' indignation and Admiral Pratt's assurances to the contrary, Navy Department witnesses recognized that they were operating just within the bounds of propriety. While it may have been quite true that they did not know the President's views on the Vinson bill, it was equally true that little effort on their part had been spent in attempting to determine what they were. If Department representatives were testifying without the benefit of administration guidance, they had made little effort to

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64 Ibid., 563-564.
65 Ibid., 568.
obtain a delay so that such guidance could be formulated.

Operating at the margin was an unfamiliar and uncomfortable position for "Charlie" Adams. Long regarded as an administration stalwart, he had manfully struggled to reconcile the conflicting aims of exasperated subordinates and those of a President too preoccupied with a collapsing economy to take a sympathetic interest in Navy problems. He had been at the forefront of administration efforts to secure the ratification of the London treaty and, more recently, Adams had stoutly defended the President in the face of the Navy League's ill-considered charges that he was abysmally ignorant of naval affairs. Yet his sincere interest in the welfare of the Navy and unflagging efforts on its behalf permitted Adams to retain the respect and even the affection of the professionals serving under him.66 Consequently, he was sorely vexed by McClintic's allegation that he was disloyal and should consider resigning from a post he retained only at considerable personal sacrifice.67

Carl Vinson reacted to McClintic's assertions by raising the debate to a higher plane with the observation that "some of the committee have the wrong slant with

66 Admiral Mark L. Bristol to Senator Trammell, February 15, 1933, Personal File, Bristol Papers, MDLC.
67 Gerald K. Wheeler, "Charles Francis Adams" (Unpublished manuscript), NORA.
reference to our responsibility and the responsibility of
the Navy. The Constitution places in Congress, a civil
body, the responsibility of preparing for the national
defense and mapping out the program for the Navy as well
as the Army. That being the case, it was imperative
that Congress receive the best professional advice avail-
able, irrespective of administration views. Vinson was
careful to clarify the obligation of naval officers before
congressional committees in this regard:

The Chairman. The fact that the Budget has not
had this bill before it will not preclude any
of your officers from going ahead and giving
the committee their military views as to the
advisability of this bill at this time, will
it?
Secretary Adams. Our officers are expected to
answer your questions honestly and sincerely.
The Chairman. And give their military opinions?
Secretary Adams. Yes, sir.
The Chairman. As to legislation of this character?
Secretary Adams. Yes, sir.69

Thus, the issue became not loyalty to the President,
but an even more fundamental obligation to provide Congress
with whatever information it required to address national
security issues.

McClintic also attempted to argue that enactment of
H.R. 6661 violated the spirit, if not the letter of the

68 Hearings on H.R. 6661 and H.R. 8230, 634.
69 Ibid., 547.
Hoover one-year naval holiday and would clearly be inconsistent with American diplomatic efforts to secure further limitations at the upcoming Geneva Disarmament Conference. Within the committee this was not a very profitable issue to raise as the majority of the members and Navy witnesses believed that these disarmament initiatives were futile and drew attention away from the imperative need to build up the Navy's strength. Insofar as the President and the nation as a whole were concerned, however, anything that smacked of undercutting disarmament talks was likely to be viewed with suspicion, if not outright disfavor.

Although McClintic's ploys had been galling to the proponents of H.R. 6661, the most effective shaft he hurled was the revelation that the Democratic leadership of the House opposed its enactment. Mentioned most prominently in this regard was the new Democratic majority leader, Congressman Henry T. Rainey, but he was not alone. When this reported Democratic opposition was viewed in conjunction with Britten's open allusion to presidential hostility, it began to appear that H.R. 6661 might be inextricably caught in the toils of election year politics.

Taken as a whole, these hearings produced a useful record that favored the enactment of H.R. 6661. While

\[70\text{Ibid.}, 563.\]
proponents might have wished that damaging testimony by Britten and McClintic could have been forestalled, this was an unrealistic expectation. Vinson's inability to constrain them was partly attributable to his inexperience as chairman, but institutional norms did not permit the muzzling of the ranking minority member and second ranking majority member. When it is also remembered that Vinson was dealing with a brawler and a maverick, it becomes apparent that his options were limited. The only legitimate criticism that might be levelled at the new chairman was that he could have muted his differences with them to a greater extent.

Running Aground

Spurred by Congressman McClintic's attempts to raise the question of the propriety of Navy testimony favoring the enactment of H.R. 6661 prior to formal administration comment, the Department expedited referral of the bill to the Bureau of the Budget.\textsuperscript{71} In addition, bill proponents wanted to have H.R. 6661's official referral to the President coincide with the heightened public awareness of that measure in the first days of hearings by the House Naval Affairs Committee. It was hoped that the combination

\textsuperscript{71}\textit{Letter from the Secretary of the Navy to the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, dated January 6, 1932, transmitting H.R. 6661 for consideration and recommendation, Al-3/A18 (320106) RG 80, NA.}
of favorable Navy testimony and positive press coverage would prompt Hoover's tacit approval, or at least mute his opposition.

The press helped in creating a positive climate for such a decision. For example, the New York Times account of the first day of hearings was very convenient from the standpoint of those favoring the Vinson bill. Failing to mention the qualified nature of Secretary Adams' support for H.R. 6661, he was said to have "strongly endorsed" it. Moreover, the Times improved on Admiral Pratt's actual testimony by quoting him as characterizing Vinson's bill as the "sanest naval bill" ever presented to Congress. From this embellished reporting of Navy support, the Times inferred, inaccurately as it turned out, "that the President is not unfriendly to the general construction policies carried in the bill." Attempting to square this conclusion with heightened administration activity in preparation for the upcoming Geneva Disarmament talks, the Times cited the "impression in informed quarters" that "the administration is not expecting any great change in the world armament situation to emerge from the Geneva conference."72

Attempting to take advantage of these positive developments, Carl Vinson requested a face to face meeting with

72NYT, January 6, 1932.
President Hoover to discuss H.R. 6661. The meeting, which took place on January 7, lasted almost an hour, during which time the Georgia lawmaker went over his bill item by item with the President in an effort to explain its provisions and clarify its intent. At the very least, Vinson hoped to secure Hoover's promise not to actively oppose the bill, even if he could not give it his overt support.

Although Vinson and the White House remained non-committal about the results of this session, it was evident that his mission had been totally unsuccessful. The following day Hoover returned his copy of the Navy Department's transmittal letter to the Bureau of the Budget and directed that it be held "without action unless or until something occurred that makes it necessary to make reply." Needless to say, his pigeon-holing of H.R. 6661 and denial of a favorable administration recommendation went a long way towards insuring that something would not occur to make a reply necessary. This action made it impossible for the Navy to officially call for enactment of the measure.

Confirmation of the President's attitude came after a January 23 meeting between President Hoover and senior

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73 Memo from Henry Wiseman, Navy Assistant, to Director of the Bureau of the Budget on Vinson Bill-H.R. 6661, Navy, Increase of, RG 51, NA.
Republican committee members Fred Britten and George P. Darrow (Republican; Pennsylvania). In a statement following the meeting Britten disclosed that the President told them he would not approve the Vinson bill. As if to underscore his determination not to approve future naval construction at this time, Hoover made it clear that he would not rescind an order postponing construction of six of eleven destroyers appropriated for by the last Congress. In making his decision just before the House Naval Affairs Committee was scheduled to favorably report H.R. 6661, the President showed that he too possessed a shrewd sense of timing. As if to add insult to injury, Hoover let it be known that he had not consulted Vinson prior to Britten's public announcement of the administration's position.  

While Hoover's public opposition was disappointing, it could not have been much of a surprise. Whatever its technical merits and legal justification, H.R. 6661 was blatantly at odds with the President's attempts to bring about future reductions in armaments. Naval construction contemplated in that bill may have been permissible under the provisions of the Hoover one-year moratorium, but remained wholly inconsistent with the spirit behind that initiative. Moreover, the enactment of such a program at

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74NYT, January 24, 1932, 1, 26.
that time would have made vigorous American efforts in preparation for the Geneva Disarmament Conference seem transparently hypocritical. Besides, Hoover's ultimate aim was not to engage in an effort to build up to treaty limits but the negotiation of lower limits, and Vinson's measure was patently inimical to that objective. Coming after a prolonged drought in naval construction the President feared the sheer magnitude of the program would be perceived by other maritime nations as being provocative and would spawn a new naval race. Finally, although Hoover was troubled by Japanese expansionism into Manchuria as a threat to world peace, he was confident that in any military struggle with Japan the United States' technological, economic, and industrial strength would ultimately prevail.

It also seems likely that the President did not much care for the machinations associated with the efforts to enact H.R. 6661. Undoubtedly he was aware of the Navy's collaboration with Vinson in behalf of this legislation to limit his options and secure his acquiescence. Unquestionably, his relations with the Georgia lawmaker were irreparably damaged.75

While Hoover was mulling over his decision about coming out publicly against H.R. 6661, Vinson was not idle. He

75 Vinson interviews.
conducted continuing hearings on that measure, endeavored to build a consensus within his committee and attempted to drum up bipartisan support for its enactment. On January 22, as a result of Navy testimony and committee consideration, Vinson introduced H.R. 8230 to supercede H.R. 6661. Essentially, H.R. 8230 represented an effort to establish a basis for compromise with the Senate by making the language of the Hale bill the preamble to Vinson's ten-year program, which remained unchanged. Final committee consideration of H.R. 8230 was scheduled for January 24 with the expectation that it would then be favorably reported to the House.

Learning that he had been denied the President's tacit support or neutrality, Vinson's only recourse was to attempt to elicit the support of the Democratic leadership of the House in an effort to pass his bill in the teeth of administration opposition. Exactly what transpired is not recorded, but it could hardly have been a pleasant experience for the new chairman. The Democrats sensed victory in the 1932 presidential election and were extremely anxious

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76To this end, Vinson gave a speech entitled, "The Needs of our National Defense" to the National Republican Club of New York City on January 17, 1932. At the same time numerous articles were being planted and letter writing campaigns encouraged to explain H.R. 6661 and place naval construction efforts in a favorable light. CR, January 21, 1932, 2426-2428.
to avoid controversial issues that would hurt their chances. To Vinson's chagrin, a $616,000,000 naval construction authorization fell within that category.

Previously, Congressman McClintic suggested as much during the hearings when he surfaced a report that H.R. 6661 was opposed by Congressman Henry T. Rainey (Democrat; Illinois), the House Majority Leader. It so happened that Rainey aspired to become Speaker and the current Speaker, Congressman John Nance Garner (Democrat; Texas), aspired to be the next President. As one of the principal campaign themes of the Democratic Party was to be an indictment of increased government spending by the Hoover Administration, Garner understandably did not want to preside over House passage of the largest naval construction program since World War I. What was needed to combat the depression was a balanced budget, retrenchment in federal expenditures, and better management of existing activities. It also would not do to alienate a large and vocal peace and disarmament movement and concede their votes to a President willing to actively fight H.R. 6661. Besides, backing Vinson would probably end up as an exercise in futility without the votes to override an expected presidential veto. For them it came down to a question of priorities and the election of a Democratic President was much to be preferred over the enactment of a piece of naval construction
legislation.

Thus, when Vinson met with Speaker Garner on the question of House consideration of his bill, he was asked to shelve it as quietly as possible. Presumably, this request was accompanied by an explicit or implicit threat that should Vinson persist in his efforts to report his bill and secure floor consideration, difficulties might arise. The Rules Committee, for instance, might not be able to find the time to fit the naval authorization within its busy schedule. And even if a rule were granted, the press of business just might be too great for the Speaker to schedule floor debate on it.

Opposed by the administration and abandoned by the House leadership, there was little that Carl Vinson could do but put the best face possible on this defeat. His response was to prepare a brief address to the House combining a clear statement of principle, a gesture of committee unanimity on the merits of his bill, and a graceful concession to the realities of election year politics. Accordingly, on January 25, he interrupted the floor consideration of another measure to make the following

\[77\text{NYT, February 10, 1932, 12.}\]
announcement:

Mr. Chairman, I rise simply for the purpose of calling to the attention of the House and the country the fact that this morning the Committee on Naval Affairs of the House by a vote of 18 to 0, two members voting "present," voted to favorably endorse and recommend to the House what is known as bringing the Navy up to its treaty strength, in accordance with the provisions of a bill which I introduced... In view, however, of the very abnormal economic conditions which now confront us at home and abroad, and the hope that some substantial results may be achieved at Geneva, the committee, in agreement with the chairman, has voted for the time being not to report the bill to the House.  

As he concluded the House broke into an enthusiastic round of applause, but this must have seemed a hollow gesture when weighed against the enormity of Vinson's disappointment. To his credit, he had been able to preserve as much of his own dignity and the committee's prestige as circumstances would permit. The committee vote itself was a tribute to his leadership and the respect accorded him by the members. Even McClintic bowed to appeals for committee solidarity by withholding a negative vote on a measure that was an anathema to him.

Even after this public admission of the defeat, however, Vinson remained ready to exploit an opportunity that might bring about floor action on his bill. Just such an

78CR, January 25, 1932, 2663.
opportunity seemed to present itself with the outbreak of hostilities between Japanese and Chinese military forces around Shanghai in late January. Consequently, on February 4, Vinson announced that in view of the developments in Shanghai and their possible ramifications for American interests in the Western Pacific, he intended to schedule committee meetings to reconsider whether the naval authorization bill should be reported to the House.\textsuperscript{79} Before he actually held that meeting, however, he arranged a meeting with Speaker Garner to renew his attempt to secure leadership backing in the event of a favorable committee report. Even if this proved unsuccessful, however, Vinson stated that he would persist in his efforts to have the bill reported out of committee. This course of action was imperative, not only because of Japanese aggression, but also in recognition that recent events at the Geneva conference demonstrated that little could be expected in the way of further disarmament.\textsuperscript{80} Despite these brave words, no further action was taken by the committee or the House on either of Vinson's bills. It must be assumed that Speaker Garner, in the course of a "full and frank" discussion with the junior chairman, made it quite clear that while

\textsuperscript{79}NYT, February 4, 1932, 1.

\textsuperscript{80}Ibid., February 10, 1932.
Japanese activities may have changed the face of Shanghai and threatened the balance of power in the Far East, they had in no way altered election year political realities. The House would not take up any naval authorization legislation this session and that was that.

The Saga of S. 51

With the shelving of H.R. 6661 and H.R. 8230 in the House of Representatives, the attention of Navy advocates shifted to the Senate. There, Senator Frederick Hale was preparing to press for enactment of S. 51. As pointed out earlier, that bill differed from those proposed by Vinson in that it represented a blanket authorization of indefinite duration permitting appropriations required to build the Navy up to the limits established in the Washington and London treaties. In contrast to the almost exclusive emphasis on replacement building in the Vinson bills, S. 51 authorized both replacement of overage vessels and new construction up to treaty limits. It was silent on the specifics and schedule for undertaking such construction, leaving that to be determined annually by the President in consultation with the Bureau of the Budget and Navy Department. The lack of specificity also manifested itself when it came to cost estimates associated with the bill. As Senator
Hale explained:

...Should the bill become law, and should it be decided to build our Navy up to treaty strength by the end of the year 1936, which would obviously be impossible, the cost would be, in round numbers, $786,000,000. Should we take 10 years as recommended by the Navy, the cost would be, in round numbers, about $980,000,000. Should we take the full time to build up the Navy, namely 20 years, we should have to replace the whole Navy, and the cost of that would be about $1,900,000,000. 81

The substantial disparity in the ten year program costs found in the Hale and Vinson bills did not stem from a different pricing criterion—both used bare ship estimates. Rather, it was because the Vinson program cost of $616,000,000 did not "include the completion of the ships now building, the modernization of battleships, certain planes for carriers already authorized, the building of any ships already authorized, or the replacement of submarines that became overage after 1936."82

Nevertheless, S. 51 never seemed as objectionable as Vinson's more specific proposals because its cost estimates, while higher, were not linked to a concrete program. All Hale appeared to be asking of his colleagues was approval of a general policy statement on the size and composition of the Navy. The authorization his bill provided was merely to

81CR, May 2, 1932, 9364.
82Ibid., May 4, 1932, 9564.
enable the Navy Department, through the Bureau of the Budget, to request appropriations from Congress in whatever amount seemed appropriate, if and when it was determined that additional shipbuilding was in the national interest. At that time, the House and Senate could consider in greater detail the merits of the specific annual program submitted within the context of the prevailing political, economic and diplomatic climate.

Hale did what he could to mute the differences between his approach to naval construction legislation and that favored by his House counterpart. Indeed, he seems to have encouraged Navy efforts to reconcile the two approaches in one compromise measure which had resulted in Vinson's introduction of H.R. 8230. Hale was perfectly willing to accept Admiral Pratt's characterization of his bill as "the blanket" with the Vinson measure being "what is rolled up inside the blanket."83 Furthermore, he always maintained that the enactment of S. 51 would not run counter to Vinson's efforts to institute a definite ten year program, but in fact complement them by providing a broader authorization framework that would also include other important Navy material modernization initiatives.

83Hearings on S. 51, 40.
This spirit of accommodation also ran through the Senate Naval Affairs Committee hearings on S. 51 held on January 7, 8 and 9, 1932. Running concurrently with those conducted by the House Naval Affairs Committee, the hearings focused primarily upon larger policy questions and the relative naval strength of the major maritime powers. Hale left to Vinson and his colleagues the task of developing a detailed record required to support a specific program. The Senate hearings were also beneficial in that they were held in a friendly, positive atmosphere throughout. Unlike the turbulent House sessions, they never degenerated into adversary proceedings. What took place was an uncomplicated, businesslike record-building exercise.

Either by inclination or mutual agreement, Hale deferred further action on S. 51 until the fate of the Vinson proposals in the House became clearer. Learning of Vinson's January 25 announcement that his committee would not report out naval construction legislation in the 1st session, Hale realized he would have to take the initiative. Accordingly, on February 1, he addressed his Senate colleagues to give a detailed justification for the enactment of S. 51.\(^\text{84}\) However, the outbreak of fighting around 

\(^{84}\text{CR, February 1, 1932, 3003-3012.}\)
Shanghai, together with disturbing reports of an impasse at the Geneva disarmament talks again propelled Vinson to the forefront of legislative activity. Vinson's efforts to revive prospects for House consideration of his bills proved unsuccessful and after a final futile appeal to his colleagues on February 18, the Georgia lawmaker retired and left the field to Hale. 85

Hale quickly responded to Vinson's failure by having the Senate Naval Affairs Committee favorably report S. 51 on February 24, 1932. 86 While this went beyond what had been accomplished in the House, Hale had no illusions about the difficulty he would face in arranging floor debate on his bill. The greatest impediment was the administration's oblique opposition to the measure. Although Hoover never publicly came out against S. 51, he prevented official Navy endorsement of the measure. As he had done in the case of H.R. 6661, the President directed the Bureau of the Budget to withhold comment on the Hale bill until advised otherwise. 87

85 Ibid., February 18, 1932, 4263-4266.
87 Memo from Henry Wiseman, Navy Assistant, to Director of the Bureau of the Budget on S. 51, dated January 8, 1932, Navy, Increase of, RG 51, NA.
Unable to formally endorse S. 51, the Navy Department nevertheless did what it could in the way of indirect assistance. Press releases were put out, drawing attention to the impressive Japanese building program and its long term implications if not answered by increased U.S. naval construction. In addition, senior civilian and uniformed leaders in the Department continued to call for the institution of a steady shipbuilding program to vouchsafe the Navy's effectiveness into the future. Naturally, Senator Hale could continue to rely upon the Navy to provide him with whatever technical data he might require during Senate consideration of S. 51.

Another obstacle was considerable resistance in the Senate to taking up the bill at all. It was controversial and seemed certain to generate prolonged and passionate debate. Furthermore, judging from the unyielding stance of the House leadership on the Vinson bill, passage of S. 51 in that chamber was problematical at best. The force of these arguments increased with each passing day and the approach of the end of the session and its inevitable backlog of unfinished business.

88 Admiral Pratt's statement on press reports of the Japanese building program, February 25, 1932, Press Releases (1932), RG 80, NA.

89 Admiral Pratt's Press Conference, May 2, 1932, Press Releases (1932), RG 80, NA.
Laboring under these handicaps, it took Senator Hale over two months of patient effort to persuade the steering committee to place S. 51 on the Senate agenda. After receiving that clearance, on May 2, he offered a motion calling for immediate Senate consideration of his bill. This precipitated two days of desultory debate on Hale's motion. In an attempt to work out a compromise, Senator Joseph Robinson (Democrat; Arkansas) proposed a unanimous consent agreement that would postpone consideration for 30 days. Hale was unwilling to withdraw his motion without first receiving assurances that S. 51 would be voted upon before adjournment. Efforts to reach such an agreement were frustrated by the opposition of anti-Navy Senators and Hale was obliged to press his motion which carried by a vote of 46 to 25.

The ensuing debate was dominated by two underlying realities—that Senator Hale had the votes he needed for passage and a general agreement that Senate consideration would be as brief as possible. Thus, while debate extended over three days, it filled less than 30 pages in the Congressional Record and involved the participation of fewer than ten Senators. Senator Hale led off with a standard statement explaining the provisions of S. 51 and advancing

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90 CR, May 2, 1932, 9364.
91 Ibid., May 2, 1932, 9364-9372, 9389-9390; May 3, 9464-9483.
the national security and diplomatic arguments for its enactment. Senators Gerald P. Nye (Republican; North Dakota), Lynn J. Frazier (Republican; North Dakota) and William H. King (Democrat; Utah) countered with the obligatory rejoinders—that S. 51 was inconsistent with the letter and spirit of the Hoover naval moratorium, jeopardized the success of the Geneva disarmament talks, was fiscally irresponsible in adding to the distress of the already overburdened American taxpayers, and unnecessary as the United States already spent more on national defense than any other nation. The only serious threat to Hale's bill came in the form of a substitute amendment offered by Senator Frazier. The Frazier amendment called for a unilateral one year moratorium "in construction of all military and naval and air forces armament and a curtailment to the greatest extent possible for one year of expenditures for other activities having as their object the preparation for war...." Following brief discussion, the Frazier amendment was decisively rejected by a vote of 17 to 58.92 The next day, May 6, witnessed final Senate approval by a tally of 44 yeas to 21 nays.93

92Ibid., May 5, 9639.
93Ibid.; May 6, 9711.
Sanctioned by this lukewarm mandate, S. 51 was then referred to the House of Representatives where it was assigned to the Committee on Naval Affairs. Even if Vinson had been able to overcome his serious reservations about a blanket authorization approach, he was convinced that the House leadership would never schedule floor action on the Hale bill. Thus, S. 51 was allowed to languish in Committee until Congress adjourned on July 16, 1932.

Post Mortem

All legislative initiatives to remedy critical Navy material deficiencies undertaken during the first session of the 72nd Congress had ended in failure. Enthusiasm, energy and planning had not been enough to enact any of the long-term, comprehensive shipbuilding authorization bills sponsored by pro-Navy legislators. None had even come close. Carl Vinson's proposals were never reported from committee and Senator Hale's bill, while clearing the Senate, had virtually no chance of favorable House action. And even if Congress were to approve one of these measures, a Hoover veto was inevitable with no likelihood of being overridden by both chambers.

A careful assessment of what transpired by the disappointed participants would have revealed a number of external and internal factors contributing to their failure.
However, further analysis would have also disclosed several positive developments that could be exploited to facilitate future efforts.

**External Factors**

Obviously, the primary external factor responsible for Congress's failure to enact a naval authorization bill was President Hoover's opposition. By pigeonholing Navy Department requests to the Bureau of the Budget for comment on the Vinson and Hale bills, he prevented official administration endorsement. Consequently, the supporters of those measures were forced to contend with the presumption that the proposals were not in accord with the financial program of the President. In the case of the Vinson bills, however, this implicit opposition was superseded by outright hostility. This opposition coupled with the apparent certainty that a Hoover veto would be sustained, proved to be an insurmountable obstacle.

Even if pro-Navy legislators had been able to overcome Hoover's antagonism, they still would have faced a formidable challenge in the Geneva Disarmament Conference. Those talks provided opponents with a persuasive argument that a naval construction authorization was not in keeping with the spirit of the conference and the enactment of such a measure might foreclose the successful negotiation of an international disarmament agreement. It was difficult
to rebut this line of reasoning as it involved proving
the negative—in effect that the talks were not likely to
produce significant results and waiting until this became
evident only resulted in the wasting of valuable time that
could be applied to the correction of Navy material defi-
ciencies. Not only was this impossible to establish, but
even attempting to do so before all the participating
nations had an opportunity to advance their respective
disarmament proposals seemed to represent a cynical atti-
tude one step removed from rank militarism.

Whatever their attitudes regarding the likely outcome
of the Geneva Conference, naval authorization proponents
still had to contend with the reality of the Hoover one
year moratorium on naval construction. Their assertion
that the United States could construct replacement tonnage
under the terms of that agreement was technically and
legally correct. Furthermore, their contention that the
moratorium did not apply to any other naval construction
not initiated before November 1, 1932 was never even
challenged. Nevertheless, proponents found that it was
impossible to dispel the common perception that such action
was inconsistent with the letter and the spirit of the
Hoover moratorium. This perplexing development under-
scored again that the chief practical difficulty the Navy
had with arms control agreements was not their specific
provisions, but the perceptions they created and attitudes they perpetuated.

It must also be recognized that a dismal economic outlook and conservative attitude toward federal expenditures did not help the cause of Navy advocates in Congress. Although they strenuously argued that federal money spent on shipbuilding would create jobs and stimulate the economy, such assertions ran headlong into the more orthodox litany that retrenchment in government expenditures was the surest way out of the Depression. Big-Navy legislators maintained that the need for an adequate Navy did not rise and fall with the health of the economy. In their eyes, cutting the Navy budget in times of economic distress was akin to an individual cancelling his insurance policies in the face of ill health. The need for naval protection did not diminish with the onset of a depression, indeed the accompanying economic dislocation increased the likelihood that the fleet would be called upon to defend vital American interests abroad. Any dispassionate observer of the world scene in 1932 would have found much to support such a belief. The trouble was that the great majority of American citizens were not permitted the privilege of being dispassionate observers of world events in 1932. Preoccupied by concern over their economic welfare and elemental human needs was not conducive to an enlightened
appreciation of foreign affairs. Certainly there was concern about Japanese aggression in Manchuria and Shanghai, but these incidents seemed remote and there was no reason to believe they would result in a war with Japan. Since relations with Great Britain, America's only other major maritime rival, appeared satisfactory, what was the pressing need to build up the fleet by placing additional demands on already overburdened taxpayers?

Aggravating this concern about the negative impact of a major naval construction program was the bandying about of enormous cost estimates. Ranging anywhere between the $616 million for the bare ship costs of the ten-year Vinson program to $2 billion outlay for Hale's twenty-year replacement program, these estimates seemed incomprehensible in the context of the existing fiscal realities. Once these figures were picked up by the press and widely circulated, efforts to qualify and explain the nuances associated with these calculations were futile. It did little good to attempt to point out that the bills in question were simply authorizations, that appropriations would have to be approved annually to implement the program, and that cost would be spread over a number of years. Attention had been riveted on total program cost estimates and there it would stay. And it must be said in fairness that this development was not solely the fault of the press or the limited
comprehension of the intricacies of naval construction by the general public. Intellectual honesty has never been a hallmark of American political debate—especially in Congress. Vinson consciously chose to use a cost estimate for his program that was artificially low and failed to allow for incidental cost growth normally expected in a warship procurement of that size and duration. Legislative opponents reciprocated by persistently citing a $2 billion dollar pricetag and failing to mention the premises or qualifications associated with that figure. The upshot was total confusion about the costs of the various shipbuilding programs being advanced, a condition favoring those opposed to naval construction legislation.

The difficulty created by each of these factors was intensified in a presidential election year. It was not good campaign politics to speak ill of disarmament and world peace. Both parties were for an "adequate" Navy, but purposely vague on the definition of that term. And each was vying with the other in promising greater retrenchment in government expenditures which conventional wisdom maintained was the only certain remedy for a major depression. This emphasis on budget cuts did not create a congenial atmosphere to bring up the necessity for a major naval construction authorization and every effort was made to avoid discussion on that subject. Neither party was
willing to concede any significant constituency before the
election or jeopardize party unity over such an issue.
Thus it was that Speaker Garner and House Majority Leader
Rainey not only did not want such legislation enacted,
they did not even want it debated. And except for brief
pro forma debate on S. 51 in the Senate, this view prevailed.

Internal Factors

It would have been tempting for pro-Navy legislative
leaders to conclude from their analysis of external factors
that their failure was totally attributable to circumstances
they could not control—tempting maybe, but hardly accu­
rate. Sober reflection would have convinced them that
some of the blame stemmed from deficiencies in the plan­
ing and execution of their efforts to enact a naval
authorization. True, the correction of such defects
probably would not have altered the outcome in 1932,
but their repetition might endanger the success of similar
efforts in the future.

While none of the leading participants benefitted
from their public debate over a legislative approach, that
damage was compounded by their subsequent inability to
agree on some form of compromise. All that this byplay
accomplished was to convey the impression that pro-Navy
leaders in Congress were either confused, willful, or
selfish at a time when unity was essential.
Vinson was also hurt by the discordant notes sounded by Representatives Fred Britten and James McClintic during his committee's hearings. Their testimony was damaging in that it highlighted his differences with Britten on legislative approach, while affording McClintic the opportunity to expose the collaboration between the Navy and the new chairman. It is unlikely that Vinson could have done anything to constrain McClintic, but he probably could have gone further in muting his differences with Britten. If he had been able to do so, it might have been possible to isolate McClintic and contain his disruptive efforts. Taking fire from both the senior Republican and second ranking Democrat was an intolerable situation that should have been avoided if at all possible.

Lastly, it must be said that Vinson's bill was really not the kind of legislative vehicle which was likely to be accepted by Congress or any self-respecting chief executive. Presidents do not normally look upon themselves as agents of the Congress dutifully submitting specified ship-building requests in mandated increments. Vinson was correct in perceiving that Hoover would not request additional funding for naval construction if not coerced, but legislative language practically mandating progressive implementation of a building program over ten years was an
exceptional and unrealistic remedy. It denied the President the management flexibility and latitude that was generally conceded to be necessary in handling a program of that size and duration. The obstacle, after all, was not executive discretion, but Hoover's intractability and the solution to the latter condition was not in the realm of legislation. It rested with the ballot box.

Positive Indicators

Despite the existence of the aforementioned negative external and internal factors, there was also a number of positive indicators coming out of the abortive 1932 campaign to enact shipbuilding authorization legislation.

The first was Carl Vinson's maturation as committee chairman. Apparently the rough handling he received during this experience stood him in good stead in his future endeavors. His domination would become more and more evident in each successive session and this control would allow him to minimize disruptive influences within the committee.

Another positive product was the establishment of a close and enduring bond between the Navy Department and Vinson. There developed a mutual respect and trust between them that was to make future collaboration easier and more effective. More importantly, Vinson's cultivation of close
working relationships with Captain Emory S. Land and other mid-level Navy Department representatives was to pay impressive dividends. Not only did these associations provide the foundation for future cooperation as these men rose to positions of greater responsibility, but they served as conduits of information and advice Vinson could draw upon in addressing various naval issues. Such contact would also prove invaluable in his latter efforts to shape naval policy through selective intervention in the Department's internal decisionmaking process.

Also gratifying was the unity displayed by the Navy in supporting the Vinson and Hale bills. Although the Department had been riven with discord since the World War over the merits of naval limitation agreements, the role of aviation, and the relative influence exercised by the operational and material sides of the service, this dissension was absent on the issue of a shipbuilding authorization. The inability to enact such a program could not be ascribed to internal disagreement as in the case of "lump sum" appropriation proposals. Even Admiral Pratt, who was suspect in the eyes of many of his fellow officers due to his previous association with the negotiation and ratification of the Washington and London treaties, performed yeoman service in forcefully articulating the Navy's position. And Admiral Moffett demonstrated a rare willingness
to forego temporary advantages for naval aviation if it jeopardized enactment of the Vinson bill. This unanimity certainly did not signal the end of institutional power politics among contending naval factions, but there seemed to be general agreement that the institution of a major shipbuilding program should be placed above parochial considerations. If this consensus could be maintained, it would greatly facilitate further legislative efforts to remedy the Navy's critical material deficiencies.

While occurring too late to be a factor in the consideration of the Vinson and Hale bills, the failure of the 1932 session of the Geneva Disarmament Conference to achieve any positive results strengthened the hands of those calling for the upbuilding and modernization of the U.S. fleet. It also damaged President Hoover's credibility. Long a proponent of arms limitation, Hoover had become alarmed over the lack of progress in those talks. In an effort to revive them, on June 22, he proposed a general reduction by one-third in the strength of each nation's land, sea and

and air forces. 95 Despite a favorable reaction from many participating nations, the Geneva Disarmament Conference adjourned a month later without taking any action on the Hoover Proposal. 96 Thus, after making a considerable investment of his time and effort, as well as placing his prestige on the line, President Hoover came away with nothing tangible to show for it. It was still possible for him to downplay the severity of this failure by pointing out that the Geneva talks would reconvene in January 1933, at which time his initiative might receive more favorable consideration. Events were to show, however, that after its disappointing performance in 1932, the Geneva Disarmament Conference would never again command the same respect, support and confidence. In a world increasingly dominated by political turbulence, economic dislocation, and aggressive expansionism, confidence in international remedies was bound to wane. Developments in Manchuria placed in stark relief the inability of the Kellogg-Briand Pact and the League of Nations to preserve peace and stability in such an environment. This realization would trigger a slow, but inexorable reversion to regional or


96Hooker, The Moffat Papers, 75.
unilateral security arrangements that would make the negotation of further international agreements that much more difficult. After 1932, the Geneva Disarmament Conference would become another casualty of that process. More to the point, however, this trend also exposed the vulnerability of the naval limitation treaty framework to these same realities. There would be increasing concern that an extension of those treaties could be negotiated at the scheduled 1936 conference in such an international climate. Under the circumstances, it would only seem prudent to begin addressing serious Navy material deficiencies—both to enhance the American bargaining position at those talks and as a hedge against their failure.

Lastly, the creation of an accurate, thorough, and positive record favoring a long-term, comprehensive approach to shipbuilding and fleet modernization was an accomplishment of no mean importance. Little remained to be said about the overall rationale and major details associated with such an approach. Indeed, until the enactment of a major shipbuilding authorization in 1934, it would not be necessary to build a record again, only to expand and elaborate on the information provided in support of the Vinson and Hale bills. Furthermore, this record was public and the salient issues were being widely circulated by the press and special interest groups like the Navy League.
The basis for public education and acceptance were there; what remained to be done was to constantly reiterate these points to increase popular awareness of them and build a larger constituency with a direct interest in naval shipbuilding.

In sum, the failure of Carl Vinson and his legislative colleagues was not an unmitigated one. Changes in the institutional environment, avoidance of internal errors, and the creative exploitation of positive developments could lead to more favorable results the next time. And Carl Vinson intended that there would be a next time.
CHAPTER V
BUILDING A CONSENSUS

On November 8, 1932, the American electorate removed the primary institutional obstacle to Carl Vinson's goal of a modern treaty Navy by resoundingly rejecting President Herbert Hoover's bid for a second term. As a staunch Democrat, Vinson naturally supported the election of Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt of New York and had served as a member of the executive committee of the Baldwin County Roosevelt Club.\(^1\) Partisan considerations aside, however, he remembered Mr. Roosevelt as a pro-Navy Assistant Secretary of the Navy during the Wilson Administration and the best candidate to reverse the Navy's declining fortunes once ensconced in the White House. Presumably, the new President-elect would retain enough of his appreciation of the intricacies associated with the maintenance and administration of the Naval Establishment to sympathetically address its needs.

Tempering his positive assessment, however, was the recognition that Franklin D. Roosevelt's past love for the Navy was not manifested during the campaign. He evinced little concern about the condition of the fleet and remained

\(^1\)Enders, "The Vinson Navy," 37.
evasive when pressed for his definition of an "adequate Navy." Moreover, he promised to outdo Hoover in slashing federal expenditures in the coming fiscal year. If he made good on this pledge to carry out deep across the board cuts, the Navy's primary worry would no longer be fleet modernization, but how to remain a militarily effective entity. The fleet was already operating with an enlisted manning level of 85 percent of combat strength. Personnel shortfalls were especially serious in the case of destroyers and submarines which necessitated the rotation of those vessels between active and inactive status. Born of quiet desperation, this stopgap remedy was aimed at insuring the highest possible readiness of as many of these units as possible, while at the same time retarding their already advanced obsolescence. Reduced fuel allowances meant less steaming time which, in turn, was translated into fewer operational exercises and decreased training. Combined, these developments meant longer hours, reduced proficiency, lower morale, deferred maintenance and a general decline in fleet readiness. The upshot was that the Navy was in no position to absorb further substantial

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2Army Navy Journal, October 15, 1932, 1. Roosevelt did not return a questionnaire sent to him about his views on naval matters by the editors of the journal.

budget cuts and retain any pretense of being able to carry out its prescribed missions.

Encounter at Warm Springs

If these pronouncements created doubts in Vinson's mind, he did not have to wait long for an opportunity to learn firsthand the President-elect's plans for the Navy. This was possible because Franklin D. Roosevelt left Hyde Park shortly after the election for a brief vacation at Warm Springs, Georgia, less than a hundred miles from Milledgeville. Along the way he took time to visit with many Democratic congressional leaders to sound them out on major issues and establish personal rapport. This accessibility continued after he arrived in Georgia and Carl Vinson was able to arrange to see Roosevelt on November 29. While primarily a courtesy call, it is difficult to believe that Vinson would have foregone the chance to personally acquaint the President-elect with the Navy's alarming deficiencies and press for vigorous executive action to address them. It must also be suspected that an attempt would be made to place within the scope of that vigorous executive action naval construction authorization legislation like that proposed by Vinson earlier in the year.

What followed was one of the most bizarre episodes in Carl Vinson's career. Emerging from a lengthy
conference with Roosevelt to speak to reporters, he unveiled what became known as the "Democratic naval program." As agreed to by the President-elect and himself, this program envisioned a reduction in the Navy budget of $100 million, along with an annual ceiling of $30 million in shipbuilding outlays over the next five years. In place of a treaty navy, this new program contemplated a "compact, self-contained navy, powerful and effective enough to meet the country's needs." While acknowledging the stringent economies affected during the Hoover Administration, Vinson expressed confidence that substantial additional savings could be achieved through the more efficient utilization of existing Navy resources and the closure of obsolete and underutilized naval facilities and air stations. To that end, he announced that he would leave for Washington immediately to conduct a committee inquiry into the "problem of naval expenditures and efficiency."

Stripped of its rhetoric, this "Democratic naval program" meant that the incoming administration was willing to accept second class naval status to balance the federal budget. There was no way the Navy could absorb a $100 million cut in its present condition and carry out its assigned missions. Short of wholesale closures of shore

\[4\text{NYT, November 30, 1932, 1, 12.}\]
installations and the deactivation of a sizeable portion of
the fleet, there were no management efficiencies that would
compensate for a budget reduction of 28 percent below
expenditures in fiscal year 1932. Furthermore, the closure
of major navy yards and facilities in the midst of a
depression and rising unemployment was not a politically
viable option. It became even less attractive when it is
remembered that many of the major naval yards were located
in Democratic urban bastions like Boston, New York, Phila­
delphia and Charleston. Even if Roosevelt had been reck­
less enough to embark on this course of action, there is
little prospect that Congress would have permitted it. In
the final analysis, the only option that would produce a
savings of $100 million would be drastic reductions in the
active fleet accompanied by deep cuts in officer and en­
listed strengths.

No less remarkable than his endorsement of a $100
million cut in naval expenditures was Vinson's acceptance
of a $30 million annual ceiling on ship construction for
the next five years. This amount was actually below that
appropriated in Hoover's last year in office, less than
half of what would be required to carry out Vinson's own
ten-year shipbuilding program, and totally inadequate to
address the looming bloc obsolescence of the Navy's
submarines and destroyers. In short, his remarks at Warm Springs contradicted everything he had said and done with respect to American naval policy since coming to Congress!

What could have accounted for such a radical departure? In retrospect, it would appear that Vinson's uncharacteristic behavior was largely the result of a bad overdose of the vaunted Roosevelt charm. With classic understatement the New York Times wryly observed, "there seemed to be reason to believe after the conference that Governor Roosevelt influenced Mr. Vinson more than Mr. Vinson influenced Governor Roosevelt."^5

It is clear that Roosevelt's paramount concern prior to his inauguration was the nation's deepening economic crisis. Accepting for the time being the counsel of his fiscally conservative advisors, the chief remedy he proposed was severe retrenchment of government expenditures to balance the federal budget and ease the burden on hard-pressed taxpayers. The strength of his conviction that this course of action was essential and the force of his arguments were apparently sufficient to sway Vinson. It also seems likely that Vinson was eager to demonstrate his party loyalty and willingness to assist the incoming administration in its efforts to alleviate the Depression. Like

^5NYT, November 30, 1932, 1.
many others exposed to the charged atmosphere in Warm Springs, Vinson must have gotten caught up in the excitement and was particularly susceptible to the President-elect's flattering invitation that he share some of the limelight by announcing the "Democratic naval program" to the nation. Fortunately for the Navy, his change of heart was shortlived and even Franklin D. Roosevelt soon came to see the political impracticality and military absurdity of such a radical change in naval policy.

As would be expected, Vinson's comments created consternation in naval circles in Washington. Unnamed Navy Department sources indicated that the implementation of the "Democratic naval program" would quickly drop the U.S. Navy to a poor third behind Great Britain and Japan, lead to the closure of virtually all navy yards and halt any new construction. On Capitol Hill, Fred Britten declared that such actions would "work great damage on the naval establishment," at a time when the breakdown of international order increased the likelihood that a strong Navy would be needed. Predictably, Representative McClintic countered by applauding Roosevelt's emphasis upon economy and sought to exploit this rationale to further his scheme to decommission "obsolete battleships" and replace them with
flying deck cruisers.\textsuperscript{6}

When Carl Vinson returned to Washington for the convening of the 2nd Session of the 72nd Congress on December 5, it is certain that he was immediately called upon by his colleagues and Navy Department representatives to "clarify" his remarks. In the unlikely event that these discussions did not convince him to abandon the "Democratic naval program" the realization that McClintic agreed with him would have removed all doubts.

Vinson's formal repudiation of the "Democratic naval program" came in a letter he wrote to the President-elect on December 28. Couched in such a way as to avoid the appearance of an outright break with Roosevelt, he tactfully explained that his purpose was to clarify and elaborate his views on future naval policy which he had not been able to fully develop during their brief conversation in Warm Springs. What followed was essentially a detailed restatement of the arguments he used to justify the naval authorization proposals in the previous session. There was no mention of an annual ceiling of $30 million on naval construction over the next five years. Instead, he "strongly recommended" a yearly outlay double that amount to permit the Navy to build up to treaty strength. Also conspicuously

\textsuperscript{6}\textit{NYT}, December 1, 1932, 1.
absent was any mention, let alone endorsement, of a $100 million cut in Navy expenditures. Carl Vinson had acted against his better judgment in embracing the "Democratic naval program," and he wanted his reversal to be a matter of record. Presumably, Roosevelt divined the true purpose behind the "clarification" and "elaboration" of Vinson's views on future naval policy and he let the matter drop without making a reply.\(^7\)

As far as the House Naval Affairs Committee was concerned, the 2nd Session of the 72nd Congress lived up to its "lame duck" billing. As late as September there had been reports that an effort might be undertaken to bring the Vinson or Hale bills before the House, but the worsening economic situation and President Hoover's continued intransigence thwarted such a move. Even more disturbing, however, was the consensus among Democratic leaders in Congress to defer action on any shipbuilding measures until after President-elect Roosevelt assumed office. Speaking to reporters on January 10, Vinson was unable to disguise his disappointment about this development, "I regret to have to say it, but the fact is the navy will get nothing

\(^7\)Letter from Representative Carl Vinson to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 28, 1932, President's Personal File 5901, Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York (hereafter cited as PPF, FDRL).
this session so far as construction necessary to bring it to treaty strength is concerned." 8

Although various patriotic and special interest groups continued to press for House debate on H.R. 8230 and S. 51, Vinson offered no encouragement in responding to such appeals. Answering a letter from Mrs. Cornelia DeWeese, he wrote that "owing to the economic conditions of the country it is out of the question to enact legislation proposed by these bills, at this Session of Congress." 9 Consequently, aside from hearings on Marine Corps manpower levels and increases in the funding limitation on alterations and repairs to battleships and aircraft carriers, the committee confined its work to the handling of minor legislation and private bills.

Changing the Watch

With the change of administrations, a number of different personalities appeared on the scene who would play major roles in the formulation and implementation of U.S. naval policy once Roosevelt took office. Their appreciation of naval matters, leadership and ability to work with Congress would become major factors in determining the success Carl Vinson and his colleagues would ultimately achieve in

8NYT, January 3, 1933, 13; January 11, 1933, 1 and 7.
9Representative Carl Vinson to Mrs. Cornelia DeWeese, February 3, 1933, H.R. 8230 bill jacket, RG 233, NA.
devising legislative remedies for the Navy's critical material deficiencies.

Roosevelt's choice of septuagenarian Senator Claude Swanson (Democrat; Virginia) as Secretary of the Navy was an interesting one. A member of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee since 1914, chairman from 1918-1920 and ranking minority member thereafter, Swanson possessed impressive credentials for his new position. Moreover, representing a state very much dependent upon naval expenditures and activities, he developed into an avid and knowledgeable navalist. As a major architect of the Senate's enactment of the 1916 shipbuilding program and consistent advocate of naval construction authorizations in the 1920's, Swanson demonstrated that he possessed the willingness and energy to apply this expertise on the Navy's behalf. Equally important, he acquired a reputation as one of the Senate's shrewdest practical politicians during his tenure. Thus, the Navy was acquiring a leader philosophically inclined to favor efforts to improve the material condition of the fleet while possessing the political acumen and connections to minimize congressional obstacles in the pursuit of that goal. Swanson's ability to pick up the telephone and break up a legislative logjam or smooth ruffled sensibilities on the Hill proved to be an invaluable asset to the Navy. Largely offsetting these positive
attributes, however, were Swanson's all-too-apparent liabilities—his advanced age (he was 71 in 1933) and frail health. On balance, therefore, nomination of the venerable Virginian was a safe, but hardly inspired move.

Concern over Swanson's health and capacity to handle a heavy workload also seem to have figured in the appointment of Henry Latrobe Roosevelt as Assistant Secretary of the Navy. Distantly related to the President, he was carrying on an informal family tradition by following in the footsteps of three other Roosevelt's who previously held that post. An ex-Marine lieutenant colonel with a business background, Harry Roosevelt was the vigorous, decisive, hard working deputy that Swanson needed to handle many of the demanding administrative tasks involved in directing the affairs of the Department. This role seemed to suit Roosevelt just fine and he was willing to accept as much responsibility as Swanson wished to delegate. As a result, he became one of the most powerful and influential Assistant Secretaries the Navy ever had—at least in terms of formal authority. Not only did he control the administration of the Shore Establishment and the allocation of public works funding, but he was also responsible for coordinating the preparation of the budget. Until his untimely death in 1936, Harry Roosevelt demonstrated that he was an energetic, able administrator capable of filling
in for his chief during Swanson's recurring bouts with illness.

Another notable personnel change within the Navy Department was the promotion of Emory S. Land to Rear Admiral and his appointment as Chief of the Bureau of Construction and Repair. As a trained naval architect and aeronautical engineer, Land was admirably qualified to assume the direction of the bureau having primary responsibility for the construction and alteration of naval vessels. In addition, he was an old Washington hand, having previously served several tours in the Bureau of Construction and Repair (1910-1914; 1916-1917; and 1918-1919). What was most remarkable about Land's years in Washington, however, was his assignment to the Bureau of Aeronautics from 1921-1928, the last two years of that tour as assistant chief of bureau under Admiral Moffett. This dual career pattern largely accounted for his unsurpassed appreciation of the critical interrelationship of the air, surface and subsurface elements and the need for their effective integration within a balanced force structure. But Land was no mere technician. A two year stint in the Office of Naval Operations between 1930-1932 permitted him to acquire a broader perspective within which to evaluate the operational implications of rapid advances in technology following the World War and the larger policy issues involved in their
effective application. Thus, by the time he took over as chief of bureau, Land had developed into an accomplished bureaucratic politician, experienced administrator and one of the Department's most progressive leaders.

As impressive as Land's professional credentials were, his most valuable assets were a keen knowledge of the legislative process and many close personal contacts with Capitol Hill. As the chief lieutenant and disciple of Admiral Moffett, it was hardly surprising that he should have acquired an appreciation of the importance of congressional relations. When combined with Land's personal charm, dynamism and competence, however, this understanding became a potent force in shaping departmental and national policy on the Navy's future material development. His relationship with Carl Vinson, which has already been alluded to, exemplifies his ability to work with congressional allies to gain his ends. When Land and Vinson got together things began to happen and his promotion to admiral greatly facilitated their subsequent collaboration. All things considered, the Navy could not have made a better choice and as Chief of the Bureau of Construction and Repair Admiral Land would cast a long shadow over the future efforts by the Navy and Congress to address the critical material deficiencies
of the fleet.  

The Navy fared less well in the appointment of Lewis Douglas as Director of the Bureau of the Budget. At thirty-nine Douglas was an ex-Congressman from Arizona who had established himself since the election as one of Roosevelt's closest advisors on fiscal matters. He was brilliant, articulate, a tireless worker and charming enough to earn the respect and affection of the President and his inner circle of advisors. The son of an Arizona copper magnate, Douglas had been born to wealth and it helped him in establishing a close rapport with the well-to-do Roosevelt. Moreover, they shared, at least initially, the view that it was imperative to balance the federal budget and that the burgeoning government bureaucracy would have to be reduced. It seems that Douglas was to play the role of the heavy for Roosevelt by zealously seeking out waste, cutting expenditures, and screening department and agency requests. In addition, he was to act as a brake on the President's occasional propensity to impulsively approve various schemes involving unprogrammed fiscal outlays. Roosevelt did not invariably cleave unto the recommendations of his economically conservative subordinate, but he generally agreed with him during his first year in office and recognized his usefulness as

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10Vice Admiral Emory S. Land, Construction Corps, U.S. Navy, Retired," Navy Office of Information, ZB Files, NOA.
the first line of defense against proposals calling for increased expenditures. With Douglas heading the Bureau of the Budget, administration endorsement of a shipbuilding authorization in 1933 was unlikely. The Department would find it difficult enough to pry loose and obligate funds already appropriated from the tightfisted Arizonan.

The Democratic landslide also substantially reshaped the partisan composition of Congress and resulted in a mass infusion of new members. The size of the Democratic majority in the House of Representatives was increased from 9 to 100 and the loss of 12 Republican seats in the Senate gave the Democrats firm control of that body for the first time since 1920. The change in party control of the Senate meant that there would be a Democratic chairman of the Naval Affairs Committee. As ranking minority member, Senator Swanson had been in line for the post, but his departure to become Secretary of the Navy led to the appointment of Senator Park Trammell (Democrat; Florida). Trammell had been active in Florida politics since the turn of the century and Governor of the State prior to his election to the Senate in 1916. If Carl Vinson's career could be cited as a point in favor of the seniority system in Congress, Trammell exemplified a case of mediocrity elevated through longevity and a safe seat. It cannot be said that Park Trammell did not support the Navy or was unwilling to
sponsor legislative proposals to address its material shortcomings, but there is little to indicate that his understanding or primary concerns regarding the Department extended much beyond Florida's boundaries. He never displayed the strength of character, energy, or political skill to be a strong chairman or a formidable floor leader. In retrospect, both he and the Navy were fortunate that Trammell could rely upon Senators Frederick Hale (Republican; Maine) and David I. Walsh (Democrat; Massachusetts), the ranking minority and majority leaders of the committee, for assistance and advice during his tenure. Insofar as Carl Vinson was concerned, Trammell's elevation to chairman meant that he would have to take the initiative more often and work harder, but also insured that he would be the chief spokesman on naval matters within Congress. Park Trammell was simply no match for his House colleague and would either actively participate in Vinson's initiatives or passively acquiesce.

As a microcosm of its parent body, the election results had similar effects on the House Naval Affairs Committee. The partisan breakdown in the 73rd Congress was 18 Democrats and 8 Republicans, a dramatic improvement over the 12 to 10 ratio in the previous session. Representative Fred Britten remained ranking minority member, but his influence with the committee was seriously eroded by the continuing
decline of Republican Party strength in the House of Representatives. Another interesting development was an infusion of new members on the committee—9 Democrats and 5 Republicans. Freshmen Democrats would be more inclined to follow Vinson's lead on most matters and committee norms restricted their actual participation to little more than voting and establishing quorums. Of even greater significance for Vinson's and the Navy's peace of mind, was Congressman James V. McClintic's decision to transfer to another committee. The Department had always been apprehensive about the prospect that McClintic was only a heartbeat away from the chairmanship. For his part, Vinson must have viewed McClintic's exit with satisfaction as it removed likelihood he would again be caught in a crossfire during future hearings from both his ranking minority and majority members. Taken as a whole, these changes significantly enhanced Vinson's control over his committee.

The NIRA Alternative

March 4, 1933 was not the most auspicious time for a presidential inauguration. Beset by widespread bank failures throughout the country, the United States seemed on the verge of economic collapse. Responding decisively on March 9, the new President called Congress into extraordinary session to act upon emergency legislative proposals from
the new administration.

The prospect of a special session of Congress posed a perplexing dilemma for the Navy Department and its allies on Capitol Hill. They had good reason to welcome an opportunity for Congress to enact laws that would improve the material condition of the fleet. Since their abortive efforts the year before, little had been accomplished and material deficiencies were now more acute than ever. This is not to say that nothing positive had taken place in the interim. Money had been appropriated for the construction of 1 8-inch gun cruiser and 7 destroyers, but these additions were paltry when compared to the technical bloc obsolescence of all U.S. World War I vintage destroyers and submarines by the end of 1934—in effect all active assets. Furthermore, residual authorization from the 1916 Naval Act had been exhausted by this meager building program and new legislation would be required before any new vessels could be appropriated for. Thus, the special session held out the chance that Congress might favorably consider some form of shipbuilding authorization before adjourning. It would also allow pro-Navy forces to ascertain just how far the new President was willing to go in demonstrating his up to then latent commitment to fleet modernization.

On the other hand, the circumstances bringing about this special session and its ostensible purpose did not
lend themselves easily to the consideration of a straightforward ship construction authorization measure. Congress was not being convened to conduct business as usual, but to deal with a national emergency. The administration was not likely to recommend, nor Congress to consider, proposals not directly related to the alleviation of the economic crisis. In such an environment, executive leadership in establishing and defining priorities would be paramount.

Where expenditures and future obligations were concerned this meant that incoming Budget Director Lewis Douglas would be the dominant figure in formulating an administration position. His advocacy of stringent retrenchment was well known and he would soon propose a 25 percent cut in projected government expenditures by limiting cash withdrawals in fiscal year 1934. For the Navy this meant that it would only be permitted to obligate $260 million of the $330 million previously appropriated.\(^{11}\) Naturally, this recommendation alarmed the Navy Department and prompted intense bargaining with the Bureau of the Budget over the next two months in an attempt to raise the suggested limits on cash withdrawals by $10 million. In addition, it caused a feverish internal review of Navy

\(^{11}\text{Confidential Memorandum from the Director of the Bureau of the Budget to Cabinet Members, March 28, 1933, L1-1(1934)/EN(330328), RG 80, NA.}\)
programs to determine how best to absorb a $60 to $70 million reduction. The Navy Department was eventually able to prevail upon Douglas to approve a $270 million obliga-
tional ceiling, but it was a pyrrhic victory. To effect the necessary economies to remain within that limit a "rotating reserve" commissioning plan was instituted whereby all classes of combatant vessels would spend six months in reserve and overhaul with reduced crews for every year they were in full operation. This was accompanied by a drastic curtailment of activities at naval yards and other shore installations, deferred maintenance, and further reductions in the number of officers and enlisted personnel. In light of these developments and the attitude of the Bureau of the Budget, this was hardly the time to seek administra-
tion endorsement of a naval construction authorization.

Realists within the Department and Congress soon demonstra-
ted they were fully cognizant of the fact.

What was needed was a mechanism that would place fleet modernization within the purview of national economic relief and recovery efforts. It was not that the Navy had previously failed to appreciate this requirement. Almost

\[\text{\textsuperscript{12}}\]CNO to Bureaus, Offices, and Divisions of the Office of Naval Operations, 3 April 1933, PP1(1934)A4-3(320510) RG 80, NA; Director of the Bureau of the Budget to the Secretary of the Navy, May 8, 1933, L1-1 (34), RG 72, NA; Secretary of the Navy to all Naval and Marine Corps Acti-
vities Concerned, May 10, 1933, L1-2(1934)/NN(330510), RG 80, NA.
from the onset of the Depression the Department had explored the possibility of using public works funding to finance the construction and modernization of warships. As noted earlier, one of the most persuasive arguments the Navy used to promote shipbuilding authorizations in 1931 and 1932 was that such action would provide jobs and stimulate the economy. Proponents of these measures never seemed to tire of pointing out the labor intensive nature of ship construction or repeating the litany that 85 percent of shipbuilding expenditures went for direct or indirect labor costs.

Lending even greater force to these arguments was the fact that by mid-1932 the shipbuilding industry was in serious trouble. Commercial orders were drying up and nearly all of the scarce naval construction contracts went to government navy yards. Unless something were done by the federal government to step up naval construction so that more business could be given to private shipyards, those firms would have no choice but to drastically curtail operations or go out of business altogether. Not only would such actions throw many skilled employees out of work and produce a severe ripple effect in an already ailing economy, but they threatened to deprive the United States of an invaluable national security resource. For if war should come, government yards would be fully committed
in carrying out their primary responsibility of fitting out and repairing the fleet. It was assumed that private yards would take over new construction after mobilization to increase the size of the fleet and replace losses. If, as a result of peacetime neglect, economic adversity, and popular hostility, private firms no longer existed or were incapable of undertaking the construction of major warships, the nation's ability to successfully wage and sustain naval operations would suffer. Competent employees could not be assembled overnight and the greater complexity and technical sophistication associated with the newer classes of vessels would only increase this lead time.

Notwithstanding the cogency of these arguments, the Navy had not been able to make its case to President Hoover. Although the Department had been a major recipient of public works funds, Hoover had consistently opposed using them for ship construction. Instead, they had been primarily funnelled through the Bureau of Yards and Docks to provide employment at politically sensitive navy yards and various other shore installations.\(^\text{13}\)

\(^{13}\)For a full discussion of the Navy's efforts to secure and use public works funds during the Hoover Administration, see Levine, "The Politics of Naval Rearmament," chapters 1 and 2.
With the 1932 Presidential election campaign heating up, the Navy surfaced this issue again in the hopes that Hoover might be more receptive. Earlier that year the enactment of the so-called Economy Act provided $10 million in public works appropriations for the Navy Department. Under the provisions of section 317 of that Act, the Department was permitted to transfer, with the President's approval, up to 12 percent of that amount to any other accounts, including those involved in ship construction. Armed with new and alarming information about the pitiful state of the shipbuilding industry, Secretary of the Navy Adams approached Hoover in mid-September to seek transfer of $1 million to shipbuilding accounts for the construction of three destroyers. It is not clear whether the President was swayed by the Secretary's arguments or the exigencies of election year politics, but he overruled his Budget Director and approved the Department's request. In doing so he established a precedent whose significance

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14Levine, "The Politics of Naval Rearmament," 55-59; Secretary of the Navy to the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, September 26, 1932; Director of the Bureau of the Budget to the Secretary of the Navy, September 30, 1932, Ll-1(1934)/EN(320318) RG 80 NA. It is interesting to note that Hoover was not persuaded by Adams' emphasis upon the plight of the private shipbuilders as the President directed that all three destroyers be built in government yards at Philadelphia, New York and Boston.
far outweighed the three destroyers and $1 million involved in that decision. It would only be a question of time before efforts would be underway to fund ship construction and modernization through public works appropriations on a far grander scale.

The first clear indication that such an effort was afoot came less than two months later. On or about November 25, Rear Admiral A.L. Parsons, Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, met with his counterpart from the Bureau of Construction and Repair to discuss the "advisability of defining public works construction as including the building of new vessels for the Navy." Parsons, who appears to have been the prime mover in this affair, found in Rear Admiral Emory S. Land, the new chief constructor of the Navy, a willing and effective ally. Together, they proceeded to map out a strategy to bring about the funding of substantial ship construction out of future public works appropriations.

The initial step was to assemble data on shipbuilding outlays for fiscal years 1920-1932 along with prospective expenditures for 1933 through 1938. Armed with these figures, Parsons approached Colonel Donald H. Sawyer, chairman of the Federal Employment Stabilization Board J.C. Huske Memorandum for the Chief Constructor, February 16, 1935, Shipbuilding Data File, 1932-1936, Emory S. Land Papers, MDLC.
managed to elicit from the board agreement that "defining and including ship construction as part of public works construction was considered proper and would be of benefit in future planning for employment stabilization."16

After laying this groundwork, further efforts were held in abeyance until after the inauguration. In the interim, Parsons and Land sought to find suitable congressional sponsors willing to handle the legislative details when the new administration submitted its public works program. Land's choice of Carl Vinson was a result of their past collaboration and continued close association. While Vinson would maintain throughout his career a philosophical aversion to justification of defense expenditures on any other basis than military requirements, he was first and foremost a political realist. Recognizing that no naval construction authorization measure would be passed during the remainder of the 2nd Session of the 72nd Congress and uncertain about the intentions of the incoming Roosevelt administration, Vinson must have been in a receptive mood when Land laid out this new approach. Considering the severity of the economic crisis taking place at that time, it was easy for him to make a pragmatic appraisal that public works money was the only feasible

16Ibid.
source of funding for additional shipbuilding prior to 1934. Vinson was acutely conscious that the Navy's material condition was deteriorating with each passing day and some form of immediate relief was imperative. Accordingly, he agreed to spearhead efforts within the House of Representatives to secure a public works funding allocation for naval construction.

The first evidence of Vinson's change in orientation came in a letter to the Secretary of the Navy on December 15, 1932, requesting that a study be performed to show how "funds appropriated for the Naval Establishment find their way back into the channels of trade."\(^\text{17}\) Replying on December 22, Secretary Adams provided a lengthy and detailed explanation of the economic impact of naval expenditures. Adams estimated that an annual expenditure of $400 million, the amount required to build and maintain a Navy of treaty strength, would benefit the economy in the following ways:

- . . . greatly reduce surpluses of raw materials and keep at least 1,290,000 of the people of this country out of unemployed status
- . . . not to mention the almost endless chain set in motion by its ramifications. In discharging its constitutional function of

\(^{17}\)Carl Vinson to Secretary of the Navy Charles F. Adams, December 15, 1932, L1-1/QN(321215), RG 80 NA.
"providing for the common defense" the federal government would thus manifestly be "promoting the general welfare". 18

Vinson incorporated data from this letter in a floor speech during House consideration of the fiscal year 1934 Navy Appropriation bill. In stark contrast to the statements he made the year before in support of his authorization measures, Vinson highlighted the positive economic consequences of naval expenditures. Indicative of this change in emphasis there was prominently displayed in the Congressional Record a chart showing the distribution of fiscal year 1932 Naval expenditures by state. While Vinson's speech contained no reference to the use of public works monies to fund ship construction, the unmistakable implication was that any and all funding the Navy received would quickly find its way back into the channels of trade, alleviate unemployment, and have a widespread economic multiplier effect. For Vinson, this address was a signal departure and a manifestation of his willingness to adopt a rationale placing shipbuilding within economic recovery efforts. 19

Admiral Parsons worked the other side of Capitol Hill and was able to enlist Senator Robert Wagner (Democrat; New

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18 Secretary of the Navy Charles F. Adams, to Carl Vinson, December 22, 1932, RL-1(321315), RG 80, NA.

19 CR, February 22, 1933, 4720-4723.
York) to orchestrate efforts in the Senate. Like Vinson and Land, Wagner had previously worked closely with Parsons to promote the Navy's interests by securing the allocation of public works funds for shore projects. Moreover, Wagner was expected to be a prime mover in any future Senate consideration of major public works legislation and enjoyed the confidence of the incoming administration. Thus, the combination of Vinson in the House of Representatives and Wagner in the Senate augured well for the Navy's efforts to secure public works monies for a substantial shipbuilding program in 1933.

Having lined up their congressional sponsors, Parsons and Land now endeavored to widen their support within the Navy Department. Shortly before the inauguration, Admiral Pratt called together the heads of Bureaus to consider what issues should be raised when the new administration took over. During this conference, Admiral Parsons advanced the "idea that new construction and investments in shore public works could be segregated not only in naval appropriations but in all other government appropriations, thus permitting the Navy to ask for much more regular total amounts" than otherwise would be the case. 20 No decision was made at the

20 Memorandum from Commander A.B. Court to the Chief of Naval Operations entitled "History of development of current Naval Building Programs, and effect of these on Treaty Strength," July 8, 1933, A1-3/QN(330708), RG 80, NA.
time, but Admiral Pratt asked the Bureau chiefs to consider it and make their recommendations.

By March 14, those Bureaus most closely associated with ship and aircraft construction had submitted their recommendations. Except for the Bureau of Engineering, the response was generally favorable. Predictably, the Bureau of Construction and Repair believed the inclusion of new construction within a "larger and more comprehensive plan for Federal Construction, is considered logical and most desirable." Even in his dissent Admiral Samuel M. Robinson, Chief of the Bureau of Engineering, acknowledged that such a course of action might be of some "immediate benefit to the Navy Department", but feared that placing any "portion of the national defense in the same category as 'Public Works'" bad policy and possibly unconstitutional. 21 Not surprisingly the desire for immediate benefit overcame any qualms about constitutionality and the Secretary of the Navy sided with Admiral Parsons.

In accordance with his decision, on March 16, Secretary Swanson instructed Admiral Land to accompany Chairman Vinson at a meeting with the Chief Clerk of the Naval

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21 Assistant Chief of the Bureau of Construction and Repair to the Navy Budget Officer, March 11, 1933; and Chief of the Bureau of Engineering to the Navy Budget Officer, March 9, 1933, L1-2/EN(330227), RG 80, NA.
Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee to discuss phraseology to authorize naval construction in any upcoming employment relief legislation. This conference was followed by sessions with Representatives William A. Ayres (Democrat; Kansas) and William B. Oliver (Democrat; Alabama), chairman of the Naval Subcommittee and third ranking majority member of the full committee, to solicit their views. As a result of these meetings, the following section was drafted:

That the President is hereby authorized further in aid of relief of unemployment, to undertake the construction of naval vessels within the limits established by the London Treaty of 1930, and of airplanes within the total number authorized by law.22

Speaking privately, Vinson later told Land that it might be preferable to change the above language to give the President more latitude in authorizing the construction of as many airplanes as were required to support a treaty navy independent of the current 1000 aircraft restriction. To do so, he recommended that the section be modified as follows:

That the President is hereby authorized further in aid of relief of unemployment, to

22 Memorandum from Admiral Emory S. Land to Secretary of the Navy Claude A. Swanson, March 16, 1933, Assistant Secretary of the Navy Spindle File, RG 80, NA.
undertake the construction of naval vessels within the limits established by the London Naval Treaty of 1930, and of additional airplanes therefor.23

Four days later, on March 20, this Navy-legislative alliance registered another victory with the enactment of H.R. 2820, the Credit Act of 1934. Subsection (a) of section 2 of Title II of that Act included within the definition of public works "the procurement of new airplanes and construction of vessels under appropriations for 'Increase of the Navy.'" In effect this represented statutory ratification of the earlier agreement between the Navy and the Federal Employment Stabilization Board. Thus far, proponents of the use of public works appropriations to fund ship construction had been successful in placing it within the scope of future public works projects and drafting appropriate legislative language to accomplish this aim. What remained to be done was to develop a suitable naval construction program and incorporate it within the major industrial recovery legislation that the administration was expected to introduce in the near future.

After announcing publicly, on March 21, that "the navy will support the view that naval construction should be considered with other public works included in any unemployment relief program Congress may vote this session,"

23 Ibid.
Secretary Swanson called a meeting for the following morning to discuss what kind of a program the Navy should propose. With the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Budget Officer and Bureau Chiefs in attendance, Swanson expressed his belief that "the Navy could rely heavily upon the friendly attitude of the President" in its efforts to link shipbuilding to unemployment relief. He was also of the opinion that if some ship construction could be initiated in this manner, "Congress will finish it." Getting down to the specifics of such a program, Swanson then propounded the question, "What do we need most right away?" In the discussion which followed, there emerged a consensus that the Navy's most pressing need was the construction of new destroyers. As the conference broke up, the Secretary directed that a memorandum be prepared for him detailing what vessels the Navy needed and the relative priorities for their construction.

As Chief of Naval Operations, it was natural for Admiral Pratt to assume responsibility for the preparation

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24 NYT, March 21, 1933, 4.

25 Memorandum from Commander A.B. Court to the Chief of Naval Operations entitled, "History of development of current Naval Building Programs, and the effect of these programs on Treaty Strength," July 8, 1933, A1-3/QN(330708), RG 80, NA.
of such a memorandum. However, there was another reason for his willingness to undertake that task. Unbeknownst to the other attendees, Swanson had used as the basis of discussion a memorandum prepared in the Office of Naval Operations early in March. Wishing to insure continuity and retain the influence of his office in formulating the Navy's program, Pratt wanted the memorandum to the Secretary prepared under its auspices. Accordingly, the author of the earlier memorandum, Commander A.B. Court, was now charged by Pratt to write the body of his report to the Secretary on the Navy's needs. Skillfully combining his detailed technical material with Admiral Pratt's more general introductory paragraphs, Commander Court completed the memorandum and it was submitted to Secretary Swanson on March 24, 1933.

As would be expected, the construction program set forth in the memorandum drew heavily upon the General Board's ten-and fifteen-year programs to build up to treaty limits, as well as the one contained in the bills introduced by Carl Vinson in the 72nd Congress. In addition, however, two other considerations were reflected in the program--"that the ships to be laid down the first year should compose about as heavy a program as existing shipbuilding facilities in the United States could be expected to cope with promptly" and "that large numbers of ships
in any one class should not all be built at the same time" to avoid contemporary obsolescence. The resulting program was spread over eight years—1934-1941—and called for the construction of 119 vessels as shown in the following table:

26Ibid.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Unit Tonnage</th>
<th>1934</th>
<th>1935</th>
<th>1936</th>
<th>1937</th>
<th>1938</th>
<th>1939</th>
<th>1940</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aircraft Carriers:</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aircraft Carriers:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15,200</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruisers-8&quot;</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruisers-6&quot;</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destroyers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1,850</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destroyers</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submarines</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1,130</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gunboats (sloops)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Memorandum from the Chief of Naval Operations to the Secretary of the Navy entitled "The Navy's Needs," A1-3(QN330024) RG 80, NA.
With the exception of replacement battleships and fleet auxiliaries, the above program would bring the United States Navy up to treaty strength and maintain it at those levels in underaged vessels through 1942. Including projects ashore associated with the maintenance of a treaty navy, the bare ship costs of this program totalled $944,363,000, broken down and expended as shown in the following table:
### Table: Funding Profile of Admiral Pratt's Shipbuilding Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>1934</th>
<th>1935</th>
<th>1936</th>
<th>1937</th>
<th>1938</th>
<th>1939</th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>1941</th>
<th>1942</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Ships to be added</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>103,910</td>
<td>160,329</td>
<td>159,494</td>
<td>99,062</td>
<td>67,665</td>
<td>39,930</td>
<td>4,220</td>
<td></td>
<td>674,610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Aircraft to be added</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4,623</td>
<td>4,624</td>
<td>4,623</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Projects ashore</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>13,462</td>
<td>11,800</td>
<td>10,800</td>
<td>9,700</td>
<td>8,103</td>
<td>6,300</td>
<td>3,733</td>
<td></td>
<td>71,898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Completion of ships built</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Aircraft for ships built</td>
<td>5,900</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>56,836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Replacement ships</td>
<td>1,785</td>
<td>5,235</td>
<td>8,050</td>
<td>8,050</td>
<td>8,900</td>
<td>12,430</td>
<td>12,915</td>
<td>7,035</td>
<td></td>
<td>64,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Additional Gunboats</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>7,530</td>
<td>9,172</td>
<td>4,385</td>
<td>11,119</td>
<td>13,119</td>
<td>8,734</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>56,849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td>54,670</td>
<td>166,707</td>
<td>201,372</td>
<td>178,344</td>
<td>125,820</td>
<td>102,411</td>
<td>76,402</td>
<td>29,602</td>
<td></td>
<td>944,383</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In addition to this, about $54,500,000 is already made available by appropriations for 1934.

Source: Memorandum from the Chief of Naval Operations to the Secretary of the Navy entitled "The Navy's Needs," AD-1(0030324) 1400, NA.
The salient feature of Pratt's memorandum, and Swanson's paramount interest, was the first annual increment of the proposed eight year program. By far the largest individual segment in terms of numbers and tonnage, it called for the laying down of 2 aircraft carriers, 4 6-inch cruisers, 4 destroyer leaders, 16 destroyers, 4 submarines and 2 gunboats. Not only would such a program address the fleet's more critical material deficiencies, but it would also provide as much construction as the depressed shipbuilding industry could absorb at the time. If the program could not be executed in its entirety, Pratt placed the highest priority on destroyers, followed by aircraft carriers, 6-inch gun cruisers, submarines and gunboats. Next, he recommended the allocation of the 32 vessels among private and government shipyards with 26 going to the former and 6 to the latter. Provided that enabling legislation could be expeditiously enacted, he believed that 4 destroyers and 4 submarines could be under contract by July 1 with the remaining vessels on order within six months. Pratt concluded by recommending that the following language be inserted in any Federal construction legislation proposed by the administration to alleviate unemployment:

That the President is hereby authorized to undertake the construction of naval vessels within the limits established by the London
Naval Treaty of 1930, and the additional number of airplanes required therefor; Provided, that not to exceed $46,000,000 of the appropriation made in Section ___ of this Act shall be expended toward the construction of such vessels and aircraft, in addition to sums already appropriated, during the Fiscal Year 1934. 27

When Admiral Pratt submitted his memorandum to Secretary Swanson on March 4, there ensued a detailed discussion of its contents and the proposed shipbuilding program. Swanson must have liked what he heard because he indicated his approval of the 32 vessel request, along with his intention to see that it was included as part of the anticipated administration public works package. 28

The task now before the Department was to see that the Navy's program was forcefully presented to the President to convince him of its merit, practicality, and that it would receive strong support in Congress. To do so, the Navy called upon Carl Vinson. Judging from what transpired in the two weeks that followed, this decision was akin to unleashing a whirlwind.

27 Memorandum from the Chief of Naval Operations to the Secretary of the Navy entitled, "The Navy's Needs," March 24, 1933, A1-3/QN(330324) RG 80, NA.

28 Memorandum from Commander A.B. Court to the Chief of Naval Operations entitled, "History of development of current Naval Building Programs, and effect of these programs on Treaty Strength," July 8, 1933, A1-3/QN(330708), RG 80, NA.
One of the first items on Vinson's agenda was to focus public opinion on this issue to generate popular support for the inclusion of shipbuilding within any forthcoming public works or unemployment relief measure. A major ingredient in the accomplishment of this aim was to energize the Navy League. Calling upon League Vice-President Nathaniel M. Hubbard, Jr., on March 27, Vinson urged efforts to publicize the benefits and the need for the Navy's program. Hubbard's response was both gratifying and prompt. A press release was quickly prepared and, after being cleared by Admiral Land for accuracy, was on its way to 3000 newspaper editors on April 1. Entitled "Employment Plus Security," the release asserted that the "upbuilding of our Navy offers one of the best means of Unemployment Relief and is well worthy of inclusion within The President's Unemployment Relief Bill." Using all the standard arguments, the Navy League claimed that such a course would lead to a "broad spread of employment both geographically and industrially" with "a high percentage of total expenditures being paid as wages to labor." To buttress its case, the League attached the chart prepared by the Navy the year before showing the materials used in shipbuilding and how every state stood to benefit from increased ship construction. Finally,

it was pointed out that building the 30 ships in question would not only help sustain work-starved private shipyards and stimulate the economy, but also enhance national security by eliminating "almost one-third of our 1937 tonnage shortage in under-age ships." 30

Meanwhile, Vinson had not been idle on Capitol Hill. After conferring with Speaker Rainey, Majority Leader Byrns and other administration supporters in the House to elicit their support, he announced to the press on March 31 that he would present the Navy's program to the President the following Tuesday. 31

As announced, Vinson's meeting with President Roosevelt took place on April 4, at which time the Georgia lawmaker set forth the Navy's proposed building program and its underlying rationale. Emerging from the conference, Vinson told waiting newsmen that the President appeared impressed with the possibilities of using naval construction to alleviate unemployment. While he was not convinced that the entire naval construction request would be approved, Vinson concluded on an upbeat note by indicating, "I am

30 Navy League of the United States "Employment Plus Security," April 1933, enclosed in a letter from F.C. Hill to the President on April 3, 1933, OF 18, Miscellaneous Building Folder, FDRL.

31 NYT, April 1, 1933, 1.
entirely satisfied with the conference and hopeful that the plan will be adopted,"\textsuperscript{32}

Despite his professed satisfaction there was no disguising the fact that Vinson had failed to secure a firm commitment from Roosevelt to support the inclusion of shipbuilding within the administration's public works request. But he did not intend to see the matter rest there. To keep pressure on the President and the issue before the public, Vinson held a meeting of the Naval Affairs Committee the following day. During that meeting, he raised the prospect that legislation authorizing the Navy to build up to treaty strength might be submitted to the committee within the next ten days. The bill he had in mind would provide for the construction of light cruisers, destroyers and submarines, the three classes "in which the United States now stands third and in which she will be fifth among the five great powers in 1936 unless Congress acts." Indicating that the President had already seen a rough draft of the measure and that it had the support of some administration leaders, Vinson urged that committee members give its unanimous endorsement of the bill when it came before them for formal consideration. If the committee acted favorably, the chairman seemed confident that the

\textsuperscript{32}Ibid., April 5, 1933, 1.
authorization could be enacted before the close of the current session. After adjourning the meeting, Vinson was off to the Navy Department to discuss the matter further with Secretary Swanson.33

Although no record exists of Vinson's April 5 meeting with the Secretary of the Navy, it appears that Swanson was able to dissuade him from introducing a separate authorization measure. Consequently, when Vinson and several other committee members called upon Secretary Swanson the following day there was no mention of such legislation. Instead the discussion was confined to the Navy's 1933 building program to be financed from unemployment relief funding. Swanson told the assembled Congressmen that the Navy Department would be "very glad" to have $230 million in public works appropriations for shipbuilding. According to the press coverage, there followed the submission by the committee of a general program to use the $230 million to construct 20 destroyers, 4 submarines, 4 light cruisers and 2 aircraft carriers. Secretary Swanson was reported to have indicated that he would take the committee program under consideration, but would withhold judgment on its details until he could consult with the General Board.34

33 I ibid., April 6, 1933.

34 I ibid., April 7, 1933, 3.
If the press accounts of this meeting are to be believed, it is difficult to characterize it other than a public relations exercise. Vinson and Swanson knew full well that the "committee program" had been devised in the Navy Department two weeks prior to the meeting. What is more, the President knew it as Secretary Swanson had formally provided him with a copy of Admiral Pratt's memorandum on April 5, which was then passed on to the Bureau of the Budget. Finally, anyone who read the New York Times article of April 1 knew it. However, having Vinson and the Naval Affairs Committee front for that program was useful in that it insulated the Department and the President from the perception that they were the authors of the plan before public reaction could be determined. Lending substance to this interpretation was Roosevelt's protestation at an April 7th news conference that he had not even considered the inclusion of naval construction. Another important consideration was that congressional initiative made very good copy and ensured media coverage at a time it was badly needed.

In a related development, on April 6 Senator Park Trammell introduced S. 1154 /see appendix 13/, which

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35Franklin D. Roosevelt Press Conferences, April 7, 1933, 1:54 (hereafter cited as FDR Press Conferences).
authorized the shipbuilding necessary to bring the Navy up to treaty strength and to replace overage vessels. The new chairman of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee explained that his bill had a dual purpose—to provide blanket authorization for future regular appropriations, or those associated with public works measures. Companion legislation was introduced in the House of Representatives by Representative Fred Britten on May 3. Britten's bill, H.R. 5479 [see appendix 147], also provided blanket authorization to build up to treaty limits, but differed from S. 1154 in that it directed the President to lay down 2 aircraft carriers, 7 six-inch gun cruisers, 4 destroyer leaders, 20 destroyers, and 9 submarines by December 31, 1933. While neither of these proposals had much chance of enactment, they did represent possible options for pro-Navy forces to consider if efforts to secure the inclusion of naval forces to consider if efforts to secure the inclusion of naval construction within public works legislation failed. In addition, they promoted increased public awareness and acceptance of shipbuilding in the guise of unemployment relief.

While the program advocated by Vinson at the Navy's instigation had not received official sanction during April,

[36NYT, April 7, 1933, 3.]
it was becoming apparent that its formal approval was only a matter of time. By the middle of the month Admiral Land directed that estimates be prepared for the 32 vessels embraced in the first year's increment of the program set forth in Admiral Pratt's memorandum. When this had been accomplished on April 25, the estimates were forwarded to Colonel Donald H. Sawyer, chairman of the Federal Employment Stabilization Board, "it being assumed that board would be temporarily charged with administering the public works provisions of the administration's unemployment relief and industrial recovery legislation when and if enacted into law." Colonel Sawyer, it will be remembered, was a holdover from the previous administration who had earlier been instrumental in placing shipbuilding within the definition of public works. By this action the Navy Department, for the first time, was formally submitting its shipbuilding program for 1933 for administration scrutiny and inclusion within the public works package to be sent to Congress.

Definite confirmation that the Navy had been successful, and the extent of that success was made public on May 1. Leaving a conference at the White House, Secretary of

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37 Memorandum from Commander J.C. Huske to Admiral Emory S. Land, Chief Constructor, entitled "1933 Shipbuilding Program - Inception of and Events leading up to." Emory S. Land Papers, Shipbuilding Data File, 1932-1936, MDLC.
the Navy Swanson told reporters that the President had agreed to include within its public works program $46 million to begin work on 30 warships. It was widely held that Roosevelt's approval had been the reward the Navy had exacted for its acquiescence to the administration's efforts to cut the Department's projected expenditures for fiscal year 1934 by $55 million. In addition, Swanson sought to preempt arguments by pacifist and disarmament advocates by stressing that this program would be reduced or halted in the event the disarmament talks in Geneva produced a new naval limitation agreement.38 This statement was more than just self-serving rhetoric on the part of the President as Roosevelt remained optimistic that something positive and substantial could yet be achieved in Geneva and was even then milling over an initiative to break the deadlock in those negotiations.

Although naval proponents could take heart from the outcome of Secretary Swanson's meeting with the President, nagging doubts remained about how much of Admiral Pratt's recommended program would be included in any public works/unemployment relief legislation. Press accounts tended to heighten this anxiety through garbled and often conflicting reports on the size and composition of the shipbuilding

38NYT, May 2, 1933, 1.
program being considered. Whether this was the result of honest mistakes by well intentioned reporters, or attempts to promote the reconfiguration of the program is not clear, but they did raise the level of uncertainty surrounding administration actions. Uncomfortable with this state of affairs, Vinson sought to dispel such ambiguity through legislative language that would specify the types and numbers of ships to be undertaken through public works funding. In a letter to Marvin H. McIntyre, Secretary to the President, on May 4, Vinson recommended such phraseology and asked that his suggested draft language be brought to the President's attention. As submitted by the Georgia chairman, the naval construction sections would specify the construction of 16 destroyers, 4 destroyer leaders, 4 submarines, 4 light cruisers, 2 aircraft carriers of about 20,000 tons, and 2 gunboats. In effect, this represented an attempt to mandate Admiral Pratt's program and was reminiscent of Vinson's earlier approach in 1932. The sections further provided that up to $46 million would be immediately available for the construction of those vessels and such additional aircraft that may be required. In addition, the Secretary of the Navy was given discretionary authority to use part of that appropriation for the purchase of plans and employment of additional skilled employees needed to carry out the expeditious construction of the above vessels.
Finally, as had become customary, the President was empowered to suspend all or part of the foregoing construction program in the event the United States subsequently became a party to an international agreement requiring the further limitation of naval armament.\textsuperscript{39}

On that same day, however, the President received contrary guidance from the House of Representatives. This time it came in the guise of a personal letter from Congressman Ayres, the chairman of the Naval Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations. While Ayres did not quarrel with the inclusion of shipbuilding within any unemployment relief program proposed by the administration, he questioned the " advisability of proposing definite numbers and types of ships." He believed that such an approach would unduly inhibit the President in attempting to carry out such a program should unforeseen circumstances arise not associated with a new naval limitation agreement. Moreover, specificity like that Vinson had in mind might cause the United States to embark on a naval construction program that was beyond the shipbuilding industry's capacity to execute efficiently and result in wasting taxpayer dollars.

\textsuperscript{39}Representative Carl Vinson to Col. Marvin H. McIntyre, Secretary to the President, May 4, 1933, OF 18, Miscellaneous, FDRL.
He pointed out that the Navy already had approximately $54 million for ship construction and was concerned about how much far beyond "an annual expenditure rate of from fifty-five to sixty million dollars we would be safe in going." Ayres simply did not believe that an increase of $46 million was either possible or prudent. As was the case with Vinson, his Kansas colleague recommended language for inclusion into the administration's forthcoming legislation. It differed from that proposed by Vinson in that it did not specify what vessels would make up the 1934 program, the actual amount of the first year appropriation, or the inclusion of aircraft.40

President Roosevelt graciously acknowledged proffered advice from all quarters regarding the nature and extent of the naval construction provisions, but remained noncommittal on any details beyond the probably funding of shipbuilding through public works appropriations.41 Thus, uncertainty would persist until the formal introduction of the President's proposal on May 17.

It should also be emphasized that however much the naval aspects of unemployment relief may have personally

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40 Representative W.A.Ayres to the President, May 4, 1933, OF 18, Miscellaneous, FDRL.
41 FDR News Conference, May 12, 1933, 1:2555.
appealed to the President, they were neither the only, nor a dominant factor in the sequence of decisions that produced that National Industrial Recovery Act. As Frank Friedel has observed, the N.I.R.A. "evolved out of Roosevelt's response to a multitude of pressures." 42

Administration efforts to draft legislative proposals that would promote industrial recovery and ease unemployment were marked by diversity and decentralization. As usual, Roosevelt gave multiple and overlapping authorizations for these drafting efforts. Three primary drafting groups were created along with several efforts all working independently and often at cross purposes. It was not until May 10 that Roosevelt decided to incorporate all such legislation in one proposal. As a result, the National Industrial Recovery Act, as finally drafted, had three major components.

The first sanctioned trade association self-regulation of the various industries through the use of codes of fair practices enforced by some unspecified penalties. In this manner, industries would avoid unfair competition and be able to fix prices at a profitable level.

Also included in this component were the labor provisions contained in Section 7(a) "that employees shall have the right to organize the bargain collectively through

42Friedel, Launching of the New Deal, 422.
through representatives of their own choosing." Besides representing an event of transcendent importance to the rise of the American labor movement, this provision insured labor support of the measure.

A second component of the bill had to do with new taxes to raise the $220 million needed to service the borrowing associated with the public works program contained in the bill. As ever, taxes were an extremely sensitive issue and Roosevelt allowed himself to be persuaded by his legislative lieutenants to leave the determination of the specific tax provisions to Congress.

While the Navy would be affected by the manufacturing codes and labor provisions set forth in the National Industrial Recovery Act, its primary concern was the $3.3 billion public works appropriation. Roosevelt had serious reservations about quick, heavy spending via massive public works, but political expediency forced him to capitulate. The figure $3.3 billion was derived from two sources. It represented the amount Bureau of the Budget experts felt could be financed and the minimum necessary to fund the available projects designated by Senator Wagner. If the President had been compelled to embrace a public works program of this size, he sought to make it as palatable as possible by ensuring that a specific shipbuilding authorization was contained in the legislative proposal sent to Congress.
As originally introduced by Congressman Doughton, chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, the National Industrial Recovery Bill (H.R. 5755) authorized "if in the opinion of the President it seems desirable, the construction of naval vessels within the terms and/or limits established by the London Naval Treaty of 1930 and/or aircraft required therefor." This constituted a blanket authorization for the President to request such appropriations as he deemed necessary to undertake naval construction allowed within treaty limits.

Examination of this section reveals that Roosevelt chose to compromise between the approaches recommended by Representatives Vinson and Ayres. He went along with Ayres to the extent that he did not specifically mention the number and types of vessels authorized or the amount to be appropriated in fiscal year 1934 for their construction. This gave him more flexibility and those details could as easily be specified in an Executive Order issued after enactment. He did, however, retain Vinson's language authorizing the manufacture of additional aircraft beyond the existing 1000 plane limit that would be needed to outfit the new vessels. In fact, the language used corresponded closely to that originally recommended by Vinson to Admiral Land in March.
Despite assurances that the President would include a shipbuilding authorization within his legislative proposal, the Navy Department was not taking any chances. Senators Wagner and Trammell and Representative Vinson were alerted to see that such language was indeed contained in the bill and were prepared to introduce an appropriate amendment should anything go awry. Fortunately such precautions proved unnecessary and once they had assured themselves that an acceptable naval construction authorization was included in the public works section, naval advocates in Congress assumed a low profile during the subsequent consideration of the measure to avoid drawing undue attention to this aspect of the bill.

43 Memorandum from Commander A.B. Court to the Chief of Naval Operations entitled, "History of development of current Naval Building Programs, and the effect of these programs on Treaty Strength," July 8, 1933, A1-3/QU(330708), RG 80, NA.

44 Carl Vinson was not prepared to let the absence of any specific reference to the numbers and types of ships included in the public works program go unchallenged. Speaking to the press, he indicated that $46 million would be allocated in fiscal year 1934 for the initial costs associated with the construction of 34 warships--6 cruisers, 16 destroyers, 4 destroyer leaders, 4 submarines, 2 aircraft carriers and 2 gunboats. It is not clear where the additional 2 cruisers came from, or if they represent garbled reporting. In any event, Vinson wanted to make it clear that he expected to see Admiral Pratt's program implemented. NYT, May 19, 1933, 1.
This proved to be a very successful tactic as the naval construction provisions came through House and Senate consideration virtually unchallenged. In fact, they were only questioned seriously twice. During House debate on May 23, 1933, Rep. Mapes (Republican; Michigan) expressed his incredulity about the authority being given to the President for naval building: "Who ever heard of conferring such power on any one man? These are national policies which should be determined by Congress." The next time attention was drawn to the naval provisions was when the Senate took up H.R. 5755 on June 12. At that time the Navy's long-time nemesis, Senator William H. King (Democrat; Utah) argued against the inclusion of authority to construct naval vessels and aircraft as it would jeopardize the success of the 1933 session of the Geneva Disarmament Conference convening at that time.

Nevertheless, these efforts could hardly be construed as being serious threats to the survival of the naval construction provisions. In part, this was because the public works portion of the National Industrial Recovery Act was carefully put together to insure as broad a base of support

45CR, May 25, 1933, 4192.
46CR, June 12, 1933, 5765.
within Congress as possible. Excluding shipbuilding would have thrown this arrangement out of kilter and jeopardized the whole bill. Besides, it was considered bad form to have one's hand buried to the wrist in the pork barrel while trying to use the other to rap the knuckles of one of your colleagues. After engaging in a great deal of bickering and numerous extraneous amendments, Congress approved the measure and President Roosevelt signed it into law on June 15, 1933.

Anticipating the enactment of the National Industrial Recovery Act, the Navy had already prepared final estimates for the appropriations necessary to carry out its specific ship and aircraft construction recommendations. On June 13, Admiral Land forwarded to the Secretary of the Navy a combined estimate of $253,383,000—$238,020,000 for shipbuilding and $15,262,000 for aircraft procurement.\(^{47}\) Two days later Secretary Swanson submitted these figures to the President for inclusion in his forthcoming Executive Order implementing the provisions of the N.I.R.A.\(^{48}\)

President Roosevelt's approval of $238 million for the construction of the 32 ships earlier set forth in Admiral Pratt's memorandum was immediately forthcoming and

\(^{47}\) Admiral E.S. Land to the Secretary of the Navy, June 13, 1933, Al-3(CC), RG 19, NA.

\(^{48}\) Secretary of the Navy to President Roosevelt, June 15, 1933, CNO Spindle File (1933), RG 80, NA.
permitted Secretary Swanson to announce this decision to the press on June 15.\textsuperscript{49} The President formally confirmed this the following day at a news conference and with his signing of Executive Order No. 6174.\textsuperscript{50} It was only learned on June 16, that the Navy had been partially successful in securing N.I.R.A. funding for aircraft procurement. While the President seemed willing to allot $9,362,000 for the acquisition of 290 aircraft, he deleted $5,900,000 for 55 patrol planes the Navy requested.\textsuperscript{51}

Efforts now focused on expediting the actual construction of the N.I.R.A. warships. On June 19, it was announced that bids would be opened at the Navy Department at 12:00 noon, Wednesday, July 26, 1933 for the 32 vessels involved, as well as those for 4 destroyers from the 1916 program and an 8-inch cruiser authorized in 1929. In accordance with N.I.R.A.'s ostensible purpose to alleviate conditions in the shipbuilding industry, bids from private yards would be solicited for the construction of 2 aircraft carriers, 1 8-inch gun cruiser, 1 6-inch gun cruiser, 4 destroyer leaders, 7 destroyers and 2 submarines. If satisfactory bids

\textsuperscript{49}\textit{Navy Press Releases, June 15, Press Release Files (1933), RG 80, NA; NYT, June 15, 1933, 1.}

\textsuperscript{50}\textit{FDR News Conferences, June 16, 1933, 1:399.}

\textsuperscript{51}\textit{Navy Press Release, June 16, 1933, Press Release Files, (1933), RG 80, NA; NYT, June 17, 1933, 3.}
were received, private shipyards would receive contracts for roughly half of the total program and thereby create some 14,000 new jobs. Acting Secretary of the Navy Harry L. Roosevelt also indicated Government yards would be immediately awarded contracts for the completion of 2 submarines and 2 gunboats. Altogether, the Navy Yards were expected to increase their work force by 12,000 employees as a result of the 16 N.I.R.A. ships they would receive.52

As scheduled, the bids were opened on July 26, with 12 firms competing for N.I.R.A. shipbuilding contracts, including the "big seven" private yards.53 After evaluation within the Navy Department, Admiral Standley, the new Chief of Naval Operations, and Admiral Land traveled to Hyde Park on August 2, to get the President's personal approval of the recommended contract awards.54 The next day, the Navy Department announced that contracts for 53 vessels had been awarded with the division between private

52Ibid., June 19, 1933, Navy Press Release File (1933), RG 80, NA.

53Ibid., July 26, 1933, Navy Press Release File (1933), RG 80, NA; NYT, July 27, 1933, 6.

54NYT, August 3, 1933, 11.
To put this all in perspective, it should be pointed out that the award of 21 new shipbuilding contracts awarded to private shipyards represented a threefold increase in the number of vessels under construction in private yards at the time. Moreover, 4 vessels were being allotted to private firms not performing any ongoing work for the Navy. Although the increase was not so dramatic in the case of Government yards, a hundred fifty percent growth was a substantial improvement. In all, the naval vessels under construction would double as a result of the N.I.R.A. program and this increase represented the greatest stimulus to the shipbuilding industry since World War I.

55Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, Newport News, Virginia--2 aircraft carriers; Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation, Quincy, Massachusetts--1 8-inch gun cruiser, and 4 destroyer-leaders; New York Shipbuilding Company, Camden, New Jersey--2 6-inch gun cruisers, and 4 destroyer leaders; Electric Boat Company, Groton, Connecticut--2 submarines; Bath Iron Works Corporation, Bath, Maine--2 destroyers; Federal Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, Kearny, New Jersey--2 destroyers; and United Dry Docks, Inc., New York, New York--2 destroyers comprised the 21 vessels built at private yards.

The following vessels were allocated to Government yards: Portsmouth Navy Yard, Portsmouth, New Hampshire--2 submarines; Boston Navy Yard, New York--1 6-inch gun cruiser and 1 gunboat; Philadelphia Navy Yard, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania--1 6-inch gun cruiser and 2 destroyers; Norfolk Navy Yard, Norfolk, Virginia--2 destroyers; Charleston, South Carolina--1 gunboat; Puget Sound Navy Yard, Puget Sound, Washington--2 destroyers, and Mare Island Navy Yard, Mare Island, California--2 destroyers. Navy Press Release, Aug. 3, 1933, Navy Press Release File (1933), RG 80, NA.

56Navy Press Release, June 19, 1933, Navy Press Release File (1933), RG 80, NA.
Given the state of the economy and the lure of government business, it is not surprising that a fierce scramble for Navy contracts ensured. Thus, when the Navy proceeded to make its awards exclusively to the "big seven" private shipyards, allegations surfaced that this was the result of collusion among established firms and favoritism by the Navy Department. The most serious of these charges was levelled by none other than Senator Trammell. Alarmed by what he believed were inordinately high bids on cruisers and the way bids were submitted among the competing firms, he wrote to the President and Secretary of the Navy on August 1, raising the possibility of collusion and requesting that the bids be rejected. Senator Trammell's primary motive, however, was to give Gulf Industries, Inc., of Pensacola, Florida, an opportunity to bid on these vessels. Laboring under a cloud of suspicion and public association with the "merchants of death", Trammell's charges against private shipbuilders seemed more plausible than they deserved to be.

Speaking off the record to reporters at Hyde Park, President Roosevelt derided Trammell's claims. Referring to the Senator as "old man Trammell," Roosevelt told the assembled newsmen that the whole thing was a transparent

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57 Senator Park Trammell to the Secretary of the Navy, August, 1, 1933, FS/L4-3(330801), RG 80, NA.
effort to get "this Gulf State Shipbuilding Company going down there at Pensacola." He went on to point out that "all they have got down there is a war time plant which is covered with grass and going to wrack and ruin." Thus, if Gulf were awarded contracts, they could not be executed until the physical plant and associated facilities were either upgraded or built from scratch at the taxpayers expense. 58

Following up on Senator Trammell's charges, Admiral Standley reported to the Secretary of the Navy on August 3 that they were based on hearsay and totally without foundation. 59 Formally responding to Senator Trammell on August 9, Secretary Swanson indicated that his allegations had been carefully investigated and that "there is no foundation in fact for the accusations contained in your letter and accordingly no further action will be taken." Moreover, Swanson explained that the bid by Gulf Industries, Inc., "was rejected because a survey of the plant indicated that this company was not in a position to undertake construction of the vessels upon which bids were submitted." 60

58FDR News Conferences, August 2, 1933, 2:122.

59Admiral W.H. Standley to the Secretary of the Navy, April 3, 1933, FS/L4-3(330801), RG 80, NA.

60Secretary of the Navy to Senator Trammell, August 9, 1933, FS/L4-3(330801), RG 80, NA.
Trammell did not contest the Secretary's findings and lamely assured him that "I have every confidence in you and our most able and Patriotic President, as well as the Department in general." 61

What is most instructive about this unfortunate episode is that it reveals clearly the low esteem in which Park Trammell was held. His motive in raising the issue of possible collusion was transparently obvious to the Department, White House, and his colleagues in Congress. It merely reinforced the prevailing view that Trammell's concern about naval affairs did not transcend what was expedient in terms of Florida politics. The affair also served to underscore again the fact that Carl Vinson represented the Navy's most credible spokesman in Congress.

With Trammell's challenge summarily disposed of and other technical details worked out, the Secretary of the Navy signed the contracts for the 17 vessels to be built in private shipyards on September 1, 1933. 62 From this point on, the major problems the Navy would face in carrying out the N.I.R.A. program involved the adjustments necessary to conform to the new fair practices codes for the shipbuilding industry and the President's desire to ease unemployment as

61 Senator Trammell to the Secretary of the Navy, August 10, OF 18, FDRL.

62 Navy Press Release, September 1, 1933, Navy Press Release File, (1933), RG 80, NA.
rapidly as possible. The challenges they presented were formidable, but not insurmountable as it turned out.\footnote{Memorandum from the Secretary of the Navy to the President, November 6, 1934, entitled "Naval Construction—Expenditures during first year of construction of account of 37 vessels of the 1933 program," Shipbuilding Data File, 1932-1936, Emory S. Land Papers, MDLC.}

Paralleling efforts to place the N.I.R.A. vessels under contract was an attempt by the Navy Department and its allies on Capitol Hill to secure additional public works funding for the procurement of naval aircraft and fleet modernization projects. As early as June 21, Admiral Parsons submitted an estimate for these items to Col. Donald H. Sawyer, Administrator of the National Recovery Act. In addition to the $238 million approved by the President for shipbuilding, Parsons requested $15 million for the acquisition of new aircraft and $77.5 million for the reconditioning of various warships.\footnote{Admiral E.S. Land to the Bureaus of Yards and Docks, Ordnance, Engineering, Aeronautics and the Navy Budget Officer, June 21, 1933, Al-1(2), RG 72, NA.} As noted previously, the $15 million for aviation was divided between those aircraft needed to outfit the new vessels under construction and patrol planes. At the time Parsons made his request it was believed that President Roosevelt was willing to allot $9.4 million for the procurement of new aircraft, but opposed
granting $6 million for patrol planes. The $77.5 million was primarily designed to modernize various battleships, but virtually all classes would benefit in one way or another from 15 restoration projects.65

Admiral Parsons' request was followed by a formal submission by the Acting Secretary of the Navy on June 26, stressing the need for the $77.5 million allocation for fleet modernization to maintain a high state of readiness.66 Receiving no decision on the Department's request, Secretary Swanson announced on July 5 that he would take the matter up with the President.67 As if on cue, Carl Vinson wrote the Secretary of the Navy the following day in support of use of N.I.R.A. money to undertake the rehabilitation of the units of the active fleet as it would "provide immediately a very large volume of work in the Navy Yards and in many private industries."68

Armed with his own data and Vinson's letter, the Secretary of the Navy endeavored to secure the President's approval, but was unsuccessful and the issue was held in abeyance.

65 Acting Secretary of the Navy H.L. Roosevelt to Col. Donald H. Sawyer, Administrator of the National Recovery Act, June 26, 1933, Recovery Agencies (1933), RG 80 NA.

66 Ibid.

67 NYT, July 6, 1933, 1.

68 Representative Carl Vinson to the Secretary of the Navy, July 6, 1933, Navy, Alterations of Vessels, RG 51, NA.
The Department attempted to raise this question again in a letter to the President on October 16 with an escalated pricetag of $93 million.\(^{69}\) Adeptly deflecting this request, Roosevelt replied that he felt it was pretty late to get any more money out of public works, but suggested that the Department take this matter up with Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes, the new Federal Emergency Administrator of Public Works following Col. Sawyer's departure.\(^{70}\) The Navy duly submitted its request on November 1, but no further action on it was forthcoming.\(^{71}\)

Following the Navy's initial rebuff in July regarding N.I.R.A. funding for fleet modernization projects, the Department's primary emphasis was shifted to securing public works money for aircraft procurement. After Secretary Ickes took over as Federal Emergency Administrator of Public Works, it became painfully evident that the earlier "understanding" on the use of N.I.R.A. funding on aircraft acquisition no longer obtained. Relishing his reputation as a curmudgeon and looking upon the Navy requests with a jaundiced eye, Ickes presented a similar problem in the field of public

\(^{69}\)Acting Secretary of the Navy H.L. Roosevelt to the President, October 16, 1933, OF 18/1/Navy, August-October, 1933, FDRL.

\(^{70}\)The President to the Acting Secretary of the Navy, October 19, 1933, OF 18/1/Navy, August-October, 1933, FDRL.

\(^{71}\)NYT, November 2, 1933, 1.
works allocations that the Department experienced with Budget Director Douglas on regular appropriations. Quite simply, when it came to prying dollars out of "Uncle Harold's" hands, the Department and its congressional allies had met an adversary worthy of their mettle. They attempted to go through normal channels and they tried to backdoor Ickes by going through the President, but neither approach met with success.

The impasse was finally broken on October 19 when the President indicated that public works monies might be available for essential Army and Navy aviation projects. Upon the Navy Department prepared a revised request and submitted it to Secretary Ickes on October 23. Broken down among four major projects, the Navy asked for the procurement of 350 replacement aircraft, 52 patrol planes and 270 aircraft for new ships, along with the modernization of existing assets at a combined cost of nearly $40 million. Ickes did not waste any time bringing the Navy back to reality. After a meeting at the White House, he replied that same day advising the Acting Secretary of the Navy that

72 The President to the Acting Secretary of the Navy, October 19, 1933, OF 18/1/Navy, August-October, 1933, FDRL.

73 Acting Secretary of the Navy H.L. Roosevelt to Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes, October 23, 1933, Al-3/VZ(330811), RG 80, NA.
the President had approved "an allocation of $15,000,000 for aircraft construction, to be divided between the Army and the Navy on a 50-50 basis." The Department's revised request was forthcoming on October 30 and outlined the use of the Navy's $7.5 million allocation for the procurement of 130 new aircraft and related equipment, along with selected modernization projects. Ickes approved the Navy's recommendations on November 15 and 1933 came to a close with the Department receiving N.I.R.A. allocations totalling $245.5 million for the construction of 32 vessels and 130 aircraft.

Weighing the Alternative

Overall, the use of N.I.R.A. funding for shipbuilding and aircraft construction had to be considered a highly successful and very innovative approach given the political and economic realities in 1933. Increasing the fiscal year 1934 naval construction program from 5 to 37 ships had a dramatic and far-reaching effect on the U.S. shipbuilding industrial

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74Secretary of Interior Harold L. Ickes to Acting Secretary of the Navy, H.L. Roosevelt, October 23, 1933, Al-3/VZ(330811), RG 80, NA.

75Acting Secretary of the Navy H.L. Roosevelt to Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes, October 30, 1933, Al-1(2), RG 72, NA.

76Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes to the Secretary of the Navy, November 15, 1933, Al-3/VZ(330811), RG 80, NA.
base. It compelled both private and Government yards to substantially upgrade their production facilities and drastically expand their work forces. By itself, the N.I.R.A. program would not cure the Navy's material deficiencies, but it could provide the momentum that would be important to the success of future efforts to sustain shipbuilding at a higher level. After increasing their capability private and Navy yards would be very sensitive to any significant cutbacks in existing production levels. Likewise, their suppliers from associated industries would have a vested interest in seeing that shipbuilding activity remained constant. In turn, the political and economic forces generated by the infusion of N.I.R.A. money would place a great deal of pressure upon the President and Congress to approve further naval construction programs. In a very real sense, N.I.R.A. greased the skids for the enactment of a future comprehensive, multi-year shipbuilding authorization—if it did not in fact make such action inevitable—by establishing a much larger and more powerful national constituency.

N.I.R.A.'s success insured that there would be no lack of claimants seeking credit for the authorship of the shipbuilding provisions of that Act. Chief among them was President Franklin D. Roosevelt himself. In a gleeful aside to Secretary of the Navy Swanson, Roosevelt later
observed, "Claude, we got away with murder that time."77

While the President's role in this episode should not be
denigrated, it would be more accurate to say that he pulled
the trigger after Admirals Parsons and Land loaded the
weapon; Secretary Swanson cocked the hammer, Senator Wagner
placed the primer and Carl Vinson pointed the barrel.

The record is clear, however, that Carl Vinson was not
the originator of the idea of using public works appropri­
ations to fund shipbuilding. As noted previously, such a
concept ran counter to his basic attitudes on the role of
government. Vinson only embraced this approach when he
became convinced that there was no alternative means through
which the Navy could acquire badly needed warships in 1933.
Once he entered the lists, however, he made his presence
felt. Indefatigable, Vinson worked at three different
levels during the formulation and congressional considera­
tion of N.I.R.A. naval construction provisions. Initially,
he assisted Admirals Parsons and Land in developing a con­
sensus within the Navy Department for their scheme to use
public works funds for shipbuilding on a grand scale. Once

this had been accomplished, he was at the forefront of the Department's efforts to secure President Roosevelt's approval of this approach and its incorporation within the administration's unemployment relief program. Working individually or through his committee, Vinson kept constant pressure on the President and saw that the issue was given continuous coverage by the press. When the President's proposal came before Congress, he labored behind the scenes to see that the naval provisions were included, that they were not subsequently diluted and that expeditious House consideration was given to H.R. 5755. Following its enactment, Vinson continued his efforts to see that the Navy received as much funding as possible for shipbuilding and aircraft construction, while at the same time participating in the ill-fated effort to apply public works monies for fleet modernization projects. By any measure, he had done yeoman work throughout the process and deserves as much credit as anyone for the successful enactment and expeditious implementation of the naval provisions of the National Industrial Recovery Act.

At the same time Carl Vinson was less susceptible than many of his Navy counterparts to illusions about the adequacy of the N.I.R.A. approach, or the uncertainties associated with its continued use. Despite the early success
the Navy enjoyed in securing the allotment of $238 million, subsequent efforts were only able to garner $7.5 million. After Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes took over as Administrator of the Federal Emergency Relief Agency, the additional dollars became progressively harder to come by. While many in the Department continued to bask in the warmth of their initial success, Vinson was better able to appreciate the difficulties ahead and had less reason for believing that N.I.R.A. could serve as a consistent substitute for regular authorization and appropriations legislation. It had been expedient to adopt this course in 1933, but attempting to forecast beyond the three year funding period for the expenditures of the initial $245.5 million was fraught with uncertainty. Economic recovery, international developments, changes in existing political alignments and a host of other developments could profoundly impact on efforts to perpetuate this approach.

Moreover, there is little to suggest that Carl Vinson felt that long-term reliance upon public works funds to finance shipbuilding would be necessary. He had every reason to believe that N.I.R.A. would serve as a pump primer for more orthodox legislation. The pressure it would generate for the continuation of ship construction at enhanced levels would become politically and economically irresistible. Although this "front-end loading" of the
N.I.R.A. program was a response to the economic exigencies of 1933, it would have a much longer-term impact on the shipbuilding industry and the Navy's future program. Carl Vinson must have felt that it provided the momentum needed to clear the way for the enactment of a comprehensive, multi-year naval authorization during the next session of Congress. Notwithstanding the vessels laid down as a result of the N.I.R.A. program, 177,000 tons and at least 92 additional vessels remained to be authorized to bring the Navy up to treaty strength. With the scheduled 1936 naval limitation conference fast approaching, such an authorization would serve to strengthen the negotiating stance of the United States at those talks. Finally, those firms and areas favorably affected by the N.I.R.A. program would be anxious to see those benefits continued and a logical means to that end was a steady, substantial naval construction program such an authorization would provide for.

Furthermore, it is likely that Carl Vinson had serious reservations about the continuation of the N.I.R.A. approach stemming from personal and institutional considerations. He was never very comfortable about the use of public works and unemployment relief as a rationale for naval construction. In his mind, the desirability and prudence for maintaining a steady shipbuilding program was justified because the
United States needed a Navy second to none to insure national security, protect its vital interest around the world and safeguard American commerce. That the N.I.R.A. was expedient in 1933 did not persuade him that approach should necessarily be pursued thereafter.

Institutionally, such an approach held little charm as it took congressional consideration of naval construction programs out of his committee. Carl Vinson and his colleagues were not inclined to let the Ways and Means Committee take the lead on shipbuilding legislation except in exceptional circumstances. Moreover, the rising expectations and increased interest in naval construction following in the wake of the N.I.R.A. program would actually increase the leverage that the Naval Affairs Committee could exert during the consideration of future authorizations. Vinson may have been personally confident that he could maintain his influence during the post-N.I.R.A. period, but the anxiety of other committee members would inevitably create pressure on him to protect and preserve the committee's jurisdiction. And he must have been aware that whatever leverage he possessed as a spokesman and co-conspirator in the N.I.R.A. process would be substantially enhanced if his committee became the principal legislative forum for future shipbuilding programs.
In sum, 1933 had been a satisfying, if unusual, year for Carl Vinson. He had been able to play a major role in enacting the largest shipbuilding program since World War I. Moreover, he could derive satisfaction from witnessing the building of a substantial and enduring national consensus that augered well for the continuation of naval construction. Not content to rest on his laurels, Vinson eagerly looked forward to exploiting the N.I.R.A. legacy toward the enactment of a comprehensive, multi-year shipbuilding authorization bill in 1934.
CHAPTER VI
BUILDING A TREATY NAVY

Admiral William H. Standley was astonished. Reexamining the copy of the January 9, 1934 Congressional Record just given him by Admiral Land, the Chief of Naval Operations could see that the legislative proposal he had been drafting to build up the Navy to treaty strength had been introduced as the "Vinson Bill."

"Uh oh, Jerry!" he exclaimed, "What's Senator Trammell going to think about this?"

Flashing his infectious grin, Admiral Land replied, "He's going to think we double-crossed him."

Standley quickly got the Chairman of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee on the phone.

"Senator," he said, "Something came up that you are not going to like very much. I sent a copy of a bill to build a Treaty Navy, that we've been preparing here in my office, down to Carl Vinson to look over and he introduced it in the House yesterday as the Vinson Bill. Trying to steal the show from you, I guess."

"That so?" Senator Trammell responded flatly.
"Yes sir," Standley went on, "But I'll tell you what I've done. A copy of that bill is on the way to your office by special messenger right now. If you act fast, you ought to be able to get it in the hopper before the Senate meets today and have your name on it too." 1

For the time being Senator Trammell demurred, but there is little doubt that Vinson's ploy galled him. Unlike his Georgia Colleague, he had introduced a shipbuilding authorization in 1933 and felt that he should have top billing in any legislative initiative during the Second Session of the 73rd Congress.

Such was Admiral Standley's account of the origins of H.R. 6604 or the Vinson-Trammell Act as it later became known. Admiral Land had a different story to tell:

I spent a few weeks of my naval career in the office of Mr. Carl Vinson...we had some expert bill writers in Mr. Vinson's office, and I knew about the types of ships we wanted. Mr. Vinson supervised the combination, It was the Vinson-Trammell Bill...Mr. Trammell put his name to it but Mr. Vinson actually wrote it... 2

The disparity between the two accounts is too great to have not been the result of a deliberate fabrication. As


will become apparent, Admiral Land was "mistaken" and Admiral Standley was probably being less than candid. In fact, the origins of the Vinson-Trammell Bill were not so dramatic, but the events leading up to its introduction are not without interest.

"Vinson's" Bill

That Carl Vinson would sponsor some kind of naval authorization bill during the Second Session of the 73rd Congress was almost a foregone conclusion. In the waning days of the previous Congress, he had announced his intention of doing so on the floor of the House. As was explained earlier, Vinson was unable to keep this pledge because of the special circumstances surrounding the first session and his decision to focus his efforts on the enactment of the naval provisions of the National Industrial Recovery Act. He did briefly brandish a separate authorization in early April, but this was done primarily to maintain the pressure on the President to include shipbuilding in the administration's public works package. The later enactment of the N.I.R.A. program and the expanded constituency it created for shipbuilding made the renewal of Vinson's efforts to secure passage of an authorization bill in the next session almost a certainty.

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3CR, February 22, 1933, 4720-4723.
In addition, those wishing to examine the provisions of H.R. 6604 [see appendix 17] would find enough similarities to the bills Vinson sponsored in 1932 to support his claim for authorship. Like its predecessors, H.R. 6604 was primarily a replacement bill aimed at addressing the problem of bloc obsolescence of destroyers and submarines. Consequently, it authorized replacement tonnage in those categories of 99,200 and 35,530, respectively, along with 15,000 tons for a carrier to replace the aging LANGLEY. Moreover, Section 2 contained an unobtrusive proviso which, in effect, was an open ended authorization to replace any other vessels that might become obsolete during the life of the program. While this would apply to a number of categories, its primary objective was to permit replacement of capital ships. The London Treaty prohibited the laying down of any new dreadnoughts, but when it expired in 1937 many American battleships would be obsolete. Conscious of the controversy associated with the continuing utility of these vessels, and the uncertainty whether the battleship holiday would be extended by the scheduled 1936 naval limitation conference,

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Navy proponents were anxious to avoid making their construction a prominent feature of the bill. As ever, the last section contained the obligatory escape clause allowing the President to modify the program in the event that the upcoming naval arms limitation conference produced a new treaty making this necessary. Few naval experts believed that anything significant could be achieved at the conference, but there was general recognition that this declaration was necessary to make the bill more politically palatable. Those more sanguine about the prospects of naval limitation felt that American determination to embark on a major naval construction program would induce the other maritime powers to agree to further reductions in order to avoid a naval race with the world's richest nation.

The main difference between H.R. 6604 and the earlier measures was the conspicuous absence of any mention of specific annual increments or mandated deadlines for the completion of the program to insure executive compliance. However, one really did not have to look any further than the election of a sympathetic, Democratic President to discover sufficient reason for this departure. After witnessing Roosevelt's expeditious implementation of the N.I.R.A. naval provisions, Vinson apparently had few qualms about reverting to a blanket authorization granting the President broad discretion over the execution of the
replacement program contained in his bill.

In fact, however, the more direct antecedents to H.R. 6604 were S. 1154 and H.R. 5479. \cite{See appendixes 13 and 14} introduced respectively by Senator Trammell on April 6, and Congressman Britten on May 3, 1933. Trammell's bill granted blanket authorization for the construction of such replacement tonnage as was necessary to maintain the U.S. fleet at treaty strength in underage vessels. Moreover, it authorized the additional construction of 2 aircraft carriers, 7 flying deck cruisers and the aircraft needed to equip them. In all, the bill envisioned the construction of 132 vessels at an estimated cost of three quarter of a billion dollars.\footnote{Chiefs of the Bureaus of Construction and Repair and Engineering to the Chief of Naval Operations, May 17, 1933; Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics to the Chief of Naval Operations, May 23, 1933; Al-3/Al8(330510), RG 80, NA.} While also providing blanket authorization for construction to build the Navy up to treaty limits and replace overage vessels, Britten's proposal differed in that it specified a 1934 building program of 2 aircraft carriers, 7 6-inch gun cruisers, 4 destroyer leaders, 20 destroyers and 9 submarines. Reminiscent of Vinson's earlier bills; Britten placed cost ceilings on each category of vessel to limit total expenditures to $305 million.
Following their introduction, both bills were routinely referred to the Navy Department for official comment. Moving with dispatch, the Bureaus of Construction and Repair, Engineering and Aeronautics suggested a number of minor changes and recommended enactment of the two measures. Although the Secretary of the Navy received Bureau endorsements on May 23, he waited until June 5 before sending the bills on to the General Board for further study. Secretary Swanson's hesitancy seems to have been the product of two considerations--a belief Congress would not be able to take up these measures before adjournment and a fear that their consideration would detract from efforts to enact the National Industrial Recovery Act. Thus, by the time the Board reported back to the Secretary on July 19, Congress had been out of session for over a month and the bills largely superseded by the implementation of the N.I.R.A. shipbuilding program. With characteristic understatement, the General Board observed that "it is apparent that an extensive revision of the detailed provisions of the bills would be necessary before further Congressional consideration." Consequently, the Board had no further comment on them, but suggested that the N.I.R.A. program should be "supplemented

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6Secretary of the Navy to the General Board, June 5, 1933, Al-3/Al8(330506, RG, NA.
by permanent authorization in some form for the construc-
tion of vessels for the Navy and their aircraft up to the
limits authorized by the London Treaty." 7 There the matter
rested for the next two months despite further expressions
of interest by the House and Senate Naval Affairs Committees
for formal Department views. 8

During that intervening period, the Navy sought to
find a way to use those measures to develop a legislative
vehicle providing the supplemental authorization referred to
by the General Board. By mid-September the Department began
to vigorously press for such legislation. In separate arti-
cles in the Marine News that month, Secretary Swanson and
Admiral Standley stressed the need for a building program
to complement N.I.R.A. construction and called for its
enactment in the next session of Congress. 9 The Navy's atti-
tude was further clarified on September 21, when the Chief
of Naval Operations responded to a letter from the Los
Angeles Junior Chamber of Commerce on that subject. Writing

7Chairman of the General Board to the Secretary of the
Navy, July 19, 1933, G.B. No. 420-2, Serial No. 1622,
General Board Records, NOA.

8Judge Advocate General to the Chief of Naval Opera-
tions, August 1, 1933, A1-3/A18(330506), RG 80, NA.

9Secretary of the Navy Claude A. Swanson, "The Navy and
Shipbuilding," 29; and Admiral William H. Standley, "Our
to Mr. E. Richard West, Admiral Standley advised him that:

It now appears that the Navy Department will recommend to Congress the passage of two acts; one authorizing the President to build the Navy up to the limits prescribed for it by the treaties to which this country is a signatory and to maintain it at that strength in all respects in combatant vessels, auxiliary vessels, aircraft, personnel and equipment.  

To that end, on September 29, 1933, Admiral Standley recommended that the General Board reexamine pending legislation with an eye toward recommending a draft proposal to bring the Navy up to treaty limits in underage vessels and providing for the construction of various auxiliary vessels. Specifically, these programs would include 1 aircraft carrier, 3 6-inch gun cruisers, 5 destroyer leaders, 60 destroyers, and 34,500 tons of submarines. In addition, Standley envisioned an auxiliary building program to lay down 10 gunboats, 4 destroyer tenders, 2 submarine tenders, 4 aircraft tenders, 2 repair ships, and 4 store ships. Enactment of such a program, Standley believed, would comprehensively address the current and foreseeable needs of a treaty navy.

Responding on October 13, the General Board pointed out that the exact characteristics and displacement of future

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10 Admiral William H. Standley to Mr. E. Richard West, Vice President, Region #9, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Los Angeles, California, September 21, 1933, A1-3/A14-7(330921), RG 80, NA.

11 Chief of Naval Operations to the Secretary of the Navy, September 29, 1933, A1-3/A18(330506), RG 80, NA.
destroyers and submarines could not be foreseen and recommended "that a bill, drawn in general terms, without specification of characteristics, be introduced, authorizing the construction of: 15,200 tons of aircraft carriers; 99,200 tons of destroyers; and 35,462 tons of submarines." On the question of auxiliaries, the General Board was emphatic "that no attempt to obtain authorization for the construction of auxiliaries and gunboats by made until after authority for the construction of the treaty limited classes had been granted by Congress."\(^{12}\)

Although the General Board recommendations were not acted upon for almost two months, the Department's advocacy of a comprehensive authorization proposal to supplement the N.I.R.A. program grew more pronounced. Indeed, a call for such legislation became a prominent feature of Navy Day speeches delivered by the Assistant Secretary of the Navy and the Chief of Naval Operations carried on national radio hookups.\(^{13}\) Furthermore, Admiral Standley sought to buttress

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\(^{12}\)The General Board to the Secretary of the Navy, October 13, 1933, G.B. 420-2, Serial No. 1629, General Board Records, NOA.

\(^{13}\)Speech by the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Henry L. Roosevelt, over the National Broadcasting System, Blue Network, from 11:30 to 12:00 midnight, October 27, 1933; Speech by Admiral William H. Standley, Chief of Naval Operations, over Columbia Broadcasting System, Yankee Network, from 10:45 to 11:00 p.m., October 26, 1933; and Speech by.
such an approach with some legislative research. At Standley's behest, Commander A.B. Court prepared a memo showing that precedent for the legislation recommended by the General Board had been established with the enactment of the Act of June 24, 1926, which instituted the Navy's 1000-plane procurement program. Commander Court thereupon concluded:

Following the precedent of that act it would seem to be entirely consistent for Congress, upon the recommendation of the Naval Affairs Committee of either the Senate or the House, to authorize the President to construct or procure vessels for the Navy to the number required to bring its strength up, within a definite time, to the limits prescribed by the Treaties of Naval Limitation to which this country is a signatory, and thereafter to replace vessels as soon as their replacements are authorized by those treaties.14

In this manner Admiral Standley became aware of a precedent first recognized by the House Naval Affairs Committee five years earlier. But if the Admiral was a late convert, he was no less fervent in his advocacy:

Our efforts to provide for the expansion of the Navy...were doubly handicapped by the fact that we always...had to take two bites at the cherry. We first had to get a bill

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14 Commander A.B. Court to the Chief of Naval Operations October 28, 1933, Al-3/A18(331028), RG 80, NA.
through the Congress authorizing the building of Navy ships and then we had to get appropriations to build the ships through the Bureau of the Budget and the Appropriations Committees of both houses of Congress. Thus, the pacifists had two opportunities to kill or emasculate our programs.

For myself, I could see no reasons in either law or diplomatic protocol why, as long as our authorized naval strength was specified in detail in our various ratified treaties, we should have to go through this double rigamarole every time we wanted to build a ship. . 15

By November 13, the Chief of Naval Operations was able to report to Admiral D.F. Sellers that, "prospects for my plans for a building program which will give us treaty strength in '39 and provide a policy of yearly replacement are becoming more encouraging every day."16

This assessment was borne out on November 29 when the Secretary of the Navy directed the Judge Advocate General to prepare legislation in lieu of the Britten and Trammell bills authorizing the supplemental construction and replacement program recommended by the General Board. In addition, the Chief of Naval Operations was directed to provide estimates "as to the costs involved, having in mind a program of

15 Standley, Admiral Ambassador to Russia, 32,
16 Admiral William H. Standley to Admiral D.F. Sellers, November 13, 1933, Correspondence Files, Sellers Papers, MDLC.
commencing the construction of the aircraft carrier during the fiscal year 1936, and the construction of twelve destroyers and six submarines each year beginning in the fiscal year 1935." Replying the same day, Admiral Standley informed the Judge Advocate General that the total program cost would come to $380,309,250 with an average expenditure over five years of approximately $65,000,000 per year. The resulting legislative proposal drafted by the Judge Advocate General was identical to the bill Vinson introduced a month later. The other notable feature of the program contained in the bill was the Navy's rejection of a crash program to reach treaty strength if such an effort perpetuated the wartime legacy of bloc obsolescence. Even though the Department faced the prospect that this supplemental authorization bill would stand as long as the treaty framework remained, it opted for a consistent, longrange program with its production efficiencies and stability.

Skillfully using the Trammell and Britten measures as the pretext for drafting a new proposal, the Navy transmitted

17 The Secretary of the Navy to the Judge Advocate General, November 29, 1933, A1-3/A18(330506), RG 80, NA.

18 The Chief of Naval Operations to the Judge Advocate General, November 29, 1933, A1-3/A18(330506), RG 80, NA.
its substitute legislation to the Bureau of the Budget on December 18 for clearance prior to its formal submission to Congress.\textsuperscript{19} As would be expected, Director Lewis Douglas was in no hurry to endorse this potential budget buster. To overcome the Budget Bureau's reticence, the Department proceeded to marshal arguments in support of the bill and bring them to bear upon the President in the hopes he would expedite matters.

Roosevelt was apparently willing to listen and at his request a tentative supplemental naval building program for 1935 was prepared on the assumption that an authorization bill was enacted and an additional $100 million would be forthcoming. Specifically, this would involve the laying down of 2 destroyer leaders, 12 destroyers, and 6 submarines. This program, the President was advised, could be readily executed by existing shipbuilding facilities, and would maintain the impetus created by the N.I.R.A. construction by increasing the 1935 increment from 3 to 25 vessels. Moreover, the building of the above ships would address "the most urgent needs of the Fleet."\textsuperscript{20} Finally, it would

\textsuperscript{19}Acting Secretary of the Navy H.L. Roosevelt to the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, December 18, 1933, A1-3/A18(330506), RG 80, NA.

\textsuperscript{20}Acting Secretary of the Navy H.L. Roosevelt to the President, December 22, 1933, A1-3/A18(330510), RG 80, NA.
strengthen the negotiating position of the United States at the "Naval Conference scheduled for 1935 to revise and review the existing naval treaties." As if to supplement the force of these internal arguments for Presidential support with public pressure, information about the Navy's draft legislation and the construction program it contained was leaked to the press on December 27.22

Unhappily for the Navy, President Roosevelt was receiving contrary advice on naval construction from other quarters. Norman Davis, the U.S. Delegate at the Geneva Disarmament Conference, wrote him on December 26 expressing his apprehension about reports of a major naval program sponsored by the administration. To avoid misunderstanding about American intentions, Davis advised the President to avoid any hasty action that would close the door to further reductions in "the present naval limitations." If Davis's counsel did not give Roosevelt pause, the budget implications associated with the Navy's program must have. The half billion dollars required to build the 102 ships to bring the

21 Memorandum from Captain Dudley Knox to Admiral William H. Standley entitled "Building Up To Treaty Strength," December 27, 1933 File, Dudley Knox Papers, MDLC.

22 New York Tribune, December 28, 1933, 1,6; NYT, December 28, 1933, 1.

23 Norman Davis to the President, December 26, 1933, PSF, Disarmament Conference, FDRL.
Navy up to treaty strength in underage vessels was a formidable sum. Unlike N.I.R.A. funding which provided a way for Roosevelt to cut the Navy budget while simultaneously increasing the shipbuilding accounts, the program contemplated in the Department's bill would involve a substantial rise in regular expenditures. After weighing the risks, the President decided against administration sponsorship of the authorization measure. When the issue was surfaced at Roosevelt's press conference on December 29, he pleaded ignorance:

I never heard of it at all, except what I read in the papers. The Secretary of the Navy said nothing, the Assistant Secretary said nothing, and neither did the Chief of Operations.24

The most delicate way to characterize this statement was that the President was trifling with the truth. More importantly, however, this meant that the President was sending a clear signal to the Navy Department that it was politically inexpedient for him to take the lead on this legislation and that an alternative means would have to be employed to bring it before Congress.

Nevertheless, the Navy did not abandon official channels without first making another appeal to the President for his help in rescuing the Department's proposal from the Bureau of the Budget. On January 5, 1934, Acting

24FDR News Conference, December 29, 1933, 2:592.
Secretary of the Navy Harry L. Roosevelt sent a letter to the White House setting forth the Navy's arguments in support of the bill and laying out its five-year building program. Pointing out that the Budget Director had not yet replied to the Department's letter of December 18, Acting Secretary Roosevelt concluded by asking the President to give him an indication of his attitude on the matter. The Navy Department never received a written reply.

In part this was because President Roosevelt did not want to make any sort of commitment on naval construction, but the primary reason was that this dialogue was quickly overtaken by events. From the President's press conference of December 29 on, the Navy had to contend with the fact that its highest priority legislative initiative was being held hostage by the tightfisted Budget Director Lewis Douglas with the President unwilling to intervene to clear the way for its submission to Congress. As had been the case so many times before under similar circumstances, various parties within the Department began contemplating circumventing the

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25Acting Secretary of the Navy H.L. Roosevelt to the President, January 5, 1934, OF 18 Navy Building File, FDRL. Secretary Swanson entered the hospital on December 15, 1933 and was not able to resume his duties until mid-1934. In the interim, Assistant Secretary Roosevelt acted in his stead. William Leahy Diaries, December 20, 1933, William Leahy Papers, MDLC.
Bureau of the Budget by sending a bootleg copy of the bill to Capitol Hill to be introduced by a sympathetic lawmaker.

There was no doubt in Admiral Emory Land's mind who should have this honor. Carl Vinson had paid his dues over the last two years and Land believed that the Navy owed him this opportunity. While the close friendship between the two obviously entered into this decision, Land was also aware that Vinson would be a more effective sponsor in securing enactment of the measure.

To avoid the appearance of outright insubordination and still receive partial credit for "Vinson's" bill, Admiral Land later devised a clever cover story. According to this account, Land was summoned by Vinson to assist in the drafting of an authorization bill which later was introduced as H.R. 6604. The collaboration between the Navy's foremost shipbuilding expert and one of Congress's legislative geniuses to produce the Vinson-Trammell Act has an appealing ring to it. Looking at the evidence, however, it is hard to conclude that this tale is anything more than a convenient fabrication designed to legitimize Vinson's authorship of H.R. 6604. It is certainly remarkable that the lengthy sessions Admiral Land spoke about failed to produce anything other than an identical draft of the Navy's legislative proposal submitted to the Bureau of the Budget on December 18. It is also unclear just when this collaboration took
place and the participants are sketchy on details. In fact, neither Vinson nor Land alluded to this episode for over twenty years and there is no contemporary evidence that these meetings took place. If they did occur, it appears that the only innovative activity engaged in was scheming how Vinson would become the primary sponsor of the Department's proposal and the legislative strategy to accomplish its eventual enactment.

Congressman Britten must have sensed something was up and he moved to preempt Vinson by submitting his own authorization proposal on January 8. Obviously, Britten had his own Navy informants and the program contained in his bill closely conformed to that recommended by the General Board. The most remarkable feature of H.R. 6575 \textsuperscript{157}, as the measure became known, was that it specified annual program increments for the five years between 1935 and 1939 with expenditure limits for each category vessel. In effect, Britten was embracing the very approach he criticized Vinson for using in 1932. It was amazing what the passage of time and a new President could do for one's attitude toward legislative approaches on naval authorizations. It was now Britten's turn to distrust a Democratic occupant of the White House and seek to induce his compliance for the execution of a shipbuilding program.
Although Britten's maneuver was a forlorn effort, it managed to steal some of Vinson's thunder and expedited the chairman's efforts to introduce the Navy draft. Presumably, in order to protect Land from criticism that he passed a copy of the Department's bill under the table, Vinson telephoned Admiral Standley on the morning of January 9.

Speaking in his soft Georgia burr, Vinson began, "Oh, ah, now Admiral, I understand that you are preparing some kind of bill in your office to, ah, authorize the Navy

26 As one would expect, Vinson had the last word in this matter. On January 19, the Bureaus of Construction and Repair and Engineering completed a comparison of H.R. 6575 and H.R. 6604. Not surprisingly, Admiral Land found a number of flaws in Britten's bill and made several suggestions which, if implemented, would have made the bills almost identical. By the time the Department completed its evaluation of H.R. 6575, Vinson's bill had already passed the House and no further action was necessary. On February 2, Carl Vinson passed this information on to Fred Britten. Earlier, Britten had chided his chairman about the virtues of H.R. 6575, but accepted its demise with good grace. After all, as a former chairman, he knew the rules of the game and was probably quite satisfied with the press coverage he had been able to receive through the introduction of his authorization proposal. Bureaus of Construction and Repair and Engineering to the Judge Advocate General, January 19, 1934, Al8-(6), RG 19, NA; Acting Secretary of the Navy to Hon. Carl Vinson, February 1, 1934; Hon. Carl Vinson to Hon. Fred Britten, February 2, 1934, Bill Jacket H.R. 6575, Records of the Committee on Naval Affairs, 73rd Congress, RG 233, NA.
Department to build up the Fleet to treaty strength."

"Yes, Mr. Vinson," the Admiral replied, "we are. I hope to have it finished in a few days."

"Ah...I wonder if you would kindly let me have a copy of your bill, Admiral. Doesn't have to be typed up fancy--just as it stands." 27

Upon receipt of a copy of the Navy's draft proposal and accompanying cost estimates, Vinson was free to introduce the legislation as his own when the House went into session that day.

If Admiral Standley's description of what took place on January 9th and 10th is substantially correct, there appears to be two likely interpretations about his role in Vinson's pirating and introduction of the Navy's authorization proposal. Either he was an unwitting victim of the plotting by Vinson and Land, or he was a co-conspirator. Taking Standley's account at face value supports the view that he was victimized. As Chief of the Bureau of Construction and Repair, Admiral Land obviously played a prominent role in developing the Navy's supplemental building program and framing the legislation embodying it. Moreover, he was fully aware that the Bureau of the Budget was holding up its clearance and that the Department had exhausted its options

27 Standley, Admiral Ambassador to Russia, 33.
through official channels. In view of his penchant for imaginative solutions, it is very likely that Land unilaterally passed on a copy of the Navy's draft to Vinson so that he would be first to introduce it. Moreover, Land was probably involved in arranging Vinson's phone call to the Chief of Naval Operations to get a copy of the bill and give himself grounds for plausible denial about how it came into the chairman's possession. Likewise, it would have been shrewd of him to bring Vinson's introduction of the Navy's proposal to Admiral Standley's attention the next day to divert suspicion from himself. Thus, the grin Standley noted could have been prompted both by Trammell's displeasure and the Chief of Naval Operations' discomfiture.

The case for Standley's involvement in Vinson's action is more tenuous. The most compelling argument in its favor is that Standley's portrayal of events make him appear too naive. After all, he was a former Assistant Chief of Naval Operations with a good deal of prior service in Washington. It is difficult to believe he did not know what was going on when Vinson called him personally for a copy of the Navy's proposals to "examine" it. If he had indeed been a co-conspirator, Vinson's call and his contrived gullibility was very convenient. It would help deflect any displeasure on the part of his superiors or Senator Trammell. As Chief of Naval Operations, Standley simply could not turn down a
specific request for the legislative proposal from the chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee. If this action circumvented the Bureau of the Budget, there was nothing he could do about it as he had no option but to comply. It is even possible that Standley actually initiated this whole ploy and used one of his chief subordinates, Admiral Land, to insulate himself from being implicated.

There is no conclusive evidence establishing which one of these interpretations is correct, but the former seems more plausible. Throughout his tenure as Chief of Naval Operations, Standley was not particularly well liked by the Bureau chiefs. The main reason for this was that he was pressing for greater control by the Line over the activities of the Navy Department. As a result, he was repeatedly circumvented by his nominal subordinates on major policy issues. There is little reason to support that Admiral Land would have been a pliant tool in any scheme devised by Standley. It would have been far easier for Land to have done the deed on his own without giving Standley any undue credit that would further strengthen his prestige and power within the Department. Moreover, Standley seems to have been too straightforward to play Machiavellian games that Land and Vinson excelled at. Simply serving in Washington, D.C. does not necessarily mean that one will ever develop the aptitude or appetite for the devious interplay between the
legislative and executive branches in the policymaking process.

**Updating the Record**

The foregoing discussion of the events leading up to Vinson's sponsorship of the Navy's authorization proposal and its subsequent introduction as H.R. 6604 should not obscure the primary purpose of that endeavor—to circumvent the Bureau of the Budget. Instead of a Department proposal awaiting internal clearance prior to its submission to Congress, Director Douglas was now confronted by a ship-building authorization sponsored by a powerful chairman whose request for an administration position could not easily be put off. After formally referring H.R. 6604 to the Navy Department for comment on January 10, Vinson pressed for an early endorsement.\(^{28}\) To this end, he met with the Chief of Naval Operations on January 13 to show his impatience and indicated that he was only "waiting for word from the Navy Department to start the ball rolling."

Standley responded by pointing out that the Department could not officially endorse the bill until the Bureau of the Budget developed an administration position on it and

\(^{28}\) Carl Vinson to the Secretary of the Navy, January 10, 1934, Al-3/A18(340110), RG 80, NA.
Budget Director Douglas was "a hard man to move."  

It soon became evident that the pressure on Douglas would become too great for him to continue his stalling much longer. Not only did he have to contend with the Navy and Carl Vinson, it must also be presumed that President Roosevelt indicated that he would not oppose the enactment of H.R. 6604 as long as it was not identified as an administration initiative. In order to salve Douglas's conscience, an ingenious rationale was devised to reconcile the passage of a major naval authorization while muting its budgetary implications. The administration's position would be that it did not object to the enactment of an authorization bill, but it would make no commitment on either requesting funds for its execution or fulfilling any shipbuilding schedule. In this way, President Roosevelt proposed to have his cake and eat it too.

No amount of tortured logic, however, could obviate the pressing need for the authorization and appropriation of additional vessels for the 1935 building program. The "front end loading" of the combined 1934 and N.I.R.A. programs saw to that. As matters stood in January 1934, 54 vessels were under contract or laid down and private and

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29 Admiral William H. Standley to Admiral D.F. Sellers, January 13, 1934, January-June, 1934, File, Papers of Admiral D.F. Sellers, MDLC.
Government yards were handling the largest number of new orders since World War I. Subcontractors and vendors all across the nation benefitted from this activity and were busily engaged in supplying the raw materials and components associated with shipbuilding. Through the expansion of the work force at the various shipyards and the positive ripple effect upon the economy, over 20,000 new jobs were created. The rub was that without new authorization legislation, the 1935 program would shrink to 3 ships—1 8-inch gun cruiser and 2 6-inch gun cruisers. No residual authorization from previous acts remained. Obviously, the prospect of dropping from 37 to 3 ships was militarily, politically, and economically intolerable. As Henry Wiseman, the Assistant for Navy Department budgeting, reported to Douglas on January 15, "it is important that a new program be adopted to provide for a reasonable distribution of ship

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30 Speech by Assistant Secretary of the Navy H.L. Roosevelt before the National Radio Forum over Nation-wide Network of the National Broadcasting Company, New York City, September 19, 1934, Press Release File (1934), RG 80, NA.

311 additional 8-inch gun cruiser was authorized under the 1929 Fifteen Cruiser Bill, but could not be laid down in 1935 under the terms of the Reed-Matsudaira Agreement associated with the London Treaty.
construction commencing with 1936 and extending beyond 1940, if Government and private ship yards are to be maintained on a basis of a reasonable work load, and if further progress is to be made in building up to the Treaty limits."

Wiseman concluded his memorandum on the new Naval shipbuilding program by recommending that "the Navy Department be advised that, in so far as the financial program of the President is concerned, there is no objection to the submission of such proposed legislation to the Congress for its consideration."32

Finding himself in the path of powerful political and economic forces calling for continued shipbuilding and bereft of strong support within the administration, Douglas capitulated. On January 17, he advised the Secretary of the Navy that the Navy's draft legislation could be submitted to Congress "with the understanding that...no comment can now be made as to when and at what rate of progress the construction of naval vessels" so authorized may be undertaken. No specific mention was made of H.R. 6604 as the Navy Department had never formally sent the bill to the Bureau of the Budget for review, taking the position

32 Memorandum from Henry Wiseman to the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, January 15, 1934, Increase of the Navy File, RG 51, NA.
that its previous submission of draft legislation to that effect was sufficient for that purpose.\textsuperscript{33}

Douglas's grudging, indirect clearance was enough to satisfy Carl Vinson and he notified the Navy two days later that the Naval Affairs Committee would commence hearings on H.R. 6604.\textsuperscript{34} Spurred by the prospect of early hearings, the Department provided its formal comments to the committee on January 20 and recommended that H.R. 6604 be enacted. In carrying out the provisions of that bill, the Navy envisioned a program "commencing the construction of the aircraft carrier during fiscal year 1936, and the construction of twelve destroyers and six submarines in the fiscal year 1935," at a total cost of approximately $380 million involving an average annual expenditure of about $65 million until

\textsuperscript{33}Director of the Bureau of the Budget to the Secretary of the Navy, January 17, 1934, A1-3/A18(330506), RG 80, NA. It seems that Douglas was not a graceful loser as on January 22, he directed that the Secretary of the Navy be made aware of Bureau of the Budget regulations dealing "with the matter or recommending or reporting upon legislation which affects the finances of the Federal Government" because of the possibility that the "provisions of these circulars may not have come to your personal notice." However, it was not ignorance that led to the circumvention of the Budget Bureau in this case, but deliberate design, L1-1/A18(340122), RG 80, NA.

\textsuperscript{34}Carl Vinson to the Secretary of the Navy, January 19, 1934, Construction and Repair Legislative Files (1934) RG 19, NA.
Carl Vinson had three very good reasons for wanting to expedite hearings on H.R. 6604. First, he sensed that it was important to act while the public support for naval construction generated by the N.I.R.A. program remained strong. Second, he wanted House debate to take place before the peace and disarmament lobbies could react effectively and bring their full might to bear upon Congress. Finally, he wanted to move before Senator Trammell could hold hearings that would promote some alternative authorization proposal.

The resulting two days of hearings on January 22-23, represented a straightforward, businesslike effort to update the basic record so painstakingly established in 1932 and explain the provisions of H.R. 6604. Consistent with this objective, only Department witnesses were invited to testify. As was the case two years earlier, this total reliance on Navy witnesses became a source of comment, but Vinson and his colleagues lacked either the inclination or the time to provide an open forum likely to be dominated by publicity-seeking pacifists. In the committee's eyes, outside testimony would not influence their deliberations and would be a waste of time. A favorable report on the bill was a foregone conclusion and Department witnesses were the best

35 Acting Secretary of the Navy H.L. Roosevelt to Chairman Vinson, January 20, 1934, A1-3/A18(330506), RG 80, NA.
sources for the technical details and supporting arguments the committee would need for floor debate.

Acting Secretary Roosevelt was the leadoff witness and gave a concise explanation of the Navy Department's endorsement of Vinson's bill:

The passage of the proposed legislation, H.R. 6604, will lay the foundation for an orderly building program such as may be found consistent with the financial ability of the government. Without it, no program can be projected ... Unless there is authority to proceed with the construction of these vessels and authority for making appropriation, the Navy Department cannot even request the Director of the Bureau of the Budget for funds. I cannot recommend too strongly the enactment of this legislation. 36

As soon as Acting Secretary Roosevelt completed his introductory statement, Vinson sought to establish for the record that his bill had administration approval. While no attempt was made to directly associate the President with the measure, the Acting Secretary made it very clear that both the Navy Department and the Bureau of the Budget approved its consideration. Those aware of Budget Director Douglas's fiscal conservatism and his attitude toward legislation of this kind recognized that his support was tantamount to White House endorsement. Presidential silence combined with intimation of tacit approval remained Franklin D.

Roosevelt's policy throughout the consideration of the Vinson-Trammell Act. This was wholly consistent with his earlier decision against having the Navy's authorization proposal assume the character of a formal administration initiative.

The Acting Secretary's testimony also disclosed that the estimated cost of the program, previously set at $380 million, would have to be revised upward to around $475 million. This increase resulted from the Navy's initial reliance upon pre-N.I.R.A. estimates. In awarding those contracts, however, the Department discovered that construction cost had risen by 25 percent. Although cost growth later became the subject of heated debate, the issue could never be satisfactorily resolved. The simple truth was that nobody had a very good idea how much money would eventually be needed to execute the program. Then, as now, projecting costs seven years into the future was fraught with uncertainty, being dependent upon inflation, strikes and a host of other economic variables. In addition, the Navy deliberately did not include within its estimates expenditures for battleship replacement which would substantially increase the cost of the program. In the absence of any means for exact reckoning, proponents of the bill

37House, Hearings on H.R. 6604, 159-162.
would adhere to the lowest figure for the purpose of debate and the cultivation of public opinion. At the same time, however, they would resolutely oppose any efforts to impose a cost ceiling in any of the vessel categories, or on the program as a whole.\textsuperscript{38}

Another issue surfaced by Colonel Roosevelt was the question of providing additional aircraft to equip the new vessels joining the fleet as a result of the construction authorized by H.R. 6604. The Navy was already suffering a serious shortage of airplanes due to the limit of one thousand useful planes imposed by the naval aviation authorization act of 1926.\textsuperscript{39} By 1934 this had become a totally unrealistic figure due to the fleet's increased aviation consciousness, plus the fact that several carriers were building or had been authorized. Indeed, the current estimate of the aircraft required for full operational efficiency was 2,184.\textsuperscript{40} If legislation could be enacted raising that

\textsuperscript{38}Uncertainty over the future cost of the program was the reason why the Navy opposed Britten's bill, H.R. 6575. The Department felt that the cost ceilings for each vessel category contained in that measure was totally unrealistic and could only be a source of recurring problems. Chiefs of the Bureau of Construction and Repair and Engineering to the Judge Advocate General, January 19, 1934, A18-1(34), RG 72, NA.


\textsuperscript{40}U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Naval Affairs, Hearings on S. 2493, 73rd Cong., 2nd Session, 1934, 2.
limit, Acting Secretary Roosevelt was of the opinion that "funds should be provided for the aircraft the same time as they are provided for the fulls, machinery, and armament, and that this cost should be a part of the original costs of the vessels." Chairman Vinson seemed initially well disposed toward this approach to aircraft procurement, but the committee opted instead for Fred Britten's suggestion that a floor amendment to the bill be prepared authorizing all the aircraft necessary to equip a treaty navy. Britten correctly pointed out that the Bureau of the Budget would continue to hold the Navy to its thousand useful plane limit and require a specific authorization to raise that ceiling. For its own part, the committee could hardly turn its back upon the provisions of the Act of June 26, 1926, one of its greatest legislative triumphs. Furthermore, the committee in the past had always treated aircraft as independent weapon systems to be authorized like warships, not as items of original equipment. The committee's choice of a floor amendment reflected its desire to allow the Navy to have time to draft appropriate language and secure Bureau of the Budget concurrence for an aircraft authorization as part of H.R. 6604.

41 House, Hearings on H.R. 6604, 161.
42 Ibid, 211.
The second day of hearings was devoted to testimony from Admiral Standley and other Navy professionals on the technical details of the bill and construction program it authorized. The most significant feature of the Navy's program was that there was no deviation from the building schedule set forth by Admiral Pratt in his memorandum on "The Navy's Needs" ten months earlier. Admiral Standley explained that the first year of Admiral Pratt's program was taken care of by funds allocated by the President under the National Industrial Recovery Act. As mentioned previously, 3 cruisers contained in the second annual increment were provided for in the fiscal year 1935 Navy appropriation bill. The remaining 22 vessels scheduled to be laid down in 1935 and the completion of the Navy total program was dependent upon enactment of H.R. 6604. Excluding the vessels already provided for by previous legislation, the General Board calculated that the United States remained short of treaty strength by 101 under-age ships. Translating the tonnage totals contained in H.R. 6604 into vessels resulted in 1 aircraft carrier, 5 destroyer-leaders, 60 destroyers, and 30 submarines for a total of 96 ships. The balance represented 5 additional submarines which could

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43 Ibid., 189, 195
44 Ibid.
be constructed under the elastic clause in Section 2. The construction of the aforementioned vessels was projected over a seven year period from 1935 to 1941. The last ship would be laid down in 1939 and would join the fleet by 1942.  

45This did not apply to the 5 submarines which would be laid down during 1940 and completed by the end of 1942.
### TABLE 16:
The Navy Program to Implement the Vinson-Trammell Act

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ships Built, Building &amp; Authorized as of 1934</th>
<th>1935</th>
<th>1936</th>
<th>1937</th>
<th>1938</th>
<th>1939</th>
<th>Total for Program</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
<th>Treaty Navy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Types</td>
<td>Tons</td>
<td>Tons</td>
<td>Tons</td>
<td>Tons</td>
<td>Tons</td>
<td>Tons</td>
<td>Tons</td>
<td>Tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battleships</td>
<td>15/525,000</td>
<td>15/525,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aircraft Carriers</td>
<td>5/120,000</td>
<td>15/15,200</td>
<td>6/135,000</td>
<td>6/135,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy Cruisers</td>
<td>18/180,000</td>
<td>18/180,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Cruisers</td>
<td>19/157,600</td>
<td>19/157,600</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destroyer Escorts</td>
<td>16/160,000</td>
<td>16/160,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destroyers</td>
<td>24/36,000</td>
<td>24/36,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submarines</td>
<td>24/157,600</td>
<td>24/157,600</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>113/1,066,670</td>
<td>113/1,066,670</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. This figure was 14,000 tons in excess of the treaty tonnage and represents the Omaha and Milwaukee which were scheduled to be replaced by newer vessels.

2. Submarine tonnage by unit was difficult to calculate due to a variety of types, but the total was 35,530.

3. Since the treaty limits only provided for 52,700 tons of submarines, this excess tonnage represents replacement vessels for those underage in 1934.

4. Not limited as to number of vessels, but limited to tonnage.

Since chances were remote that H.R. 6604 could be enacted before the naval supply bill for fiscal year 1935, the prospects for securing funding to begin construction of the 22 vessels became a matter of lively interest. Thus denied regular appropriations, Vinson summed up the situation facing the bill's proponents, "The only question is whether or not we will get a supplemental appropriation or whether we will get a portion of the money out of any of the additional money that is given to Public Works." Admiral Standley later indicated that it was the Department's intention to seek a supplemental appropriation during the 2nd session if H.R. 6604 could be enacted before adjournment. Vinson continued to press Admirals Standley and Land to elicit how large a supplemental appropriation would be required to cover the costs of the first year of construction for the 20 or 22 additional ships the Navy wanted to lay down in 1935. Admiral Land calculated that first year costs would run somewhere between $15 and $25 million, depending how soon H.R. 6604 could be enacted and contracts awarded. The tenor and substance of this discussion on funding strategies clearly belied administration claims that

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46 House, Hearings on H.R. 6604, 183
47 Ibid., 191
H.R. 6604 simply authorized appropriations whose consideration was safely deferred until some future time. It was evident that the Navy Department and the committee intended to request funding to carry out the 1935 program immediately following the enactment of H.R. 6604. Consequently, the sooner the House and Senate could complete their consideration of the measure, the sooner the Navy could queue up for funding via a supplemental or deficiency appropriation. As Admiral Land had indicated, the earlier the funding became available, the greater the execution of the first year construction of the 1935 program.

The hearings concluded with the committee voting unanimously to favorably report H.R. 6604 to the House. Thereupon, Fred Britten moved that the chairman be instructed to make every effort to attach H.R. 6604 to the pending naval appropriation bill, or, failing in that, appear before the Rules Committee to seek a rule for floor consideration. Britten's motion carried and the committee adjourned, leaving Vinson with the task of scheduling House debate on H.R. 6604 as soon as possible.

Altogether, it had been a masterful two days of hearings. Vinson had been in form control throughout, keeping distractions to a minimum and making sure that all the major issues were addressed. Predictably the only discordant note sounded during the hearings came when Fred Britten
learned that the program under consideration did not include flying-deck cruisers. Britten had long favored such craft and was miffed when the General Board discarded them. The Navy contended that they were not as suitable as carriers and that the allowance of light cruiser tonnage would be utilized on 10,000 ton vessels mounting 6-inch guns. They would have the range required for Pacific operations and their greater number of guns would make them more formidable than a hybrid vessel like a flying deck cruiser. Britten's irrascibility not withstanding, it was an improvement over the hearings two years before when he was sniping at the bill itself. The end result was a concise, positive, and useful record that could be effectively employed to garner support within the House or for the cultivation of public opinion.

Going to the Floor

The soul of impatience, Carl Vinson moved with alacrity to bring H.R. 6604 to the floor. Just one day following the completion of hearings, the committee reported a slightly amended version of the bill on January 24.\(^48\) As indicated previously, no attempt was made to incorporate any

\(^48\) The sole amendment to the bill was to change the number of cruisers mentioned on page 2, line 19 of the bill from five to six and this was necessitated only because the Navy had made a drafting error, U.S., Congress, House Report No. 303, to accompany H.R. 6604, 72nd Cong., 2nd Session, I.
significant new provisions into H.R. 6604 at this time as proponents preferred instead to introduce all committee amendments during floor debate. The committee report itself was a model of trenchant exposition setting forth the background, rationale, and basic provisions of the measure in just two pages.

In accordance with the committee's instructions, Vinson explored the possibility of tacking H.R. 6604 as a rider to the pending Navy appropriation bill for fiscal year 1935. This ploy was a doubtful proposition from the start as the incorporation of legislation of such magnitude in an appropriation bill risked an almost certain point of order which undoubtedly would be sustained. Nevertheless, even as the House considered the Navy supply bill on January 24, Vinson was prepared to offer his bill as an amendment. At the last moment, however, he decided against it. He may have become aware that a point of order would be raised should be attempt to proceed, or have just decided that this approach was unnecessary and involved too much risk. The only real benefit to be gained by offering H.R. 6604 as a rider was that in doing so formal debate and the possibility of damaging floor amendment could be avoided. Vinson must have been aware at the time that there was little prospect his bill would be defeated, or even strongly challenged. Speaker Rainey and the House leadership were saying as much when they
predicted that H.R. 6604 would pass after a few hours of debate if it went to the floor. If a clear-cut victory was in the offing via straightforward consideration, why employ indirection? On Capitol Hill a basic tenet is that perceptions of power and strength are critical and should be cultivated at every opportunity. A solid mandate from the House would not only establish momentum, but facilitate subsequent efforts in the Senate to enact H.R. 6604.

For whatever reasons, Vinson abandoned the idea of a rider and arranged to come before the Rules Committee on January 25 to request a rule for floor consideration of his bill. Voting unanimously, the Rules Committee granted him an open rule for two hours of debate. Thereupon, the House leadership obligingly scheduled debate on H.R. 6604 for Tuesday, January 30.

Whatever uncertainty remained about the outcome of House debate was rudely dispelled by Speaker Rainey the day

49 NYT, January 25, 1934, 4.
50 Ibid, January 26, 1934, 8.
before it was scheduled to take place. Coldly eyeing a delegation of pacifists agitating against Vinson's bill, Rainey minced few words, "The Vinson bill should and very probably will be passed tomorrow, with possibly not more than 30 votes against it."\(^{52}\)

Notwithstanding such assurances, Vinson and his committee colleagues were taking no chances that something would go awry. Efforts were made to ascertain what amendments might be offered, supporters were lined up to speak in behalf of the bill, and the Navy Department was tasked to provide whatever backup material proponents seemed likely to need in rebutting opposing arguments.

As scheduled, on January 30, House deliberation began with consideration of the rule reported by the Rules Committee. After some initial sparring and a compromise extending the time for general debate to three hours, the rule was agreed to by a voice vote.\(^{53}\) As majority and minority floor managers, the available time was divided between Vinson and Britten. In accordance with custom, members of the Naval Affairs Committee were given over half the allotted time so debate predominantly favored the bill. While hostile speakers had to be content with a portion of the balance,

\(^{52}\)San Francisco Examiner, January 29, 1934, located in the Henry T. Rainey Papers, MDLC.

\(^{53}\)CR, January 30, 1934.
they gave away nothing in ardor.

Vinson led off with a lucid and concise explanation of his proposal emphasizing its two aims: "First, the measure establishes the strength of the United States Navy in respect to the categories of ships that are limited by international agreement; second, it authorizes the appropriations necessary for such building. . .When this bill is boiled down to its last analysis, it is simply an authorization for replacement of obsolete ships, plus a definite statement that it is the policy of the United States to maintain the Navy at whatever limits may be established by international agreement." 54

The discussion then proceeded along avenues which had been well covered the previous decade and gave the debate a ritualistic tone. Proponents drew upon old arguments stressing the need for a large fleet to protect commerce around the world and support policies abroad. In uncertain times, one could never know when a strong navy would be needed and, unlike armies, ships could not be created overnight. It was also claimed that the success of the treaty system depended upon the United States attaining its tonnage limits. Disarmament by example had not worked and a new show of determination would provide the clout to

54Ibid., 1597.
enhance further reduction of naval armament. Those hostile to the bill countered by predicting that a large building program would lead to a naval race and probably war. Besides, expanding the fleet would not be in conformity with the Kellogg-Briand Pact, or the recent Presidential appeal for world disarmament. Opponents demanded to know who the U.S. was going to fight with its big navy, emphasizing that geography combined with the development of the airplane and submarine made invasion impossible. Both sides brought Japan into the discussion, supporters claiming that a treaty fleet would restrain her aggression, and detractors prophesying that additional building would only serve to exacerbate the existing suspicion with which that nation viewed American intentions—a belief recent rumbling from Tokyo tended to support.

The economic consequences of the program provided another area of contention. Backers hailed the increased

55 Ibid., 1953. This was a reference to a message by President Roosevelt on May 16, 1933 to other world leaders calling for renewed efforts at the Geneva Disarmament Conference. A text of this message is found on 1595-1596. Like the appeal of his predecessor, Roosevelt's appeal generated nothing more substantial than polite applause.

demands it would make upon labor and raw materials, while sustaining the vital shipbuilding industry. They were willing to admit that the scheme involved considerable cost, but it would be insignificant compared to the expense of a defeat resulting from unpreparedness. Opponents called the construction a disastrous diversion of resources away from schools, internal improvements, and the alleviation of agricultural distress. Furthermore, the huge price tag did not include the half billion dollars a year needed to maintain this treaty navy.57 This concern over finances opened the door for arguments equating expenditures with preparedness. It was easy to demonstrate that, in dollars, United States naval budgets far exceeded those of its nearest rivals. If we were not prepared now, it was asked what good was it to increase this outlay? This oversimplification won few converts in 1934, but no discussion of Navy legislation would have been complete without it.58

The nature of the authorization was also the subject of some heated exchanges. Those who favored the blanket authorization characterized it as a flexible approach to

57 CR, January 30, 1934, 5115.

58 Ibid., 1602-1903. Obviously, the higher standard of living in the United States accounted for its greater naval expenditures. Furthermore, American sailors received more pay and more money was spent on their well-being than on either their Japanese, or British counterparts.
naval expansion which would cut costs, take advantage of improved technology, and avoid the wholesale obsolescence of any one category. They assured their colleagues that Congress would still be able to exert control over the program through annual appropriations which were required before contracts could be issued. Ross Collins (Democrat; Mississippi), a long time foe of the Navy, took strong exception to this explanation, pointing out the previous experience with such authorizations indicated that subsequent review by appropriation was impractical. He then launched into the most damaging attack delivered against the bill that day. He submitted that the age limits set down in the London Treaty were arbitrary and cited recent expenditures for the modernization of many "obsolete" vessels. Replacement, he maintained, should be selective and not be whole categories. Collins concluded his remarks by unmasking the elastic clause in Section 2. He warned that the replacement of battleships would double the cost of the program and leave the country with a number of "white elephants" unable to withstand aerial bombardment. The best place for them during the next war would be tied up somewhere on the Mississippi River.

59 Ibid., 1598.

60 Ibid., 1616. Admiral Sims' observation about dreadnoughts was quite popular with Collins and other "little navy" spokesmen.
unpleasant disclosures were sidestepped and studiously ignored by the proponents of the bill.

Time for general debate expired and amendments were taken up. The first to be offered was the following committee amendment authorizing additional aircraft:

That the President is hereby authorized to procure the necessary naval aircraft for vessels and other naval purposes in numbers commensurate with the treaty navy.  

Since a committee amendment to this effect had been suggested by Congressman Britten during hearings on January 23, the issue of incorporation of an authorization of additional aircraft within H.R. 6604 had been a subject of considerable interest. Even as Britten spoke, the Navy was sending to the Bureau of the Budget for clearance a legislative proposal to "authorize the President to undertake the procurement of such aircraft over the next five years, as to provide the Navy with sixteen hundred and fifty useful airplanes by July 1939." Three days later the Department followed up with a supplemental letter seeking to increase its earlier aircraft authorization recommendation to 2,184, involving an estimated cost of

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61 CR, January 30, 1934, 1622.

62 Acting Secretary of the Navy to the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, January 26, 1934, A1-3/A18(330506) RG 80, NA.
$95 million. In addition, the Acting Secretary of the Navy recommended that this be accomplished by amending H.R. 6604 in the following manner:

The President is hereby further authorized to increase the number of useful airplanes, as defined and established by the act approved June 24, 1926. . . to two thousand one hundred and eighty-four, which number is hereby established as the authorized number of useful airplanes to be employed in the Navy."63

The Bureau of the Budget was generally sympathetic toward the Navy's efforts to increase the authorized limits of usable aircraft, but deemed it "foolish to again attempt to write into legislation the details as to numbers of planes and cost per year for a future five year period."64 Consequently, when the Bureau responded on January 27, Director Douglas recommended the incorporation of "general authority to construct the necessary planes for vessels and other naval purposes not covered by the 1000-plane program."65 As was the case with his approval of the Navy's ship authorization proposal,

63 Ibid.

64 Henry Wiseman to the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, January 26, 1934, Aircraft, Construction, RG 51, NA.

65 Director of the Bureau of the Budget to the Secretary of the Navy, January 27, 1934, Al-3(330506), RG 80, NA.
Douglas wanted it understood that this implied no commitment on the scheduling and rate of construction.

Following receipt of Bureau of the Budget approval, Admiral Standley and Rear Admiral Ernest J. King, Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics, appeared before the House Naval Affairs Committee on January 29. Admiral Standley recited the steps taken by the Navy Department to secure administration approval to seek authorization of additional aircraft and read the favorable reply from the Bureau of the Budget. At this point he submitted for the committee's consideration a draft amendment to authorize additional aircraft. Following brief deliberation, the committee approved a motion requesting that the chairman "use every parliamentary procedure to have H.R. 6604 amended so as to include authority to procure aircraft in numbers commensurate with a treaty Navy." 66

As a result of this careful preparation and expression of administration support, Vinson's airplane authorization amendment received swift approval by the House. 67

66 Memorandum from the Judge Advocate General to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, January 29, 1934, Construction and Repair Legislative Files, RG 19, NA.

67 Ibid., 1623. The texts and placement of all amendments can be found in Appendix.
Two amendments by Representative Hastings (Democrat; Oklahoma) aimed at establishing a ceiling on appropriations were the sternest test the bill was to face. He believed that H.R. 6604 "took the bridle off" and expenditures would soar unless firm action was taken. His suggestion was to follow the procedure Congress had employed in the case of the N.I.R.A., namely, to place an upper limit on the authorization. The first amendment attempted to set the total at $380,000,000—the figure cited by proponents. Vinson, conscious that such a restriction would represent emasculation of the program, rose to meet the challenge. He explained that the hearings had disclosed that the first estimate would have to be increased by at least 25 percent, and that it did not include funds for the aircraft just authorized—not to mention any vessels which would be built through indirect authorization. The House sided with Vinson. Undismayed, the Oklahoma Democrat now introduced a second proposal fixing the ceiling at $475,000,000. Britten gave it tepid support, but Vinson repeated his objections. He stated frankly that no one could foretell the exact cost of the program and

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68 Ibid., 1626-1627.

69 Ibid., 1627. The vote was 51 for and 146 against.
the determination was best left to the President and his naval advisors. Vinson suggested that if his colleague opposed the bill, why not forthrightly vote against it instead of obstructing its implementation? The second amendment received more votes but also failed by a wide margin. Their defeat marked the end of direct or indirect efforts to block the bill in the House.

Whatever their differences, both sides could agree on a proposal made by Representative W.A. Ayres of Kansas. He moved that any future international agreement calling for the suspension of this program "shall not apply to the vessels actually under construction on the date of the passage of this act." This was an indication of the low station to which the Washington Treaty had fallen in Congress by 1934. For years "big navy" men had bewailed the scrapping of the powerful uncompleted dreadnoughts in the 1916 program because of that treaty. It was maintained that the United States had taken a noble step toward disarmament, but other nations were unwilling to follow our example and scrap their new vessels at subsequent conferences. Our diplomats had been duped by wily Europeans and no more of the taxpayers' money should be

70 Ibid., 1629. The vote was 74 for and 127 against.
71 Ibid., 1618.
risked on new construction that would not be completed. This narrow view of the treaty era was comforting as many placed the blame for the Navy's plight on the Washington Conference and not upon the ensuing period of congressional neglect. The amendment was adopted without a vote.

An interesting development now occurred as the emphasis shifted away from the aim and content of the bill to the consideration of ways to regulate its operation to avoid profiteering and total dependence upon private armament makers. To this end, Representative Thompson, (Democrat; Illinois) introduced the following amendment:

Provided further, That the first and each succeeding alternate vessel of each category except the 15,000-ton aircraft carrier, upon which work is undertaken, and the main engines, armor, and armament for such vessels, the construction and manufacture of which is authorized by this act, shall be constructed or manufactured in the Government navy yards, naval stations, naval gun factories, naval ordnance plants, or arsenals of the United States, except such materials and parts as were not customarily manufactured in such Government plants prior to February 13, 1929.72

The background of this amendment involved a long-standing negative reaction to armaments manufacturers in any form. This aversion had been recently reinforced by such publications as the Merchants of Death and a hostile

72 Ibid., 1624.
study by the editors of *Fortune*. There was a widespread belief that an insidious combination of munitions makers had been responsible for World War I. It was also well known that firms in the United States, such as Carnegie Steel, had wrung exorbitant profits from an harassed wartime administration. Congress responded by providing for the creation of Government naval yards, ordnance factories, and even a steel foundry capable of manufacturing armor plate used in warships. It was hoped that even if these facilities could not provide all the armaments the nation would require (a goal many sought), they would at least be able to monitor costs so that profits would not be excessive. Since the war, however, many of these establishments had closed down and Navy yards decayed while being relegated to repair work. During the 1920's, Congress had repeatedly recommended that at least half of the naval construction take place in these yards, but their wishes were either ignored or circumvented by the Navy.

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H.C. Engelbrecht and F.C. Hanighen, *Merchants of Death, A Study of the International Armament Industry* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1934); "Arms and Men," *Fortune*, March, 1934. It would be difficult to overstress the impact upon public opinion these works had. The latter article was reprinted in its entirety in the *Congressional Record* during the debate. It should also be kept in mind that the Nye Committee investigations were just now getting underway.
Many legislators viewed this as a flagrant act of insubordination and this anger resulted in the Dallinger Amendment being attached to the 1929 naval authorization. If specifically enjoined the Navy to build at least half of the vessels covered by the act (1 carrier, 15 cruisers) at Government yards, while authorizing the appropriations to make the necessary improvements which would enable them to carry out this construction. This indication of congressional intent was too clear to be disregarded and the Navy Department adhered to this principle in all subsequent construction hoping to avoid a later amendment directing mandatory compliance in all categories. Thompson now dashed these hopes.

It cannot be said that Vinson was very much surprised by Thompson's amendment. Earlier that day he received a memorandum from Admiral Land addressing the possible introduction of a Dallinger type amendment during floor debate. Land argued forcefully against the adoption of any such amendment as it would reduce the Navy's flexibility in implementing the shipbuilding program authorized by H.R. 6604. Furthermore, since the Navy's record had been good

74 U.S. Congress, Committee on Naval Affairs, Hearings on H.R. 11526, 70th Congress, 1st Session, 52.
the allocation of future building could safely be left
in the hands of the Secretary of the President. Finally,
should it become necessary to "build all or a greater part
of the ships for a Treaty Navy in the immediate future, it
will be impossible to build half of them in Navy Yards."

Although the Navy Department preferred to sec H.R.
6604 pass without a Dallinger type amendment, Land was
enough of a realist to recognize that some form of fall­
back amendment might be required and he suggested the
following language:

That, insofar as practicable, vessels con­
structed under the authorization of this
Act shall be built on the basis of one half
in Navy Yards and one half in private ship
yards, final decision in each case to be at
the discretion of the President.76

Taking Land's advice, Vinson offered the Navy substi­
tute amendment.77 When Thompson refused to agree to this,
a fight ensued. The determination not to allow an opening
for munitions makers could not be overcome. Even some of the
the supporters of the bill felt they had to minimize
the negative by-products of naval expansion. The result

76 Memorandum from Admiral Emory S. Land to Hon. Carl
Vinson, January 30, 1934, Construction and Repair Legis­
lative Files, RG 19, NA.

77 CR, January 30, 1934, 1624.
was approval of the Thompson Amendment by a vote of 143-90.  

Representative Charles W. Tobey (Republican; New Hampshire) now proposed a hastily drawn amendment to carry on the fight against profiteering:

> Provided however, That no such appropriation shall be used for any contract with steel or aircraft or shipbuilding firms or corporations unless the said firm or corporation shall agree to limit its net profit on such Government contract to 10 percent of the gross of the contract.  

There is no evidence that this figure of 10 percent profit was derived from any objective study of Navy contracts, the operations of the shipbuilding, aircraft, or steel industries, or current economic realities. It sounded about right and that was all that mattered to Tobey and those of his persuasion. It would allow the House to make a simplistic political statement that would sound good back home. The management implications and details involved in implementing this directive were beyond the comprehension of constituents and could safely be left to the Navy Department and the merchants of death to fret over.

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78 Ibid., 1626.
79 Ibid., 1629.
But if Tobey was short on facts and expertise, nobody could fault him on cleverness and timing. He reasoned that since one of the President's avowed aims was to take the profit out of war, why not aid him by assuring that this authorization would conform with his desire? Although he did not subscribe to counter-arguments that this amendment would guarantee contractors a 10 percent gain, even that would be preferable to the excessive sums they had extorted in the past.

This unexpected ploy simply caught Vinson and other proponents flatfooted. Since the Navy had not anticipated Tobey's amendment no prepared rebuttals were available. The hour was late and Vinson wanted to secure passage before the House recessed for the day. If he tried to delay consideration until the Navy Department could work up solid arguments against it, House debate would carry over. Vinson decided he could not accept that risk and if the Navy found the amendment really obnoxious it could be killed during House-Senate conference on the bill. Therefore, he responded by trying to quash the proposal by raising a point of order that it was not germane, but he was not sustained. After quizzing Tobey on the amendment and seeing he could neither shake his resolve, Vinson
reluctantly agreed to it. 80

Vinson now asked that all debate be stopped and moved that the Committee on the Whole House rise. Thereupon, the House resumed consideration of the bill and as there was no demand for a separate vote on any amendment, the measure was read for a third time. Representative Collins then called for the yeas and nays, but only thirteen members responded and his motion was rejected. Thus, H.R. 6604 was passed and moved on to the Senate. 81

Trammell Comes Aboard

By January 19, Senator Park Trammell's patience had run out. His bill, S. 1154 authorizing the Navy to build up to treaty strength had been referred to the Department for a report back in April 1933 and to date no response had been forthcoming. Instead, the Navy had drafted its

80 Ibid., 1630.

81 Ibid., 1630, March 5, 3686-3687. During interviews with Mr. Vinson, he said that he was satisfied with the course of the debate and felt it was unnecessary to put anyone on the spot by pressing for a record. One must also suspect that it may have been an extremely difficult, if not impossible task to establish a quorum that late in the afternoon. It is clear that few members were in the House chamber when final passage took place. Under the circumstances it is to Representatives Collins' credit that he did not suggest the absence of a quorum instead of requesting a roll call vote.
own substitute which was then gratuitously provided to Carl Vinson. While Trammell waited for a reply, Vinson introduced the Navy's proposal and was energetically working for its enactment. While it was true that Trammell had been given the opportunity to sponsor the Navy draft bill shortly after its introduction in the House, it is understandable that the Florida Senator would want to avoid the appearance of following in Vinson's wake. Besides, the Navy owed him the courtesy of a reply and he meant to have it. Writing a terse letter to the Secretary of the Navy, Trammell pointed out this oversight and requested that he be advised as soon as possible what action had been taken upon the pending request for a report on S. 1154 and such amendments as the Navy Department might recommend. Failing to receive an immediate response, he reiterated his demand by telegram on January 23, and indicated that his committee intended to begin hearings on S. 1154 within the week.

82 Senator Park Trammell to the Secretary of the Navy, January 19, 1934, Al-3/A18(330510), RG 80, NA.

83 Telegram from Senator Trammell to the Secretary of the Navy, January 23, 1934, Al-3/A18(330510), RG 80, NA.
The mention of hearings caught the Department's attention and on the following morning two letters were received by Senator Trammell. In the first, Acting Secretary Roosevelt explained that the implementation of the N.I.R.A. required major revision of S. 1154 and the resulting substitute bill had been awaiting Bureau of the Budget approval until January 19. Consequently, the Department had been unable to respond before now and was providing via a second letter a copy of the Navy's substitute. So Trammell had to content himself with a draft identical to H.R. 6604 three days after the Department's endorsement of Vinson's bill and the morning after the House Naval Affairs Committee voted to favorably report the measure. By coincidence or design, developments were keeping the Senator one step behind his House counterpart, and a marginal participant.

Nevertheless, the House committee's interest in amending H.R. 6604 to include aircraft authorization provided an opening for Trammell to introduce the Navy's proposal while avoiding the appearance of his abjectly trailing in Vinson's wake. On January 26 he introduced

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84 Two letters from Acting Secretary of the Navy H.L. Roosevelt, to Senator Trammell, January 23, 1934, Al-3/Al8 (330510), RG 80, NA.
S. 2493 that differed from Vinson's bill by incorporating the Navy's amendment to increase the authorized number of useful airplanes to 2,184. In so doing, Trammell was able to graciously abandon S. 1154 and eventually share sponsorship of H.R. 6604 which would come to be known as the Vinson-Trammell Act. In the meantime, however, he intended to request the Navy's views on S. 2493 and hold hearings on it on January 29.

It is difficult to characterize the resulting hearings as anything more than a face-saving device for Senator Trammell aimed at establishing his credibility as a full partner in efforts to enact authorization legislation. Following brief deliberation, the committee adopted a revised Navy amendment on aircraft authorization—the same offered by Carl Vinson on the House floor the next day—and agreed to favorably report the bill as amended to the Senate. Senator Homer T. Bone (Democrat; Washington) argued strongly for dividing the construction of the vessels authorized between private and Government yards on at least a 50-50 basis through the adoption of a Dallinger type amendment. Although no action was taken, this gave the Navy some forewarning of the possibility of such an amendment.

85U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Naval Affairs, Hearings on S. 2493, 73rd Congress, 2nd Session, 12.
amendment being offered during House floor debate the
next day and moved Admiral Land to prepare a memorandum
on that subject for Carl Vinson.

The first half of this brief hearing was consumed
by a rambling, pro forma session to report out Trammell's
bill, and the latter half was given over to aimless testi-
mony and discussion with representatives of disarmament
and pacifist groups. While such arguments had little
impact upon proceedings, the willingness to listen
created a favorable psychological climate. The brusque
treatment meted out to such groups by Carl Vinson and his
colleagues on the House side aggravated resentment and op-
position unnecessarily.

Only three days later the Navy was again before the
Senate Naval Affairs Committee, this time for a hearing
on H.R. 6604. A short session focused exclusively on the
Thompson and Tobey amendments. Admirals Standley and Land
strenuously opposed the first on several grounds. First,
it was unnecessary as the Navy already accepted the
Dallinger Amendment in principle and, although it techni-
cally applied only to cruisers, it had been extended to
all categories since 1929. Second, an inflexible division
would deny planners the options needed to respond to a major
crisis creating demands Navy yards could not meet. Even in
1934, they were not capable of carrying out half the construction without major modifications and expansion of their existing facilities. Third, the heavy load upon the Government yards would make their function of repairing and overhauling the fleet, their primary role, a secondary matter. Fourth, the Navy believed that this amendment would endanger the future existence of private yards which the program had largely been designed to help. Finally, the admirals felt that the private shipbuilders performed better work for less cost. If, in spite of these objections, some amendment of this type was unavoidable, the Navy preferred the Vinson proposal.

Senator Homer T. Bone (Democrat; Washington) was not impressed. His state possessed a Government yard at Bremerton and he was determined to see it benefit from the program. He argued that public facilities were cheaper and performed excellent work.\textsuperscript{86} He refused to accept the assertion that these yards were not meant to function in a shipbuilding capacity. If they were not now able to handle increased demands occasioned by an emergency, the required expansion should be undertaken. Under close

\textsuperscript{86}Ibid. Bone cited the case of the LOUISVILLE, a heavy cruiser built at Bremerton with a reported savings of 43 percent.
questioning, the admirals were obliged to admit that, short of a major crisis, the Navy yards were adequate.\textsuperscript{87}

The relative cost and efficiency of work in private and Government yards was to remain a vexing question throughout this period. In the first place, it was like trying to compare apples and oranges. Private estimates were usually higher, but this included taxes, insurance, and other costs which did not apply to Government facilities. Advocates of Navy Yards claimed that this was offset by their own higher labor costs because workers in Government yards were represented by the American Federation of Labor as opposed to open shops and company unions operated by private shipbuilders. In addition, a whole host of other factors were brought forward to complicate this debate.\textsuperscript{88} In political terms, however,

\textsuperscript{87}\textit{Ibid.}, 15

\textsuperscript{88}Other differences frequently cited were that the organization in a Navy Yard is not primarily oriented toward shipbuilding; civil service restrictions make it impossible to "hire and fire" as necessary, thus increasing the cost of production; the government pays full wages, without work, for 44 days a year, including annual leave and holidays; whereas a private contractor pays only for work done. Charles F. Elliott, "The Genesis of the Modern U.S. Navy" United States Naval Institute Proceedings, XCII March 1966, 65.
the issue was simple: if you had a private yard in your district or state it was better—if you represented a Navy Yard the reverse was true. The rest of the debate was just noise and smoke. The upshot was that the Navy had to come to grips with the political realities associated with parochial interests thus created to build and sustain the consensus needed to support a major, long-term ship-building program.

It became obvious that the Admirals were not going to win a debate with Senator Bone in open session, but they did secure some relief in the subsequent closed markup session. At that time, the committee adopted a substitute for the Thompson amendment basing the equal division of work between private and government yards and facilities on the basis of tonnage, not numbers of ships. This would allow the Navy to award more contracts to qualified private yards while it undertook the construction of fewer, larger vessels in its own yards. This latitude was further increased through the enactment of a proviso to the amendment empowering the President to alter this distribution of work if its maintenance was "inconsistent with the public interest in any year." Thus, the Navy gained greater flexibility in the allocation of construction through the equal tonnage criterion and could seek a Presidential waiver.
when circumstances required. 89

The opposition to the Tobey amendment arose from the belief that it was unenforceable. Admiral Land went on to add that since profiteering was primarily a wartime phenomenon, in peacetime normal competition would keep it in check. Bone scoffed at this explanation, pointing to the growing evidence of collusion in the bids submitted by private shipbuilders on N.I.R.A. contracts. 90 Tobey, who had requested to testify, joined in to refute the charge that his amendment was not effective. He argued that similar procedures had been followed in road construction, and other internal improvements carried out under Public Works. On balance, the Navy had not fared well in this exchange. Although the Navy's evaluation of Tobey's amendment may have been correct, Congress was more intent upon making a statement of principle about profiteering than upon the feasibility of the amendment. The best that


90 Ibid., 5. The bids in 1933 had been so similar that coincidence was unlikely. Trammell had led the fight to have them rejected, although largely because Gulf State Shipbuilding Company, a Florida firm he represented, had been refused contracts.
could be done under the circumstances was the adoption of an amendment to further clarify the implementation of the Tobey Amendment.

It was easier to get H.R. 6604 out of committee than to bet it on the Senate floor. The reason for this was the determined opposition of an anti-Navy faction led by the redoubtable William H. King of Utah. Ironically, he had once served on the Senate Naval Affairs Committee, but left in disgust following the enactment of the 1916 Naval Appropriation Act. From that moment, he carried on a remorseless vendetta with the Navy and no legislation aimed at benefitting that service ever escaped his scrutiny. King's efforts to defeat Hale's bill in 1932 and delete naval construction from the N.I.R.A. proposal a year later showed that his vigilance had not relaxed or that he was mellowing with age. He was joined by likeminded Senators coming almost exclusively from the northern plains states and upper midwest. King and his cohorts were masters of obstruction as evidenced by their success in delaying enactment of the "Fifteen Cruiser Bill" for a year. The memory of this intense hostility undoubtedly discouraged greater activity in the Senate on behalf of the Navy in the intervening years.

Arrayed against this formidable coalition were Park Trammell and his senior colleagues on the Naval Affairs
Committee. Trammell was the weakest member of the pro-Navy team. He lacked the intelligence, determination, energy, dedication and the knowledge to be an effective force on naval matters in Congress. Consequently, he could not command the respect or generate the support necessary to overcome determined opposition without difficulty. Further, Trammell lacked Vinson's boldness and his tentativeness was a decided liability during floor debate. Fortunately for the Navy, he could lean on Senator David I. Walsh (Democrat; Massachusetts), the second ranking majority member and reputedly the best qualified Democrat on the committee. Across the aisle, Frederick Hale stood ready to offer his considerable talents in support of H.R. 6604. Hale and Walsh could not totally

91Interview with Congressman Claude Pepper (Democrat; Florida), January 31, 1980. Congressman Pepper ran against Senator Trammell in 1935 and the latter's competence became a major issue in the campaign. Running against a relative unknown, Trammell was barely about to eke out a victory in the Democratic primary and even then there were charges of voting irregularities which may have denied Pepper the election.

compensate for Trammell's ineptitude, they were able to limit its impact. As will be shown, the selective intervention by other Senators at decisive points contributed to the ultimate Senate passage of the measure.

From February 9 until March 6, Senators King, Frazier and Nye employed dilatory tactics to keep H.R. 6604 from coming to a vote. Resurrecting arguments they used against S. 51 two years earlier and augmenting them with the charges hurled during House debate, this trio subjected the bill to a savage, withering attack. The only innovative aspect of this sustained verbal barrage was Senator Nye's plea to defer action until after his investigation of armaments manufacturers. All that proponents were able to accomplish in the course of repeated attempts to force consideration of the measure during February was the adoption of the committee amendments.93

For pro-Navy advocates, this delay was intolerable. They had the necessary votes for Senate passage, but feared that this consensus might disappear in the face of ever-increasing pressure exerted by pacifist and disarmament groups. Senate opponents realized this and wanted to gain enough time for the strong disarmament movement to mobilize

93CR, February 20, 2874-2875.
fully against H.R. 6604. Taken off guard by the swiftness of House action, pacifist and disarmament groups had escalated their efforts to defeat the measure since then and the pressure was becoming intense by the end of February. Equally serious, if H.R. 6604 were not enacted fairly quickly, the opportunity to secure funding to initiate construction of the 1935 program would pass. Since the Navy Appropriation Act for fiscal year 1935 had already been enacted, the only recourse was to provide the necessary funding via a supplemental or deficiency appropriation later in the session. The greater the delay, the more difficult this would become.

To resolve this impasse, on March 1, Senator Joseph T. Robinson offered a unanimous consent agreement providing that consideration of H.R. 6604 would be completed on March 6 and limiting debate by any member to ten minutes with an additional ten minutes allowed for the discussion of each amendment.\(^{94}\) Since he was Senate Majority Leader, Robinson's motion assumed a special significance. It was an indication that the Senate leadership wished to expedite consideration of H.R. 6604 and that the dilatory tactics of opponents should cease. As a senior administration spokesman and President Roosevelt's trusted lieutenant, Robinson

\(^{94}\)CR, March 1, 1934, 3491.
also conveyed by his action White House interest in the timely consideration of the measure. If this were not enough to persuade opposing Senators to agree to his motion, Robinson could have threatened some form of retaliation or raised the spectre of cloture. The Senate vote on final passage gave proof that this was not an idle threat. Senator Frazier, on behalf of the bill's opponents, agreed to the unanimous consent request, thereby assuring quick Senate approval.

As the debate on March 5-6 showed, however, the hard-core opposition to H.R. 6604 in the Senate was not going to accept defeat quietly. The exchanges were bitter and the rhetoric florid. For example, Senator Nye referred to the measure as "a bill for the relief of the munitions makers of the United States." In the midst of this posturing and polemic, the only matters of substance, taken up were amendments offered by Senators Trammell and Bone.

The Trammell amendment dealt with the profit limitation provisions placed in the House bill by Representative Tobey. Apparently it represented an effort by the Senate Naval Affairs Committee to clarify the terms and procedures to make profit limitation workable. Throughout February

95Ibid., March 6, 1934, 3780.
there had been several meetings between the committee and Navy and Treasury representatives to draft satisfactory legislative language.96 The main difference between the Trammell amendment and the House bill was that the 10 percent limitation was now said to apply only to those contracts in excess of $10,000. The record does not reveal how this particular figure was derived, but in light of subsequent opposition by the Navy Department and administration it appears to have been a committee number. As was earlier the case with the 10 percent limit, the choice of $10,000 as a cutoff point may have been on no other basis than that it sounded right and was politically defensible. Certainly the committee held no hearings on this matter and time was too short to conduct a thorough study to validate that figure. As it turned out, $10,000 was much too low and this provision would haunt the Navy for the next fifty years. After a largely nongermane discussion of Trammell's amendment extending over three days, it was approved by voice vote on March 6.97

96 Chief of the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts to the Secretary of the Navy, February 10, 1934, A1-3/A18(340110) RG 80, NA.

97 CR, February 27, 1934, 3312-3313; March 1, 3492-3496; March 6, 3793.
The amendment offered by Senator Bone represented an attempt to extend the equal division of ship construction between private and Government yards and facilities to aircraft manufacturing. Cognizant that existing Government owned facilities were unequal to such a task, Bone gave the President selective waiver authority. He specified, however, that subsequent efforts should be undertaken to expand present facilities or construct additional ones until they possessed the capacity to perform 50 percent of the production of naval aircraft.

Since learning of Senator Bone's intention to offer such an amendment, the Navy had been arguing vigorously against it. In the Department's eyes it was unnecessary as experience indicated that the average profits realized by that part of the aircraft industry engaged in building naval aircraft had been less than 4 percent between 1926 and 1933. Furthermore, to attempt to undertake production of half the naval aircraft acquired to support a treaty navy would "helplessly swamp technical facilities already over­loaded." It was also pointed out that the Navy only had about "twenty officers capable of directing and executing new aircraft designs" and it would take a minimum of seven years to educate and train the new officers required to carry out the Bone amendment. Finally, even if this were done, the chances were that the resulting aircraft designs
would not be as good as those produced by private manufacturers and that the production lines would not be as efficient or as cost-effective.\textsuperscript{98}

The seriousness with which the Navy regarded the Bone amendment resulted in a meeting between Senator Trammell and President Roosevelt on February 25. At that meeting the arguments against the amendment were discussed along with substitute language that would allow the President greater discretion in apportioning the manufacture of naval aircraft.\textsuperscript{99} Apparently, Senator Trammell came away not totally persuaded or concluded that the Bone amendment could not be defeated outright. Instead, he sought to reduce the proportion of manufacture at Government facilities to 25 percent. Trammell contended that this was a far more reasonable figure and if this percentage could be attained, then the proportion could be increased at some later date. Sensing that this was a reasonable compromise, Bone accepted and the Senate adopted his amendment as

\textsuperscript{98}Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics to Senator Trammell, February 21, 1934, A18-1(34), RG 72, NA.

\textsuperscript{99}Acting Secretary of the Navy to President Roosevelt, February 24, 1934, Miscellaneous Naval Building Folder, OF 18, FDRL. A note attached to this letter indicated that a meeting between the President and Senator Trammell was scheduled for 12:15 p.m. on February 25, 1934.
A final amendment was offered by Senator Bone to direct the President to develop navy yards and facilities to such an extent as to be able to handle all construction and maintenance of the fleet, become self-sufficient in wartime, and take the profit out of war. This radical proposal was opposed by Senator Trammell and summarily rejected.

All debate on the bill and amendments thus completed, the Senate passed H.R. 6604 by a vote of 65 to 18, with 13 not voting. Upon examination, the names in the negative column provided few surprises: Borah and Pope of Idaho; Frazier and Nye of North Dakota; King and Thomas of Utah; Dickinson and Murphy of Iowa; Bulow of South Dakota; Costigan of Colorado; Norris of Nebraska; Capper of Kansas; Clark of Missouri; Thomas of Oklahoma; La Follette of Wisconsin; and Shipstead of Minnesota. In addition, Wheeler of Montana, who was absent, indicated that he would have cast a negative vote. The only unexpected opposition came from Carter Glass of Virginia and Huey Long of Louisiana. The absentees included Erickson of Montana, Norbeck of South Dakota, Thompson of Nebraska, and Gore of Oklahoma.

100 CR, March 6, 1934, 3793-3794, 3801, 3813.
101 Ibid.
102 Ibid., 3813-3814.
so that, with the exception of Wyoming and Nevada, not one of the northern tier of states between the Mississippi and the Sierra Nevada gave full Senate approval. This interior region tended to be isolationist, oriented toward agriculture and other domestic problems, and, despite arguments that shipbuilding would benefit all sections, remained unsympathetic to naval expansion. The geographic basis of this opposition would seem confirmed by the fact that it consisted of 11 Democrats, 7 Republicans, and 1 Farmer-Laborite (Shipstead).\textsuperscript{103}

Conference

The substantial differences between the House and Senate bills necessitated a joint conference to resolve them. The following table indicates the areas of major disagreement:

\textsuperscript{103}The addition of absentees to this total would have contributed another 4 Democrats and 1 Republican.
### TABLE 17:

**Areas of Major Disagreement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amendment Number</th>
<th>House Position</th>
<th>Senate Position</th>
<th>Conference Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The first and succeeding alternate vessel of each category (except for the 15,000 ton aircraft carrier) shall be constructed in Government navy yards and facilities.</td>
<td>Not less than half the tonnage constructed under H.R. 6604 shall be constructed in Government navy yards and facilities. If the President does not find such apportionment inconsistent with the public interest in any given year.</td>
<td>Adopted House provision but retained Senate language giving the President discretionary authority to alter the apportionment in the public interest in any given year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No such provision</td>
<td>Not less than 25% of the aircraft manufactured authorized by H.R. 6604 shall be constructed in Government plants and factories. The President can waive this provision where the Government does not have the existing capacity to undertake 25%, but must subsequently initiate action to bring about the expansion of existing facilities and the acquisition or construction of new ones to conform with the intent of this provision.</td>
<td>Adopted Senate amendment, but reduced the percentage of aircraft to be built in Government plants and factories to 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>No contracts shall be entered into for the construction of ships and aircraft authorized by H.R. 6604, unless the firms agree to a 10% limit on net profit.</td>
<td>There shall be a 10% profit limit on all contracts and major subcontracts over $10,000. Profits will be reported to the Secretary of the Treasury and any excess profits will be recovered.</td>
<td>Adopted Senate amendment. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>No such provision</td>
<td>All contracts shall provide that the books, records, accounts, contracts, memoranda, documents, papers and correspondence of the contractor and its affiliates shall be subject to examination of the Bureau of the Budget or by any duly authorized representative of either House of Congress.</td>
<td>Adopted Senate amendment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In the first conference report, the value of contracts subject to the profit limitation was raised to $50,000, but a point of order was sustained against that action as it went beyond the scope of the House and Senate bills.*
Any lingering doubts about President Roosevelt's interest or involvement in the enactment of H.R. 6604 were dispelled by the close interplay between the administration and the House and Senate conferees. On March 10, Carl Vinson met with Budget Director Lewis Douglas to ascertain the administration's views and recommendations regarding changes to the Senate bill. Douglas advised him that insofar as the Thompson and Bone amendments were concerned, the President preferred to avoid the use of any specific formula or percentage in dividing ship construction or aircraft manufacture between Government and private facilities. Instead, the President should only be required to award a contract to a Government yard or factory in cases where it reasonably appears there has been collusion between private bidders. The administration also objected to the Senate revision to the Tobey amendment applying the 10 percent profit limitation to all contracts in excess of $10,000. This would involve the monitoring of an excessive number of contracts and the cost involved in auditing contracts that small would be prohibitive. Rather, the administration would prefer to have the Tobey amendment apply to contracts in excess of $50,000 as that would be a more manageable number to track and violations at that scale would justify the expense of an audit.
Following the meeting, Douglas wrote a letter to Vinson transmitting two draft amendments embodying the administration's wishes and urged that they be adopted by the House-Senate conferees as substitutes for the Senate amendments. Shortly thereafter, Douglas must have thought better about transmitting the administration's amendments solely through Vinson and requested the return of the letter. Vinson complied and on March 12 identical letters were sent to both chairmen with copies of the administration's substitute amendments.

On March 16, after a telephone discussion on the status of the joint conference, Vinson provided Budget Director Douglas with copies of the amendments tentatively agreed to by the conferees and solicited administration views on them before the next scheduled meeting on the 19th. Perusing the enclosed amendments, Douglas realized that administration guidance had only been partially accepted by the conferees. In the case of the Thompson amendment, the House position prevailed with the division of construction between Government and private yards

104 Budget Director Lewis Douglas to Hon. Carl Vinson, March 10, 1934; Budget Director Lewis Douglas to Hon. Carl Vinson and Senator Park Trammell, March 12, 1934, Navy, Increase of, RG 51, NA.
alternating by vessel in each category, except for the 15,000 ton aircraft carrier. The House conferees success­fully maintained that apportionment by tonnage, since pro­vided for in the Senate bill was not feasible as contracts were based on units and not displacement. However, the House did agree to accept the Senate language giving the President discretionary authority to modify the allocation of work between Government and private yards if he deter­mined it was in the "public interests" to do so.

The Bone amendment was also retained, but the percen­tage of aircraft and engines to be built in Government facilities was further reduced from 25 to 10 percent. The House conferees pointed out that the Government simply did not have the means to manufacture its quota, nor could it quickly acquire this capability. A requirement higher than one tenth, they maintained, would have the practical effect of vetoing the aviation authorization. Furthermore, the President was given authority to suspend this require­ment if he determined that Government facilities were inadequate to manufacture 10 percent of the naval aircraft and engines authorized. However, should a suspension be invoked, the President was expected to expand existing facilities, or acquire or construct new ones to achieve a 10 percent manufacturing and repair capability. The
President was also empowered to assign work to a Government facility if there was evidence of collusion between private bidders or that excessive profits were suspected. Finally, this amendment authorized funds necessary for the enlargement, acquisition, or construction of Government facilities to implement its provisions.

The third amendment Vinson enclosed modified the Senate version of the Tobey amendment and was identical to the administration substitute. The primary difference between the amendment the conferees adopted and the Senate version was that it applied to contracts and primary subcontracts involving $50,000 or more.105

After circulating these amendments through the Navy and Treasury Departments and checking with the President, Douglas called Vinson on the morning of March 19 with the administration's views. He advised Vinson that there was no objection to the Thompson amendment and while the administration could accept the revised Bone amendment, Douglas did not believe "that the Government should expand its present facilities to enter further into competition with private business, unless it becomes necessary to protect the Government against monopoly." But the most

105Hon. Carl Vinson to Budget Director Lewis Douglas, March 16, 1934, Navy, Increase of, RG 51, NA.
surprising news Douglas imparted was that the modified Tobey amendment was not satisfactory. In effect, after Vinson and Trammell pushed through the administration revision of the Tobey amendment, Douglas was telling them that it needed further modification. It seems that after studying the administration substitute, the Navy Department and the Income Tax Division of the Bureau of Internal Revenue became dissatisfied and prepared a number of suggested changes. There was concern that unless extreme care were exercised a profit limitation provision might cost the Government two to three percent of each contract for administration audit. Thus, such legislation might end up defeating itself "by increasing the cost under private contracts or by causing private firms to decline to bid for such Government business." Commander Weyerbacher, the Navy representative, discussed the proposed changes with Vinson over the phone in Douglas's office and was soon on his way to the Hill to assist the conferees in drafting a satisfactory substitute amendment. The resulting revisions were the last of a sequence of attempts to make the Tobey amendment enforceable and dealt primarily with reporting requirements by contractors and subcontractors, along with the procedures by which the Treasury Department would determine and
recover excess profits.  

Another item of dispute between the House and Senate had to do with Section 4 of the bill, which authorized the President to suspend construction in the event of an international agreement further limiting naval armament. By its adoption of the Ayres amendment, the House restricted this authority by exempting vessels actually under construction. At Secretary of State Cordell Hull's request, Senator Trammell further modified the House restriction by adding the qualification "such suspension shall not apply to vessels actually under construction on the date of the passage of this Act." Vinson was strongly opposed to this amendment and wrote to Col. Marvin H. McIntyre, Secretary to the President, to bring the matter to President Roosevelt's attention. The position of the House conferees, Vinson asserted:

is that this amendment is very objectionable and that it should be omitted. So far as results go, this amendment will refer primarily to the scrapping of vessels called for by the treaties and such scrapping should be from the bottom (old vessels) and not from the top (new vessels). This proposed Senate amendment is very uneconomical and

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106Ibid., Budget Director Lewis Douglas to Hon. Carl Vinson, March 19, 1934, Navy, Increase of, RG 51, NA. This letter was never actually sent since Douglas and Vinson discussed its contents over the phone and Commander Weyerbacher was soon on his way to Vinson's office to redraft the substitute to the Tobey amendment in the Senate bill.
permits and/or demands the same action as obtained under the Washington Treaty now so universally condemned by the country as a whole and by Congress in particular.107

Vinson's protest notwithstanding, President Roosevelt apparently was not disposed to overrule his Secretary of State on this matter and the House conferees were forced reluctantly to concede to the Senate amendment. Although a relatively minor point, the vehemence of House opposition underscored again the low esteem with which the Washington Treaty was held in 1934 and this attitude did not augur well for the upcoming naval conference in London.

After incorporating the administration modifications to the substitute Tobey amendment, the House-Senate conferees ratified their earlier tentative agreements and filed the conference report on March 20, 1934. When the House took up the conference report the following day, it experienced a hostile reception due to the upward revision of the size of the contracts under the profit limitation. Tobey objected asserting that this new definition would exempt at least $72 million worth of Navy contracts

107Hon. Carl Vinson to Col. Marvin McIntyre, Secretary to the President, March 16, 1934, Miscellaneous Naval Building File, OF 18, NA.
annually from the provisions of his amendment. Vinson repeated the arguments against the $10,000, but there was no denying that the conferees had gone beyond the scope of the two bills when they adopted the $50,000 figure. According to House Rules the conferees could have agreed to a figure between zero and $10,000, but not above that amount. Therefore, Tobey's point of order was sustained and a new conference ordered.\footnote{\textit{CR}, March 21, 5028.} The necessary changes were quickly made and the new report was agreed to on March 22. \footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, March 22, 7174.}

Now it was the Senate's turn to experience difficulty with the conference report. In spite of its privileged nature, Senator King was almost able to talk Trammell out of presenting the report until consideration of the pending Philippine bill had been completed. However, Senator Charles L. McNary (Republican; Oregon), the Minority Leader, was on hand to check his colleague's wavering and the report was taken up immediately.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, 5107.} Senator Bone, outraged at the treatment meted out to his amendment in conference, now rose to vent his rage and sarcasm on the present version of the bill. He insisted that the Government did have
facilities capable of producing aircraft and they should be expanded if the nation was not to fall prey to rapacious private corporations. Although incensed at the reduction in the proportion of Government manufacture and repair of naval aircraft from 25 to 10 percent, Bone was no less displeased with the "weasel words" which gave the President such broad discretion in the implementation of his amendment.\textsuperscript{111} He concluded by moving that the conference report be recommitted.\textsuperscript{112} Senator King immediately seconded Bone's motion which was in turn followed by a proposal from Senator Huey Long (Democrat; Louisiana) to defer further consideration of the report until votes had been taken on amendments to the Philippine bill.\textsuperscript{113} Senator McNary coolly quashed these efforts and the Senate agreed to the report amid a number of caustic partian shots by Senators Bone and Nye.

\textbf{Roosevelt's Turn}

With the House and Senate approval of the conference report, H.R. 6604 was engrossed and sent to the White House for the President's consideration. Predictably, this

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{111} \textit{Ibid.}, 5108.
\item \textsuperscript{112} \textit{Ibid.}, 5111.
\item \textsuperscript{113} \textit{Ibid.}, 5116.
\end{itemize}
occasioned a frantic last ditch appeal by pacifist groups for President Roosevelt to veto the Vinson-Trammell bill. Roosevelt had long been sensitive to this pressure and professed mystification at its stridency. Between February 2 and 17, the White House received and referred to the Secretary of the Navy for acknowledgement over 150 pieces of correspondence protesting H.R. 6604. The President, along with the bill's sponsors, maintained the pious attitude that the authorization was no more than a statement of policy which could not be implemented until some time in the future when Congress appropriated the necessary funds. Roosevelt felt he could dispel the fears of those opposing the bill because of that misapprehension by making clear the difference between an appropriation and an authorization.

Consequently, at noon, on March 27, with Carl Vinson, Fred Britten, and Assistant Secretary of the Navy Henry L. Roosevelt looking on, the President signed the bill and

114 Listing of correspondence and telegrams respectfully referred to the Secretary of the Navy for consideration and acknowledgement to writers, February 2-17, 1934, President's Personal File 5901, FDRL.

115 FDR's News Conferences, March 23, 1934, 360-361.
Because there is some public misapprehension of the facts in relation to the Vinson bill, it is only right that its main provisions should be made wholly clear.

This is not a law for the construction of a single additional United States warship.

The general purpose of the bill is solely a statement by the Congress that it approved the building of our Navy up to and not beyond the strength in various types of ships authorized, first by the Washington Naval Limitations Treaty of 1922, and secondly by the London Naval Limitations Treaty of 1930.

As has been done on several previous occasions in our history, the bill authorizes purchase and construction over a period of years. But the bill appropriates no money for such construction, and the word "authorization" is therefore, merely a statement of the policy of the present Congress. Whether it will be carried out depends on the action of future Congresses.

It has been and will be the policy of the administration to favor continued limitation of naval armament. It is my personal hope that the naval conference to be held in 1935 will extend all existing naval limitations and agree to further reductions.

At the same time the President was making his remarkable statement, the administration was making preparations to secure funds for the first year of the program.

Franklin D. Roosevelt's actions during this whole episode

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118 Ibid.
appear disingenuous at best, that is to say wholly consistent with his handling of the naval authorization from its inception.

Carl Vinson, however, gave a more candid appraisal: "This act is not a mere piece of paper. It means real fighting ships. We will provide the money this session to start work on part of the vessels authorized."119

Funding the First Year

In retrospect, it is difficult to see how President Roosevelt expected to allay the fears of opponents of the Vinson-Trammell through his clumsy lecture on the difference between authorization and appropriation bills. Even as he was signing H.R. 6604 into law, it was an open secret that the Navy had already submitted a request for supplemental appropriations to fund the first year's increment of 20 ships.120 Less well known but equally remarkable was the fact that during the bill-signing ceremony Roosevelt personally promised Vinson and the Assistant Secretary of the Navy that he intended to have the money necessary for the building of the first 20 ships taken from public works funds. Consequently, the Navy Department withdrew its

119Ibid.
120Ibid.
pending supplemental estimates of $38 million from the Bureau of the Budget and awaited the President's pleasure.\textsuperscript{121}

Furthermore, these estimates were not the result of some hasty calculations as H.R. 6604 neared enactment. Ever since the possibility of a supplemental appropriation request had been mentioned as a means for funding the 1935 program during the hearings by the House Naval Affairs Committee on January 21-22, the Navy had been busily engaged in generating and refining estimates.\textsuperscript{122} In addition, legislative language to accompany these estimates had been drafted in order to conform with the special provisions of the Vinson-Trammell Act. Thus, by the time the President signed the bill, the Navy was thoroughly prepared to make its presentation for the necessary funding to carry out the first year of construction authorized by H.R. 6604.

Following the Navy Department's withdrawal of its supplemental estimates on March 27, there was almost a

\textsuperscript{121}The Acting Secretary of the Navy H.L. Roosevelt to the President, April 5, 1934, Ll-1(1935)/EN(340308), RG 80, NA.

\textsuperscript{122}Bureaus of Construction and Repair and Engineering to the Navy Budget Officer, January 24, 1934, Al-3/A18 (340110), RG 80; Bureau of Construction and Repair and Engineering to the Navy Budget Officer, January 29, 1934, Ll-1(1935)/EN(340129), RG 80; Bureaus of Construction and Repair and Engineering to the Navy Budget Officer, February 7, 1934, Al-3/A18(340110) RG 80; Bureau of Ordnance to the
month's hiatus on efforts to secure funding. Whether this delay was a conscious decision on the President's part, or attributable to the normal process of working out the details of the administration's deficiency submission is not clear, but there is no denying much of the clamor and pressure against naval construction did subside as a result. In any event, it was not until April 22 that the funding issue surfaced again. Speaking to reporters, Vinson indicated that he thought the "P.W.A. might allocate $25,000,000 to start construction under his act." He estimated that the $25 million would permit the first years work on 15 or 20 destroyers and submarines and, perhaps, even include some aircraft. Four days later, Vinson's

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123 Apparently President Roosevelt had not confided his intention to use public works monies in the deficiency appropriation request to fund first year construction authorized by H.R. 6604 with Budget Director Douglas as the latter was mystified by the Navy withdrawal of its supplemental submission on March 27, 1934. Henry Wiseman to Budget Director Douglas, March 27, 1934, Navy, Increase of, RG 51, NA.

124 NYT, April 24, 1934, 3.
remarks were given further credence by a report that President Roosevelt made an informal announcement at one of his press conferences that approximately $32 million out of P.W.A. funds would be allocated toward the first year's construction authorized by H.R. 6604. Final confirmation came from Secretary of the Navy Swanson on May 16, the day after President Roosevelt's message to Congress requesting $1,322,000,000 in public works and relief appropriations. While not mentioned specifically in the President's message, Secretary Swanson announced that President Roosevelt advocated using approximately $40 million of that request for the navy shipbuilding program to begin construction of 20 warships.

Consequently, it was no surprise to find Admiral Standley and his retinue before the House Appropriations Committee on May 22, 1934, asking for funds to initiate construction authorized by the Vinson-Trammell Act. The Navy desired $20,380,000 to begin work on 2 destroyer leaders, 12 destroyers, and 6 submarines. In addition,

125NYT, April 26, 1934, 1 and 10.

126Ibid, May 17, 1934, 1.


128Ibid., 294-295.
the Bureau of Aeronautics estimated that it would require $12,832,512 to procure 225 aircraft needed to equip the new carriers and $2,708,000 to expand the Naval Aircraft Factory at Philadelphia in conformity with the provisions of the Bone amendment.129

These hearings paved the way for the introduction, on June 2, of H.R. 9830, the Deficiency Bill for fiscal year 1935. The House approved it on the following day and sent it on to the Senate.130 After unsuccessful attempts by Senators La Follette and Cutting to repeal the Navy section of the National Industrial Recovery Act, the bill was passed without the formality of a record vote and the President signed it on the 18th.

The following day, Secretary Swanson wrote the President requesting the the $40,700,000 contained in the Deficiency Appropriation be allocated without delay.131 Receiving no response, Swanson repeated his request on June 28 and the next day President Roosevelt formally allotted $40,661,000 from the Emergency Appropriation Act for fiscal year 1935 to begin the construction of the first 20 ships

129 Ibid., 284-287.
130 CR, June 3, 1934, 19332, 10423.
131 Ibid., June 3, 1943, 11661, 11672-11673, 11676.
and 225 aircraft authorized by the Vinson-Trammell Act.\footnote{132}{Secretary of the Navy Swanson to the President, June 19, 1934, Al-3/QN(340619), RG 80, NA.}

For its part, the Navy had not been idle during June. On the 6th Secretary Swanson signed the contract plans for 20 vessels authorized by H.R. 6604.\footnote{133}{Handwritten note by the President of allotments he made on June 29, 1934 showing that the Navy was to receive $40,661,905, OF 79, FDRL.} Three weeks later, the Department was ready to advertise for bids which would be publicly opened on August 15th.\footnote{134}{Press Release, June 6, 1934, Press Release File (1934), RG 80, NA.} By the end of the month the Navy had made its tentative allocations to Navy Yards and possible allocations to private yards. As scheduled, the bids were opened on August 15, and on the 22nd the final awards were made with 9 vessels going to private yards and 11 to Navy Yards.\footnote{135}{Handwritten note by the President of allotments he made on June 29, 1934 showing that the Navy was to receive $40,661,905, OF 79, FDRL.} All contracts were issued by November and the first year's construction under

\footnote{132}{Secretary of the Navy Swanson to the President, June 19, 1934, Al-3/QN(340619), RG 80, NA.}

\footnote{133}{Handwritten note by the President of allotments he made on June 29, 1934 showing that the Navy was to receive $40,661,905, OF 79, FDRL.}

\footnote{134}{Press Release, June 6, 1934, Press Release File (1934), RG 80, NA.}

the Vinson-Trammell Act was underway.

Reflections on H.R. 6604

The foregoing account establishes pretty conclusively that Carl Vinson neither conceived nor wrote what eventually became the Vinson-Trammell Act. Rather, with the help of the Navy he co-opted a Department proposal held up by the Bureau of the Budget, thereby enabling its submission to Congress. The direct antecedents of H.R. 6604 were the Trammell and Britten bills introduced in 1933 authorizing naval construction which also served as the vehicles for subsequent Navy efforts to draft the aforementioned Department proposal. Going back to 1932, a comparison shows that Senator Hale's bill, S. 51, had a closer resemblance to H.R. 6604 than either of the bills Vinson sponsored. Notwithstanding much that has been written to the contrary, then, H.R. 6604 was a Navy proposal drafted internally at a time Carl Vinson was not even in Washington. 136

The question of whether Vinson was afforded the opportunity to sponsor the Navy's proposal as a result of a conscious decision by the Chief of Naval Operations, or of a more limited arrangement engineered by Admiral Land is

136 When Congress adjourned Carl Vinson almost invariably departed from Washington to Milledgeville, Georgia and returned only just prior to the convening of the next session.
impossible to establish with certainty. Land's methods and his relationship with Vinson point to the latter case. It is much harder to imagine Land acting as Admiral Standley's surrogate in this matter and there is little to indicate that the two worked that closely. In Land's account, for example, the origin of the Vinson-Trammell Act is presented as an instance tale of the cooperation between himself as one of the Navy's foremost technical experts and Vinson, one of the Hill's great legislative craftsmen. There is no mention of Standley. By contrast, Standley's cersion is more generous to Land and generally lends credence to the limited conspiracy theory.

That Vinson did not actually draft H.R. 6604 is not very remarkable. Congressmen rarely author the bills they introduce although there persists a popular belief to the contrary. Legislators are by nature brokers of ideas which are translated into law through the legislative process. Success in playing the role of sponsor does not place a premium on creativity or profound thinking. What is needed is pragmatism, skill in interpersonal relations, shrewdness and determination. Together with a thorough appreciation of the rules and dynamics of the legislative process, these qualities produce effectiveness and success. Vinson recognized the promise and importance of the Navy's
authorization proposal, wanted to be its primary sponsor, and applied his considerable political and legislative talents to seeing that it was enacted. The results clearly indicate that the Navy or Admiral Land was justified in favoring Vinson over his Senate counterpart. The Gentleman from Georgia delivered and Trammell almost did not. By any practical measurement, Carl Vinson deserved to be the sponsor of the Navy's proposal because he could do more in enhancing its chances for enactment than anyone else in Congress.

It should also not be forgotten that Vinson had been toiling in behalf of a comprehensive, multi-year naval construction authorization since 1928, and not always painlessly. Working in the Navy's behalf, he had repeatedly shown his willingness to spearhead such efforts, although the issue was generally in doubt. True, the rebuffs and partial successes he experienced were not such as to jeopardize his political future, but to someone as ambitious, proud and competitive as Vinson they must have been very frustrating. Moreover, no chairmen can long endure championing lost causes without losing the respect of his colleagues or mortgaging the prestige of his committee. It was only right that this long service should be rewarded with sponsorship of a Navy authorization proposal.
whose success seemed likely.

As set forth in the last chapter, however, another reason why Vinson deserved to be the primary sponsor of H.R. 6604 was that he played a leading role in laying the groundwork for its success. Working closely with the Navy Department, he had been largely responsible for seeing that naval construction was included within the President's public works/unemployment relief package which became part of the National Industrial Recovery Act. There had always been a sizeable constituency within Congress favoring increased shipbuilding, but the N.I.R.A. program brought in the extra support needed to produce a winning consensus in 1934. The necessity for additional authorization to sustain the level of construction begun in 1933 virtually assured the enactment of a naval authorization in the following year. The 20,000 new jobs created by the N.I.R.A. shipbuilding program had to be protected and members facing reelection had more than just a passing interest in seeing that the workload did not fall off. If H.R. 6604 had not been enacted, new authorization would have had to wait until 1935.

Thus, there would have been no additional funding for fiscal year 1935 and, unless Congress acted quickly, fiscal year 1936 funding would be in doubt. There was no way that
private and Government yards could compensate for a two year hiatus in new contracts without significantly curtailling activities and laying off much of the workforce. These considerations were compelling enough to elicit the required support to pass H.R. 6604 in both chambers by comfortable margins in 1934. As much as anyone else, Vinson could claim credit for creating the political climate that made such action almost inevitable.

In handling of H.R. 6604, the greatest virtue Vinson displayed was dispatch. From the time he received a copy of the Navy's proposal until House passage, only 21 days elapsed. Considering that 8 days were spent awaiting Budget Director Lewis Douglas's capitulation and grudging clearance, House passage by the end of January was no mean accomplishment. Recognizing that chances for defeat on the floor were remote, Vinson wasted no time securing House approval. He realized that the only likely threat to H.R. 6604 was that through delay opposing forces would gain the time to mobilize and bring pressure to bear on Congress. By expediting committee and House action, Vinson preempted such a threat from developing and managed to maintain the favorable momentum behind the bill. It was unfortunate that he was not also able to forestall the adoption of the Thompson and Tobey amendments, but it is
hard to find too much fault on this point. At the time, armaments makers in general and shipbuilders in particular did not enjoy a very positive image in the United States. Thus, arguing against measures whose ostensible purpose was to limit excess profits by the "merchants of death" was decidedly not a success oriented undertaking. And although the Tobey amendment was an administrator's nightmare, incorporating it within H.R. 6604 allowed those voting for that measure to seem more responsible in justifying their support. Looking at arbitrary profit limitation within a broader context, its political virtues may well have outweighed its shortcomings.

Through the remainder of congressional consideration of H.R. 6604, Vinson consistently demonstrated a willingness to cooperate with the Navy Department and the administration. He worked closely with Budget Director Douglas during the House-Senate conference and did all that was politically feasible to incorporate administration recommendations into the final bill. In one instance he went too far in attempting to accommodate executive branch wishes. By raising the dollar value of contracts subject to the Tobey amendment from $10,000 to $50,000 he brought about House rejection of the first conference report. Despite this rebuff, Vinson emerged from this campaign with greatly enhanced prestige and credibility on the Hill and in the eyes of his
counterparts in the Navy Department. His efforts were greatly appreciated and moved Acting Secretary of the Navy H.L. Roosevelt to write at the close of the 2nd Session: "so much of the legislation which your Committee has reported has been of such vital importance to the Navy Department that I feel I must acknowledge your efforts and thank you and your committee for them." Significantly, but appropriately, no similar letters were sent to other committee chairmen.

By comparison, Senator Park Trammell comes off rather poorly. Even allowing that he worked in a far less structured institutional environment, Trammell was never in control of events during Senate consideration of H.R. 6604. Always a marginal performer, he needed the decisive intervention of the Senate leadership and administration to overcome opposition or dilatory maneuvers at critical junctures. On balance, it must be said that his lone virtue of quiet persistence was amply rewarded through the association of his name with H.R. 6604 which provided him with greater historical distinction than he deserved.

\[137\] Acting Secretary of the Navy to Hon. Carl Vinson June 21, 1934, GJ2/A18(340619), RG 80, NA.
On the executive side, President Franklin D. Roosevelt played the fox throughout. Unwilling to see H.R. 6604 emerge as an administration proposal, he continued to maintain a respectable distance from it during its consideration by Congress. Nevertheless, one should not infer from this posture that Roosevelt was uninterested or uninfluential in securing the eventual enactment of the bill. After all, it gave the broad grant of discretionary authority over naval construction any strong chief executive longed for. And while he may have declined to intervene to compel Budget Director Douglas to clear the Department proposal for Hill consideration, the President never evinced any dissatisfaction when the Navy circumvented the Bureau of the Budget via Carl Vinson. Once introduced, Roosevelt saw to it that H.R. 6604 received prompt administration endorsement. The President's informal involvement also manifested itself in the prompt scheduling of House floor debate by the Rules Committee and House leadership. It is simply inconceivable that Speaker Rainey would have acted as promptly or as decisively if he did not have clear guidance from the White House favoring quick action. When Senate consideration was stalled due to the dilatory tactics employed by the bill's opponents, it is difficult to believe that Senator Robinson's unanimous consent
agreement was not instigated by Roosevelt. The obvious origin of this initiative to all concerned led to its ready acceptance, although doing so was tantamount to swift passage. During the subsequent House-Senate conference, it is clear that the President became closely involved in the administration by-play with the conferees. If anyone continued to doubt how he felt about H.R. 6604, his inclusion of naval construction in his request to Congress for a deficiency appropriation should have dispelled that uncertainty.

What is more certain, however, is that in later years Roosevelt revelled in his role leading to the enactment of the Vinson-Trammell Act and claimed an ever-increasing share of credit for it. Moreover, no one could seriously doubt his desire to become involved in naval matters and enhance the strength and capability of the fleet. His reticence at the time was born of and nurtured by political expediency. Overt support of H.R. 6604 involved a substantial risk by alienating Democratic and Republican progressives who formed the backbone of his political support. It would also have tended to undercut his efforts to promote a new naval limitation agreement or, at the very least,

138Roosevelt, Public Papers and Addresses, II, 370.
preserve the existing framework. Furthermore, there was no need to incur such a risk as it really would not alter the already high probability that the bill would be enacted. His covert actions in its behalf were sufficient to convince those who could decisively affect the consideration of the measure to give their support and expedite action upon it. All of the public activity could be handled by willing surrogates who were plentiful and Franklin D. Roosevelt was a master in the employment and sacrificing of surrogates.

In addition, Acting Secretary of the Navy Henry L. Roosevelt, and Admirals William H. Standley and Emory S. Land performed yeoman service in facilitating the enactment of H.R. 6604 and securing initial funding for the program it authorized. With the exception of the Tobey amendment, which came out of nowhere, they were able to keep congressional proponents of the bill apprised of possible amendments and well stocked with substitutes and relevant data. Still, their greatest service came before the actual introduction of H.R. 6604 in formulating the actual proposal and the building program it embodied. The circumstances may have been propitious for the enactment of the naval construction authorization in 1934, but these Department representatives had much to say about making this probability a reality.
The upshot was that the Navy received its authorization to build up to treaty strength in ships and aircraft. This was to be accomplished by means which were flexible, largely free from the whims of an unpredictable Congress and almost completely in the hands of the President. The only real restrictions upon the program were the existing naval limitation agreements and the amount of money Congress would appropriate. The continued existence of the first of these impediments seemed increasingly doubtful in late 1934 and congressional funding had already been forthcoming in the 2nd Deficiency Appropriation for fiscal year 1935. The Thompson, Tobey and Bone amendments may have been undesirable, but represented the unavoidable political price the Navy had to pay for its Treaty Navy. Besides, in their final form those amendments were judged by the Navy as "workable at least and not too objectionable." All told, it was not a bad record of accomplishment.

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139 Admiral William H. Standley to Admiral D.F. Seller, March 20, 1934, Correspondence File, D.F. Sellers Papers, MDLC.
"It is considered desirable to recognize that the Vinson-Trammell Act was, in effect, the genesis of the modern U.S. Navy. . . "¹ Although this assessment may be somewhat overstated, there has been a general recognition since its enactment, that the Vinson-Trammell Act represented an accomplishment of great and lasting significance. Certainly, it was a major turning point in U.S. naval policy and development during the interwar period involving fundamental changes in force structure, fleet manning, and organization. Moreover, it profoundly influenced naval procurement practices, the shipbuilding and aviation industries, and the industrial mobilization base. The execution of the program set forth in the Vinson-Trammell Act also had significant diplomatic repercussions affecting the conduct and direction of American foreign policy for the remainder of the decade. Finally, and of transcendent importance, its enactment radically altered legislative

approaches and attitudes toward military preparedness that were to have far reaching consequences for congressional decisionmaking for over a quarter of a century. These, then were the principal legacies of the Vinson-Trammell Act.

The Unwarranted Legacy

Throughout its consideration, opponents of the Vinson-Trammell Act argued that enactment of a major, multi-year authorization would undercut upcoming naval limitation talks and initiate a new naval race jeopardizing world peace. In the years that followed, disarmament advocates and revisionist historians continued to advance these claims. In their eyes, the act was largely responsible for the failure of the London Naval Conference of 1935-1936 to establish a new naval arms limitation framework and set the stage for frantic rearmament efforts leading to World War II.

The validity of such charges rests on being able to establish that the Vinson-Trammell Act actually blighted the prospects of an otherwise promising round of talks in London. It would have to be shown that the enactment of the act was a capricious, willful move by the enemies of peace and disarmament that foreclosed the successful negotiation of a naval limitation agreement to supplement
and extend those negotiated earlier in Washington and London.

In assessing the role played by the Vinson-Trammell Act in bringing about the demise of the treaty system it is first necessary to briefly reexamine the reasons behind the success of previous naval limitation agreements. In 1921 agreement had been possible due to the combination of war weariness on the part of Great Britain, France and Italy; Japan's realization that it could not compete with its rivals in a major naval race; and the willingness of the United States to forego immediate advantage to ease the burden of a massive ship construction program initiated during and immediately after the World War. Success at London in 1930 had been predicated on American willingness to compromise on the cruiser question and to join with Great Britain in raising Japanese ratios for auxiliary classes in return for the latter's acceptance of the extension of quantitative limits to those categories. In addition, the political relations among the three major maritime powers were cordial enough to get negotiations over the inevitable rough spots. In brief, there was something in these agreements for everyone and a shared willingness to pursue sincerely the goal of naval limitation despite various technical and political impediments.
By early 1934, however, these conditions no longer obtained. While none of the signatory powers was blameless, Japan must bear primary responsibility for this unfortunate development. In fact, it can be said that Japan's support for realistic naval limitation did not long survive the negotiation of the London Treaty in 1930. Serious dissention within the fleet and a public outcry against the continuation of naval ratios even jeopardized Japan's ratification of that agreement. Only the determination of Prime Minister Hamaguchi Osachi, living up to his reputation as "The Lion," along with the efforts of a group of sympathetic admirals and like-minded civilian leaders carried the day for ratification. Unhappily, however, the Prime Minister soon paid for this accomplishment with his life from an assassin's bullet. In retrospect, Hamaguchi's death can be seen as the turning point where moderate civilian politicians began to lose control over the military and the nationalist zealots allied with them. This trend manifested itself clearly just a year later with the Kwantung Army's unauthorized seizure of Manchuria following a contrived incident outside Mukden. Shortly thereafter, the navy and army became involved in bloody fighting with Chinese forces in the vicinity of Shanghai. There followed a recurring cycle of
cabinet reshuffling and new governments, each less viable than the last. With the political system unable or unwilling to curb the military, Japan embarked upon a policy of attempting to establish hegemony over Northern China in defiance of world opinion and the condemnation of the League of Nations. Indeed, Japan responded by withdrawing from the League and establishing the puppet state of Manchukuo. More and more, Japan would turn inward and seek unilateral solutions to its political and economic problems. Consequently, this naked aggression, coupled with a thinly veiled intent to limit Western influence and trade in order to establish a special economic relationship in Northeast Asia, dissipated the reservoir of good will and trust that previously existed with the United States and Great Britain.

Although the Japanese Army had taken the lead in this expansionism on the Asian mainland, it would be a mistake to conclude that the navy was necessarily more moderate. The differences between the two services were and would remain primarily over the orientation of Japanese expansionism and the nature of the primary external threat to the accomplishment of that aim. The army had as its main objective the creation of friendly client states in Northeast Asia, thereby allowing Japan's access to the raw materials she
needed and simultaneously assuring the markets for her finished goods. Much more conscious of the hardship suffered by farmers in Japan as a result of rapid industrialization and the depression, the army also desired to open up areas for colonization that would draw off excess agrarian population. Since the army's activities were largely confined to Manchuria and Northern China, its potential adversaries were the Soviet Union and the Nationalist Chinese regime of Chiang Kai-shek.

The navy, on the other hand, tended to look East and South for objectives and possible enemies. Recognizing that Japan was an industrialized, maritime nation whose survival depended on access to the oil fields in the Dutch East Indies and the resources and markets in Southeast Asia, the navy saw the British and American fleets as the primary threat. If the United States did not acquiesce to Japan's political and economic hegemony of Asia, the navy would have to be strong enough to decisively repulse efforts by the American fleet to establish control of the Western Pacific, and occupy the Philippines and Guam. The navy also had to keep in mind that Great Britain might choose to align itself with the United States and throw its Pacific fleet and the naval resources of Australia and New Zealand into the balance. Any hard analysis of the
respective naval strengths of Japan and her likely opponents revealed that the London treaty ratio was insufficient for her operational needs. Treaty limits may have sufficed for her to retain a marginal superiority in the Western Pacific, but they were totally inadequate for Japan to realize her aspirations of extending her naval dominance to Southeast Asia in the face of a hostile coalition of Great Britain and the United States.

Following the assassination of Prime Minister Hamaguchi, the "treaty faction" rapidly lost influence within the Navy. It was displaced by the "fleet faction" which opposed the treaty system and its ratios because those quotas implied inferiority and would deny Japan the realization of its destiny as the arbiter of events in East Asia and the Western Pacific. In agreeing with the army's policies in China, the navy was careful to extract in return the promise that the Washington and London treaties would not be extended and full equality would be demanded in any subsequent agreement. Carefully cultivating public opinion, the navy applied increasing pressure upon the civilian governments in support of these objectives. By early 1934, this pressure was becoming irresistible.2

The "fleet faction" was also influenced by other considerations. The initiation of the N.I.R.A. program alarmed the Japanese as it indicated that the United States was not going to grant Japan de facto parity by default. In the past, naval limitation negotiations had generally ratified the relative strengths of the signatories at the time of the conference. In 1930, Japan had been successful in advancing arguments that the ratios established at Washington should be revised upward when applied to auxiliary categories to reflect existing tonnage relationships vis-a-vis Great Britain and the United States. It was hoped that this ratio creep would repeat itself at the upcoming second London conference in 1935-1936. The N.I.R.A. program dimmed such hopes and Japanese navalists were faced with the prospect that the de facto 5:4 ratio Japan had been able to attain vis-a-vis the United States in overall naval strength by 1932 would erode before the next conference. This development obviously would weaken Japanese arguments for parity and the abolition of existing ratios. As the legitimatization of de facto parity was the primary incentive for pursuing further naval limitation efforts, the U.S. action killed what little interest the navy had in the upcoming London talks.
Since the N.I.R.A. shipbuilding program was nothing more than a belated effort by the United States to build toward treaty limits and replace overage vessels, Japanese alarm is somewhat difficult to understand. It seems likely that the magnitude of that program, compared to the relative absence of American shipbuilding efforts since the Washington Treaty, made it seem more menacing than it really was. By failing to maintain a steady building and replacement program, the United States nourished Japanese hopes that parity could be incrementally achieved within the treaty framework. Viewed within that context, the N.I.R.A. program represented an ominous departure from previous American limited building programs—not only did it imply that Japan would not be granted parity, but raised the spectre of a far greater rearmament effort.

Another factor that entered into the Imperial Navy's thinking was the growing belief that the United States and Great Britain lacked the will and did not possess the technical capability to match Japanese naval building efforts should the treaty system expire. Although many in the navy, including Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, knew the extent of American industrial capacity, most felt that the United States was too soft and politically divided to translate this capacity into naval strength. Furthermore,
the navy's technical branch believed that the development of a new class of super battleships mounting 18-inch guns, the deployment of the long lance torpedo, and exploiting advances in aviation would give Japan a substantial technical edge over her rivals. Finally, there was a pervasive conviction that the Japanese spirit would compensate for any material deficiencies and provide an imponderable advantage, especially when combined with the most rigorous and realistic training regimen of any navy.

Still, Japan was not totally indifferent to world opinion and searched for a way to put as good a face as possible on its abrogation of the Washington Treaty. The result was a clever mixture of demands for equality, qualitative naval limitation, and an overall reduction in fleet tonnages. Instead of the existing inequitable ratios, Japan proposed parity vis-a-vis the United States and Great Britain on the basis of what came to be known as the "common upper limit." This meant that the three major naval powers would agree to a single tonnage limit which they would employ to fit their special needs. In effect, this was the revival of the global tonnage approach advocated by France at previous conferences and would abolish limitation by vessel categories. The Japanese were careful to point out that this "common upper limit" could be lower than current
tonnage levels so that the cause of disarmament could actually be advanced through its adoption. Linked to this total tonnage limitation, was Japan's proposal that "offensive" warships be eliminated. For Japan these vessels were carriers, battleships, and heavy cruisers—any ships capable of extended operations across the Pacific. In the rather unlikely event that the other signatory powers could be persuaded to accept these terms, Japan would find itself capable of maintaining undisputed control over the Western Pacific. Nevertheless, the main purpose for promoting these initiatives was to put Japanese withdrawal from naval limitation in the best light possible by obfuscating the real issues with idealistic rhetoric.

Washington was not swayed by these transparent arguments. Never enamored with the treaty system anyway, the Navy was determined that the United States should not play the part of "Santa Claus" again. The Department recommended no further changes in existing ratios, no reduction in the size of the battleships and carriers, no decrease in the number of heavy cruisers, and no increase

3Secretary of the Navy to the President, November 19, 1934, enclosing a memorandum from Admiral Frank H. Schofield to Admiral William H. Standley, dated October 5, PSF/157/ London Naval Conference, 1934, FDRL.
in the number of light cruisers or restrictions on their tonnage below the previous ceiling of 10,000 tons.\(^4\) The Navy's hard line benefitted from the general perception that the United States had been making sacrifices under the rubric of "disarmament by example" and it was about time for someone else to make concessions. Furthermore, concern over Japanese aggression in Manchuria and China, combined with the Hoover-Stimson doctrine of nonrecognition, made Americans less receptive to further reductions in treaty ratios. The Roosevelt Administration mirrored these attitudes and adopted a policy that pressure had to be kept on Japan to curb her reckless expansionism. Like Hoover before him, President Roosevelt believed that the industrial and technological superiority of the United States would convince the Japanese that they could not expect to win a naval race. As if to underscore this attitude, on November 27, 1934, Carl Vinson leveled a stern warning at Japan. Speaking to reporters, he declared, "We cannot grant naval equality to Japan at any price. If the Tokyo Government does insist upon wrecking the treaty,

\(^4\)Chairman of the General Board to Director of War Plans, January 26, 1934, G.B. No. 438-1 (Serial No. 1640), General Correspondence, William S. Sims, Papers, MDLC.
I will insist that the (House Naval Affairs) committee and Congress make enough money available to build five ships for each three laid down by Japan."

Should armed conflict become unavoidable, Roosevelt and his naval advisors had little doubt that the material preponderance of the United States would ultimately prevail. Thus, while not ruling out minor concessions, the American position was that no fundamental changes to the treaty framework would be acceptable. In adopting this negotiating stance, President Roosevelt seemed to be attempting to be conciliatory enough to retain British support yet ensure that the Japanese were seen as being clearly responsible for the failure of the talks and the demise of the treaty system.

The British approach to the naval conversations was one of opportunism. Preoccupied with the resurgence of

5Baltimore Sun, November 28, 1934, 1. In interviews about naval discussions during this period, Vinson professed little interest or involvement, saying that he left diplomatic questions to the State Department. After this episode, the State Department must have been deeply appreciative that his subsequent foreign policy statements were few and far between. Naturally, Vinson's heavyhanded approach played into the hands of the "fleet faction" in Japan by heightening tensions and making American actions appear more bellicose than they actually were.
Germany as a potential military and naval threat and the general instability in Europe, the Admiralty began having serious second thoughts about the existing treaty arrangement. Faced with the prospect of concentrating the fleet in home waters and the Mediterranean to counter the growth in Italian, French and German naval capabilities, the British felt they had to have more cruisers to protect vital trade routes. Although Great Britain did not want to concede parity to Japan, there was a greater willingness to come to some sort of accommodation on that question. With the reduction in the Royal Navy's presence in the Far East, it seemed wise to attempt to mute differences with the predominant power in that region. What the British had in mind was the partial retention of quantitative limitations and the cosmetic adherence to ratios, but actually shift emphasis to a qualitative approach dealing with the specific characteristics of each class of vessel. This involved the reduction in the size of battleships and the caliber of their main batteries, smaller aircraft carriers, and limiting the number of heavy cruisers.

Sensing that the British position was reasonably close to their own, the Japanese sought to break the Anglo-American stance on parity by offering concessions on qualitative issues. The sticking points blocking an Anglo-Japanese
understanding were British refusal to formally repudiate ratios, and disagreement over the definition of "offensive" warships that Japan wished to abolish. On the question of ratios, Great Britain, much to the chagrin of the United States, showed a great deal of flexibility short of outright repudiation, but that was the minimum Japan would accept. Insofar as "offensive" vessels were concerned, Japan placed battleships and carriers in that category while Britain did not. On the other hand, Japan would not agree to abolish defensive submarines which the British regarded as loathsome aggressive weapons.

Consequently, when the three delegations met for preliminary discussion in late 1934, it soon became evident that no common basis for agreement existed. Admiral Yamamoto claimed that Japan's demand for parity and the abolition of various "offensive vessels" was necessary because of improvements in naval armaments since the last treaty. These demands were unacceptable to the British and Americans as they refused to subscribe to the rather lame argument that developments in naval technology warranted Japanese parity. They reminded their oriental counterparts that while Japan had only one ocean to defend, they had several. Therefore, parity for Japan was highly inequitable and would result in her naval superiority over much of the
Pacific Ocean. It was also pointed out that conflicting definitions made agreement impossible as to what constituted an "offensive" warship. Despite some wavering on the part of the British in attempting to persuade the Japanese not to abrogate the Washington treaty by proposing cosmetic retention of the ratios, no progress was made. As a result, on December 24, 1934, Japan formally renounced the Washington Treaty effective December 31, 1936.6

Despite its announced intention to abrogate the Washington treaty, Japan actively participated in further naval discussions in 1935 and sent a high-level delegation to the second London conference which convened later that year. Continued Japanese inflexibility in pressing its demands, however, only served to bring the United States and Great Britain closer together and caused them to adopt a less conciliatory stance. Therefore, when the other participants—the United States, Great Britain, France and Italy—rejected the concept of a "common upper limit" in January 1936, the Japanese delegates withdrew.

The departure of the Japanese delegation assured the futility of trying to extend quantitative limitation, but Europe was not blameless. The British had just concluded a

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6NYT, December 30, 1934, 1, 14.
naval pact with Germany which allowed its fleet to build up to 35 percent of the size of the Royal Navy. This, in turn, would cause a predictable expansion of the French and Italian fleets making Great Britain's two power standard policy in Europe unattainable within existing treaty limits. Following the Japanese walkout, most of the participants were ready to adjourn, but the British pressed for a treaty embodying certain qualitative restrictions. An agreement was finally ratified by the United States, Great Britain, and Italy, but later Japanese refusal to either abide by it or exchange information transformed it into a dead letter. Thus, the interwar experiment in naval limitation came to an end and a new period of naval rearmament moved into high gear.

While it cannot be said that the Vinson-Trammell Act had no impact on the demise of the treaty system, its contribution was minor compared to other factors. Its enactment merely confirmed Japanese fears that the United States was not willing to concede naval parity by default at the next naval conference. Thus, it may have helped precipitate Japan's denunciation of the Washington Treaty, but

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8Ibid., 395-397.
certainly was not the root cause behind that action. Radical changes taking place in Japan since the ratification of the London Treaty had already fatally damaged prospects for the extension of qualitative naval limitation. Under the circumstances, the only way the United States could have salvaged quantitative limitation would have been to have acquiesced to Japan's desire for naval parity and political and economic hegemony in the Far East--neither of which were acceptable to the Roosevelt Administration. Viewed in this context, the resurgence of American naval construction was more a response to Japanese actions than their cause. If there is any legitimate criticism that can be leveled at the Vinson-Trammell Act it is that it unduly magnified belated American efforts to build to treaty limits. The principal reason for this, however, was not the magnitude of the program it authorized but the earlier failure of the United States to build and maintain a treaty navy.

The Unfortunate Legacy

As had been foreseen prior to the enactment of the Vinson-Trammell Act, the implementation of the Tobey amendment quickly presented serious problems for the Navy's shipbuilding program. By early 1935, Department witnesses testifying in support of the appropriations request for
fiscal year 1936 were urging its repeal or modification.\footnote{U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, Navy Department Appropriation Bills for 1936, Hearings, before the Subcommittee on Navy Department of Committee on Appropriations, 74th Cong., 1st Session, 1935, 7.}

It was becoming painfully evident that firms providing high technology items refused to bid as the 10 percent profit margin was not large enough to defray the costs associated with research and development. Particularly objectionable was the provision that the profit limitation would apply to each contract separately. Competitive research and development was a risky business at best with many more losers than winners, and a 10 percent return on one success simply would not offset the losses associated with the numerous failures. Consequently, there was little incentive to compete for Navy contracts and this produced a growing concern that the fleet would lag behind its major rivals in the development and application of new technology.

Another problem was that the increased cost of surety bonds, which could be forfeited in the event of failure to turn over excess profits, was being passed on to the Government in the form of inflated estimates.\footnote{"A worker is Worthy. . .," Scientific American, CLIII (November, 1935), 237.} In short,
the 10 percent profit ceiling on all Navy contracts over 
$10,000 had the effect of raising bids, and discouraging 
many smaller, technology oriented firms from seeking Navy 
business.

In attempting to address these problems, the Navy 
prevailed upon Carl Vinson to introduce H.R. 5730, a Depart­
ment proposal, on February 14, 1935. H.R. 5730 contained a 
number of provisions designed to make the 10 percent profit 
limitation more compatible with the needs of the naval 
construction program. First, the 10 percent ceiling was 
applied to the total number of contracts handled by a 
firm each year. Thus, excess profits would be determined 
on the basis of 10 percent of the aggregate worth of all 
contracts, not separately as was previously the case. 
Moreover, excess profits could no longer be charged against 
performance bonds, a change that was expected to save the 
Government a half million dollars annually in contract 
administration. In addition, the losses suffered by a 
company in one year could be applied as a credit toward the 
computation of profits the following year. Finally, con­
tracts involving specialized scientific equipment involving 
extensive research and development would be exempted.

In the course of nine days of hearings conducted by the 
House Naval Affairs Committee all these recommended changes
were examined in detail. The most troublesome issue, however, was arriving at a workable definition of scientific equipment to be exempted from the 10 percent profit limit. Mr. R.E. Gillmore, representing the Scientific Apparatus Makers, offered an amendment to exempt from the profit ceiling "contracts or subcontracts for scientific equipment used for communication, target detection, navigation, and fire control as may be so designated by the Secretary of the Navy." Mr. Gillmore and other industry representatives argued that such an exemption was imperative due to the risk associated with the development of high technology items in the above categories. Vinson and his colleagues were sympathetic with the aim of the Gillmore amendment, but expressed reservation over its ambiguity relative to the specific items to which it applied. The committee made a determined effort to develop a clear set of definitions regarding scientific equipment, but was ultimately forced to conclude that the only realistic way to implement the amendment was to give the Secretary of the Navy discretionary authority to determine exemptions on a case by case basis.

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11 U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Naval Affairs, Hearings on H.R. 5730 to Amend section 3 (b) of an Act entitled "An Act to establish the composition of the United States Navy . . .," approved March 27, 1934, 74th Cong., 1st Session, 1436.
basis. Thus amended, the bill passed the House on June 12, 1935, but was not approved by the upper chamber until the following year, and finally signed into law on June 25, 1936.

As it turned out, this was not the last attempt to modify the profit limitation provisions of the Vinson-Trammell Act. It was further amended by the Act of April 25, 1939 to provide that the 10 percent ceiling would thereafter only apply to naval vessels, with military and naval aircraft contracts being subject to a 12 percent limit. The final prewar modification of the Tobey amendment was the Act of June 28, 1940 which again changed the percentages to define excess profit as that higher than 8 percent of the total contract prices completed within a taxable year, or 8.7 percent of the total cost of performing those contracts, whichever was lower. In addition, the contract value subject to these provisions was raised from $10,000 to $25,000. Paralleling these statutory changes were a number of revisions to Treasury regulations regarding the implementation of profit limitation. The overall effect of these modifications was to meet specific industry and Navy objections, and facilitate the administration of the profit limitation provisions.
Notwithstanding these revisions, the Vinson-Trammell Act was not successful in limiting profits and the extra effort and cost associated with the implementation of the Tobey amendment detracted from the naval construction program. The judgment of two prominent experts on profit limitation is unequivocal and harsh:

The Vinson-Trammell Act and its amendments must be written off as a failure, even in peacetime, in accomplishing any effective profits control. According to a statement of the Treasury Department, the net amount assessed under the Act on contracts for Navy vessels and aircraft up to August 31, 1942, was roughly $7,450,000 and on Army aircraft contracts for the same period, $70,000. As plans for vastly increased procurement of war munitions were made after the fall of France in 1940, it was established that the Vinson-Trammell Act limitations were making shipbuilders and aircraft manufacturers reluctant to enter into contracts and were definitely delaying the war program. Investigations of profits on the contracts of the armed forces after suspension of the Vinson-Trammell Act, have quite conclusively established that the Act was ineffectual to prevent very large profits to certain contractors.\(^2\)

While this assessment might be softened inasmuch as the Tobey amendment may have been an unavoidable cost for the enactment of a major ship authorization in 1934, it still

points up the pitfalls of legislating on the House floor. No one could quarrel with the principle of prohibiting excess profits on Navy contracts and Congressman Tobey may have acted with the best of intentions, but a hastily drafted, across the board profit limitation provision was a poor remedy. Shipbuilding and airplane manufacture were very complex undertakings incorporating state of the art technology and not easily amenable to a generalized, simplistic approach. Nevertheless, it has been shown that the Tobey amendment was drafted and enacted without the benefit of any authoritative study or comprehensive hearings into the nature of the shipbuilding and aircraft manufacturing industries and how a profit limitation might be effectively applied. In essence, Congress short-circuited its committee system and only after the outbreak of war was the Navy able to rid itself of the unsatisfactory product of that precipitous decision.

The Material Legacy

Viewed from the perspective of American involvement in World War II, it would be difficult to overemphasize the contribution of the Vinson-Trammell Act in enhancing the readiness and material condition of the U.S. fleet. As shown in the following table, it eventually provided authorization for the construction of 8 battleships, 1
aircraft carrier, 4 light cruisers, 5 destroyer-leaders, 46 destroyers, and 28 submarines—the core of the fleet's modern combatant vessels in commission at the outbreak of hostilities.
### TABLE 18
EARLY APPROPRIATIONS UNDER VINSON-TRAMMELL AUTHORIZATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Capital Ships</th>
<th>Cruisers</th>
<th>Destroyers</th>
<th>Submarines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 24, 1935</td>
<td>1 Carrier</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 3, 1936</td>
<td>2 Battleships</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 27, 1937</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 26, 1938</td>
<td>2 Battleships</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 25, 1938</td>
<td>2 Battleships</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 25, 1939</td>
<td>2 Battleships</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Equally important, however, the Vinson-Trammell Act provided continuity between the N.I.R.A. program for 1934 and the upswing in naval construction just prior to World War II. Undoubtedly, in its absence, some additional building would have been authorized by Congress in the intervening years but it is unlikely that the resulting program would have been as consistent or balanced. Taking up an incremental, short-term authorization amid the dramatic oscillations that occurred on the domestic and international scene in the mid and late 1930's would have been an uncertain proposition at best. By shielding the naval construction program from these extremes, the Vinson-Trammell Act was able to ensure the maintenance of a comprehensive, consistent approach that facilitated planning, budgeting and production decision-making. Furthermore, it permitted the Navy to adhere to a

13 Responding to the Panay incident and the general breakdown in international order, in 1938 Congress passed the Second Vinson Act authorizing the Navy to exceed treaty tonnage limits by 20 percent. In early 1940 there followed a Third Vinson Act further increasing naval authorization levels by 11 percent. Finally, in the wake of the fall of France in June 1940, a Fourth Vinson Act was enacted increasing authorization limits by 70 percent. Together, these incremental augmentations of naval authorization made the "two ocean Navy" a reality and laid the foundation for the ultimate naval triumph of the United States and its allies.
procurement strategy to avoid the bloc obsolescence characteristic of crash programs like that undertaken by the United States during World War I.

Another major benefit flowing from the continuity provided by the Vinson-Trammell Act was the ability to gradually increase and improve the naval construction production base which suffered badly during the 1920's. Several shipyards actually closed and many highly trained workers were forced to go into other occupations. Consequently, naval design and construction became a "veritable lost art." Thus, the Vinson-Trammell Act accomplished the resuscitation of the ailing shipbuilding industry by providing a steady workload over several years. Shipbuilding firms could now be confident that the N.I.R.A. program was not an isolated phenomenon, but an integral part of a larger, longer range effort to bring the Navy to full treaty strength in underage vessels. Thus assured, these firms would be willing to make the necessary capital investments and undertake the required training to increase the size of their workforce to gain a share of this expanded program. Without these incentives, the emergency

naval construction programs initiated just before the war would have suffered serious delays while adequate facilities were being built and the necessary workforce assembled and trained. Even with the benefit of the Vinson-Trammell Act, "it was to take nearly four years to regain the organizations, skilled workmen, and building ways necessary to carry out actual construction on a large scale."\(^{15}\) It hardly needs to be pointed out that by 1940, the United States did not have four years to spare in preparing what turned out to be the greatest naval conflict in its history.

Another factor facilitating increased naval construction was the foresight of naval constructors and engineers throughout the building drought in the 1920's and early 1930's. Continuously preparing and revising the design of all classes of combatant vessels, satisfactory plans were ready upon the resumption of large-scale building with the advent of the N.I.R.A. program in 1933. Ironically, they were aided by the existence of the qualitative limitations contained in the Washington and London treaties which were largely responsible for the hiatus in shipbuilding by the United States. Forced to abide by qualitative characteristics set forth in those treaties, naval constructors and

\(^{15}\)Ibid.
engineers could devote their energies to making the optimum tradeoffs in armor, armament and speed within those constraints. Even with the demise of the treaty system at the end of 1936, so many warships had been built to treaty specifications by all the signatory powers that production and operational considerations militated against any major change in the characteristics of combatant vessels. The Vinson-Trammell Act permitted the continuing construction which allowed the limited number of design personnel to refine their plans and incorporate new technology. Consequently, by the time emergency shipbuilding programs were initiated, basic designs had been frozen so that production was simplified and construction lead time minimized. What was most important, however, was that the crucible of war demonstrated that these designs produced warships that acquitted themselves well in combat.

The Transcendent Legacy

Notwithstanding its significant foreign policy, production and material ramifications, the Vinson-Trammell Act registered its greatest and enduring impact on the legislative process. After a decade of relative inaction, disharmony and frustration, the Vinson-Trammell Act established the basis for a new and positive relationship among contending entities within Congress in addressing shipbuilding and other issues related to the material maintenance of the fleet.
As mentioned previously, the changes occasioned by the enactment of the Budget and Accounting Act of 1921 profoundly altered the institutional arrangements within both the executive branch and Congress for dealing with naval matters. Looking back on the period between the Spanish-American War and the years immediately following World War I, the Navy and its legislative allies must have sensed that they were witnessing the passing of a golden age. Without the existence of the Bureau of the Budget or involvement of the Appropriations committees, the Department and the House and Senate Committees on Naval Affairs enjoyed almost complete control over the formulation and implementation of naval policy. This was especially true insofar as the annual Navy budget was concerned as the Naval Affairs committees exercised jurisdiction over appropriations. Not only did this mean that the Department's request would receive a sympathetic hearing, but an annual shipbuilding program was a near certainty. Naval construction could easily be incorporated within the appropriations bill and its inclusion would become an integral part of the consensus building package fashioned by the committee. The establishment of the Bureau of the Budget and the transfer of jurisdiction over all appropriations to the Appropriations committees ended this happy arrangement.
The Bureau of the Budget constrained budget submissions and legislative initiatives by the Navy Department to ensure that they remained consistent with administration policy. The shifting of responsibility for annual appropriations back to the Appropriations committees created clear distinction between the authorization and appropriations process. What this meant in real terms was that before any major new naval construction could be undertaken, the Naval Affairs committees would have to pass legislation authorizing appropriations for that purpose. Thus, such legislation would come before the House and Senate as a discrete package not integrated within an appropriation bill, to be debated on its own merits and subjected to attacks from peace and disarmament groups. Isolated, beleagured, and without a broad constituency within Congress, these measures faced an uphill battle for enactment.

This is not to say that the change in institutional structure of legislative procedure was the sole, or even primary reason for the failure of the United States to institute a consistent building program during the 1920's. Public apathy, executive opposition, and the atmosphere perpetuated by the treaty system were at least as important in accounting for this failure. Nevertheless,
altering the legislative process established in 1922 became the prerequisite for the establishment of a major, multi-year naval construction program. Unless something could be done to overcome the procedural inertia confronting efforts to enact naval authorizations, fleet modernization efforts would remain partial and sporadic.

It did not take long for naval construction proponents to recognize that new institutional and procedural arrangements were unsuitable and that a new approach was necessary. By 1926, the Department and its allies in Congress realized that one year authorizations could not effectively address fleet modernization requirements. Except for the Eight Cruiser bill enacted in 1924, no naval construction had been authorized since the Washington Conference—in fact, none of the Navy's one year shipbuilding recommendations had even been introduced. Inspired by the enactment of a five year, 1000 plane authorization that same year, the Navy and its legislative cohorts began exploring the application of that approach to shipbuilding. Essentially, this involved a multi-year authorization broken down in specific annual increments. The ill-fated Vinson bills in 1932 constituted the most serious attempt to enact this type of authorization.
After 1932 the emphasis shifted to a blanket, multi-year authorization on the basis of overall numbers or tonnage of underage vessels within treaty limits. By virtue of the election of a sympathetic, Democratic President, the widening of the constituency for shipbuilding within Congress and Vinson's legislative skill, this approach came to fruition in 1934. As a result of the enactment of the Vinson-Trammell Act, a new harmony was achieved favoring a comprehensive, consistent approach to naval construction and fleet modernization. Blanket authorization became standard practice and remained the pre-eminent legislative vehicle for military procurement for the next quarter century.

By providing a blanket authorization based on tonnage, the Naval Affairs Committee did not have to contend with the polarization within Congress and the public controversy associated with annual or sporadic efforts to initiate shipbuilding programs. Now it was simply left to the Appropriations committees to provide the funding necessary to carry out the administration's shipbuilding request contained within the budget submission to that fiscal year. Once again, the ship construction increment was an integrated part of the annual appropriation bill and enjoyed the relative security afforded by that status. Although the Appropriations committees could be expected to make some
minor reductions or restructuring of the administration's recommendations, it was not likely that a drastic cut in the shipbuilding program would be attempted. After all, Congress, through its enactment of the Vinson-Trammell Act, had made a policy statement and it would involve considerable risk to try to circumvent this direction in the face of certain opposition by the Naval Affairs Committee, the administration and the Navy Department.

Moreover, opponents to naval construction found themselves in a difficult position as the objectives of the Vinson-Trammell Act represented those already adopted by the United States through its ratification of the Washington and London Treaties. Progressives would find their opposition inconsistent with treaties which had been their handiwork. Whereas in the 1920's they could oppose naval building on the basis that new reductions in naval tonnages might be in the offing, by the end of 1934 it was clear that the treaty framework was collapsing. The onus was now upon them to persuade Congress why it was not prudent to at least build up to treaty limits if it appeared that the other signatories were going to exceed them. Thus, the edifice erected at Washington and London proved more useful to the Navy and its proponents in Congress following its collapse than when it was in force. Much to the chagrin of peace and disarmament advocates,
the rubble of the treaty framework became the unchallengeable foundation for American naval rearmament up to World War II.

There was, of course, an institutional cost for this achievement as the House Naval Affairs Committee effectively legislated itself out of the annual congressional review of the naval construction program. For a committee to voluntarily curtail its involvement in such a manner was a rarity in the annals of the House of Representatives and raises the question why Vinson and his colleagues were willing to make this sacrifice. Upon closer examination, it appears to have been the result of a combination of factors—recognition that naval requirements demanded decisive action, appreciation of the basic conservatism of the appropriations process, confidence in various institutional safeguards, and Carl Vinson's realization that this new procedural framework could be employed to establish his personal dominance over the legislative implementation of the Vinson-Trammell Act.

Vinson and his colleagues seem to have been fully conscious of the potential institutional drawbacks associated with the adoption of a multi-year, blanket authorization, but did not hesitate to accept them as the price for streamlining the legislative process. As partners in the abortive
efforts to institute a major, long-term shipbuilding program since 1928, most members shared Vinson's conviction that the existing legislative arrangement was incapable of adequately addressing the Navy's material shortcomings. Consequently, they were quite willing to join him in sacrificing a measure of the committee's power to provide for a modern treaty navy. Moreover, by 1934 they were acutely aware of the alarming decline of the U.S. fleet vis-a-vis its principal rivals. Events abroad did not permit the United States to stumble along aimlessly and the institutional repercussion resulting from corrective action paled before the consequences of continued neglect. Even without the vindication provided by World War II, it would have been difficult to sanction the prolongation of the quantitative and qualitative inferiority of the American Navy in the early 1930's.

The committee's principal concern was that the Appropriations committees might take advantage of the void created by the Naval Affairs committees withdrawal from the annual congressional review process. Using the power of the purse,

15Vinson interviews. This was mitigated somewhat in the case of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee due to overlapping membership with the Appropriations Committee. Such dual membership was not permitted in the House of Representatives.
the Appropriations committees could conceivably bring about major alterations of the policy guidance set forth in the Vinson-Trammell Act. Muting this apprehension, however, was the recognition of the basically conservative nature of the appropriations process and the relative caution of the Appropriations committees. In retrospect, this assessment was well founded as sufficient appropriations were forthcoming to implement the Vinson-Trammell program and the Appropriations committees did not attempt to seriously modify the policy guidance contained in that act. In large part this was due to President Roosevelt's willingness to include substantial funding for naval construction in his budget submissions after fiscal year 1935. Not normally disposed to drastically alter the President's budget without a clear congressional consensus, the Appropriations committees responded with incremental and marginal adjustments. Conscious of their technical limitations in evaluating the annual shipbuilding request, those committees resorted to a general rationale that a small reduction was necessary to encourage greater management efficiencies and keep the shipbuilders honest. This approach was also politically expedient in that no single cut was deep enough to create serious opposition by aggrieved legislators, yet the sum of these minor reductions represented a significant savings.
Should the House Appropriations Committee prove to be more aggressive and obnoxious than anticipated, the members of the Naval Affairs Committee could draw comfort from the existence of a number of institutional safeguards. It was not easy to "roll" the Appropriations Committee on the House floor, but arbitrary cuts in the Navy shipbuilding accounts risked overt opposition by the Naval Affairs Committee. Even if the committee did not prevail, attention would be focused on areas of disagreement and these exchanges might create the impression that the Appropriations Committee was acting contrary to congressional guidance in impeding the execution of the provisions of the Vinson-Trammell Act. Obviously, the Appropriations Committee would much prefer to avoid such confrontations and endeavored to be conciliatory enough to elicit at least the neutrality of the Naval Affairs Committee. Such circumspection could also pay great dividends if Carl Vinson and other senior members could be prevailed upon to speak in behalf of the Navy appropriation bill during House debate. Recognizing the inevitability of some cuts, Vinson and his colleagues would be inclined to cooperate as long as the basic program was not jeopardized.

Oversight hearings could also be employed to deter or rectify arbitrary actions by the Appropriations Committee.
Such hearings might be used to expose the interference of the Appropriations Committee in the implementation of the Vinson-Trammell naval building program. Or they might reveal unforeseen problems that would justify even greater outlays. They could also serve as a convenient forum to reaffirm the economic and political benefits associated with a large-scale shipbuilding program. Finally, oversight hearings provided a convenient mechanism for the Naval Affairs Committee to effectively reassert its interest, expertise and credibility regarding the program. In fact, the committee did conduct extensive hearings on the progress of the naval construction program, naval aircraft procurement and a number of other issues related to bringing the Navy up to treaty strength.

In addition, the committee routinely handled a great deal of housekeeping and private legislation of great personal interest to various members of Congress, including those serving on the Appropriations Committee. Antagonizing Vinson and his committee had to be weighed carefully against possible negative consideration of special interest measures.

Lastly, even if the House Appropriations Committee had proved to be a serious problem, in all likelihood this would prove to be only a temporary inconvenience. With the imminent collapse of the treaty system apparent even before
the enactment of the Vinson-Trammell Act, general naval rearmament was only a question of time. New authorization would soon be needed if the United States was to remain a credible naval power. Consequently, if the Appropriations Committee demonstrated its inability or unwillingness to fund a blanket authorization, the next act could be drafted to increase compliance.

Although not a primary motive in his advocacy of a blanket authorization, there is good reason to suppose that Carl Vinson actually welcomed his committee's diminished role in the annual congressional review of naval construction programs. In making this observation, however, a careful distinction should be drawn between committee participation and Vinson's personal involvement. Not having to work through the committee increased his freedom of action and was entirely consistent with his characteristic approach to legislative problem solving where critical national security issues were concerned. Throughout his career, he sought to address such problems by stripping away the extraneous factors that impeded a quick and objective solution. Generally, this meant the reduction of the number of active players and the muting of parochial and partisan considerations. Never enthusiastic about widespread member involvement— including those on his own committee—in
dealing with major naval policy questions, he apparently believed that such participation only resulted in greater parochialisms, unnecessary delay, and a less satisfactory legislative remedy. Much to be preferred were informal deliberations by a handful of responsible, knowledgeable senior members who were more inclined to make their decisions on the basis of military requirements. Untainted by the inevitable grandstanding associated with larger public forums, this low-keyed bargaining by a select few was an ideal medium for Carl Vinson. Through the force of his personality, expertise and energy, he could be expected to dominate such deliberations and decisively shape their outcome.

The thrust of Vinson's independent initiatives appears to have been to restrict the range of options available to the House Appropriations Committee in its review of naval construction funding requests. Possessing a strong proprietary interest in the implementation of the Vinson-Trammell Act, Vinson became intimately involved in the decision-making process within the executive branch in determining the size of the annual program and level of funding to be requested. For the most part, there was little difference of opinion on these matters as the Navy wished to satisfy its chief legislative benefactor and President Roosevelt
needed little encouragement to provide adequate funding for shipbuilding. Once the President's budget submission was before Congress, Vinson shifted his emphasis to persuading the Naval Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee to support the naval construction request. At times his attempts at persuasion bordered on outright interference and, on at least one occasion, moved an exasperated subcommittee chairman to forbid members to discuss the Navy appropriation with the wily Georgian.16 Confronted by a Navy request whose formulation was influenced by Vinson, combined with a traditional inclination to make only minor cuts and wishing to avoid opposition by the Naval Affairs Committee, the House Appropriations Committee's options were indeed limited.

On the Senate side, Vinson's freelancing was even more successful and resulted in the consummation of an informal alliance between his committee and the Naval Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee—a relationship that has continued to this day. Chaired by Senator James F. Byrnes (Democrat; South Carolina), a strong Navy backer, the Naval Subcommittee acted as a sympathetic court of appeals for

16 Interviews with Hon. F. Edward Hebert (Democrat; Louisiana), February 17, 1974.
cuts by the House Appropriations Committee. Being a former Congressman and colleague of Vinson's, Byrnes proved to be a very receptive and helpful ally. Whatever the attitude of the House Appropriations Committee toward the implementation of the Vinson-Trammell Act, Senator Byrnes left no doubt about how he and his committee felt:

    Congress. . .in the Trammell-Vinson Act provided for the construction of certain vessels. . .
    The Appropriations Committee has no duty other than to comply with the act of Congress and to provide the funds to enable the Navy Department to carry out the policy which has already been determined by the Congress. . .
    . . .the Appropriations Committee. . .
    does not go into the matter of the determination of the policy but considers only the question of providing needed funds. . .
    The Appropriations Committee has never held and never does hold hearings, on that particular subject.17

Skillfully alternating between the application of his formal powers and prerogatives on behalf of the committee and reliance upon personal persuasion, Carl Vinson came to dominate Congress's handling of naval matters to a degree that has never been rivalled. Eliot Janeway was hardly exaggerating in his description of Vinson's predominance shortly after World War II:

For some years Vinson and his Capitol colleagues have lived together under a non-aggression pact. They knew that he doesn't care who makes the nation's laws, so long as he can build its Navy, and they have given him a blank check to operate as a one-man Committee of the Whole on naval matters. In return, Congress is assured from long experience, that the Vinson Navy measures which it votes for will never boomerang. The pact has been justified. In no other field does Congress wield more power, or do individual members suffer less embarrassment.

Through his efforts to enact a blanket shipbuilding authorization and subsequent exploitation of the resulting institutional and procedural changes, Carl Vinson was largely responsible for the American naval renaissance in the later 1930's. The measure of his success becomes more apparent when it is remembered that in the short space of three years he transformed Congress from being an intractable part of the problem to a prominent element of the solution of severe Navy material deficiencies. What is even more remarkable was that Carl Vinson was able to maintain that happy relationship for over a quarter of a century.

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APPENDIXES

MAJOR NAVAL AUTHORIZATION MEASURES,
1916-1934

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1. H.R. 15947—An Act making appropriations for the naval service for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and seventeen, and for other purposes. (Public Law No. 241) August 29, 1916

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the following sums be, and they are hereby, appropriated, to be paid out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the naval service of the Government for the year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and seventeen, and for other purposes: . . .

INCREASE OF THE NAVY

For the purpose of further increasing the Naval Establishment of the United States, the President of the United States is hereby authorized to undertake prior to July first, nineteen hundred and nineteen, the construction of the vessels enumerated below:

Ten first-class battleships, carrying as heavy armor and as powerful armament as any vessels of their class, to have the highest practicable speed and greatest desirable radius of action; four of these at a cost, exclusive of armor and armament, not to exceed $11,500,000 each, to be begun as soon as practicable.

Six battle cruisers, carrying suitable armor and as powerful armament as any vessels of their class, to have the highest practicable speed and greatest desirable radius of action; four of these to cost, exclusive of armor and armament, not to exceed $16,500,000 each, to be begun as soon as practicable.

Ten scout cruisers, carrying suitable protection and armament suited to their size and type, to have the highest practicable speed and greatest desirable radius of action; four to cost, exclusive of armor and armament, not to exceed $5,000,000 each, to be begun as soon as practicable.

Fifty torpedo-boat destroyers, to have the highest practicable speed and greatest desirable radius of action; twenty to cost, exclusive of armor and armament, not to exceed $1,200,000 each, to be begun as soon as practicable: Provided, That not less than four of these shall be built on the Pacific coast: Provided further, That the cost of construction on the Pacific coast does not exceed the cost of construction on the Atlantic coast, plus the cost of transportation from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Nine fleet submarines.

Fifty-eight coast submarines, of which number three to have a surface displacement of about eight hundred tons each, to cost, exclusive of armor and armament, not to exceed $1,200,000 each, and twenty-seven, which shall be the best and most desirable and useful type of submarine which
can be procured at a cost, exclusive of armor and armament, not to exceed $700,000 each, shall be begun as soon as practicable; and the sum of $8,217,000 is hereby appropriated for the construction of said submarines, to be available until expended. Not less than twelve of the submarines, to be available until expended. Not less than twelve of the submarines herein authorized to be begun as soon as practicable shall be built on the Pacific coast: Provided, That the cost of construction on the Pacific coast does not exceed the cost of construction on the Atlantic coast, plus the cost of transportation from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

One submarine, equipped with the Neff system of submarine propulsion, exclusive of armor and armament, $250,000: Provided, That the owners of the Neff system of submarine propulsion will construct, in accordance with drawings, plans, and specifications provided by them, one coast-defense submarine of about one hundred and fifty tons displacement when submerged, carrying armor and armament similar and equal to that of the "C" class of submarines, with fittings, equipment, machinery, devices, appliances, and appurtenances of every kind with latest improvements, complete in all respects, and suitable for naval purposes: Provided further, That the money appropriated for this purpose shall not be paid to the builders of said boat until the same has been completed, passed satisfactory service tests, and been accepted by the Secretary of the Navy; but upon such completion, tests, and acceptance by the Secretary of the Navy the sum appropriated shall be paid.

Three fuel ships, one at a cost not to exceed $1,500,000 to be begun as soon as practicable.

One repair ship.

One transport.

One hospital ship, at a cost not to exceed $2,350,000, to be begun as soon as practicable.

Two destroyer tenders.

One fleet submarine tender.

Two ammunition ships, one at a cost, exclusive of armor and armament, not to exceed $2,350,000, to be begun as soon as practicable.

Two gunboats, one at a cost, exclusive of armor and armament, not to exceed $860,000, to be begun as soon as practicable: Provided, That the sixty-six vessels directed herein to be begun as soon as practicable shall be contracted for or shall be begun in navy yards within six months from the date of the approval of this Act.

The Secretary of the Navy shall build any of the vessels herein authorized in such navy yards as he may designate should it reasonably appear that the persons, firms, or corporations, or the agents thereof, bidding for the construction of any of said vessels have entered into any
combination, agreement, or understanding the effect, object, or purpose of which is to deprive the Government of fair, open, and unrestricted competition in letting contracts for the construction of any of said vessels: Provided, That the Secretary of the Navy is hereby authorized to build any of the vessels herein authorized in such navy yards as he may designate.

CONSTRUCTION AND MACHINERY: On account of hulls and outfits of vessels and machinery of vessels heretofore and herein authorized, to be available until expended, $59,000,194.

INCREASE OF THE NAVY, TORPEDO BOATS: On account of submarine torpedo boats heretofore authorized, to be available until expended $5,282,593.

INCREASE OF THE NAVY, ARMOR AND ARMAMENT: Toward the armor and armament for vessels heretofore and herein authorized, to be available until expended, $47,110,000.

INCREASE OF THE NAVY, AMMUNITION: Toward ammunition for the vessels herein authorized, to be available until expended, $19,485,287.

Total increase of the Navy heretofore and herein authorized, $139,345,287.
2. H.R. 9690—An Act to authorize the construction and procurement of aircraft and aircraft equipment in the Navy and Marine Corps, and to adjust and define the status of the operating personnel in connection therewith. (Public Law No. 422) June 24, 1926

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That for the purpose of further developing and further increasing aeronautics in the Navy, the President of the United States is hereby authorized to undertake the construction and procurement of aircraft, spare parts, and equipment for the Navy as enumerated below:

PARAGRAPH 1. During the fiscal year ending June 30, 1927, not to exceed two hundred and thirty-five airplanes with spare parts and equipment, to cost not to exceed $12,285,000: Provided, That the number of airplanes and the limit of cost herein specified for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1927, shall be in addition to the seventy-eight airplanes with spare parts and equipment for which the sum of $3,300,000 is included under the appropriation increase of the Navy in the Navy Department and Naval Establishment Appropriation Act for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1927.

PAR. 2. During the fiscal year ending June 30, 1928, not to exceed three hundred and thirteen airplanes with spare parts and equipment, to cost not to exceed $16,223,750.

PAR. 3. During the fiscal year ending June 30, 1929, not to exceed three hundred and thirty-five airplanes with spare parts and equipment, to cost not to exceed $17,582,500.

PAR. 4. During the fiscal year ending June 30, 1930, not to exceed three hundred and fifty-seven airplanes with spare parts and equipment, to cost not to exceed $18,941,250.

PAR. 5. During the fiscal year ending June 30, 1931, not to exceed three hundred and seventy-four airplanes with spare parts and equipment, to cost not to exceed $20,046,250; in all, during the five-year period beginning July 1, 1926, and ending June 30, 1931, one thousand six hundred and fourteen airplanes, with spare parts and equipment, to cost not to exceed $85,078,750.

PAR. 6. During the fiscal year ending June 30, 1932, and during each fiscal year thereafter, not to exceed three hundred and thirty-three airplanes with spare parts and equipment, to cost not to exceed $17,476,250.

PAR. 7. The number of airplanes, spare parts, and equipment thus authorized to be constructed or procured during the five fiscal years beginning July 1, 1926, and ending June 30, 1931, and the number authorized to be constructed or procured during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1932, and during each fiscal year thereafter is the number which it has been estimated will be required...
to increase, during a five-year period beginning July 1, 1926, the useful airplanes on hand or otherwise provided for on June 30, 1926, to one thousand and to maintain the number of useful airplanes at not less than this number which is hereby established as the authorized number of useful airplanes to be employed in the Navy: Provided, That, in the event satisfactory arrangements for the procurement of the authorized number of airplanes are not made in any fiscal year, such deficiency may be made up in the next ensuing year or years: Provided further, That "useful airplanes," as used in this Act, shall be those airplanes on the Navy list which are, or which after reasonable repairs can be made, in all respects safe to fly and fitted to take part in active military operations in time of war, and shall be exclusive of those airplanes classified as experimental or, with the approval of the Secretary of the Navy, declared obsolete: Provided further, That nothing herein shall be construed as more than an authorization for the procurement of aircraft within the limits enumerated in this Act, nor in any way to abridge the right of Congress to determine what numbers of aircraft may be appropriated for in any fiscal year within the limits so authorized.
3. H.R. 7359—A Bill to provide for the increase of the Naval Establishment. December 14, 1927

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That for the purpose of further increasing the Naval Establishment of the United States the President of the United States is hereby authorized to undertake the construction of the following vessels: Twenty-five light cruisers, nine destroyer leaders, thirty-two submarines, and five aircraft carriers.

SEC. 2. The construction of light cruisers and aircraft carriers herein authorized shall be subject to the limitations prescribed by the treaty limiting naval armament, ratified August 17, 1923.

SEC. 3. In the event of an international conference for the limitation of naval armaments the President is hereby empowered, in his discretion, to suspend in whole or in part any construction authorized by this Act.
4. H.R. 11526—An Act to authorize the construction of certain naval vessels, and for other purposes.
(Public Law No 726) February 6, 1929

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President of the United States is hereby authorized to undertake prior to July 1, 1931, the construction of fifteen light cruisers and one aircraft carrier according to the following program:
(a) Five light cruisers during each of the fiscal years ending June 30, 1929, 1930, and 1931, to cost, including armor and armament, not to exceed $17,000,000 each.
(b) One aircraft carrier prior to June 30, 1930, to cost, including armor and armament, not to exceed $19,000,000: Provided, That if the construction of any vessel herein authorized to be undertaken in the fiscal year ending June 30, 1929 or 1930, is not undertaken in that fiscal year, such construction may be undertaken in the next succeeding fiscal year: And provided further, That the first and each succeeding alternate cruiser upon which work is undertaken, together with the main engines, armor, and armament for such eight cruisers, the construction and manufacture of which is authorized by this Act, shall be constructed or manufactured in the Government navy yards, naval gun factories, naval ordnance plants, or arsenals of the United States (1), except such material or parts as are not customarily manufactured in such Government plants.
SEC. 2. The Secretary of the Navy is directed to submit annually to the Bureau of the Budget estimates for the construction of the foregoing vessels.
SEC. 3. The construction of the light cruisers and of the aircraft carrier herein authorized shall be subject to the limitations prescribed by the treaty limiting naval armament, ratified August 17, 1923, so long as such treaty shall remain effective.
SEC. 4. In the event of an international agreement, which the President is requested to encourage, for the further limitation of naval armament, to which the United States is signatory, the President is hereby authorized and empowered to suspend in whole or in part any of the naval construction authorized under this Act.
(2) Sec. 5. First. That the Congress favors a treaty, or treaties, with all the principal maritime nations regulating the conduct of belligerents and neutrals in war at sea, including the inviolability of private property thereon.
Second. That such treaties be negotiated if practically possible prior to the meeting of the conference on the limitation of armaments in 1931.
SEC. (3) 6. The Secretary of the Navy is hereby directed to present to the Congress on or before December 10, 1929, preliminary plans, specifications, and estimates of cost for the construction of two salvage vessels for use in ship disasters.
5. H.R. 12283-A Bill to authorize the construction of certain naval vessels required under the London Naval Conference, and for other purposes. May 9, 1930

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President of the United States is hereby authorized to undertake prior to July 1, 1936, the construction of such light cruisers, destroyers, destroyer leaders, submarines, and airplane carriers as are authorized under the London Naval Conference, according to the following program:

(a) Seventy-three thousand five hundred tons light cruisers to cost, including armor and armament, not to exceed $132,300,000.

(b) Fifty-five thousand five hundred tons destroyers and destroyer leaders to cost, including armor and armament, not to exceed $150,000,000.

(c) Forty-two thousand one hundred tons submarines to cost, including armor and armament, not to exceed $122,000,000.

(d) Sixty-nine thousand tons aircraft carriers to cost, including armor and armament, not to exceed $93,500,000.

SEC. 2. The Secretary of the Navy is directed to submit annually to the Bureau of the Budget estimates for the construction of the foregoing vessels.

SEC. 3. The construction of the light cruisers, destroyers, submarines, and aircraft carriers herein authorized shall be subject to the limitations prescribed by the treaty limiting naval armament, signed at London April 22, 1930, when ratified by the United States Senate, so long as such treaty shall remain effective.

SEC. 4 In the event of an international agreement for the further limitation of naval armament, to which the United States is signatory, the President is hereby authorized and empowered to suspend in whole or in part any of the naval construction authorized under this Act.
RESOLUTION

Whereas it is the sincere desire of the American people to establish a material reduction in naval armament throughout the world;

Whereas the United States has participated in three naval conferences with the object in view of urging upon other nations its purpose and desire to reduce its naval armament and to cooperate with other nations to the same end in order that the peoples of the world may be released of the crushing burdens necessitated by maintaining their present military establishments, and because of the conviction that world peace is more likely to be preserved by the maintenance of minimum navies by the great powers of the world; and

Whereas all American experts and delegates, including Senator Reed of Pennsylvania, whose statement, "We (the American delegates) were horrified to find that in these auxiliary classes the United States was in a condition of almost hopeless inferiority," give irrefutable and overwhelming testimony that there was a failure to make any material progress in actual naval armament reduction at the three conferences which have been held since the World War, due to the fact that the American Navy was proportionately inferior to the navies of Great Britain and Japan at the convening of the last two conferences; and

Whereas it is the opinion of American delegates and observers that no conference will result in bringing about a substantial limitation of naval armament in the world unless at future conferences the United States is in a position to scrap its proportional share of naval craft with other powers; and

Whereas it is the desire of the United States Government to remove all possible obstacles that have heretofore caused a failure to accomplish material naval reduction, and because of the sincere desire of the American people to promote world peace and lessen the tax burdens of its peoples and the peoples of the world in future maintenance of large military establishments; and

Whereas the London treaty seeks to establish a definite naval parity between the contracting nations and therefore is tantamount to legalizing the right of each nation concerned to maintain a navy of the actual strength defined in the treaty, and, therefore, when other nations are maintaining maximum navies permitted under the actual parity set up the failure of the United States in this respect is an admission to the world of our purpose to maintain a navy of actual inferior strength to what our
needs require, and agreed upon by the American delegates at London:

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate of the United States, in the event that this treaty is ratified, favors the substantial completion by December 31, 1936, of all cruisers mounting guns in excess of 611 inches, all aircraft carriers, all destroyers, and all submarines permitted under the Treaty for the limitation and reduction of naval armament, signed at London on April 22, 1930.
7. H.R. 14688—A Bill to authorize the construction of certain naval vessels, and for other purposes.
December 8, 1930

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President of the United States is hereby authorized to undertake the construction of naval vessels enumerated below:

(a) One aircraft carrier to cost, including armor, armament, ammunition, and airplanes, not to exceed $27,650,000.
(b) One flying-deck cruiser to cost, including armor, armament, ammunition, and airplanes, not to exceed $20,780,000.
(c) One cruiser to cost, including armor, armament, ammunition, and airplanes, not to exceed $16,605,000.
(d) Four submarines to cost, including armor, armament, and ammunition, not to exceed $4,400,000 each; in all, $17,600,000: Provided, That for the said aircraft carrier the limit of cost shall include the cost of one hundred and fourteen airplanes, for the flying-deck cruiser thirty-six airplanes, and for the second cruiser six airplanes, the construction of which numbers of airplanes is hereby authorized.

SEC. 2. That the Act approved June 24, 1926 (44 Stat. L. 764; U.S.C., title 34, sec. 749), entitled "An act to authorize the construction and procurement of aircraft and aircraft equipment in the Navy and Marine Corps, and to adjust and define the status of the operating personnel in connection therewith," is hereby amended as follows:

In section 1, paragraph 6, by eliminating after the word, "thereafter" in line 2, the words "not to exceed three hundred and thirty-three airplanes with spare parts and equipment, to cost not to exceed $17,476,250," and substituting therefor the words, "not to exceed the number of airplanes required to maintain the authorized number of useful airplanes to be employed in the Navy as defined in paragraph 7 of this Act," so that paragraph 6, as amended, will read:

"PAR. 6. During the fiscal year ending June 30, 1932, and during each fiscal year thereafter, not to exceed the number of airplanes required to maintain the authorized number of useful airplanes to be employed in the Navy as defined in paragraph 7 of this Act."

In section 1, paragraph 7, by adding after the word "Navy," in line 12 the words: "Provided, That one year prior to the contract date of delivery of the aircraft carrier authorized by the Act of February 13, 1929 (45 Stat, L. 1165), entitled 'An Act to authorize the construction of certain naval vessels, and for other purposes,'
the authorized number of useful airplanes shall be increased by one hundred and thirty useful airplanes, such additional useful airplanes to cost not to exceed $5,000,000: Provided further, That one year prior to the contract or estimated date of completion of any vessel or vessels whose construction has been or may be authorized by any act subsequent to the said Act of February 13, 1929, the authorized number of useful airplanes shall be increased by the number of airplanes whose cost of construction is included within the limit of cost of such vessel or vessels authorized by such Act: Provided further, That upon the decommissioning or placing in ordinary, of any vessel equipped with airplanes, the total number of airplanes authorized to be maintained in the Navy shall be reduced by the number of airplanes, including spare airplanes, which form a part of the equipment of any such vessel: Provided further, That nothing herein contained shall be construed to reduce the authorized number of useful airplanes below one thousand:; so that paragraph 7, as amended, will read:

"PAR. 7. The number of airplanes, spare parts, and equipment thus authorized to be constructed or procured during the five fiscal years beginning July 1, 1926, and ending June 30, 1931, and the number authorized to be constructed or procured during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1932, and during each fiscal year thereafter is the number which it has been estimated will be required to increase, during a five-year period beginning July 1, 1926, the useful airplanes on hand or otherwise provided for on June 30, 1926, to one thousand and to maintain the number of useful airplanes at not less than this number which is hereby established as the authorized number of useful airplanes to be employed in the Navy: Provided, That one year prior to the contract date of delivery of the aircraft carrier authorized by the Act of February 13, 1929 (45 Stat. L. 1165), entitled 'An Act to authorize the construction of certain naval vessels, and for other purposes,' the authorized number of useful airplanes shall be increased by one hundred and thirty useful airplanes, such additional useful airplanes to cost not to exceed $5,000,000: Provided further, That one year prior to the contract or estimated date of completion of any vessel or vessels whose construction has been or may be authorized by any Act subsequent to the said Act of February 13, 1929, the authorized number of useful airplanes shall be increased by the number of airplanes whose cost of construction is included within the limit of cost of such vessel or vessels authorized by such Act: Provided further, That upon the decommissioning or placing in ordinary, of any vessel
equipped with airplanes, the total number of airplanes authorized to be maintained in the Navy shall be reduced by the number of airplanes, including spare airplanes, which form a part of the equipment of any such vessel: Provided further, That nothing contained herein shall be construed to reduce the authorized number of useful airplanes below one thousand: Provided further, That, in the event satisfactory arrangements for the procurement of the authorized number of airplanes are not made in any fiscal year, such deficiency may be made up in the next ensuing year or years: Provided further, That, 'useful airplanes,' as used in this Act, shall be those airplanes on the Navy list which are, or which after reasonable repairs can be made, in all respects safe to fly and fitted to take part in active military operations in time of war, and shall be exclusive of those airplanes classified as experimental or, with the approval of the Secretary of the Navy, declared obsolete: Provided further, That nothing herein shall be construed as more than an authorization for the procurement of aircraft within the limits enumerated in this Act, nor in any way to abridge the right of Congress to determine what numbers of aircraft may be appropriated for in any fiscal year within the limits so authorized."

SEC. 3. The Secretary of the Navy is directed to submit annually to the Bureau of the Budget estimates for the construction of the foregoing vessels and aircraft.

SEC. 4. The construction of vessels herein authorized shall be subject to the limitations prescribed by the treaties limiting naval armament, signed at Washington on February 6, 1922, and signed at London on April 22, 1930, so long as such treaties shall remain effective.
SEC. 5. The Secretary of the Navy, for the purpose of developing Diesel engine power plants for naval vessels, is hereby authorized, in his discretion, to procure by purchase, abroad or in the United States, with or without competition, by contract or otherwise, or by manufacture in Government yards such designs, power plants, power plant parts or power plant accessories, as may be necessary in his judgment for experimental purposes in the development of such power plants and their installation to cost in the aggregate not to exceed $3,000,000 of which not more than $500,000 shall be expended for the procurement from abroad of such esings, power plant accessories: Provided, That whenever the Secretary of the Navy shall enter into a contract for such designs, power plants, power plant parts or accessories he is hereby authorized to award such contract to the bidder that can satisfactorily perform the work or the service required to the best advantage of the Government; and the decision of the Secretary of the Navy as to the award of such contract, the interpretation of the provision of the contract, and the application and administration of the contract shall not be reviewable by any officer or tribunal of the United States except the President and the Federal Courts.
H.R. 6289—A Bill to authorize the building up of the United States Navy to the strength permitted by the Washington and London naval treaties. December 18, 1931

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That subject to the limitations prescribed by the Treaty for the Limitation of Naval Armament, signed at Washington on February 6, 1922, and the Treaty for the Limitation and Reduction of Naval Armament, signed at London on April 22, 1930, the President of the United States is hereby authorized to build up the naval armament of the United States to the strength permitted by said treaties. Such building up shall be accomplished by new construction, replacement of over-age vessels, and alterations in and conversion of existing vessels, in the manner and to the extent authorized by said treaties, and appropriations for the purposes herein designated are hereby authorized to be made.

SEC. 2. The Secretary of the Navy is directed to submit annually to the Bureau of the Budget estimates for the carrying out of the foregoing program.

SEC. 3. In the event of an international agreement for the further limitation of naval armament, to which the United States is signatory, the President is hereby authorized and empowered to suspend in whole or in part the naval construction authorized by this Act in order to bring the naval armament of the United States within the limitations so agreed upon.
9. H.R. 6661—A Bill to authorize the construction of certain naval vessels for replacements and additions, and for other purposes. January 4, 1932.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President of the United States is hereby authorized to undertake prior to July 1, 1942, the construction of the vessels enumerated below according to the following annual program:

(a) Three aircraft carriers, one of about twenty thousand tons standard displacement during each of the fiscal years ending June 30, 1933 and 1934, to cost, including armor and armament, not to exceed $25,599,000 each, and one of about fifteen thousand two hundred tons standard displacement in the fiscal year 1935, to cost, including armor and armament, not to exceed $20,210,000; in all $71,408,000.

(b) Nine six-inch gun cruisers, of not exceeding ten thousand tons standard displacement, two during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1933, one of which shall be a flying deck cruiser, and two during each of the fiscal years, 1935, 1936, and 1937, and one in 1941, the flying deck cruiser to cost, including armor and armament, not to exceed $15,011,000, each of the others to cost $15,265,000; in all, $137,131,000.

(c) Thirteen destroyers, of not exceeding one thousand eight hundred and fifty tons standard displacement, one during each of the fiscal years ending June 30, 1933, to 1939, inclusive, and two each in 1940, 1941, and 1942, to cost, including armament, not to exceed $4,391,000 each; in all, $57,083,000.

(d) Seventy-two destroyers, of not exceeding one thousand five hundred tons standard displacement, eight during each of the fiscal years ending June 30, 1934, to 1942, inclusive, to cost, including armament, not to exceed $3,785,000 each; in all $272,520,000.

(e) Twenty-three submarines, of about one thousand one hundred and thirty tons standard displacement, six during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1933; four in each of the fiscal years 1934 to 1936, inclusive; and five in 1937, to cost, including armament, not to exceed $3,396,000 each, in all, $78,108,000: Provided, That if the construction of any vessel herein authorized to be undertaken in a specified year is not undertaken in that year such construction may be undertaken in the next or any succeeding fiscal year: Provided further, That the second and each succeeding alternate vessel of each group (b), (c), (d), and (e) above, upon which work is undertaken together with the main engines, armor, and armament for such vessels, shall be constructed
or manufactured in the Government navy yards, naval gun factories, naval ordnance plants, or arsenals of the United States, except such material or parts as are not customarily manufactured in such Government plants.

SEC. 2. It is hereby directed that, whenever the Secretary of the Navy shall enter into a contract for the construction of any vessel or engine herein authorized, he shall award such contract on terms prescribed by him to the bidder that in his judgment can satisfactorily perform the work or the service required to the best advantage of the Government; and the award of such contract by the Secretary of the Navy, the interpretation of the provisions of the contract, and the application and administration of the contract shall not be reviewable by any officer or tribunal of the United States except the President and the Federal courts.

SEC. 3. The Secretary of the Navy is hereby authorized, in his discretion, to modify within existing treaty limits and within the prescribed limits of cost the characteristics of any or all of the types of vessels specified in this Act, including the authority to construct the vessels authorized by section 1, paragraph (b), above, either as light cruisers, of not exceeding ten thousand tons standard displacement, to cost, including armor and armament, not to exceed $15,265,000 each, or as flying deck cruisers, of not exceeding ten thousand tons standard displacement, to cost, including armor and armament, not to exceed $15,011,000 each, as permitted by the treaty limiting naval armament, signed at London on April 22, 1930.

SEC. 4. The Secretary of the Navy is hereby directed to submit annually to the Bureau of the Budget estimates for the construction of the foregoing vessels.

SEC. 5. The construction of the vessels herein authorized shall be subject to the limitations prescribed by the treaties limiting naval armament signed at Washington on February 6, 1922, and signed at London on April 22, 1930, so long as such treaties shall remain effective.

SEC. 6. In the event of an international agreement for the further limitation of naval armament to which the United States shall be signatory, the President is hereby authorized and empowered to suspend in whole or in part pursuant to the terms of such international agreement any of the naval construction authorized by this Act.
Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
tives of the United States of America in Congress assem-
bled, That the President of the United States is hereby
authorized to undertake at the earliest practicable date
the construction of naval vessels enumerated below:

(a) One aircraft carrier to cost, including armor,
armament, ammunition, and airplanes, not to exceed
$27,650,000.

(b) One flying-deck cruiser to cost, including armor,
armament, ammunition, and airplanes, not to exceed
$20,780,000.

(c) Four submarines to cost, including armor, arma-
ment, and ammunition, not to exceed $4,400,000 each; in
all, $17,600,000. Provided, That for the said aircraft
carrier the limit of cost shall include the cost of one
hundred and fourteen airplanes and for the flying-deck
cruiser thirty-six airplanes, the construction of which
numbers of airplanes is hereby authorized.

SEC. 2. That the Act approved June 24, 1926 (44 Stat.
authorize the construction and procurement of aircraft and
aircraft equipment in the Navy and Marine Corps, and to ad-
just and define the status of the operating personnel in
connection therewith," is hereby amended as follows:

In section 1, paragraph 6, by eliminating after the
word, "thereafter" in line 2, the words "not to exceed
three hundred and thirty-three airplanes with spare parts
and equipment, to cost not to exceed $17,476,250," and
substituting therefor the words, "not to exceed the number
of airplanes required to maintain the authorized number of
useful airplanes to be employed in the Navy as defined in
paragraph 7 of this Act," so that paragraph 6, as amended,
will read:

"PAR. 6. During the fiscal year ending June 30, 1932,
and during each fiscal year thereafter, not to exceed the
number of airplanes required to maintain the authorized
number of useful airplanes to be employed in the Navy, as
defined in paragraph 7 of this Act."

In section 1, paragraph 7, by adding after the word
"Navy," in line 12 the words: "Provided, That one year
prior to the contract date of delivery of the aircraft
carrier authorized by the Act of February 13, 1929 (45 Stat.
L. 1165), entitled 'An Act to authorize the construction of
certain naval vessels, and for other purposes,' the autho-
rized number of useful airplanes shall be increased by one
hundred and thirty useful airplanes, such additional useful
airplanes to cost not to exceed $5,000,000: Provided further, That one year prior to the contract or estimated date of completion of any vessel or vessels whose construction has been or may be authorized by any Act subsequent to the said Act of February 13, 1929, the authorized number of useful airplanes shall be increased by the number of airplanes whose cost of construction is included within the limit of cost of such vessel or vessels authorized by such Act: Provided further, That upon the decommissioning or placing in ordinary, of any vessel equipped with airplanes, the total number of airplanes authorized to be maintained in the Navy shall be reduced by the number of airplanes, including spare airplanes, which form a part of the equipment of any such vessel: Provided further, That nothing herein contained shall be construed to reduce the authorized number of useful airplanes below one thousand," so that that paragraph 7, as amended, will read: "PAR. 7. The number of airplanes, spare parts, and equipment thus authorized to be constructed or procured during the five fiscal years beginning July 1, 1926, and ending June 30, 1931, and the number authorized to be constructed or procured during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1932, and during each fiscal year thereafter is the number which it has been estimated will be required to increase, during a five-year period beginning July 1, 1926, the useful airplanes on hand or otherwise provided for on June 30, 1926, to one thousand and to maintain the number of useful airplanes at not less than this number which is hereby established as the authorized number of useful airplanes to be employed in the Navy: Provided, That one year prior to the contract date of delivery of the aircraft carrier authorized by the Act of February 13, 1929 (45 Stat. L. 1165), entitled "An Act to authorize the construction of certain naval vessels, and for other purposes," the authorized number of useful airplanes shall be increased by one hundred and thirty useful airplanes, such additional useful airplanes to cost not to exceed $5,000,000: Provided further, That one year prior to the contract or estimated date of completion of any vessel or vessels whose construction has been or may be authorized by any Act subsequent to the said Act of February 13, 1929, the authorized number of useful airplanes shall be increased by the number of airplanes whose cost of construction is included within the limit of cost of such vessel or vessels authorized by such Act: Provided further, That upon the decommissioning or placing in ordinary, of any vessel equipped with airplanes, the total number of airplanes authorized to be maintained in the Navy shall be reduced by the number of airplanes, including spare airplanes, which form a part of the equipment of any such vessel: Provided further, That nothing contained
herein shall be construed to reduce the authorized number of useful airplanes below one thousand: Provided further, That, in the event satisfactory arrangements for the procurement of the authorized number of airplanes are not made in any fiscal year, such deficiency may be made up in the next ensuing year or years: Provided further, That 'useful airplanes,' as used in this Act, shall be those airplanes on the Navy list which are, or which after reasonable repairs can be made, in all respects safe to fly and fitted, to take part in active military operations in time of war, and shall be exclusive of those airplanes classified as experimental or, with the approval of the Secretary of the Navy, declared obsolete: Provided further, That nothing herein shall be construed as more than an authorization for the procurement of aircraft within the limits enumerated in this Act, nor in any way to abridge the right of Congress to determine what numbers of aircraft may be appropriated for in any fiscal year within the limits so authorized."

SEC. 3. The Secretary of the Navy is directed to submit annually to the Bureau of the Budget estimates for the construction of the foregoing vessels and aircraft.

SEC. 4. The Secretary of the Navy, for the purpose of developing Diesel engine power plants for naval vessels, is hereby authorized, in his discretion, to procure by purchase, abroad or in the United States, with or without competition, by contract or otherwise, or by manufacture in Government yards such designs, power plants, power-plant parts, or power-plant accessories as may be necessary in his judgment for experimental purposes in the development of such power plants and their installation, to cost in the aggregate not to exceed $3,000,000 of which not more than $500,000 shall be expended for the procurement from abroad of such designs, power plants, power-plant parts, or power-plant accessories: Provided, That, whenever the Secretary of the Navy shall enter into a contract for such designs, power plants, power-plant parts, or accessories he is hereby authorized to award such contract to the bidder that can satisfactorily perform the work or the service required to the best advantage of the Government; and the decision of the Secretary of the Navy as to the award of such contract, the interpretation of the provisions of the contract, and the application and administration of the contract shall not be reviewable by any officer or tribunal of the United States except the President and the Federal courts.

SEC. 5. The construction of vessels herein authorized shall be subject to the limitations prescribed by the treaties limiting naval armament, signed at Washington on February 6, 1922, and signed at London on April 22, 1930, so long as such treaties shall remain effective.
II. H.R. 8230-A Bill to authorize the construction of certain naval vessels for replacements and additions, and for other purposes. January 22, 1932

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That subject to the limitations prescribed by the treaty for the limitation of naval armament, signed at Washington on February 6, 1922, and the treaty for the limitation and reduction of naval armament, signed at London on April 22, 1930, the President of the United States is hereby authorized to build up the naval armament of the United States to the extent permitted by said treaties, and that such building up shall be accomplished by new construction and replacement of over age vessels within the limit and to the extent permitted by said treaties.

SEC. 2. The President of the United States is authorized to undertake prior to July 1, 1942, the construction of the vessels enumerated below according to the following annual program:

(a) Three aircraft carriers, one of approximately twenty thousand tons standard displacement during each of the fiscal years ending June 30, 1933 and 1934, to cost, including armor and armament, not to exceed $25,599,000 each, and one of approximately fifteen thousand two hundred tons standard displacement during the fiscal year 1935, to cost, including armor and armament, not to exceed $20,210,000; in all $71,408,000.

(b) Nine six-inch gun cruisers each not exceeding ten thousand tons standard displacement, two during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1933, one of which shall be a flying deck cruiser, and two during each of the fiscal years 1935, 1936, and 1937, and one during the fiscal year 1941, the flying-deck cruiser to cost, including armor and armament, not to exceed $15,011,000, each of the others not to exceed $15,265,000; in all, $137,131,000.

(c) Thirteen destroyers, each not exceeding one thousand eight hundred and fifty tons standard displacement, one during each of the fiscal years ending June 30, 1933, to 1939, inclusive, and two during each of the fiscal years 1940, 1941, and 1942, to cost, including armament, not to exceed $4,391,000 each; in all, $57,083,000.

(d) Seventy-two destroyers, each not exceeding one thousand five hundred tons standard displacement, eight during each of the fiscal years ending June 30, 1934, to 1942, inclusive, to cost, including armament, not to exceed $3,785,000 each; in all, $272,520,000.

(e) Twenty-three submarines, each approximately one thousand one hundred and thirty tons standard displacement,
six during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1933; four during each of the fiscal years 1934 to 1936, inclusive; and five during the fiscal year 1937, to cost, including armament, not to exceed $3,396,000 each; in all $78,108,000: Provided, That if the construction of any vessel herein authorized to be undertaken in a specified year is not undertaken in that year such construction may be undertaken in the next or any succeeding fiscal year: Provided further, That the second and each succeeding alternate vessel of each group (b), (c), (d), and (e) above, upon which work is undertaken together with the main engines, armor, and armament for such vessels, shall be constructed or manufactured in the Government navy yards, naval gun factories, naval ordnance plants, or arsenals of the United States, except such material or parts as are not customarily manufactured in such Government plants.

SEC. 3. The Secretary of the Navy is hereby authorized, in his discretion, to modify within existing treaty limits and within the prescribed limits of cost the characteristics of any or all of the types of vessels specified in this Act, including the authority to construct the vessels authorized by section 2, paragraph (b), above, either as light cruisers, of not exceeding ten thousand tons standard displacement, to cost, including armor and armament, not to exceed $15,265,000 each, or as flying-deck cruisers, of not exceeding ten thousand tons standard displacement, to cost, including armor and armament, not to exceed $15,011,000 each, as permitted by the treaty limiting naval armament, signed at London on April 22, 1930.

SEC. 4. The Secretary of the Navy is hereby directed to submit annually to the Bureau of the Budget estimates for the construction of the foregoing vessels and there is hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry into effect the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 5. In the event of an international agreement for the further limitation of naval armament to which the United States shall be signatory, the President is hereby authorized and empowered to suspend so much of the naval construction authorized by this Act as may be necessary to bring the naval armament of the United States within the limitation so agreed upon.
12. S. 51—An Act to authorize the building up of the United States Navy to the strength permitted by the Washington and London naval treaties. May 9, 1932

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That, subject to the limitations prescribed by the Treaty for the Limitation of Naval Armament, signed at Washington on February 6, 1922, and the Treaty for the Limitation and Reduction of Naval Armament, London on April 22, 1930, the President of the United States is hereby authorized to build up the naval armament of the United States to the strength permitted by said treaties. Such building up shall be accomplished by new construction, replacement of overage vessels, and alterations in and conversion of existing vessels, within the limits authorized by said treaties, and appropriations for the purposes herein designated are hereby authorized to be made.

SEC. 2. In the event of an international agreement for the further limitation of naval armament, to which the United States is signatory, the President is hereby authorized and empowered to suspend in whole or in part the naval construction authorized by this Act in order to bring the naval armament of the United States within the limitations so agreed upon.
Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That in order to enable the President of the United States to maintain the United States Navy at the agreed ratio of strength relative to the navies of other powers signatory to the treaties limiting naval armament signed at Washington February 6, 1922, and at London April 22, 1930, he is hereby authorized to replace, by vessels of modern design and construction, the obsolete and over-age aircraft carrier, cruisers, destroyers, and submarines now on the Navy list, and those that become over-age on or before December 31, 1936, and, subject to the terms of article 19 of the London treaty, to so replace vessels that become over-age in 1937, 1938, and 1939: Provided, That the replacement for the United States ship Rochester shall be a 10,000 ton 6-inch gun flying-on-deck cruiser and shall be constructed as soon as practicable.

SEC. 2. That the Act approved February 13, 1929 (45 Stat., 1165), authorizing the construction of fifteen light cruisers, is hereby amended so as to provide that five of said cruisers (which were not permitted to be constructed as 10,000 ton 8-inch gun cruisers under the terms of the London Treaty) shall be 10,000 ton 6-inch gun cruisers and be constructed, as the President may direct, as flying-on-deck cruisers.

SEC. 3. That the President is hereby further authorized to construct two additional aircraft carriers to complete the maximum allowance of vessels authorized under that category by the London treaty and to construct one additional 10,000 ton 6-inch gun cruiser, to be of the flying-on-deck type if the President so directs, to complete the maximum allowance in the cruiser "(b)" category.

SEC. 4. That the number of useful airplanes to be employed in the Navy as provided by the Act approved June 24, 1926 (44 Stat. 764; U.S.C., Supp. VI, title 34, sec 749), is hereby increased by the number of airplanes necessary to maintain quotas for the vessels authorized by the Act of February 13, 1929, and the vessels herein authorized: Provided, That such increase shall not be effected until 18 months prior to the contract date of completion of the respective vessels so authorized.

SEC. 5. That appropriations for the purposes herein designated are hereby authorized to be made.
SEC. 6. That the construction of the vessels herein authorized shall be subject to the limitation prescribed by the treaties limiting naval armament signed at Washington on February 6, 1922, and signed at London on April 22, 1930, so long as such treaties as they now provide or may be modified shall remain effective.

SEC. 7. That the President is authorized to initiate and promote international agreements that will bring about further limitations of armaments and is hereby authorized and empowered to suspend in whole or in part the naval construction authorized by this Act in order to bring the naval armament of the United States with the limitations so agreed upon.
14. H.R. 5479—A Bill to authorize the building up of the United States Navy to the strength permitted by the Washington and London naval treaties.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, That subject to the limitations prescribed by the treaty for the limitation of naval armament, signed at Washington on February 6, 1922, and the treaty for the limitation and reduction of naval armament, signed at London on April 22, 1930, the President of the United States is hereby authorized to build up the naval armament of the United States to the strength permitted by said treaties. Such building up shall be accomplished by new construction and replacement of over-age vessels, in the manner and to the extent authorized by said treaties.

SEC. 2. The President is hereby authorized to contract for the following vessels to be laid down before December 31, 1933:

(a) Two aircraft carriers, each of approximately twenty thousand tons standard displacement, to cost not to exceed $29,320,000 each, including armor, armament, and ammunition.

(b) Seven six-inch gun cruisers, each not exceeding ten thousand tons standard displacement, to cost not to exceed $16,770,000 each, including armor, armament, and ammunition.

(c) Four destroyers, each not exceeding one thousand eight hundred and fifty tons standard displacement, to cost not to exceed $5,115,450 each, including armor, armament, and ammunition.

(d) Twenty destroyers, each not exceeding one thousand one hundred and fifty tons standard displacement, to cost not to exceed $4,234,500 each, including armor, armament, and ammunition.

(e) Nine submarines, each not exceeding one thousand one hundred and fifty tons standard displacement, to cost not to exceed $4,025,000 each, including armor, armament, and ammunition.

SEC. 3. The Secretary of the Navy is hereby directed to submit annually to the Bureau of the Budget estimates for the completion of the foregoing vessels in the shortest practicable time, and there is hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry into effect the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 4. In the event of an international agreement for the further limitation of naval armament to which the United States shall be signatory, the President is hereby authorized and empowered to suspend so much of the naval construction authorized by the Act as may be necessary to bring the naval armament of the United States within the limitation so agreed upon.
15. H.R. 6575-A Bill to authorize the building up of the United States Navy to the strength permitted by the Washington and London naval treaties. January 8, 1934

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That subject to the limitations prescribed by the treaty for the limitation of naval armament signed at Washington on February 26, 1922 and the treaty for limitation and reduction of naval armament, signed at London on April 22, 1930, the President of the United States is hereby authorized to build up the naval armament of the United States to the strength permitted by said treaties. Such building up shall be accomplished by new construction and replacement of over-age vessels, in the manner and to the extent authorized by said treaties.

SEC. 2. The President is hereby authorized to contract for the following vessels to be laid down before December 31 of each year herein designated:

(a) 1935: One eight-inch-gun cruiser, not exceeding ten thousand tons standard displacement, to cost not to exceed $15,000,000 exclusive of armor, armament, and ammunition.

(b) Two six-inch-gun cruisers, each not exceeding ten thousand tons standard displacement, to cost not to exceed $15,000,000 each, exclusive of armor, armament, and ammunition.

(c) Two destroyer leaders, each not exceeding one thousand eight hundred and fifty tons standard displacement, to cost not to exceed $4,400,000 each, exclusive of armor, armament, and ammunition.

(d) Twelve destroyers, each not exceeding one thousand five hundred tons standard displacement, to cost not to exceed $3,800,000 each, exclusive of armor, armament, and ammunition.

(e) Six submarines, each not exceeding one thousand three hundred tons standard displacement, to cost not to exceed $3,900,000 each, exclusive of armor, armament, and ammunition.

(a) 1936: One aircraft carrier, of approximately fifteen thousand two hundred tons standard displacement, to cost not to exceed $20,210,000, exclusive of armor, armament, ammunition, and accompanying planes.

(b) One six-inch-gun cruiser, not exceeding ten thousand tons standard displacement, to cost not to exceed $15,000,000 exclusive of armor, armament, and ammunition.

(c) Two destroyer leaders, each not exceeding one thousand eight hundred and fifty tons standard displacement,
to cost not to exceed $3,900,000 each, exclusive of armor, armament, and ammunition.

(a) 1937: One six-inch-gun cruiser, not exceeding ten thousand tons standard displacement, to cost not to exceed $15,000,000, exclusive of armor, armament, and ammunition.

(b) One destroyer leader, not exceeding one thousand eight hundred and fifty tons standard displacement, to cost not to exceed $4,400,000, exclusive of armor, armament, and ammunition.

(c) Twelve destroyers, each not exceeding one thousand five hundred tons standard displacement, to cost not to exceed $3,800,000 each, exclusive of armor, armament, and ammunition.

(d) Six submarines, each not exceeding one thousand three hundred tons standard displacement, to cost not to exceed $3,900,000 each, exclusive of armor, armament, and ammunition.

(a) 1938: One six-inch-gun cruiser, not exceeding ten thousand tons standard displacement, to cost not to exceed $15,000,000, exclusive of armor, armament, and ammunition.

(b) Twelve destroyers, each not exceeding one thousand five hundred tons standard displacement, to cost not to exceed $3,800,000 each, exclusive of armor, armament, and ammunition.

(c) Six submarines, each not exceeding one thousand three hundred tons standard displacement, to cost not to exceed $3,900,000 each, exclusive of armor, armament, and ammunition.

(a) 1939: One six-inch-gun cruiser, not exceeding ten thousand tons standard displacement, to cost not to exceed $15,000,000, exclusive of armor, armament, and ammunition.

(b) Twelve destroyers, each not exceeding one thousand five hundred tons standard displacement, to cost not to exceed $3,800,000 each, exclusive of armor, armament, and ammunition.

(c) Five submarines, each not exceeding one thousand three hundred tons standard displacement, to cost not to exceed $3,900,000 each, exclusive of armor, armament, and ammunition.

SEC. 3 The Secretary of the Navy is hereby directed to submit annually to the Bureau of the Budget estimates for the completion of the foregoing vessels in the shortest practicable time, and there is hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry into effect the provisions of the Act.

SEC. 4. In the event of an international agreement for the further limitation of naval armament to which the United States shall be signatory, the President is hereby authorized by this Act as may be necessary to bring the naval armament of the United States within the limitation so agreed upon.
16. S. 2493—A Bill to establish the composition of the United States Navy with respect to the categories of vessels limited by the treaties signed at Washington February 6, 1933, and at London April 22, 1930, at the limits prescribed by those treaties; to authorize the construction of certain naval vessels; and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the composition of the United States Navy with respect to the categories of vessels limited by the treaties signed at Washington, February 6, 1922, and at London, April 22, 1930, is hereby established at the limit prescribed by those treaties.

SEC. 2. That subject to the provisions of the treaties signed at Washington, February 6, 1922, and at London, April 22, 1930, the President of the United States is hereby authorized to undertake, prior to December 31, 1936, or as soon thereafter as he may deem it advisable (in addition to the six cruisers not yet constructed under the Act approved February 13, 1929 (45 Stat. 1165), and in addition to the vessels being constructed pursuant to Executive Order Numbered 6174 of June 16, 1933), the construction of (a) one aircraft carrier of approximately fifteen thousand tons, standard displacement, to replace the experimental aircraft carrier Langley; (b) ninety-nine thousand two hundred tons aggregate of destroyers to replace over-age destroyers; (c) thirty-five thousand five hundred and thirty tons aggregate of submarines to replace over-age submarines; Provided, That the President of the United States is hereby authorized to replace, by vessels of modern design and construction, vessels in the Navy in the categories limited by the treaties signed as Washington February 6, 1922, and at London April 22, 1930, when their replacement is permitted by the said treaties.

SEC. 3. The President is hereby further authorized to increase the number of useful airplanes in the Navy, as defined and established by the Act approved June 24, 1926 (44 Stat. 764; U.S.C., Supp. VI, title 34, sec. 749), to the number required for the Navy of a complement as established by this Act, but not in excess of two thousand one hundred and eighty-four airplanes.

SEC. 4. The Secretary of the Navy is hereby directed to submit annually to the Bureau of the Budget estimates for the construction of the foregoing vessels; and there is hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry into effect the provisions of this Act.
SEC. 5. That in the event of international agreement for the further limitations of naval armament to which the United States is signatory, the President is hereby authorized and empowered to suspend so much of its naval construction authorized by this Act as may be necessary to bring the naval armament of the United States within the limitation so agreed upon.
17. H.R. 6604—A Bill to establish the composition of the United States Navy with respect to the categories of vessels limited by the treaties signed at Washington February 6, 1933, and at London April 22, 1930, at the limits prescribed by those treaties; to authorize the construction of certain naval vessels; and for other purposes. January 9, 1934

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the composition of the United States Navy with respect to the categories of vessels limited by the treaties signed at Washington, February 6, 1922, and at London, April 22, 1930, is hereby established at the limit prescribed by those treaties.

SEC. 2. That subject to the provision of the treaties signed at Washington, February 6, 1922, and at London, April 22, 1930, the President of the United States is hereby authorized to undertake prior to December 31, 1936, or as soon thereafter as he may deem it advisable (in addition to the six cruisers not yet constructed under the Act approved February 13, 1929 (45 Stat. 1165), and in addition to the vessels being constructed pursuant to Executive Order Numbered 6174 of June 16, 1933), the construction of: (a) One aircraft carrier of approximately fifteen thousand tons standard displacement, to replace the experimental aircraft carrier Langley; (b) ninety-nine thousand two hundred tons aggregate of destroyers to replace over-age destroyers; (c) thirty-five thousand five hundred and thirty tons aggregate of submarines to replace over-age submarines: Provided, That the President of the United States is hereby authorized to replace, by vessels of modern design and construction, vessels in the Navy in the categories limited by the treaties signed at Washington, February 6, 1922, and at London, April 22, 1930, when their replacement is permitted by the said treaties.

SEC. 3. The Secretary of the Navy is hereby directed to submit annually to the Bureau of the Budget estimates for the construction of the foregoing vessels; and there is hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry into effect the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 4. That in the event of international agreement for the further limitations of naval armament to which the United States is signatory, the President is hereby authorized and empowered to suspend so much of its naval construction authorized by this Act as may be necessary to bring the naval Armament of the United States within the limitation so agreed upon.
A. Amendments offered during House debate on January 30, 1934:

(a) Amendments to Section 2:
By Representative Vinson of Georgia: Provided further, That the President is hereby authorized to procure the necessary naval aircraft for vessels and other naval purposes in numbers commensurate with the treaty navy. (The amendment was adopted.)

By Representative Thompson of Illinois: Provided further, That the first and each succeeding alternate vessel of each category, except the 15,000-ton aircraft carrier, upon which work is undertaken, and the main engines, armor, and armament for such vessels, the construction and manufacture of which is authorized by this act, shall be constructed or manufactured in the Government navy yards, naval stations, naval gun factories, naval ordnance plants, or arsenals of the United States, except such material or charts as were not customarily manufactured in such Government plants prior to February 13, 1929. (The amendment was adopted by a vote of 140-93.)

By Representative Vinson of Georgia: That so far as practical vessels constructed under the authorization of this act shall be built on the basis of one half in the navy yards and one half in private shipyards, the final decision in each case to be at the discretion of the President. (The amendment was rejected.)

(b) Amendments to Section 3:
By Representative Vinson of Georgia (underlined portion represents the amendment): The Secretary of the Navy is hereby directed to submit annually to the Bureau of the Budget estimates for the construction of the foregoing vessels and aircraft; and there is hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry into effect the provisions of this act. (The amendment was adopted.)

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1 CR, LXXVIII, 1622-1624.
2 Ibid., 1624, 1626.
3 Ibid., 1624.
4 Ibid., 1626.
By Representative Hastings of Oklahoma (underlined portion represents the amendment): The Secretary of the Navy is hereby directed to submit annually to the Bureau of the Budget estimates for the construction of the foregoing vessels and aircraft; and there is hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary not to exceed $380,000,000. (The amendment was rejected by a vote of 51-146.)

By Representatives Hastings of Oklahoma (underlined portion represents the amendment): The Secretary of the Navy is hereby directed to submit annually to the Bureau of the Budget estimates for the construction of the foregoing vessels and aircraft; and there is hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary not to exceed $475,000,000. (The amendment was rejected by a vote of 74-127.)

By Representative Tobey of New Hampshire: Provided however, that no such appropriation shall be used for any contract with steel or aircraft or shipbuilding firms or corporations unless the said firm or corporation shall agree to limit its net profit on such Government contract to 10 percent of the gross of the contract. (The amendment was adopted.)

(c) Amendments to Section 4:
By Representative Ayres of Kansas (underlined portion represents the amendment): That in the event of international agreement for the further limitations of naval armament to which the United States is signatory, the President is hereby authorized and empowered to suspend so much of its naval construction authorized by this act as may be necessary to bring the naval armament of the United States within the limitation agreed upon except that such suspension shall not apply to vessels actually under construction. (The Amendment was adopted.)

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5 Ibid., 1626-1627
6 Ibid., 1627-1629
7 Ibid., 1629-1630.
8 Ibid., 1630.
B. The Vinson-Trammell Act as passed by the House on January 30, 1934:

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the composition of the United States Navy with respect to the categories of vessels limited by the Treaties signed at Washington, February 6, 1922, and at London, April 22, 1930, is hereby established at the limit prescribed by those treaties.

SEC. 2. That subject to the provisions of the treaties signed at Washington, February 6, 1922, and at London, April 22, 1930, the President of the United States is hereby authorized to undertake prior to December 31, 1936, or as soon thereafter as he may deem it advisable (in addition to the six cruisers not yet constructed under the Act approved February 13, 1929 (45 Stat. 1165) and in addition to the vessels being constructed pursuant to Executive Order Numbered 6174 of June 16, 1933), the construction of: tons standard displacement, to replace the experimental aircraft carrier Langley; (b) ninety-nine thousand two hundred tons aggregate of destroyers to replace over-age destroyers; (c) thirty-five thousand five hundred and thirty tons aggregate of submarines to replace over-age submarines: Provided, That the President of the United States is hereby authorized to replace, by vessels of modern design and construction, vessels in the Navy in the categories limited by the treaties signed at Washington, February 6, 1922, and at London, April 22, 1930, when their replacement is permitted by the said treaties; Provided further, That the President is hereby authorized to procure the necessary naval aircraft for vessels and other naval purposes in numbers commensurate with a treaty Navy: Provided further, That the first and each succeeding alternate vessel of each category, except the fifteen thousand-ton aircraft carrier, upon which work is undertaken, and the main engines, armor and armament of such vessels, the construction and maintenance of which is authorized by this Act, shall be constructed or manufactured in the Government navy yards, naval stations, naval gun factories, naval ordnance plants, or arsenals of the United States except such material or parts as were not customarily manufactured in such Government plants prior to February 13, 1929.

SEC. 3. The Secretary of the Navy is hereby directed to submit annually to the Bureau of the Budget estimates for the construction of the foregoing vessels and aircraft; and there is hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry into effect the provisions of this act: Provided however, That no such appropriation shall be used for any contract with steel or aircraft or
shipbuilding firms or corporations unless the said firm or corporation shall agree to limit its net profit on such Government contract to 10 per centum of the gross of the contract.

SEC. 4. That in the event of international agreement for further limitation of naval armament to which the United States is signatory, the President is hereby authorized and empowered to suspend so much of its naval construction authorized by this Act as may be necessary to bring the naval armament of the United States within the limitation so agreed upon, except that such suspension shall not apply to vessels actually under construction.
C. Amendments offered during Senate debate:

(a) Amendments to Section 2:

By Senator Trammell of Florida: Provided further, (strike out the Thompson Amendment), That not less than half the tonnage (and such tonnage in addition thereto as the Government is now or may hereafter be equipped to manufacture or construct) the construction and/or manufacture of which is authorized by this act (except the 15,000-ton aircraft carrier under construction and except such materials or parts as the Government was not customarily manufacturing on February 13, 1929, and is not at the time of construction equipped to manufacture or construct) shall, in the same ratio of tonnage as being constructed in private shipyards be constructed and/or manufactured in the Government navy yards, naval stations, naval gun factories, naval ordnance plants, arsenals, and/or plants, or factories of the United States now or hereafter equipped for the manufacture or construction of naval vessels and/or equipment therefor: Provided, That if inconsistent with the public interests in any year to have a vessel or vessels constructed as otherwise required above, the President may have such vessel or vessels built in Government or private yard as he may direct. (The amendment was adopted.)

By Senator Bone of Washington: Provided further, That not less than 25 percent of each succeeding lot of aircraft, including the engines for such aircraft, the procurement of which is authorized by this act and hereafter undertaken shall be constructed and/or manufactured in Government aircraft factories and/or other plants or factories owned and operated by the United States Government.

The foregoing proviso is subject to the further condition that if it shall be determined by the President that present plants, factories, and equipment owned by the Government are not such as to permit the construction and/or manufacture of the said aircraft and/or engines in such Government plants and factories, in the proportions herein specified and required, then and in that event such requirement may be suspended in whole or in part by his order. However, in the event of such order of suspension being made by the President, the existing plants, factories,
and facilities now owned and/or operated by the Government shall forthwith be expanded and equipped to enable the Government to construct, manufacture, and repair its own naval aircraft therein, and, in addition, such order of suspension being made by the President, the existing plants, factories, and facilities now owned and/or operated by the Government shall forthwith be expanded and equipped to enable the Government to construct, manufacture, and repair its own naval aircraft therein, and facilities shall, as speedily as possible, be constructed and/or acquired by purchase or condemnation for the purpose of enabling the Government to take over and perform the work of constructing, manufacturing, and repairing not less than 25 percent of its naval aircraft therein. The funds necessary for the enlargement and expansion of such existing plants and facilities owned by the Government, and for the construction and acquisition of new plants, factories, facilities, and equipment for the construction and manufacture of naval aircraft, are hereby authorized to be appropriated. (The amendment was adopted.)

By Senator Bone of Washington: It being the intent and purpose of this proviso that the Government shall, insofar as practicable, develop its navy yards, arsenals, and other plants and facilities to the end that it may—
(a) At all times hereafter be able to construct, maintain, and repair its authorized vessels and naval equipment;
(b) As speedily as possible become self-sufficient in time of war; and
(c) Insofar as may be possible, eliminate private profit in war and in the preparation therefor. (The) amendment was rejected.)

By Senator Dill of Washington: Provided further, That in making awards under contracts for the construction of vessels in private shipyards, bids may be accepted from shipyards located on the Pacific coast: And provided further, That the cost of construction on the Pacific coast does not exceed the cost of construction on the Atlantic coast plus the cost of transportation of necessary materials from the Atlantic to the Pacific. (The amendment was never formally considered.)

10 Ibid., 3813
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid., 3800.
(b) Amendments to Section 3:
By Senator Trammell of Florida: Provided, (strike out the Tobey Amendment), That any profit resulting from any contract, or subcontract, of $10,000 or more, payable from such funds as may hereafter be appropriated for the vessel or vessels and aircraft authorized herein, or vessels heretofore authorized but not yet contracted for, or payable by the contractor to any subcontractor, shall not exceed 10 percent of the cost of performing such contract or the subcontract, respectively. All contractors and subcontractors shall report the net profits from such contracts, under oath, to the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States upon the completion of the work under such contract or subcontract. Such report shall provide such information and be on such forms as shall be prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury. All profits of either contractor or subcontractor in excess of said 10 percent shall be and become the property of the United States of America and shall be collected by the Secretary of the Treasury by suit or otherwise and be paid into the Treasury of the United States under such rules and regulations as the Secretary of the Treasury may prescribe. (The amendment was adopted.)¹³

By Senator Trammell of Florida: And provided further, That every such contract shall provide that the books, records, accounts, contracts, memoranda, documents, papers, and correspondence of the contractor and its affiliates and subsidiaries of each and every subcontractor shall, during the usual hours of business be subject to examination by the Bureau of the Budget or by any duly authorized representative of either House of the Congress. As used in this section the word "subsidiary" means any person over whom or which such contractor has actual or legal control, whether by stock ownership or otherwise; and the term "affiliate," means any person who has actual or legal control over such contractor whether by stock ownership or otherwise. (The amendment was adopted.)¹⁴

¹³Ibid., 3793.
¹⁴Ibid., 3813.
D. The Vinson-Trammell Act as passed by the Senate on March 7, 1934:

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the composition of the United States Navy with respect to the categories of vessels limited by the treaties signed at Washington, February 6, 1922, and at London, April 22, 1930, is hereby established at the limit prescribed by those treaties.

SEC. 2. That subject to the provisions of the treaties signed at Washington, February 6, 1922, and at London, April 22, 1930, the President of the United States is hereby authorized to undertake prior to December 31, 1936, or as soon thereafter as he may deem it advisable (in addition to the six cruisers not yet constructed under the Act approved February 13, 1929 (45 Stat, 1165) and in addition to the vessels being constructed pursuant to Executive Order Numbered 6174 of June 16, 1933), the construction of: (a) One aircraft carrier of approximately fifteen thousand tons standard displacement, to replace the experimental aircraft carrier Langley; (b) ninety-nine thousand two hundred tons aggregate of destroyers to replace over-age submarines: Provided, That the President of the United States is hereby authorized to replace, by vessels of modern design and construction, vessels in the Navy in the categories limited by the treaties signed at Washington, February 6, 1933, and at London, April 22, 1930, when their replacement is permitted by the said treaties: Provided further, That the President is hereby authorized to procure the necessary naval aircraft for vessels and other naval purposes in number commensurate with a treaty Navy: Provided further, That not less than half the tonnage (and such tonnage in addition thereto as the Government is now or may hereafter be equipped to manufacture or construct) the construction and/or manufacture of which is authorized by this act (except the 15,000-ton aircraft carrier under construction and except such materials or parts as the Government was not customarily manufacturing on February 13, 1929, and is not at the time of construction equipped to manufacture and construct) shall, in the same ratio of tonnage as being constructed in private shipyards be constructed and/or manufactured in the Government navy yards, naval stations, naval gun factories, naval ordnance plants, arsenals, and/or plants or factories of the United States now or hereafter equipped for the manufacture and construction of naval vessels and/or equipment therefor: Provided, That if inconsistent with the public interests in any year to have a vessel or vessels constructed as otherwise required above, the President may have such vessel or vessels built in Government or private yard as he may direct; Provided further,
That not less than 25 percent of each succeeding lot of aircraft, including engines for such aircraft, the procurement of which is authorized by this act and hereafter undertaken shall be constructed and/or manufactured in Government aircraft factories and/or other plants or factories owned and operated by the United States Government.

The foregoing proviso is subject to the further condition that if it shall be determined by the President that present plants, factories, and equipment owned by the Government are not such as to permit the construction and/or manufacture of the said aircraft and/or engines in such Government plants and factories, in the proportions herein specified and required, then and in that event such requirement may be suspended in whole or in part by his order. However, in the event of such order of suspension being made by the President, the existing plants, factories, and facilities now owned and/or operated by the Government shall forthwith be expanded and equipped to enable the Government to construct, manufacture, and repair its own naval aircraft therein, and, in addition, such other and further plants and facilities shall, as speedily as possible, be constructed and/or acquired by purchase or condemnation for the purpose of enabling the Government to take over and perform the work of constructing, manufacturing, and repairing no less than 25 percent of its naval aircraft therein. The funds necessary for the enlargement and expansion of such existing plants and facilities owned by the Government, and for the construction and acquisition of new plants, factories, facilities, and equipment for the construction and manufacture of naval aircraft, are hereby authorized to be appropriated.

SEC. 3. The Secretary of the Navy is hereby directed to submit annually to the Bureau of the Budget estimates for the construction of the foregoing vessels and aircraft; and there is hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry into effect the provisions of this act: Provided, That any profit resulting from any contract, or subcontract, of $10,000 or more, payable from such funds as may hereafter be appropriated for the vessel or vessels and aircraft authorized herein, or vessels heretofore authorized but not yet contracted for, or payable by the contractor to any subcontractor for, or payable by the contractor to any subcontractor, shall not exceed 10 percent of the cost of performing such contract or the subcontract, respectively. All contractors and subcontractors shall report the net profits from such contracts, under oath, to the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States upon the completion of the work under such contract or subcontract. Such report shall provide such information and be on such forms as shall be prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury. All profits
of either contractor or subcontractor in excess of said 10 percent shall be and become the property of the United States of America and shall be collected by the Secretary of the Treasury under such rules and regulations as the Secretary of the Treasury may prescribe: And provided further, That every such contract shall provide that the books, records, accounts, contracts, memoranda, documents, papers, and correspondence of the contractor and its affiliates and subsidiaries and of each and every subcontractor shall, during the usual hours of business be subject to examination by the Bureau of the Budget or by any duly authorized representative of either House of the Congress. As used in this section the word "subsidiary" means any person over whom or which such contractor has actual or legal control, whether by stock ownership or otherwise; and the term "affiliate," means any person who has actual or legal control over such contractor whether by stock ownership or otherwise.

SEC. 4. That in the event of international agreement for further limitations of naval armament to which the United States is signatory, the President is hereby authorized and empowered to suspend so much of its naval construction authorized by this Act as may be necessary to bring the naval armament of the United States within the limitation so agreed upon, except that such suspension shall not apply to vessels actually under construction.15

15Ibid.
E. The Vinson-Trammell Act following the Conference on March 21, 1934:

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
tives of the United States of America in Congress assem-
bled, That the composition of the United States Navy with
respect to the categories of vessels limited by the
treaties signed at Washington, February 6, 1922, and at
London, April 22, 1930, is hereby established at the
limit prescribed by those treaties.

SEC. 2. That subject to the provisions of the treaties
signed at Washington February 6, 1922, and at London April
22, 1930, the President of the United States is hereby
authorized to undertake prior to December 31, 1936, or
as soon thereafter as he may deem it advisable (in addi-
tion to the six cruisers not yet constructed under the act
approved February 13, 1929 (45 Stat. 1165), and in addi-
tion to the vessels being constructed pursuant to Execu-
tive Order No. 6174 of June 16, 1933), the construction
of: (a) One aircraft carrier of approximately 15,000 tons
standard displacement, to replace the experimental aircraft
carrier Langley; (b) 99,200 tons aggregate of destroyers to
replace over-age destroyers; (c) 35,530 tons aggregate of
submarines to replace over-age submarines: Provided, That
the President of the United States is hereby authorized to
replace, by vessels of modern design and construction ves-
sels in the Navy in the categories limited by the treaties
signed at Washington February 6, 1922, and at London April
22, 1930, Provided further, That the President is hereby
authorized to procure the necessary naval aircraft for ves-
sels and other naval purposes in number commensurate with
a treaty navy: Provided further, That the first and each
succeeding alternate vessel of each category, except the
15,000-ton aircraft carrier, upon which work is undertaken
and the main engines, armor, and armament for such vessels,
the construction and manufacture of which is authorized by
this act, shall be constructed or manufactured in the Gov-
ernment navy yards, naval stations, naval gun factories,
naval ordnance plants, or arsenals of the United States,
except such materials or parts as were not customarily
manufactured in such Government plants prior to February 13,
1929: Provided further, That if inconsistent with the public
interest in any year to have a vessel or vessels constructed
as required above, the President may have such vessel or
vessels built in a Government or private yard as he may
direct.

That no less than 10 percent of the aircraft, including
the engines herefor, the procurement of which is authorized
by this act and hereafter undertaken, shall be constructed
and/or manufactured in Government aircraft factories and/or
other plants or factories owned and operated by the United States Government.

The foregoing paragraph is subject to the following conditions:

(1) That if it shall be determined by the President that present plants, factories, and equipment owned by the Government are not such as to permit the construction and/or manufacture of the said aircraft and/or engines in such Government plants and factories in the proportions herein specified and required, then and in that event such requirement may be suspended in whole or in part by his order. However, in the event of such order of suspension being made by the President, then at his discretion the existing plants, factories, and facilities now owned and/or operated by the Government shall forthwith be expanded and equipped to enable the Government to construct, manufacture, and repair not less than 10 percent of its naval aircraft therein, except that it shall be discretionary with the President as to the percent constructed and/or manufactured in Government plants if he should find it impracticable for the Government to undertake the construction and/or manufacture of not less than 10 percent of its naval aircraft therein.

(2) The President is also authorized to employ Government establishments in any case where—

(a) It should reasonably appear that the persons, firms, or corporations, or agents therefor, bidding for the construction of any of said aircraft engines, spare parts, or equipment have entered into any combination, agreement, or understanding the effect, object, or purpose of which is to deprive the Government of fair, open, and unrestricted competition in letting contracts for the construction of any said aircraft engines, spare parts, or equipment, or—

(b) Should it reasonably appear that any person, firm, or corporation, or agents thereof, being solely or peculiarly in position to manufacture or furnish the particular type or design of aircraft, engines, spare parts, or equipment required by the Navy, in bidding on such aircraft, engines, spare parts, or equipment, have named a price in excess of cost of production plus a reasonable profit, as provided in section 3 of this act.

The funds necessary for the enlargement and expansion of such existing plants and facilities now owned by the Government for the construction and manufacture of naval aircraft are hereby authorized to be appropriated.

SEC. 3. The Secretary of the Navy is hereby directed to submit annually to the Bureau of the Budget estimates for the construction of the foregoing vessels and aircraft; and there is hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums
as may be necessary to carry into effect the provisions of this act: Provided, That no contract shall be made by the Secretary of the Navy for the construction and/or manufacture of any complete naval vessel or aircraft, or any portion thereof, herein, heretofore, or hereafter authorized unless the contractor agrees--

(a) To make a report, as hereinafter described, under oath to the Secretary of the Navy upon the completion of the contract.

(b) To pay into the Treasury profit as hereinafter provided shall be determined by the Treasury Department, in excess of 10 percent of the total contract price, such amount to become the property of the United States: Provided, That if such amount is not voluntarily paid the Secretary of the Treasury may collect the same under the usual methods employed under the internal-revenue laws to collect Federal income taxes.

(c) To make no subdivisions of any contract or subcontract for the same article or articles for the purposes of evading the provisions of this act, but any subdivision of any contract or subcontract involving an amount in excess of $50,000 shall be subject to the conditions herein prescribed.

(d) That the manufacturing spaces and books of its own plant, affiliates, and subdivisions shall at all times be subject to inspection and audit by any person designated by the Secretary of the Navy, the Secretary of the Treasury, and/or by a duly authorized committee of Congress.

(e) To make no subcontract unless the subcontractor agrees to the foregoing conditions.

The report shall be in form prescribed by the Secretary of the Navy and shall state the total contract price, the cost of performing the contract, the net income, and the per centum such net income bears to the contract price. A copy of such report shall be transmitted to the Secretary of the Treasury for consideration in connection with the Federal income-tax returns of the contractor for the taxable year or years concerned.

The method of ascertaining the amount of excess profit to be paid into the Treasury shall be determined by the Secretary of the Treasury in agreement with the Secretary of the Navy and made available to the public. The method initially fixed upon shall be so determined on or before June 30, 1934: Provided, That in any case where an excess profit may be found to be owing to the United States in consequences hereof, the Secretary of the Treasury shall allow credit for any Federal income taxes paid or remaining to be paid upon the amount of the excess profit.

The contract or subcontracts referred to herein are limited to those where the award exceeds $50,000.
The provisions of this section shall not become effective until June 30, 1934.

SEC. 4. That in the event of international agreement for the further limitations of naval armament to which the United States is signatory, the President is hereby authorized and empowered to suspend so much of its naval construction as has been authorized as may be necessary to bring the naval armament of the United States within the limitation so agreed upon, except that such suspension shall not apply to vessels actually under construction.16

16 Ibid., 5026
F. The Vinson-Trammell Act as contained in the Second Conference Report on March 22, and as finally enacted on March 27, 1934: This version of the bill was identical to First Conference Report except $50,000 was stricken out and replaced by $10,000 in Section 3 so that it would read:

The contract or subcontracts referred herein are limited to those where the award exceeds $10,000.
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I. Interviews and Miscellanea:

On March 22 and 24, 1972, the writer conducted three interviews with Carl Vinson in Milledgeville, Georgia. His observations and comments on the Vinson-Trammell Act largely set the tone for the study and provided many personal insights. Mr. Vinson also made available scrapbooks compiled by his staff which are now located at the Mary Vinson Memorial Library in Milledgeville. These scrapbooks provided a number of newspaper articles for the period covered by this dissertation. This study also benefited materially from interviews with the following individuals during its research and preparation between 1973 and 1980:

Hon. O. C. Fisher, Member House Armed Services Committee, Democrat, Texas, 1943-1975.
Hon. Claude D. Pepper, Democrat, Florida, Senator (1936-1951); Congressman (1963--).
Mr. Phillip Kelleher, Professional Staff Member, House Armed Services Committee,
Mr. Russell Blanford, Chief Counsel, House Armed Services Committee,
Mr. Louis Stockstill, Armed Forces Journal,
Mr. James F. Deakins, Clerical Staff Assistant, House Armed Services Committee.

II. Manuscripts and Archival Holdings

Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York

President's Secretary's Files
PSF 5-Safe File, Navy Department
PSF 11-Confidential File, Navy, 1933-1942
PSF 12-Confidential File, State Department, 1933-1938
PSF 59-Diplomatic, Japan
PSF 78-Navy Department
PSF 83-Navy Department, Swanson File
PSF 157-London Naval Conference
PSF 158-Messages to Congress

Official Files
OF 18-Navy Department
OF 79-Bureau of the Budget
OF 179-Japan
Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Admiral Mark L. Bristol Papers
Admiral Ernest J. King Papers
Commodore Dudley W. Knox Papers
Admiral Emory S. Land Papers
Admiral William D. Leahy Papers
Admiral William V. Pratt Papers
Admiral David F. Sellers Papers
Admiral William H. Standley Papers
Admiral Harry E. Yarnell Papers

National Archives

Record Group 19-Bureau of Ships (contains records of the Bureaus of Construction and Repairs and Engineering before they were combined into the Bureau of Ships in 1940)
Record Group 37-Office of Naval Intelligence
Record Group 51-Bureau of the Budget
Record Group 72-Bureau of Aeronautics
Record Group 80-Central Files, Navy Department
Record Group 233-Records of the U.S. House of Representatives

Naval Operational Archives, Navy Yard, Washington, D.C.

General Board Records
ZB Files (Biographical Files)

III. Bibliographical Aids:


IV. Government Sources:


. To Authorize the Construction of Certain Naval Vessels, and for Other Purposes. H. Rept. 2291 To Accompany H.R. 14688, 71st Cong., 3rd sess., 1931.

. Senate. To Authorize the Construction of Certain Naval Vessels, and for Other Purposes. S. Rept. 1322 To Accompany S. 5288, 71st Cong., 3rd sess., 1931.


Committee on Naval Affairs. To Authorize the Construction of Certain Naval Vessels for Replacement and Additions, and for Other Purposes, Hearings, House of Representatives, on H.R. 6661 72nd Cong., 1st sess., 1932.


Navy Department Appropriation Bill, 1934. H. Rept. 2190 To Accompany H.R. 14724, 72nd Cong., 2nd sess., 1933.


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