If I go back to this, it is in part for the purpose of paying due respect to the consistency and tenacity of the leaders of French politics. Now, however, whether because the proposals worked out by the Security Committee have failed to satisfy the French delegation, or because they have been rejected by other delegations, we are confronted by new French proposals for security. This means that, after four years of work on disarmament by the Preparatory Commission and in the second year of the Conference itself, we have been thrown back to the place we were five years ago and are compelled once more to leave the question of disarmament in the background and take up the problem of security. Let us hope this cycle will not repeat itself, and that we shall not find ourselves, at the end of another five years, back again where we now stand.

The Soviet delegation has repeatedly shown its attitude to the question of security, both in the Preparatory Commission and at the present Conference. It has not the slightest desire to ignore this problem, the enormous importance of which it thoroughly realises. We have always, however, been convinced, and still are convinced, that the best, if not the only, guarantee of security for all nations would be total disarmament, or at least the utmost possible reduction of armaments in the shortest possible period. We have always considered, and still consider, that the problem of security approached by any other method is so complex, and evokes such serious political questions and international differences, that it could hardly be solved fortuitously and in a short time, and that to take it up would mean to abandon all idea of disarmament for a very considerable period.

But apparently there is no escape from this problem, if only because it has been raised by a great and powerful State, whose representatives have declared that until it is solved they cannot undertake any obligations with regard to the reduction of armaments. If, therefore, we want to advance, and not just to go round and round, we shall have to consider with all seriousness the French proposals, and make up our minds whether there is any possibility of reaching an international agreement based upon these and other proposals which may be made on security by other delegations, proceeding subsequently to questions of disarmament, or whether such an agreement will prove impossible, in which case we shall have to admit that, owing to the attitude of some States, the whole problem of disarmament and security is insoluble and that it is not through international conferences that humanity will rid itself of the heavy burden of armaments and the scourge of war. In either case, some clarity will have been shed on the fate of the Conference.

In turning to the essence of the French memorandum, I feel bound to state that only its first chapter could affect all the States here represented. The other chapters seem to be intended only for members either of existing international organisations or of future voluntary organisations. Chapter II, for instance, has in view Members of the League of Nations only; Chapter III—and, to a certain extent, Chapter V—European States only, and moreover those connected in a formal way with the League of Nations; Chapter IV, signatories to the Washington Naval Agreement, and Mediterranean States, and these if they are ready to consider the decisions of the League of Nations binding for themselves. It is to be presumed that the authors of these chapters did not have in view the participation in the organisations proposed by them of the Soviet Union, which is situated on the continent of Asia as well as that of Europe, is not a Member of the League of Nations, and is not a signatory of the Washington Agreement.

It seems to me indubitable that, inasmuch as special and very serious obligations are to be imposed upon the participants of the proposed organisations, they are entitled to demand that these obligations should be extended at least to their nearest neighbours. Consequently, since the Soviet Union has not only European States upon its borders, but also Asiatic States, such as Japan, China and others, which are excluded in advance from the organisations proposed and thus exempted from the new obligations, it can hardly be expected that the Soviet Union itself should undertake these obligations. Further, the fulfilment of these obligations and the manner of their fulfilment are left entirely to the decisions of the League of Nations binding for themselves. It is to be presumed that the authors of these chapters did not have in view the participation in the organisations proposed by them of the Soviet Union, which is situated on the continent of Asia as well as that of Europe, is not a Member of the League of Nations, and is not a signatory of the Washington Agreement.

In the circumstances, the Soviet delegation sees no necessity to make at the present moment a detailed analysis of the proposals contained in Chapters II to V of the French memorandum; the more so since it has already expressed its opinion on certain of these proposals, such as, for example, the internationalisation of armed forces, when put before the Disarmament Conference by M. Tardieu, then head of the French delegation. It nevertheless reserves to itself the right to revert to them, if and when the States for which they are intended show readiness to accept them.

As I have already pointed out, only the proposals contained in the first chapter of the French memorandum, dealing with the interpretation and considerable extension of the obligations undertaken by the signatories to the Briand-Kellogg Pact, may be considered as addressed to all the States here represented, including the Soviet Union. I am happy to be able to state that the Soviet delegation raises no objections to these proposals and would be ready to sign a convention embodying them. I venture, however, to make a few observations, in my opinion, of the utmost relevance.

I assume that, if we aim at the strengthening and extension of obligations under the Pact, we are bound at the same time to see to it that the obligations already undertaken remain...
in full force for all its signatories, and are not limited or minimised by those reservations made
on their own account by certain States—reservations practically nullifying the whole Pact.
These reservations, it is true, have no legal force, inasmuch as the other signatories to the
Pact have not given their assent to them; but, for all that, cases have been known of aggression
being justified by reference to them. The Soviet delegation, therefore, will propose in due time
that the States which have made these reservations should formally repudiate them, or that
they should be deprived of all legal and moral force by an international agreement.

Further, the French proposals provide for certain international sanctions with regard to
a State infringing the Pact—that is to say, a State found to be the aggressor in any armed
conflict. This inevitably brings us to the questions: How is the aggressor to be determined,
and who is to determine the aggressor? Apparently we must either think about setting up
a special international organ for this purpose, or invest a conference of all signatories to the
Pact with the necessary judicial powers. In either case, the question of the impartiality of
a decision on a matter of such vital importance for any State as its stigmatisation as an
aggressor, and the application to it of international sanctions, is bound to arise. This question
is of great interest to all States, but is of special interest to the State which I represent, and
on this point more than any other, perfect frankness and mutual understanding are indispensable.

We represent the only country in the whole world which has altered its political system,
created a perfectly new political system of Soviets and destroyed capitalism, and which is
building up a new social order, while all the other States have preserved the capitalist regime.
You are aware that the phenomenon of a Soviet socialist State was so distasteful to the whole
capitalist world that, at the time, attempts were even made by way of intervention to restore
capitalism in our country, or at least by way of dismemberment to reduce the dimensions of the
new State.

These attempts were fruitless, and have not been renewed, but it cannot be said that the
idea of fresh attempts has been completely abandoned. On the contrary, we know that it is
still cherished in some countries by extremely influential politicians, leaders of great parties,
former, future, and even present members of Governments, making a crusade against the
Soviet Union almost the centre of their foreign policy, and for this purpose keeping up close
organisational and financial connections with émigrés, adherents of the old Russian regime.
It must be admitted, then, that the capitalist world as a whole has not yet completely reconciled
itself to the existence of a country building up socialism, and this irreconcilability continues to
give rise to hostility to such a country, hostility continually finding the most varied means of
expression.

I will not weary you by enumerating all the many and various anti-Soviet campaigns
which spring up from one year to another. I will merely remark that, taking into account
all the States in both hemispheres, the majority have not as yet established normal relations
with the Soviet Union—in other words, are applying a boycott against it, one of those very
sanctions proposed to be applied in the future only against an aggressor.

In such circumstances it is permissible to enquire whether the Soviet Union may expect a
fair attitude towards it and impartial decisions from any international organ, when such an
organ consists exclusively of representatives of a capitalist world which is hostile to it, and may
have a majority of representatives of the Governments of countries boycotting it. It seems to
me there can be no two answers to this question, and, should anyone here doubt this, I would
recommend him to imagine, for the sake of hypothesis, that his own State is the only capitalist
country in the midst of countries which have established the Soviet system and are building
up socialism, and I would ask him to tell us if he thinks his country would entrust the solution
of questions vital to itself to an international organ consisting exclusively of representatives of
the Governments of Soviet countries.

A moment’s thought will show why the Soviet Union, as long as the present attitude
to it lasts, cannot agree to acknowledge as binding upon itself the decisions of such
international organisations as the Assembly or the Council of the League of Nations,
existing international tribunals and arbitration courts, although by no means rejecting
on principle the idea of international co-operation or arbitration. This question becomes
acute for us every time there is talk of setting up international organs with judicial,
controlling and similar functions. It is natural enough, in such circumstances, that we should
demand a composition of these organs which should ensure for us the same measure of
impartiality and fairness as is enjoyed by other States, and such a demand will have to be
made by the Soviet delegation when, in consequence of the French proposals, the question of
the establishment of such organs comes up for discussion. We do not think, however, that the
fulfilment of this legitimate demand need meet with serious practical difficulties.

Whatever its composition, however, any international organ called upon to determine
the aggressor would be bound to experience extraordinary difficulties in existing circumstances,
if only from the simple fact that there is no universally acknowledged definition of aggression,
and that, in practice as well as in theory, multitudinous discordance prevails on this point.
This is demonstrated, among other things, by the reservations made when signing the Briand-
Kellogg Pact to which I have referred. What is the meaning of these reservations? Do they not amount to the insistence of certain States on freedom of action, pact or no pact, in certain cases or in certain parts of the globe? What these cases or localities are is left for each State to decide. What, it may be asked, are the guarantees that those very circumstances which have hitherto been made pretexts for war will not be regarded as such cases? Experience has shown that numerous and various circumstances have been used as justification for aggression, such as, the desire to exploit the natural riches of a given territory, the infringement of some international agreement, the measures taken by some State encroaching upon the material interest of another, the defence of nationals voluntarily residing at their own risk in a given country, the infringement of established privileges by some State, the outbreak of revolution or disorders, and so on. Such justifications for attack have been made, not in the Middle Ages, not in past centuries, but in quite recent times. And this practice has been enriched with new theories. There seems to be a tendency nowadays to justify attack by the actual or alleged chaotic condition of another State, by the extent of capital investments or by special interests in another State, by the allegation of absence of certain State attributes in another country, by strategical considerations, or by the desire to extend one country's line of self-defence well beyond its own frontiers. A theory has also lately been advanced justifying war as one method of ensuring peace. If such theories are widely spread and are taken into account by international arbiters, that is to say, by members of international tribunals, it may confidently be prophesied that an aggressor will never be found in any armed conflict, and that only mutually aggressive or mutually defensive parties will be established, or, worse still, the defensive party will be considered the aggressor, and vice versa.

You are aware that even tribunals acting on the basis of exact laws are not always able to pass just decisions. This is shown by the fact that different judicial authorities, acting on the basis of identical laws, in identical cases pass judgments which are not identical. How much less can it be expected that tribunals will pass fair decisions when they are not bound to obey any laws or guiding lines, and would not this be precisely the situation of an international organ obliged now to apply the Briand-Kellogg Pact? And here it is a matter, not of the interests of individual citizens, but of those of States and of peoples.

It seems to us obvious that, if we wish to see in action the Briand-Kellogg Pact, together with the extension proposed by the French delegation, and to secure the minimum of authority, impartiality and confidence to the international organ to be called into life by these extensions, we shall have to give it instructions for its guidance, and that means, first of all, defining war and aggression and the distinction between aggression and defence, and once for all condemning those fallacious justifications of aggression with which the past has familiarised us. The Soviet delegation has endeavoured to embody the ideas I have just expounded in a draft declaration which it ventures to offer for your consideration.

DEFINITION OF "AGGRESSOR": DRAFT DECLARATION. 1

The General Commission,

Considering that, in the interests of general security and in order to facilitate the attainment of an agreement for the maximum reduction of armaments, it is necessary, with the utmost precision, to define aggression, in order to remove any possibility of its justification;

Recognising the principle of equal right of all States to independence, security and self-defence;

Animated by the desire of ensuring to each nation, in the interests of general peace, the right of free development according to its own choice and at the rate that suits it best, and of safeguarding the security, independence and complete territorial inviolability of each State and its right to self-defence against attack or invasion from outside, but only within its own frontiers; and

Anxious to provide the necessary guidance to the international organs which may be called upon to define the aggressor:

Declares:

1. The aggressor in an international conflict shall be considered that State which is the first to take any of the following actions:

(a) Declaration of war against another State;

(b) The invasion by its armed forces of the territory of another State without declaration of war;

(c) Bombarding the territory of another State by its land, naval or air forces or knowingly attacking the naval or air forces of another State;

(d) The landing in, or introduction within the frontiers of, another State of land, naval or air forces without the permission of the Government of such a State, or the infringement of the conditions of such permission, particularly as regards the duration of sojourn or extension of area;

(e) The establishment of a naval blockade of the coast or ports of another State.

2. No considerations whatsoever of a political, strategical or economic nature, including the desire to exploit natural riches or to obtain any sort of advantages or privileges on the territory of another State, no references to considerable capital investments or other special interests in a given State, or to the alleged absence of certain attributes of State organisation in the case of a given country, shall be accepted as justification of aggression as defined in Clause 1.

In particular, justification for attack cannot be based upon:

A. The internal situation in a given State, as, for instance:

(a) Political, economic or cultural backwardness of a given country;

(b) Alleged mal-administration;

(c) Possible danger to life or property of foreign residents;

(d) Revolutionary or counter-revolutionary movement, civil war, disorders or strikes;

(e) The establishment or maintenance in any State of any political, economic or social order.

B. Any acts, laws, or regulations of a given State, as, for instance:

(a) The infringement of international agreements;

(b) The infringement of the commercial, concessional or other economic rights or interests of a given State or its citizens;

(c) The rupture of diplomatic or economic relations;

(d) Economic or financial boycott;

(e) Repudiation of debts;

(f) Non-admission or limitation of immigration, or restriction of rights or privileges of foreign residents;

(g) The infringement of the privileges of official representatives of other States;

(h) The refusal to allow armed forces transit to the territory of a third State;

(i) Religious or anti-religious measures;

(k) Frontier incidents.

3. In the case of the mobilisation or concentration of armed forces to a considerable extent in the vicinity of its frontiers, the State which such activities threaten may have recourse to diplomatic or other means for the peaceful solution of international controversies. It may at the same time take steps of a military nature, analogous to those described above, without, however, crossing the frontier.

The General Commission decides to embody the above principles in the Convention on security and disarmament, or in a special agreement to form an integral part of the said Convention.

In drawing up this document, I was by no means unaware of those discussions which have taken place in the League of Nations, and the difficulties with which attempts to define aggressive acts have met. I am, therefore, able to foresee all the objections and observations which might be made with regard to our document by lawyers or other experts, who will once again point out the impossibility of an absolute definition of aggression, the possibility of cases unforeseen by us, and—most important of all—the difficulty of establishing the original aggressor in the case of concentration of armed forces on either side of a frontier. I can reply in advance to these, that we make no pretensions to absolute definitions, since such are hardly possible or conceivable, and, moreover, in the great majority of cases known to us in history, if not in all cases of armed conflicts, the establishment of such factors as which side was the first to declare war or to commit a real act of aggression has presented no real difficulties, controversy only arising as to the legitimacy of the causes and justification for such aggression. I think the same thing may be said with regard to cases which have come before the League of Nations during the last few years. I admit, however, that the Soviet delegation itself attributes infinitely greater importance to the second clause in its declaration, in which will be found denunciation of instances of justification of aggression, both already known to us in history and capable of arising in the future, than to the other clauses.
I do not feel sure that, in the draft declaration I have just read to you, all conceivable justifications of war have been exhausted, and indeed this was not our purpose. In saying that no considerations whatsoever could justify attack on foreign territory, we cover also circumstances not specially mentioned in the declaration. We are ready to admit the imperfections of the document we are placing before you; we are ready to listen to your objections, to advance and accept amendments, additions and the like. It is not, however, details that matter, but the acceptance of the basic principles underlying this document. These principles consist in the acknowledgment of the inviolability of established and recognised frontiers for any State, great or small; the denial of any State’s right to interfere in the affairs, development, legislation or administration of another. We ought to proclaim a “Charter of the Freedom of Nations” at this Conference. Only then will international agreements for the renunciation of war and for non-aggression acquire real significance, and inspire all States with the feeling of some degree of security. I say “some degree”, because we still insist that full security for all can only be ensured by total or the utmost possible disarmament.

Until and unless this is fulfilled, however, we shall endeavour to bring about solutions for what is known as the problem of security—solutions that cannot be made the object of diplomatic juggling, but will profit the smaller and weaker, and not only the stronger, countries.

You will realise that our proposals are not meant to compete with or be substituted for the French proposals, but are their logical extension. This is why we regard their consideration as desirable during the discussion of the French proposals.

The Soviet Government, in placing its new proposals before you, is moved exclusively by those same aspirations which caused it at the time to propose total disarmament, and which are causing it to give such prominence in its foreign policy to the system of bilateral non-aggression pacts—aspirations for the utmost possible guarantees of world peace. I do not think there are any left to doubt the peaceable dispositions of the country I represent. It is true there are still sceptics and cynics who endeavour to minimise its significance by pointing out that the Soviet State requires peace for its socialist construction. We do not deny this, but do such people imply that it is only the Soviet State which can build itself up and develop in peaceful conditions, and that other conditions, not peaceful, are required for the development of capitalist States? If any State giving evidence of peaceable disposition should explain that it requires peace for its own development, we for our part would not hold this against it. We gave every State represented here the opportunity to display such disposition by accepting our proposals for disarmament, and non-aggression pacts; we give them this opportunity once more by our present proposals.

The President observed that, in the declaration which the Soviet representative had made, the latter had stated that he considered it desirable that the proposals he had put forward should be discussed during the discussion of the French plan. The President had, accordingly, requested the Secretariat to circulate the declaration at once, so that, if delegates wished to refer to it during the discussion of the French proposals, they would be in a position to do so.

M. DE ZULUETA (Spain). — From the very outset of our examination of the French disarmament plan, we are unable to free ourselves from the international political atmosphere in which it is submitted to us.

This plan is dictated by the noble aim of organising peace and so making disarmament a practical proposition. It assembles, so to speak, in a logical combination, the developments that have occurred since the League’s foundation. It is designed to continue and complete the Geneva Covenant and the Pact of Paris; and I do not think that I am being unduly pessimistic when I say that these two instruments are at present passing through the most serious crisis that have occurred since the League’s foundation. It is designed to continue and complete the Geneva Covenant and the Pact of Paris; and I do not think that I am being unduly pessimistic when I say that these two instruments are at present passing through the most serious crisis that have occurred since the League’s foundation.

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While the world is struggling in the throes of an economic depression, grave international conflicts are putting our faith in the efficacy of treaties to the severest test. In the Far East, notwithstanding the endeavours which the Council and Assembly have been making since September 1931, and are still making, might is still the deciding factor. In the West, two peoples, united to one another, and to Spain as well, by ties of kinship, are openly employing force in defiance of the obligations they assumed under the League Covenant. There are other conflicts, too, poisoning the international atmosphere. In the East as in the West, for various reasons which it is not for me to discuss, we see methods of ensuring peace wrecked by the age-long tendency to resort to violence.

Those are the facts, and any policy which did not set out from a direct appreciation of them would be condemned to failure through lack of realism.

The Spanish Republic, which I represent, has testified to its sense of idealism in international matters; but I wish to say in the clearest possible terms that its idealism is in fact only a clear-sighted realism—that is to say that, while Spain desires always to look afar for what is known as the problem of security—solutions that cannot be made the object of diplomatic juggling, but will profit the smaller and weaker, and not only the stronger, countries.
and to look high, she Nevertheless is always anxious to see clearly. Spain considers that the real source of the insecurity prevailing among the peoples to-day must be sought in the growing scepticism as regards the value of international pacts, a scepticism that is spreading more and more as their weakness is demonstrated by bitter experience.

In the last analysis, everything depends on our faith in treaties. The organisation of peace is only possible through international conventions which can be circumvented or violated. Disarmament is only possible through international conventions which can be circumvented or violated. Supervision can only be established through international conventions which can be circumvented or violated.

We are thus brought to this conclusion: either we shall endeavour to give our pacts the value of something sacred, so to enhance their value that it is above all suspicion, or we shall be inevitably condemned to trail through history the burden of national armaments, the shame of our mutual mistrust and the menace of war. The difficulty with which we are faced in disarmament comes from that. If the peoples really believed that the international pacts would be operative in an emergency, they would be more ready to throw away the arms which, with a faith that possibly is out of date, they still regard as the guarantee of their security.

The Spanish Republic considers it essential to achieve the utmost feasible measure of disarmament as soon as possible. It believes that technical progress has added so heavy a burden to military budgets that, if we here should fail, all hope of social progress and of a higher standard of living will disappear and fresh fuel will be heaped on the furnace of war.

Spain earnestly desires to be able to avert the possibility of having to reconstitute at great expense her land and naval armaments in consequence of the failure of the present Conference. With this desire in mind, I wish to express my sincere appreciation of the French Republic's efforts to put the Conference in a position to satisfy the hopes it has raised throughout the world. The Spanish Republic thinks it useful, in particular, to emphasise the combination of political ideas and suggestions for disarmament in the French plan, because we believe that progress in disarmament is closely bound up with progress in international fellowship.

This is not the time to analyse the plan in detail. I shall merely touch on its guiding lines. In the first place, I note with approval the suggestion for making the Council's authority more effective and more operative by dropping the principle of unanimity. Sooner or later we shall have to advance along that line, if we are anxious that international law should attain to its full stature in the free acceptance by each State of the decisions of the organised international community. This new principle, which it would be highly desirable to make universal, is contained in the continental pact proposed in the French plan.

The continental pact deserves a most sympathetic welcome from us. The innovations it proposes confer on it special importance. We would ask permission to submit the following two observations on this matter:

Friendship and confidence between nations cannot be greater in time of crisis than in normal times. If, therefore, the countries parties to the proposed pact desire that, in the event of an emergency, there should be no hesitation on the part of the other nations to lend their help for the restoration of justice and peace, would it not be necessary that, in normal times, all countries should scrupulously direct their policy in accordance with the principles and methods of the League? Security would be all the stronger in an emergency if confidence were stronger in normal times, and the very principles of the League would be all the more effective at the time when they take the form of sacrifices if they were better respected and better honoured at times when all that they demand is the clarity, co-operation and open diplomacy mentioned in the Preamble to the Covenant.

The second point to be stressed in this connection is the great advantage that would ensue from closely linking up, in their practical application, the continental pact to the general pact referred to in the first chapter of the French plan.

Personally, I would venture to propose that the operation of the continental pact should be directly dependent on the application of paragraph (c) of Chapter I. It is difficult to imagine in practice that the grave measures against the aggressor contemplated in the continental pact can be taken without the moral and even the financial support which naturally follow from the application of paragraph (c), under which the aggressor will be openly designated, not merely by the assembly of the countries belonging to the continental pact, but by the much larger and more powerful assembly of the general pact.

We have not failed to note the suggestions in the French plan for naval matters. The Spanish nation, in so far as it is concerned, will always be glad to co-operate in any action for establishing durable foundations for peace and good understanding among all the countries with special interests in the Mediterranean.

With regard to disarmament, the Spanish Republic would be glad to see the very important measure proposed in the French plan carried out; but I would venture to remind the General Commission that our aspirations in this matter go somewhat further. We note with satisfaction that the suggestion for qualitative disarmament, whereby we could scrap arms which are useful in the service of the offensive at the expense of the defensive is in a fair way to be realised. That is a suggestion which sprang from this Conference, and which may easily become its most fruitful result. In this connection, we welcome the French suggestion for transferring the idea of qualitative disarmament from the sphere of material to that of organisation and type of army, because there are certain types of military organisation which are obviously designed rather for the offensive than for the defensive. We consider, however, that we should go even further in the matter of
qualitative disarmament, for we believe that the total abolition of all powerful arms, coupled with strict supervision, would ensure complete security for countries whose policy and organisation are purely defensive.

This remark applies in particular to air disarmament. While we congratulate the French delegation on its suggestions in this matter, and while we are ready to accept them, we should have liked still more radical solutions. We consider that the menace of this arm weighs so heavily on the imagination of the peoples that the total abolition of military aviation and as complete a measure as possible of internationalisation for civil aviation, combined with the strict control of its demilitarisation, should be regarded as measures of international conservation of whose wisdom there can be no question. We entirely concur, however, in the French measure for the international supervision of the manufacture of arms, and I will venture to repeat the hope that the Conference will not break up before it has concluded a Convention governing this matter—perhaps the gravest of all those we have to discuss.

Two words concerning the international army. It is useless to disguise the technical and political difficulties involved in this scheme. The suggestion for an international air army is particularly attractive, but may I point out two dangers to be avoided? First, the natural mistrust which certain countries would feel at the existence of powerful air units, even on an international footing and whatever guarantees were offered, if such units were stationed in the territory of other countries; secondly, the mistrust that would also arise from the fact that ammunition for the international air force would have to be manufactured somewhere, so that there would always be a possibility of misusing the means of manufacture for national and aggressive ends, or, at any rate, the fear might be created that such misuse might occur.

These reservations are not, however, put forward in order to mask opposition on our part. Far from it. The Spanish Republic would be glad to be able to co-operate with the Conference in establishing the first outline of an international army. A new institution of that kind, however technically inadequate it might be at the outset, would undoubtedly, owing to its high moral authority, have considerable influence in arresting disputes.

These ideas, however, bring me back to the reflections I made at the beginning of my statement. In the last analysis, just as the might of the weapon depends on that of the arm wielding it, and as the might of the arm depends on that of the heart and the brain, so the international army would be but a vain display of apparent force if faith were lacking in the international commonwealth. All our hopes must, then, be placed in faith in the pacts, in obedience to international law and, should circumstances unfortunately demand it, in the concerted effort of the nations to secure respect for the international law we have all accepted and voted.

The continuation of the discussion was adjourned to the next meeting.

THIRTY-SECOND MEETING

Held on Tuesday, February 7th, 1933, at 3.30 p.m.

President: The Right Honourable A. HENDERSON.

62. MESSAGE OF SYMPATHY WITH COUNT APPONYI, FIRST DELEGATE OF HUNGARY, ON THE OCCASION OF HIS ILLNESS.

The President read the following letter which he thought the Commission would approve:

"My dear Count Apponyi,

"It is with the greatest regret that I have heard of your serious illness, and I am hastening to write this note to send you, on behalf of your colleagues in the General Commission of the Disarmament Conference, their deep sympathy, their warmest greetings, and their best wishes for your speedy recovery.

"They all remember, as I do, the magnificent part you have played in our work for disarmament, for the League of Nations, and for peace, and they earnestly hope that you will soon be restored to full health and activity.

(Signed) A. Henderson."

General Tanczos (Hungary) said that he was very deeply moved by the letter which the President had just read. At this time, when all Hungarians felt the gravest anxiety, the Hungarian delegation especially appreciated this mark of sympathy.
M. YEVTITCH (Yugoslavia). — Now that we are discussing the plan for the organisation of peace which has been laid before us by the French delegation, public opinion and the nations represented at this Conference must be feeling that we have reached a point at which solutions are essential, solutions the importance of which will be decisive, not merely for this Conference, but for the establishment of peace.

World public opinion, which has patiently followed the preparatory work of the Conference—and may have thought it long and arduous—has begun to show signs of lassitude and doubt. It looks to-day to the Disarmament Conference for decisions regarding the organisation of peace; it looks for the realisation of the plans of the edifice ‘ in which all the peoples of the earth may shelter against the dangers and the horrors of war ’, as Sir John Simon has so well put it.

The French delegation, always full of initiative in the work of disarmament—one of the most laborious tasks that have been entrusted to us by the Covenant of the League—has earned our gratitude by its scheme for the organisation of peace, which is inspired both by attention to the realities of the moment and by the bold desire to make a real approach to the ideal which is common to us all. In the name of Yugoslavia, I feel it my duty to pay a special tribute here to this work, bearing as it does the impress of sincerity and devotion to the cause of peace.

By the initiative it has just taken, the French delegation marks the conclusion of the preparatory work of the Conference, and launches us into a period of achievement for which the preliminary conditions are now fulfilled. The time has come when the Conference is called upon to take up its responsibilities, and it is our duty to adopt a definite attitude to the whole problem submitted to our judgment by the French plan.

In the Yugoslav delegation’s view, that plan is not merely a basis for discussion. We hold that it should represent for the Conference a system which should be developed and amplified with a view to the complete establishment of international peace. That is precisely our object. At the same time, it should be remarked that, while we may accept the framework and the foundations of this plan, we can only attain the goal step by step.

In its memorandum, the French delegation has succeeded in drawing unambiguous conclusions from the general discussion on disarmament, and in establishing principles on which the plan has been constructed. Its value resides entirely in the synthesis of the views expressed by the various Governments, the international undertakings in force, and the principles accepted at the present time. In drawing up the plan, advantage has been taken of the progress made during the last few years, which, as M. Beneš has quite rightly pointed out, exceeds the limits of the League Covenant on certain points. None of those undertakings, none of those principles, can be put aside or rejected in our decisions. The fundamental principles of the organisation of peace are derived from the Covenant of the League, and peace itself finds its best guarantee in the loyal and effective application of the Covenant and in the authority of the League. For that reason, the League must be invested with a powerful authority, and we must recognise the necessity for its decisions to be effective.

The French plan judiciously provides, in its military part, for armed forces to be placed at the direct disposal of the League, with a view, if necessary, to urgent common action. If we desire the end, we must also desire the means.

During the previous discussion, the United Kingdom representative very rightly remarked that ‘ the barrier to the more complete disarmament of Europe is fear ’. The eminent and learned delegate of Greece, M. Politis, laid particular emphasis upon those words yesterday. In our opinion, that statement has a general application, and concerns all States.

Two inevitable consequences result from it:

1 Disarmament and the principle of equality of rights are intimately linked with the question of security—as was, indeed, fully recognised in the Five-Power Declaration made at Geneva on December 11th last.

2 The complexity of the relations existing between the States of Europe calls for a special organisation for the solution of the problem of the reduction of armaments, which can only be pursued pari passu with the reinforcement of security. The elasticity of the wording of Article 8 of the Covenant is calculated to facilitate the solution of this problem.

The French plan, which is logical and coherent alike in its political and in its military provisions, should be developed in the course of the special discussion and should be supplemented by appropriate conventions and agreements. We think it essential at once to point out that, in the political part of the plan, the wording of Section A, paragraph 1, to the effect that ‘ An aggression as thus defined cannot be taken to include certain cases such as the existence of an agreement to the contrary ’, should in any case be supplemented

1 Document Conf.D.146.
by a full enumeration of the agreements in view; failing which, there will be a lack of clearness,
which may prevent loyal application of Article 16 of the Covenant. With this end in view,
it will at the same time be necessary to appoint a special organ of the League which, contrary
to existing practice, will undertake the task of estimating the compatibility with the Covenant
of treaties and agreements intended for registration with the League. In this way, the special
provisions of paragraph 3 of Section A of the French plan with regard to the giving of assistance
— to be decided by the Council simply on ascertaining that an attack or invasion has taken
place — would be defined exactly, and their application would be more effective. It will be
particularly important and desirable not to make any distinction between regular troops and
irregular bands, publicly organised and protected by regular troops, in establishing the fact
of attack or invasion.

What we desire is not merely clearness and precision in the texts, but a firm will to act
on them. Our increasing apprehensions on this score are not surprising in the light of recent
events. I may be permitted, for example, to say that it is significant that mere individuals
are in a position to-day to figure as the owners of vast quantities of arms, which they bring
across frontiers, in defiance of the text of treaties, to unknown destinations without the know-
ledge of the Governments.

In this connection, I take leave to add that, in the course of the special discussion, the
Yugoslav delegation will supplement certain provisions of the French plan by repeating its
proposal of April 13th last for the prohibition of aerial bombardment and preparations for
the same, as also of the instruments of chemical and bacterial warfare, even in the case of
legitimate defence. The Yugoslav delegation will insist on the fact that the penalties to be
provided in such case should be as rigorous as possible.

In the hope that, during the deliberations of the General Commission, both in the general
discussion and in the special discussion on the particular problems relating to the organisation
of peace, we shall have fruitful exchanges of view out of which the necessary agreements
will arise, the Yugoslav delegation regards it as its duty to contribute unreservedly and with
all its strength to the accomplishment of the salutary work of the organisation of peace.

M. MASIREVICH (Hungary). — Faithful to its line of conduct followed since the beginning
of the work of the Conference, the Hungarian delegation is firmly resolved to collaborate
loyally and sincerely in the discussion of any project which, while taking into account the
principles embodied in Article 8 of the Covenant and in the declaration of December 11th
last, is capable of leading with the rapidity which is desirable to the satisfactory accomplishment
of our tasks, which is the aim of all those taking part in the Disarmament Conference. The
Hungarian Government and Hungarian public opinion welcomed with deep satisfaction
the declaration of December last, in which they see a happy and final solution of the question
of equal rights which has been so long under discussion.

No one would be happier than my country if the hope were to be realised to which the
President gave expression — namely, that our object, the conclusion of a satisfactory Convention,
is capable of attainment within two months.

It is in this spirit that the Hungarian delegation has studied the plan submitted to the
Bureau by M. Paul-Boncour on November 14th last; in the same spirit we welcome its
discussion. We think that the plan has certain aspects and certain elements which, taken
in conjunction with other projects already before the Conference, may — if the atmosphere of
mutual confidence which is so necessary for our work can be realised — open the way to the
conclusion of a Disarmament Convention on a universal basis, for any partial solution would,
in our opinion, only be an experiment carrying within itself from the outset the seeds of its
own failure.

Having regard to the President's recommendation not to prolong unduly the course of the
discussion, I will refrain from going into details, and will confine myself to saying that, in
so far as the general aspect of the plan under discussion is concerned, the Hungarian delegation
agrees with the views and arguments on the subject put forward by certain previous speakers
who have indicated very clearly the merits of the plan and at the same time the difficulties in
the way of execution of certain parts of it.

I also reserve the right to offer my observations when the discussions on the details of the
plan begin.

M. BEELAERTS VAN BLOKLAND (Netherlands). — The Disarmament Conference is faced
with the heavy responsibility of deciding certain major questions of principle and also of
finding solutions for a considerable number of technical problems.

Experience has shown that there can be no success in the work of disarmament if the
experts are left alone to continue their technical discussions and if the Governments do not,
in advance, endeavour to agree on the political aspects of the problem.

The great merit of the French memorandum is that it contains suggestions in these two
spheres. I wish to thank the French delegation for having thus supplied the General Commission
with an appropriate basis of discussion upon the resumption of our work.
The agreement of principle reached on December 11th, 1932, between the five Powers, by which the special difficulties of certain countries have been eliminated, gives us ground for hoping that the general deliberations upon which we have just embarked will bear fruit. Public opinion is impatiently demanding prompt decisions. Here again the French delegation has shown that it understands the needs of the hour, because it has sought to construct a system which will enable the Conference to bring its task to a speedy and successful conclusion. “These proposals”, the memorandum tells us, “form an indivisible whole”. That, of course, does not mean that the Conference is faced with the alternative of accepting or rejecting them en bloc. The delegations will be entitled to state their opinion on each of the different parts of the plan submitted to them. There will be conversations and helpful exchanges of views, concessions on either side, and in the last resort it will be for the Conference to extract the maximum benefit from all the proposals submitted, not only those of the French delegation, but those of other delegations as well.

The fundamental point in the French memorandum is the connection it establishes between disarmament and security. The Netherlands delegation, so far as it is concerned, is not convinced of the necessity for having, in addition to the Covenant, further guarantees for security before proceeding to a reduction of armaments. I shall not go so far as to say that disarmament alone would suffice to create security. Excessive armaments are primarily not the cause, but the effect, of the unrest and feeling of insecurity by which the nations are disturbed. At the same time, they can only stimulate and strengthen that feeling, and it is armaments that, to put it briefly, are conducting us infallibly down the road to ruin.

The crisis through which we are passing, as the first delegate of Spain reminded us again yesterday, is first and foremost a crisis of confidence. We cannot inspire a greater measure of confidence than we are prepared to give, and I still do not see a better way of developing mutual confidence between countries than the loyal fulfilment of the promise in Article 8 of the Covenant. But, while the Covenant suffices for me as a solemn undertaking, it cannot be denied that that is not the general opinion in the Conference. There are other Powers which, before measures of disarmament can be made practicable, insist on the need for strengthening peace by new undertakings of mutual assistance in case of aggression. That being so, the Netherlands delegation will give its very sincere help in examining the problem as it is put in the French memorandum. I do not think I am being unfair to the French plan if I take it that its sole object is to bring about a real and substantial measure of disarmament.

I desire, in the first place, to make a few observations on the parts of the plan aiming more directly at disarmament.

In Chapter III, Section B, the plan begins by making a distinction between a national short-term service army with limited effectives and specialised units consisting of troops serving on more or less long-term engagements. This distinction between effectives is, in my view, of paramount importance. The Netherlands Government has long been of opinion that these two types of army cannot be placed on the same footing and treated in the same way. An army of long-service troops may constitute a dangerous assaulting force, particularly if it possesses powerful weapons. The other is powerful by reason of its numbers, since the annual contingent under arms can at all times, and promptly, be reinforced by the contingents from the previous years, that is to say, the trained reserves.

The Netherlands delegation therefore can only approve the distinction established in the French memorandum and is ready to co-operate in determining the effectives and the period of training, while assuring their defensive character. The memorandum contains valuable suggestions in this connection.

The Netherlands delegation has had special satisfaction in noting the fact that, in the French delegation’s view, the prohibition of all powerful mobile material for these defensive forces—in particular, material making it possible to attack permanent fortifications—is to be regarded only as a minimum. The Netherlands delegation is firmly convinced that, to achieve the aim in view, we must go much further, and that a qualitative limitation of armaments affecting only material utilisable against permanent fortifications is much less than what we are entitled to expect from the Conference.

The qualitative limitation proposed in the French memorandum, moreover, is not an absolute limitation. That is a grave objection. The special units consisting of long-service troops will possess material which is forbidden to national armies. Again, from the normal equipment of those special units, States will be entitled to have mobile material which is prohibited to the national armies and which will be, as the memorandum states, stored under international supervision. The French delegation’s idea is that all this material which will be forbidden to the national armies will not constitute a danger, since the specialised units possessing it, and also the material in store, will be used for two purposes only—for joint action in response to an appeal from the League, or for legitimate defence of the country on whose territory the material exists. I am unable to attach any great importance to this restriction. In fact, as matters already stand to-day, under the system set up by the Pact of Paris, no State is entitled to have recourse to arms for aggressive purposes.

If it is desired to describe as qualitative limitation an undertaking not to use certain arms except in case of joint action or legitimate defence, nothing further is required in this field, since qualitative limitation is already complete.
For these reasons, the Netherlands delegation considers, like the Belgian delegate, that, if we desire to bring about real qualitative limitation, it would be very dangerous to authorise the States to keep prohibited arms for any reason whatsoever. Prohibition should, to my mind, involve destruction.

The French delegation’s proposal whereby all the countries will permanently keep at the League’s disposal a reduced number of specialised units to form a contingent for joint action is worthy of thorough consideration. In itself, the proposal involves neither any pre-established scheme for joint action—a point on which Her Majesty’s Government continues to feel serious doubts—nor any plan for the automatic launching of joint action.

Moreover, the existence of such special units, in anticipation of the possibility that they may be placed at the League’s disposal, does not rule out the danger of their being used for other purposes. However that may be, the obligation to maintain these units is not a disarmament but an armament obligation. In order that this obligation may be acceptable, it would be necessary, apart from other conditions, that the Convention should involve a much larger measure of armaments reduction than that which we are justified in expecting from the progress made by the Conference hitherto.

The French proposals will not result in an international force in the proper sense of the term, which would make the League to some extent independent of the support of the States Members. In their main lines, the French proposals respect the principle that all joint action will be dependent on the decision of the Governments which are to furnish contingents. These proposals would therefore give us no ground for forming an opinion on the question whether the existence of such an international force is to be considered possible and desirable, but for the fact that the memorandum reproduces the idea of an organically international air force. The proposals in the memorandum on this point, however, are not sufficiently precise for me to be able to pronounce on them at the moment.

The Netherlands delegation has noted with satisfaction in Chapter V, concerning air forces, that the French delegation proposes that all bombardment from the air should be prohibited. Bombardment on the field of battle would also be excluded. As to the creation of a “European Air Transport Union”, that is a point on which the Netherlands delegation has already expressed its view on several occasions. We are not in favour of internationalising civil aviation, but, if this is the only method of achieving reductions in the air arm, my Government will not offer any strong opposition.

We must, however, be sure that the development of civil aviation will not be handicapped and that the sacrifice made will effectively and efficaciously promote the cause of disarmament.

After these observations on the disarmament clauses, I have a few comments to make on the political clauses, that is to say, on the proposals in the memorandum regarding security.

Among the new engagements proposed by the French delegation in this matter there are some with which the Netherlands delegation warmly sympathises. Thus, the Netherlands Government, which, from the foundation of the League, has been deeply conscious of the solemn obligations of the Covenant, has no hesitation in reaffirming the loyal application of the provisions of the Covenant mentioned in Chapter II of the French memorandum.

Chapter I calls for the adoption of certain principles which constitute an extension of the Pact of Paris and which do not conflict with the spirit of the League Covenant. Only, if this extension is to have its full effect, all the countries which signed the Pact of Paris must declare themselves ready to accept it. If that is done, the Netherlands delegation will have no hesitation in accepting it.

The proposals contained in Chapters III, IV and V of the memorandum are founded on the principle of the distinction between land, sea and air armaments. That is the guiding principle, not only of the military proposals, but also of those aiming at security. In the case of disarmament, this distinction was already introduced a year ago in the work of this Conference, when it set up certain sub-commissions, and in that connection the distinction has great advantages. In the case of security, the same distinction involves, we consider, serious drawbacks, in particular for States having territories in different parts of the world. It may be asked how it would be possible to work out a logical plan of mutual assistance which did not offer the same guarantees for the territories situated in Europe and for those situated overseas. That, however, seems to be the aim of the French memorandum. The distinction between assistance by the land forces and that by the naval forces would surely lead to consequences which would be totally unacceptable. For the moment, the Netherlands delegation is obliged to make an express reservation regarding the distinction and division of the three arms as the basis of the obligation to lend assistance against an aggressor.

This reservation becomes particularly serious in view of the very clear reply given by the United Kingdom representative to the leader of the Italian delegation as regards the United Kingdom’s attitude to the new obligations suggested in the French memorandum for guaranteeing European security. Like Baron Aloisi, I should find it very difficult to accept in this matter a convention which left our English friends outside the European family.

That is perhaps the main reservation, but not the only one, which the Netherlands delegation has to put forward regarding the organisation of European security.
The whole of this system is based on a definition of the aggressor and on a method for designating the aggressor. With regard to the definition, the Netherlands delegation is inclined to think that any attempt to set up in advance rigid and absolute criteria for determining the aggressor could hardly lead to concrete results in the present circumstances. The number and variety of the schemes—we have just received yet another one which is quite three pages in length—that have been put forward show the difficulty of finding a strict definition of aggression. The work we are doing here is not of a scientific or academic nature. On the contrary, the definition of the aggressor will be the basis of extremely serious obligations for the States. In order to bring about security, in order that a State may decide to lend compulsory assistance to the State victim of an aggression, a strict definition of the aggressor will not suffice. What is needed first and foremost is that the State which must take the decision, so fraught with consequences, to give its assistance, must be fully persuaded—both Government and nation—that, in doing so, it is obeying the unavoidable demands, not of a formula, but of international justice. If it is in any doubt on this point, can we expect the system to work, can we expect the signatories of the Convention to embrace a cause which, in their inmost minds, they believe to be unjust, and that they will be ready to make in such a cause all the sacrifices that a war may impose upon them?

In reply to these objections and to render as automatic as possible the assistance to the State which, according to the definition accepted, is the victim of aggression, the French delegation proposes that the granting of assistance should be decided by the Council on simply ascertaining that an attack or invasion has taken place. That decision will be taken by a majority vote. This system would mean the abandonment of the constitutional principles upon which the League Covenant was built up. It would mean that the Council’s decision would be binding even on Members of the League which had had no part in the taking of it. It would mean that a majority vote would suffice for the gravest decision which the Council can be called upon to take. It would mean that questions concerning the European continent would be decided, and consequently heavy obligations imposed upon the States belonging to it, by a majority which might largely consist of countries with no share in those obligations. Finally, this system would be directly the reverse of the Covenant, under which the States bearing the greatest responsibility for the maintenance of peace should possess the greatest influence in decisions.

In response to the sincere and loyal effort of their French friends, the Netherlands delegation thought it right candidly to state the reservations suggested by its study of the French memorandum. It would, however, be glad if doubtful points could be cleared up in the course of the discussion and if the proposals submitted could be modified so as to enable it to drop its reservations and to overcome its objections to certain of the details in the plan.

According to what has been said by previous speakers, some of our reservations are shared by other delegations, which have put forward other objections as well. It seems plain that all that the Conference can do is to reach some sort of compromise between all the various views. We must concentrate all our efforts on that compromise. The Netherlands delegation will loyally take its part. It will not reject out of hand any new proposal for strengthening mutual assistance, but it cannot contemplate the acceptance of such a proposal except on the express condition that the general disarmament convention to be concluded at the same time represents, to a very appreciable extent, the achievement of the aim for which we have come together—not only the limitation, but also the reduction, of armaments.

64. DEATH OF COUNT APPONYI, FIRST DELEGATE OF HUNGARY.

The President deeply regretted to have to inform the General Commission that he had received the news of the passing of their good friend Count Apponyi. He was sure that the Commission would wish that he should send a letter of condolence in the name of the Commission to the members of the family.

General TANCZOS (Hungary) said that the death of Count Albert Apponyi was a grievous loss, first and foremost to his country and people, but he thought he might say that it was also a very sad and serious loss to the League of Nations.

Count Albert Apponyi had been a fervent admirer and a zealous servant of the international institution at Geneva. His last political action had been a masterly speech delivered at Vienna ten days previously in defence of the League of Nations against its many enemies and adversaries.

Count Albert Apponyi had been delegate of Hungary at almost all the ordinary Assemblies of the League since 1924. Those who had attended these Assemblies would remember his speeches, which had been marked by wisdom, moderation and the spirit of conciliation, together with a lofty patriotism and unparalleled love of his country and nation.

To spare his strength, he had consented not to take part in the 1932 Assembly, but he had added that he would come back for the re-opening of the Disarmament Conference, to uphold the cause of his beloved country. Eight days previously he had returned to the field of battle at Geneva. Like any true campaigner, soldier and patriot, he had fallen on the field of battle, labouring with his last breath for the dignity and happiness of his country.
General Tánczos would very respectfully beg his colleagues to observe a moment’s silence in remembrance of the noble figure and exceptional personality of Count Albert Apponyi.

The President requested General Tánczos to convey to his Government the deep sympathy of the General Commission for the great loss which Hungary had sustained by the passing of one of the most devoted friends of the League of Nations and of the peace-keeping system of the world.

(On the proposal of the President, the Commission adjourned for a quarter of an hour as a mark of sympathy with Count Albert Apponyi’s country and family.)


M. Antoniadé (Roumania).—I am speaking in this debate in order to signify the Roumanian Government’s cordial support for the French plan of security and disarmament, and, since the French delegation has asked, not for vague encouragement or general observations, but for reasoned approval or criticisms, I shall endeavour to state, as briefly as possible, the reasons which lead my delegation to pronounce in favour of this plan.

The French plan is not an arbitrary construction opposed to, or superimposed on, all that the Conference has done hitherto. As the French representative indicated at the outset, it is simply an endeavour to co-ordinate into an organic whole the partial results already achieved and to draw the logical consequences from the principles already accepted. It is a work of synthesis which aims at giving practical effect to our debates. I do not share the opinion of those who consider the debates which occupied a great part of last year to have been sterile. This long preparation will not have been wasted. It was an illusion to imagine that a work of such vast scope could be set on foot in a few weeks or a few months. To build fast is not to build solidly.

From our hesitations, from our tentative efforts, from the clash of contrary ideas, from their confrontation and the sincere endeavour to reconcile them as far as possible, a few main ideas clearly emerged. All that remained was to co-ordinate them, to deduce from them the necessary consequences and to build them into a coherent system adjustable to the various existing situations. This was evidently not an easy thing to do, but it is the task which is undertaken in the French plan. Even if everyone does not agree with all the solutions proposed, we must render justice to this loyal and sincere effort and acknowledge that it allows the Conference, which had found itself in a blind alley, to escape once more into the open and draw nearer to its objective.

Among the tributes paid to this plan, we have heard praise of the elegance of the construction, its logical structure in which all the parts fit in with one another, its systematic spirit—praise which sometimes looks like criticism in view of the distrust felt in certain quarters for anything systematic in politics. In spite of all this praise, there seems to be a tendency to say that, however beautiful from the aesthetic point of view, the plan cannot be adjusted to realities.

I was particularly glad to hear a realistic politician like M. Beneš say that one of the reasons for the lamentable state of our post-war world was the fact that stability, consistency in politics and a respect for immutable principles were unfortunately no longer in fashion in this world, and that, on the pretext of elasticity, preference was given to solutions adopted on the spur of daily necessities. This fundamental distrust of system and logic in politics is not always to be commended. It is necessary to think clearly on this subject. There is a logic which, originating from abstract principles, desires to impose itself from outside on facts and situations—a rigid logic which wishes to compel realities to bend to its requirements. But there is also an internal logic which does not set out from arbitrary principles or endeavour to re-create reality in the abstract, but which follows the sinuous contours of existing realities. It is this latter logic that we find in the French plan and that constitutes one of its principal merits. This logic does not move in a vacuum, it does not set out from arbitrary abstract principles, but from principles consecrated by what forms the charter of the present international world—the Covenant of the League, the Pact of Paris, the Treaty of Locarno and other international acts—and from principles accepted by this Conference itself.

Deserved praise has also been given to the great flexibility of this plan. It is in the application of these principles that this flexibility shows itself. There is nothing rigid in this constructive experiment, but a continual effort is made to adapt the solutions proposed to any given situation, as I shall show in a moment. I must confess that systematic distrust is no longer justified in face of such a method.

What constitutes the principal merit of this plan and makes it truly constructive, and what commands the support of so many delegations, among them that which I have the honour to represent, is that it is a courageous endeavour to set up an organisation of peace. I have often heard it said that this plan speaks too much of security and not enough of disarmament; that it is too ample in the political sphere and passes lightly over technical measures for the
reduction and limitation of armaments, that, in short, this is a Disarmament Conference and not a Security Conference. This is a profound error which we cannot be at too great pains to refute.

There is too great a tendency to consider disarmament as if it were an end in itself and not one of the means of ensuring peace. It is as if it were sufficient to prohibit certain arms, to reduce the calibre of a few guns or the tonnage of a few ships or a few tanks in order *ipsa facta* to ensure lasting peace. But lasting peace can only be ensured if we take the trouble to organise it, and it can only be organised in the international plane by organising security in every part of the world and for every country. It is for this reason that the French plan, faithful to the spirit of the Covenant, faithful to Article 8 which for us is the law and the prophets—as has, indeed, been solemnly recognised in your resolutions—proclaims the essential principle that between disarmament and the development of security by the organisation of peace there is an indissoluble link. We entirely accept this principle and its consequences—namely, that, once the conditions of security have been recognised as sufficient, reductions and limitations will have to be adapted to the special circumstances of each State, that this reduction will have to proceed by stages, and that the principle of progressive reduction is incompatible with re-armament.

As it has always stated, my delegation has never been able to accept the view that disarmament must be effected apart from any consideration of security; that the obligation of Article 8 is a pure and simple one or subject to the sole condition of present security; that disarmament by its intrinsic virtue would create security without any other guarantee. My Government considers, and I think that many of us hold the same view, that it would be extremely dangerous to make the experiment of disarmament without a genuine organisation of security.

In this domain of the organisation of security, the idea, in the French plan, of agreements forming concentric circles is entirely remarkable and is a true constructive effort. This is the most striking example of the plan's elasticity and of the desire to adapt principles to actual conditions and different situations in the various parts of the globe. The most general pact, the agreement for consultation, to which all States here represented will be asked to accede, is of great importance. As M. Paul-Boncour rightly observed, the object of this agreement is, by incorporating the Paris Pact in public international law, to endow that great moral affirmation, with full juridical force. With that vigorous logic to which I have referred, this principle expresses all those consequences which the Paris Pact merely implies. If favourably received by the nations of the world, such an agreement will become one of the foundations of the new economy. With regard to the Paris Pact, the Roumanian delegation heartily welcomes the United Kingdom delegation's proposal that this agreement should be extended and defined by a solemn declaration on the part of all European States to the effect that they will never, in any circumstances, seek to solve any existing or future dispute between them by resorting to force. This is the very phraseology employed in the agreement of December 17th, 1932, which has already received wide approval.

The second and narrower circle comprises Members of the League of Nations, and the pacts to be concluded will be based, above all, on the effective and loyal application of Article 16. The Roumanian delegation unreservedly approves this proposal.

But most important of all, from the standpoint of us Europeans, will be the third group of pacts concerning the organisation of Europe. This organisation, with its political and military provisions, deserves most careful consideration during the discussions of detail which must necessarily take place.

In the political sphere, the plan puts forward again, with certain modifications and adaptations, those valuable concepts of the Geneva Protocol which were based on mutual assistance. Since the abandonment of the Protocol, it has become increasingly evident that these concepts are an essential element in the true organisation of peace. The system proposed is fairly supple and the means for its realisation would appear to be practicable. Naturally, the guarantees it offers would have to be examined very carefully, with a view to ascertaining whether they are really adequate or require to be strengthened further. It would be highly desirable that this system for the organisation of Europe on the basis of mutual assistance should be an absolutely comprehensive European system.

Alongside this political organisation of Europe, and on the basis of the increase of security and in ratio to that increase, the French plan embodies certain practical measures for bringing about the reduction of armaments. The Roumanian delegation accepts as a whole these technical provisions relating to land, naval and air forces.

One particularly attractive feature of the plan is the purely defensive character it attributes to the type of army to be organised in Europe. As regards the effective of land forces and the period of service, account must be taken—as is provided, moreover, in the plan—of the geographical situation and particular conditions of the various countries, with a view to ensuring the security of each.

There is also a proposal to standardise war material by progressive stages, the manufacture of such material being supervised and organised on an international basis. This is a proposal of great importance: it lends practical value to the suggested qualitative reductions, in that it will put a stop to the perpetual technical improvement of weapons and avoid the baneful consequences which may result therefrom.

Another very interesting part of the plan refers to qualitative reductions of material. With regard to such reductions, there is the resolution of July 23rd, 1932, accepted by us all, which leaves the system to be applied in the case of prohibited arms open to further discussion.
The French plan favours the formula of internationalisation as a corollary to the other formula applied to effectives, namely, the internationalisation of certain specialised units.

After reflecting on the weighty arguments submitted by the French delegation, the Roumanian delegation would be disposed to accept the principle of internationalisation in both cases. It fully realises that this idea—though not quite a new one—may engender sharp controversy. It believes that the idea of an organically international air force would meet with less resistance. As you know, ideas, particularly when they happen to be right, seem to possess a charmed existence: the Utopia of to-day becomes the fact of to-morrow. In any case, this idea—an inspired anticipation of the future—merits most careful consideration. The Roumanian delegation is sympathetically disposed towards an experiment in this entirely new domain.

The Roumanian delegation also accepts the proposal to organise on a sound and permanent basis, as between the States parties to the future convention, the supervision of the fulfilment of their obligations in the matter of their arms—a principle which M. Paul-Boncour regards as the keystone of the French proposal. It is convinced that, without some real and effective supervisory organisation, any convention on disarmament would be illusory.

These are the reasons for which the Roumanian delegation attaches great value to the constructive effort embodied in the French plan and for which it approves that plan. It believes that these proposals should now be considered in detail, because such consideration, and the adoption of the principles proposed, might lead us to take a decisive step in the direction of our goal.

M. LANGE (Norway).—We have all followed with sustained interest and careful attention the discussions of the last four meetings. But, if a stranger were to fall from the heavens into the public gallery, would he not wonder whether he was attending a discussion, by a scientific academy, of legal arguments in the international field instead of a conference with a clearly political task before it?

On the basis of that observation, may I make an appeal to the Conference? Can we continue thus obstinately to uphold diametrically opposed views, instead of thinking of the work before us or of what is to be the outcome of our deliberations?

Like all international conferences, this Conference is governed by the rule of unanimity in the adoption of resolutions. Hence, if we desire that the Conference should not die of anaemia—and the many empty places around the tables show that this danger is not altogether imaginary—we must make an effort to put things straight. We must make an effort towards agreement. Mindful of the Bible saying, "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city", I shall resist the temptation to break a lance in defence of the thesis which I cherish, and which has always been that of my delegation, namely, that the reduction of armaments would be the first and most important step to ensure security for all.

If we all remain in our positions, our work will be condemned to sterility. The need for concessions must be recognised by every delegation. We who believe that security would be created by progressive disarmament cannot and must not forget that an important group of States holds the opposite conviction. Personally, I consider it our duty to take this fact into account. Just as it is the duty of the opposite camp to take into account the fact that it is faced with a large number of States whose opinion is the reverse of its own. Unless our work is to be barren, we must make an effort to reconcile our views, and I have asked permission to speak this afternoon in order to attempt to make a modest contribution to this effort. I shall do so on the basis and in the light of the French plan, taking from it the constructive elements it contains, and I think that in doing so I shall be complying with the pressing request made by M. Massigli, delegate of France, when he opened this debate, and requested us to make definite declarations, to put forward criticisms if need be, and to indicate exactly where we stood.

I should add that, after listening to the admirable speech by my colleague, M. Beelaerts van Blokland, I wondered whether it would be necessary for me to speak at all. To a very large extent, my ideas are identical with his. I should merely like to complete what he has said by clearing up a few doubtful points and drawing a few conclusions connected with the political aspect.

In the first place, it seems to me that we can all entirely accept the points enumerated in Chapters I and II of the French plan—the agreement for consultation; the non-recognition of any situation brought about by the breach of an international undertaking; the prohibition of all economic or financial relations, direct or indirect, with the aggressor country; and I lay particular stress on the sentence following this last point: "The Powers shall undertake to adopt the necessary measures to make these prohibition immediately effective." In time of peace, the States are to obtain legal powers for the immediate operation of economic and financial sanctions and also for the effective organisation of financial and economic assistance.

Secondly, we shall, I think, have to examine very closely the possibility of co-ordinating the political provisions in Section A of Chapter III with the undertakings in the first two chapters. They contain certain very interesting ideas, the application of which need not, I think, be restricted to continental Europe. For instance, I do not see why the adoption of the General Act of Arbitration should not form part of the general Convention for Security and Disarmament.
I consider that, in the same order of ideas, it would be very interesting to study the proposal tabled by M. Litvinoff yesterday, which, in my view, contains useful suggestions for the examination of the very delicate problem of the designation of the aggressor.

Speaking generally, the idea of a regional politico-military organisation has always seemed to me very difficult of realisation; but, as far as we are concerned, we will not oppose its study, although we do not regard it as a very fruitful idea, particularly in the case of the suggestion to set up a system of quotas of war materials which would be stored in the various countries but would be placed at the service of the international organisation. Is it psychologically conceivable that a State would be ready to transfer the strongest units in its military armature to another State at a time of tension, or even of acute crisis? By leaving these units of the international force in the hands of the individual States, we should be exposing them to temptation—and I fear the temptation would prove irresistible—to avail themselves of those arms for their own ends, or in any case to keep them at their own disposal as long as possible.

As against this, I regard the idea of a force organically international in character as far more practicable and also as politically realisable under certain conditions.

In the first place, this force must be conceived of as a specialised and limited force. The French suggestion for an air force seems to me to fulfil these conditions. Why limited? For a very simple psychological reason. It is essential that the men who will be called on to undergo training, if necessary to give their lives in the service of the international organisation we are now attempting to construct, must be imbued with a new spirit of international loyalty. These men exist, but they are still the exception. We must therefore begin by creating a nucleus around which a more considerable force will be able to develop little by little according to the possibilities and needs of the situation. Why specialised? I do not conceive of this force as a force which could dominate or impose the international will on national wills simply by dint of military superiority. At first its duties should, I think, be those of a police force and supervisory in nature. For example, it would watch over the execution of the clauses of the Convention on the means of preventing war, and, if need be, carry out other duties of a police force.

But, even if we assume this specialisation in the international force, it is essential that its creation should be co-ordinated with a reduction in the weapons of attack and with a strict limitation of military expenditure, in order to put a stop to the competition in armaments.

There are two ways of ensuring the predominance of the international authority. We might either superimpose the international force upon the national forces, or weaken the national forces, reduce them to a level which will deprive them of their harmful quality and enable the international authority to act quickly and decisively.

But, even if we were to achieve the lowest measure of reduction which we can hope for in this first stage in the work of disarmament—mention has been made of one-third as being a substantial reduction—it would be impossible to superimpose on the armaments kept by the States an international force capable of intervening effectively against a great Power, not to mention several Powers in coalition.

I am happy to see in the French plan one point which, I think, might constitute an important factor in the agreement for which I am hoping and which is the object of all my wishes—I mean the principle of a reduction in the means of attack which enable a sudden attack to be carried out. I am particularly happy to see this idea completed and crystallised in an entirely new domain. Among these means of attack, effectives do undoubtedly form the decisive element, because only the effectives can ensure durable results in the event of a sudden attack.

Norway, whose land forces are organised as a militia with a shorter service than that of any other country, and whose naval forces are organised in accordance with the actual formula in the French plan—short-term service with limited effectives—is naturally sympathetic to the French suggestion for reducing the forces of continental Europe to a uniform type.

But, while I say, on behalf of my Government, that we are prepared to accept this suggestion, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that any such re-organisation of the military forces will require a fairly long period of years; and then I have to put this fundamental question to the Conference, in regard to which I hope the French delegation will give explanations and a reply: Will the French plan, taken as a whole, bring about the immediate and substantial reduction stipulated in the resolution of July 23rd last?

I now come back to the point from which I set out. We must not waste our time here in theoretical discussions of principles. It is our duty to achieve rapid solutions. Time presses. The world awaits with impatience the substantial reduction, the definite reduction, of armed forces for which we have been called together. A crisis is upon us, the most serious that the world has known since the dark days of July 1914. The economic world, business circles and the millions of unemployed await political solutions. Ours is the responsibility to see that we do not bring bitter disappointment to these millions of sufferers.

M. Hecht (Austria). — The Austrian delegation has from the outset taken an active part in the work of the Disarmament Conference. It has done so because the Austrian Government believed that the aim which the Conference is seeking to attain does at last constitute the
realisation of the reciprocal undertakings which were the preliminary condition for the armaments limitations stipulated in the peace treaties.

The Austrian delegation takes particular pleasure in assisting in the work on which the Conference is at present engaged, because, in its view, the French plan offers a suitable basis for new and fruitful discussion.

I do not propose to deal to-day with the main guiding lines of the plan. I should, I think, leave such general considerations to the representatives of the Great Powers. I shall, however, during the discussions of detail, have certain criticisms to make on certain aspects of the plan which, in the Federal Government’s opinion, give rise to objection. I desire, however, to mention briefly two of the avenues opened up by the French plan, because they are of special importance to Austria.

The Austrian Government notes with satisfaction the recognition of each State’s right to equality in the matter of security in conformity with Article 8 of the Covenant, and it awaits, from the practical application of this recognition, the effective protection of which Austria has greater need than any other State by reason of her geographical position in the centre of Europe and of the special configuration of her frontiers.

Secondly, by reducing the military systems to a general uniform type, the French plan enables Austria to contemplate the abandonment of the professional military system, which is alien to the character of her people, and the introduction of the militia system. Austria warmly hopes that she will be granted this right. She will undertake this reform on the basis of any decisions of the Conference resulting from the principle of equality. The Austrian Government regards the introduction of such a military system as one of the basic conditions for the country’s security, but the Austrian Government and people desire it also for purely idealistic reasons. The organisation of an army based on compulsory military service is specially effective in inculcating patriotism, concord and discipline—civic virtues which a new State needs to develop to the highest possible degree. It is for these considerations, and not from a desire to re-arm, that we contemplate these reforms as essential to the Austrian State.

In these few words, I have indicated some of the practical consequences which my Government would be glad to draw from the French plan, and I express the hope that the outcome of the discussion on that plan will be to enable the Conference to achieve a definite success.

Mr. Gibson (United States of America).—In his opening speech, M. Massigli expressed the view that the first task to be dealt with under the French plan is to reach agreement among the continental States of Europe. He said that, once this result had been obtained, it would be time for the other States to determine whether it is worth while for them to undertake the engagements which have been outlined in the French plan in order to bring about general agreement. Inasmuch as the plan is designed primarily to solve a continental European problem, I do not feel that we are called upon at this stage to express an opinion as to how far it will fulfil its purpose. We hope, however, that this discussion will lead to the acceptance of definite measures of reduction, which, after all, is the purpose of our Conference.

Inasmuch as the European aspect of the French plan is its basis, this basis must be dealt with before we can profitably discuss its other aspects, and I shall not, therefore, offer at this time any comment on that phase of the plan which concerns non-continental States and non-members of the League of Nations. To do this before the basis itself is established would be hypothetical rather than real.

For practical purposes, it is sufficient to say at this time that what the United States Government can do is a matter perhaps for future discussion; what it will be disposed to do will be largely determined by the measure of actual reduction which the Conference may achieve.

The continuation of the discussion was adjourned to the next meeting.

THIRTY-THIRRD MEETING

Held on Wednesday, February 8th, 1933, at 3 p.m.

President: The Right Honourable A. HENDERSON.


Tevfik Rüstü Bey (Turkey).—Ever since the Turkish delegation first took part in the preparatory work for this Conference, it has never lost sight of the indissoluble link which exists between security and disarmament. We have invariably taken into account this point of view in all our proposals and in our comments on the proposals of other delegations.
Events have, we believe, shown that this is the right view. Whenever opportunity permitted, we have never failed to state likewise, that we would welcome any solution which would enable us more easily to attain the aim of this Conference and which had any prospect of general approval. Such a solution can of course only be obtained through a spirit of mutual conciliation. We have also stated on various occasions that, in the choice of the methods for reduction, our main concern is to give serious consideration to the anxieties of those countries which are not the most powerfully armed, and to do nothing which would upset in a manner detrimental to them the present balance between the existing armed forces. That is why we have always stated that we prefer any system of reduction aiming at the equalisation of forces, and that is why we hastened, not only to accept, but also to extend, the proposal for qualitative disarmament made by the Italian delegation. That proposal still retains its full importance.

For the same reason, we accepted the Hoover proposal, modified as regards the part dealing with quantitative armaments by the corrective contained in the Soviet proportional proposal.

I should now like to sum up in a few words the Turkish delegation's opinion on the French constructive plan. I shall avoid going into details, as we shall have an opportunity of dealing with them during its discussion in the Commissions.

As regards the military part of the plan, I will refer to my statements at the plenary meeting of the Conference on February 15th, 1932.

The fundamental concern of the framers of this plan seems to us to be to ensure security. The factors which govern the crisis of confidence are due, I believe, in a large measure, to psychological motives. My friend, M. Politis, in his masterly speech the day before yesterday, brought out very well, by concrete illustrations, the importance of this factor of confidence. I should like to say how grateful I am to him for his very eloquent interpretation of the feelings of our two countries.

Our daily experience has taught us that it is of paramount importance to responsible leaders, when they set out to find a solution for any problem, that they should first have a firm determination to solve that problem. If they do so, they will be able to discover the necessary formulae and will certainly reach agreement, irrespective of the inherent difficulties of the problem. The treaties and arrangements they conclude will only be the crystallisation of their intention, on condition, however, that it is in conformity with the aspirations of the peoples. Such agreements can often be only the outcome of persevering efforts, and demand a more or less long period of time.

That is why it is perfectly natural that, when faced with the necessity of adapting themselves to new conditions due to the Great War and scientific progress, the nations pass through these phases of doubt and groping. But the danger inherent in unduly prolonging these phases makes it our common duty to assist one another to get through them, as soon as possible, before we are overtaken by events.

The French scheme affords a valuable indication of that state of mind which I have attempted to describe in its general features. I join in the tributes paid by all speakers to the framers of the plan, who have made an invaluable contribution to the organisation of peace. The plan likewise, in our view, is a living document, which shows that we cannot advance in the matter of the reduction of armaments unless we solve the problem of security in one way or another. There is no use shutting our eyes to that fact, which confronts us at every turn.

Consequently, like other speakers, and in particular my friend M. Litvinoff, who stressed the importance of this point, I think we must endeavour to overcome this dilemma by embarking upon the discussion of the practical ways and means that have been recommended in this connection, and which might help us to dispel many of the doubts that have been expressed.

According to the French plan, the solution for the problem of security involves a mixture of measures, some of them in the nature of political undertakings, and others in the nature of armaments reductions. What objection would there be to accepting that principle? So far as we are concerned, we see none. We therefore think that it would be particularly appropriate to seek for combinations which would define the engagements between States and so put a stop, by a substantial reduction, to the competition in armaments, which is both a danger to security and a heavy burden for all nations.

The French proposal deals in Chapter I with the contractual situation established by the Pact of Paris, but when signing that Pact most of the countries made so many reservations that, so far as we can see, no headway was made towards international organisation by its adoption as it stands. These reservations must be dropped, and all the signatories must be in complete agreement on the meaning and scope of the Pact. It is plain that it must be construed in its widest sense. It is likewise of vital importance to be in agreement on the definition of aggression. I should like to congratulate the distinguished Commissary for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, M. Litvinoff, on his proposal, which represents a new and happy suggestion in this matter. I hasten to add that the Turkish delegation has much pleasure in supporting his declaration. We attach great importance to this question, and we may therefore find it necessary to propose certain additions during its discussion.

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1 Document Conf.D.146.

2 See the Verbatim Records of the Plenary Meetings of the Conference, Volume I, page 111.
The second concentric circle in the French plan concerns the States Members of the League; that necessarily implies the harmonisation of the two Pacts and the adoption of uniform interpretations of certain articles in the League Covenant.

Although the third circle in the plan partly concerns the States Members of the Commission of Enquiry for European Union, it is difficult to define its true limits. One thing emerges plainly, namely, the possibility for certain countries, in particular the United Kingdom, to remain outside this political organisation. My distinguished colleague for Italy said openly that, without the United Kingdom's participation, he could not assume the undertakings resulting from the third chapter of the French memorandum. It is, of course, perfectly natural that every country should take into consideration the attitude of its neighbours and friends towards any political combinations and engagements.

The discussions that have been going forward these last few days would appear to indicate that Chapter I in the French plan will receive unanimous acceptance. That being so, it might now be possible, as far as security is concerned, to make the Briand-Kellogg Pact more definite, to eliminate the reservations, to extend it and to determine the sanctions which would be acceptable to all countries. It would be desirable at the same time to contemplate the possibility of the Pact having a regional application.

Thus, in its present phase, the Conference would have accomplished much valuable work in the field of security and would, to an appreciable extent, have overcome the crisis of confidence.

Pari passu with this first realisable measure of security, it is, I think, clear, from the discussions so far, that we can at this stage of the Conference anticipate important possibilities, as regards the qualitative and quantitative reduction of armaments, by combining the various proposals and amendments on that subject. I cherish this hope in view of the statements made by all the delegations whom we have heard from this platform in the past year.

M. MIKOFF (Bulgaria). — The resumption of the work of the Disarmament Conference, consequent upon the agreement of December 11th last, has revived the hope with which mankind greeted the beginnings of the Conference. It would be dangerous to disappoint that hope again. Our Commission therefore is faced with the duty, more imperious than ever, of arriving at conclusions and that swiftly.

The Bulgarian delegation greatly appreciates the valuable effort to this end made in the French plan, which may be a powerful lever in the accomplishment of this task.

The Bulgarian delegation sees in the general structure of this plan some of the fundamental ideas it has upheld from the outset, and therefore will lend its modest but cordial co-operation in the examination of the various proposals of which it consists, with the sincere desire to reach a general agreement by smoothing away all difficulties which might hamper any such general agreement.

I am happy to see that, in the view of the French delegation itself, the plan is not to be taken as a rigid or unchangeable piece of machinery and that, as is expressly stated in the preamble to the memorandum of November 14th, 1932, a certain latitude is left for combining the plan with other proposals that will undoubtedly facilitate the search for, and achievement of, the necessary general agreement.

In this work, the Bulgarian delegation will join in the common effort for the purpose of the rapid attainment of our aim, namely, the conclusion of a Disarmament Convention, based on equality of rights and on the organisation of the same security for all.

I entirely agree with M. Bourquin in his statement the day before yesterday, that the discussions so far, that we can at this stage of the Conference anticipate important possibilities, as regards the qualitative and quantitative reduction of armaments, by combining the various proposals and amendments on that subject. I cherish this hope in view of the statements made by all the delegations whom we have heard from this platform in the past year.
plain that, if all that I could do was to obtain your agreement from feelings of deference or as a mark of courtesy, I should blame myself very severely for having delayed in useless study the outcome of our work, which we all desire to expedite.

I propose then to reply, not, of course, to all the criticisms—for, let me repeat, there are certain points of detail which can only be brought out in an exhaustive study of the plan—but to the general criticisms.

Let me first say that any attempt at an approximation of views or at agreement would be out of the question, were you to regard the French plan as the fanciful production of our brains, or as connoting the preference of France, or of the group of Powers which have adopted the same position as we do in this matter and have given us their support. As regards reductions of armaments, our plan is offered purely as a synthesis of previous decisions or possible agreements. It endeavours to extend or adapt, or crystallise, those agreements on the basis of the whole series of considerations that have emerged from our own work. Similarly, as regards the link between disarmament and security on which it is founded, the French plan claims that it is only pursuing the path that began with Article 8 of the Covenant and, after traversing the intermediate stages of the Preparatory Commission’s work and the Assembly resolutions, which have perhaps too often been overlooked in the various phases of our proceedings, ended in your resolution of April 19th, 1932, which pointed to Article 8 as the starting-point of our discussions.

I know, of course, that the perpetual ebb and flow of life precludes rigidity in texts. It is quite certain that texts are not unchangeable. To retain their force they must undergo adjustment. But it is none the less true that, while they exist, they constitute the rule by which we are governed, just as contracts constitute the law governing the parties to them. So long as the texts are not modified, it is to them that we must refer, unless we are prepared to see our international discussions go astray amid individual preoccupations and all the fancies that are born of the human brain.

And so, when nations come to a Conference like this, at which they nerve themselves to stake their destiny, they come in the faith of texts and reciprocal engagements which are their common guarantee.

It is not without reason that the first resolution you adopted—I am mistaken, it was the second, because on the day before, on April 18th, 1932, you took another of which I shall speak later—it is not, I say, without reason that the resolution adopted by you on April 19th, 1932, recalled what is, in fact, the basis of our work—Article 8 of the Covenant. Even those countries which, though not Members of the League, have done us the honour of taking part in our work, have come to a Conference which opened under the auspices of Article 8 of the Covenant and with the obligations of that article as its basis.

What does Article 8 say?

It is perfectly clear—the reduction of armaments is to be sought in the measure compatible with national safety and the fulfilment of international obligations. It therefore affirms two things—security and the link between national security and international security. Indubitably, these two are the inevitable accompaniment of one another.

The second point recalled in your resolution of April 19th is this. Reductions in armaments must be planned in relation to the special needs of each State, account being had to its geographical situation and particular conditions. That rules out ipso facto the idea of a scale or any other simple, and consequently attractive, idea which fails to meet the conditions of variety and complexity that are the basis of our work under the terms of Article 8.

The third point. These reductions are to be carried out by stages.

Lastly, I should fail to state the whole position if I did not establish a link between Article 8 and the preamble to Part V of the peace treaties, under which certain special limitations imposed by these treaties on a number of countries are at once the condition and the promise for subsequent reductions of armaments. That implies, first, that these reductions cannot be brought about except by maintaining those special limitations and, secondly, that, in maintaining these, the nations undertake to approximate their own position to them as closely as possible, by the successive stages mentioned in Article 8.

There can therefore be no possible mistake. The disarmament with which we are concerned here and which the nations from all quarters of the world have met to bring about, if that is possible, is not just any sort of disarmament, or a disarmament of the kind that was attempted at other periods in history and the failure or weakness of which showed that the fundamental requirement was lacking. What makes our basis, our reciprocal engagement, the guarantee, as I believe it, of our success is the fact that this disarmament is being conducted in an organised society called the League of Nations, by virtue of a Covenant which all those who have signed it are bound to respect, and which establishes an indissoluble link between disarmament and security.

The text of the Covenant would suffice in itself, but there are many other texts which establish this link without interruption from the very outset down to our resolution of April 19th, 1932. This unbroken sequence is very striking and its significance is unmistakable. At every stage, we find the link between this work of disarmament, this hope of disarmament, this will for disarmament and the organisation of the security that is necessary to achieve it.

If the doctrine took shape, and perfectly clear and precise shape. I will venture to go over that road again, for I am anxious that you should realise how faithfully the French plan keeps to the path followed continuously by the League of Nations.
In 1922, the third Assembly adopted a resolution which states:

"In the present state of the world, many Governments would be unable to accept responsibility for a serious reduction of armaments unless they received in exchange a satisfactory guarantee of the safety of their country."

The Assembly considered that this guarantee could be found "in a defensive agreement which should be open to all countries, binding them to provide immediate and effective assistance, in accordance with a prearranged plan, in the event of one of them being attacked."

Two years later, in 1924, there was the Protocol, which was an attempt to put into effect and crystallise the principles laid down in the 1922 resolution. I shall not surprise you if, in speaking of the Protocol, I say that I cannot but feel a pang of regret which is shared by all those who took part in that great endeavour—the biggest, I believe, and the most positive that was ever made for the organisation of peace. But let us not waste time in repining. I am merely indicating the definite stages on a road which we are asking you to continue. I myself will continue.

The Protocol, in the general and universal form in which it was framed, was not, in spite of the acceptances given at the close of the 1924 Assembly, ratified by certain Governments whose adherence was essential to its coming into force. Make no mistake, however! At the Council session held in March 1925, when it was felt that the Protocol could not come into force, the very representative who, on behalf of his country, stated his objections to it, Sir Austen Chamberlain, speaking in the name of His Majesty's Government, instead of snapping this link between the possibility of armaments reduction and the necessary guarantees of security, on the contrary proclaimed its existence and, at the same time, pointed out a path upon which the League entered a few months later and which it is the French plan's only object to urge you to continue after an unduly protracted halt. Sir Austen Chamberlain said:

"These fears may be groundless; but, if they exist, they cannot be effectually laid by even the most perfect method of dealing with particular disputes by the machinery of enquiry and arbitration. For what is feared in such cases is not injustice, but war—war deliberately undertaken for purposes of conquest or revenge. And, if so, can there be a better way of allaying fears like these than by adopting some scheme which should prove to all the world that such a war would fail?

"Since the general provisions of the Covenant cannot be stiffened with advantage, and since the 'extreme cases' with which the League may have to deal will probably affect certain nations or groups of nations more nearly than others, His Majesty's Government conclude that the best way of dealing with the situation is, with the co-operation of the League, to supplement the Covenant by making special arrangements in order to meet special needs."

France replied through the mouth of M. Briand. While upholding its preference for the general instrument represented by the Protocol, France, yielding to the arguments of the United Kingdom representative, admitted that, in application, the Protocol could be adjusted to circumstances and geographical situations. In consequence of the stimulus given by this great occasion—how the Governments were stirred by the aspirations of their peoples, and, how true it is that nothing in man's striving is lost!—while the Protocol did not attain the final, the immense purpose for which it was designed, it at least had an immediate and most valuable result. Thanks to the co-operation of the different countries which felt more particularly this need, and thanks to the guarantee of the United Kingdom and Italy, there was brought into being at Locarno, on one of the points around which the bitterest clashes in history have occurred or are likely to occur, this machinery of security the efficacy of which the United Kingdom delegate so rightly mentioned the other day when, after the lapse of many years, he repeated his predecessor's invitation to the nations which believe that security is not sufficiently assured at other points in the world to follow that example. Immediately afterwards, not by way of words or texts, but in the practice of the League—because of Locarno, because of this addition to the Covenant on a point that was particularly menaced or which was thought to be particularly menaced, because a system of mutual assistance in case of aggression had been set on foot and a guarantee had been given—the Powers began the preparatory work of the Disarmament Commission decided by the 1925 Assembly. That is not a mere chronological record or comparison of dates, although it is a particularly striking one. In 1926, as a sequel to the work establishing this link, the Assembly took the following decision:

"Being desirous that the investigations in regard to which the Assembly itself took the initiative in its resolution of September 25th, 1925, should be brought to a successful conclusion as soon as possible, the Assembly requests the Council to call upon the Preparatory Commission to take steps to hasten the completion of the technical work and thus be able to draw up, at the beginning of next year, a programme for the conference for the reduction and limitation of armaments corresponding to existing conditions in regard to regional and general security."

But—and those who took part in the work of the Preparatory Commission have not forgotten it—it was soon perceived that there were, throughout the world and particularly in Europe, other geographical regions or other historical difficulties than those dealt with in the Locarno agreements, that the obstacle to a substantial reduction of armaments was the fact that security continued inadequate, more especially in Europe. It was the 1927 resolution which established this necessary link. I must apologise for reminding you of it.

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to-day in so much detail, but it is essential to put the facts before you because, unless due account is taken of them, it does not—I admit it—appear to be worth while studying the French plan. The 1927 resolution gives precise and tangible form to the link between security and disarmament by setting up, side by side with the Preparatory Commission which was doing the technical work for possible armament reductions, the Committee on Arbitration and Security which was to study the "measures capable of giving all States the guarantees of arbitration and security necessary to enable them to fix the level of their armaments at the lowest possible figures in an international disarmament agreement ". At the lowest possible figures. I ask you to bear these words in mind. We shall come across them again in the first of arbitration and security necessary to enable them to fix the level of their armaments at the lowest possible figures in an international disarmament agreement ". At the lowest possible figures.

The Arbitration and Security Committee went to work, and in 1928, on the report of M. Politis, it adopted conclusions, which are the very bases of the entire political part of the French plan, for giving the nations a greater measure of security. The report says:

"It is impossible at present to contemplate the conclusion of a general agreement—adding to the obligations assumed under the Covenant—with a view to giving the nations greater security.

Regional pacts comprising non-aggression, arbitration and mutual assistance represent the completest type of security agreement and the one which can most easily be brought into harmony with the system of the Covenant. Such pacts should always include the following provisions:

1. A prohibition to resort to force;
2. The organisation of pacific procedures for the settlement of all disputes;
3. The establishment of a system of mutual assistance, to operate in conjunction with the duties of the League Council."

Those are the very principles inscribed in the French plan.

Again, the 1928 Assembly took cognisance of these conclusions and of this work, of which, after all, we cannot be satisfied merely to note the utility and then abstain from using, for international bodies, like national bodies, cannot live without a minimum of continuity, and unless they observe the condition that they must not constantly start again along roads that they have already traversed, but must, on the other hand, pursue the work begun. The 1928 Assembly, considering "... the present conditions of security set up by the Covenant of the League of Nations, by the treaties of peace and, in particular, by the reductions in the armaments of certain countries under these treaties, and also by the Locarno Agreements ...", decided that a first general Convention for the reduction and limitation of armaments could at the present time be concluded, and that the Governments which considered that their security is not sufficiently assured are now, thanks to the work of the Committee on Arbitration and Security, in possession of fresh means for strengthening their security of which it is to be hoped that they will make use ... ."

That is what the French plan proposes, and it makes that proposal because that has not yet been done; because, since Locarno, nothing has been done as regards security organised by mutual assistance; because no other efforts, however valuable and however inspired, no excommunications, whatever their scope and whatever their moral value, can replace these guarantees of security if, as M. Politis said in his fine speech, they are not supplemented by detailed legal and political clauses.

The Preparatory Commission, however, desiring to achieve a first stage, a first convention, was obliged to note that, in spite of the very valuable work of the Committee on Arbitration and Security, the nations, even while they declared their security insufficient, did not take the necessary means to increase it by making use of these model agreements, by adjusting them to their own needs and affixing their signature thereto. The Preparatory Commission accordingly proposed a preliminary draft convention which was the text we brought with us when we came here. This text justified the assumption that it was on the basis of the 1928 resolution that we were going to work, and that that work would be to fill in the figures and details in what was only a technical schedule—in other words, to fill in the blanks in the draft convention.

But how does this draft begin? Think what its terms are:

"The High Contracting Parties agree to limit and, so far as possible, to reduce their respective armaments as provided in the present Convention."

That surely is clear. When we came here from all over the world in response to previous resolutions which are the outcome of the Covenant and are our common guarantee, we had with us a draft Convention of which the first article—and, even more, its whole aspect and wording—prove that it is really a Convention that would act as a brake, a limitation Convention, with the hope that nevertheless armaments may be reduced below this limit, below this stopping-point.

But it was too late. The hope of the nations had outsped the halting rhythm of our work. A Convention that would act as a brake would, I think, have been a great boon at the time when I had the honour to propose it, as far back as 1926, on behalf of my Government; it might even have been so in 1928 at the Assembly, when I again asked that, while continuing..."
our studies of disarmament and our search for that security by means of which more extensive reductions in armaments could be achieved, we should nevertheless begin by arresting the competition in armaments.

When we met in February 1932, the peoples of the world expected of us something more than this—and they were right. It was for that reason that the first resolution we adopted—that to which I have just referred—the first definite result of our work, the resolution which you adopted on April 18th, 1932, said that the General Commission considered that the reduction of armaments as provided in Article 8 of the Covenant of the League of Nations should be achieved, doubtless progressively, by means of successive revisions at appropriate intervals, but after the present Conference had taken the first decisive step of general reduction to the lowest possible level.

Here, we have progressed far beyond the terms of the Preparatory Commission’s draft. That draft said: a Convention to act as a brake, and reductions if possible. Your resolution says: To the lowest possible level. I think we can attain that level if we take appropriate steps, if we seek it along the lines we have followed since the beginnings of the Covenant and by the successive stages, which I could not help feeling it was necessary to define—lines which I think we are entitled to believe you still desire to follow. Under the resolutions of 1927 and 1928, which specified the aim of the Conference and the intended course of its work, this lowest possible level is bound up with guarantees of security greater than those which at present exist, because existing guarantees—those contemplated in the Preparatory Commission’s draft—could only lead to a Convention that would act as a brake and, if possible, to a reduction.

From that time onward, we have been following a different path—a path of promise, a path along which we will go with you gladly, provided the link that has been forged, not by our preferences but by the texts which are our guarantee, be not sundered, and provided that, in a desire to reach the lowest possible level at the very first stage, fresh guarantees of security are also sought, such as have always been indicated in our resolutions as the very condition of this great effort.

The whole problem, in judging a plan in which a tentative effort has been made—an effort which even those who have criticised its substance have acknowledged (and for that acknowledgment I thank them sincerely)—is to make quite sure what that plan proposes. Well, what this plan, taking into account all previous work and all the difficulties already encountered, proposes is to discover some form of guarantees in keeping with those to which attention has been directed since the day on which you rejected the Protocol.

For you the question is two-fold. First, are such guarantees possible? Secondly, are the reductions offered in exchange for these guarantees sufficient? These two questions are linked together. Neither transcends the other, in our estimation. It is not a question of deciding which should come first and which second. Our thesis is that disarmament and security must progress side by side and hand in hand along the path that was mapped out by all our previous discussions.

In exchange for these guarantees of security which we propose, are the reductions offered of sufficient importance, and do they correspond to the original idea embodied, on April 19th, 1932, in a resolution adopted by the Conference which, in my opinion, itself urged us to seek for fresh guarantees of security?

I have heard and have read among the criticisms of this plan that the main disadvantage of this scheme for disarmament was that it contained no definite and practical proposals for the reduction of armaments.

I make no comment: I merely read.

No substantial reductions in the naval forces of the world, when the plan proposes, in the spirit of Mr. Hoover’s suggestions, that reductions should be effected “in those categories of vessels which have been recognised as the most offensive, by means of the qualitative reduction of the characteristics at present fixed for certain types of war vessels”?

No substantial reductions, when the plan proposes that you should add to these qualitative reductions quantitative reductions under the terms of the Hoover proposal—namely, that “the naval armaments having grown in mutual relation to one another, it will be desirable to look for ‘real and positive’ reductions of tonnage” and that, subject to a special system applicable to fleets whose aggregate tonnage does not exceed 100,000 tons, the uniform percentage of reduction, whatever it may be, shall be accepted by us, provided it is in conformity with the actual existing relativity of tonnages?

No substantial reductions in the air forces of the world, when the plan clearly lays down, as an undertaking which, after all, is only a repetition of the undertaking to which we all subscribed in the resolution of July 23rd, 1932, “all bombardment from the air shall be prohibited and bombing aircraft shall be abolished, under the conditions for which the resolution of July 23rd provides”?

No substantial reductions in armaments in a plan which makes double provision for the reduction of effectives by reducing effectives themselves and reducing the length of service, so that by this double reduction the general term of comparison is finally reached: a massive reduction in the average daily effectives?

I have no need to be convinced of your sincerity and am sure that, in spite of the quantities of papers we have been receiving since the beginning of the Conference, you have all done us the honour of carefully perusing the memorandum submitted to you as a sequel to my oral explanations on November 4th last. If it has been possible to level such a criticism against the plan—a criticism to which I have briefly replied, because in truth the reply was so easy
that it could not be other than brief—that is probably because there emerges from the plan an idea which, as far as we are concerned, goes far beyond the mathematics of reduction. This idea is that the plan does something more than change the labels of the forms of armies or material. It goes further and endeavours to ensure that we shall, at any rate as regards a number of countries in a definite region of the world, establish certain forms of armies which, by their very nature, shall allay a great anxiety manifested in the course of the work of the Conference itself. This may indeed be indicated as its most original outcome, for up to the present the idea had scarcely been mooted, if at all. The idea is that, as regards the reduction of armaments, we must not look merely at the quantity, but also at the quality and offensive potentiality, of arms and armies.

That was why I said at the outset that, just as, in our reiterated and definite affirmation of the necessity connection between security and disarmament, we were not stating anything new but only seeking to redefine and clarify things that had been already stated in the course of our work, so, in our reafirmation and positive proposals for the reduction of armaments, we have endeavoured to disentangle and carry a step further everything which seemed to be already a positive and material result of our long discussions.

I wish to pay a tribute to those delegates of the United States of America and the United Kingdom and Italy and of the other countries which supported this idea, who are the authors of this new and extremely useful concept that, in fact, a distinction should be drawn between offensive and defensive armaments. This idea, useful though it is, must, like all ideas, be brought to fruition, and we have endeavoured to do so in the plan submitted to you, taking several considerations into account, the first of which is obviously this discrimination between offensive and defensive. This special regime—the prohibition, as some would prefer, though we ourselves prefer internationalisation—should apply to powerful armaments, the offensive capacity of which is particularly great and which may consequently favour aggression by breaking down the material or moral resistance of the country attacked. Clearly, this regime is of no use unless it is applied in every sphere: sea, land and air. There is obviously no reason why its application should be restricted to land armaments, to the exclusion of naval armaments. The concept is only true if it is applied to armaments in every form.

Another point is that, if we are to achieve practical and equitable results, we must rid ourselves of one of the most dangerous, and at the same time most false, conceptions in the world—namely, that war can be humanised and that while some material is open to condemnation other material is blameless. The cruelty of war does not vary according to the perfection of material. I have already had the honour to make this statement in this assembly. This phrase returns to my lips naturally, as it returns to the lips of all others who have pronounced it: it is no more humane to prevent human bodies being hewn to pieces by material cast forth by powerful implements than by hand-grenades or even dirks.

If the idea is to be pursued, we must analyse it in a spirit of greater objectivity. We must endeavour— it is not easy, but it is possible—to determine what, among naval, land and air material, facilitates aggression and is basically powerful and offensive and is (as I said just now) intended to break down the material and moral resistance of the defendant.

Our technical experts have discussed these matters at great length. We do not think that they have, in spite of the praiseworthy efforts of our colleagues who presided over their work, been able to reach very definite results. I feel that, although the advice of technical experts may be indispensable, it is the statesmen who, in the last resort, will have to take decisions. As regards offensive or defensive material, when with much difficulty the characteristics of each have been defined, these definitions will have to be interpreted and this can only be contemplated as part of a political hypothesis. Certain material which could, owing to its powerful nature, be used for aggression becomes perfectly legitimate in the hands of the victim of an aggression, and must, in fact, be supplied to the victim if, by misfortune, the aggressor becomes installed in his territory.

How then can we discriminate? What, after all our efforts, remains which is tangible, cogent and objective? This: there do exist implements of war so powerful that they can break up defensive organisations. It is the great merit of the observations which Mr. Gibson put forward in support of the American proposal that they did bring out quite clearly the idea that our efforts should be concentrated on such implements as were intended, and intended solely, to ensure a victorious offensive. The idea is equally true if it is applied to permanent fixed organisations. It is indeed sufficiently evident that every implement on sea or land which can be used to destroy permanent peace organisations does thereby possess an aggressive potentiality against which we should be on our guard. Nothing is easier than discrimination along these lines, and I think that this is one of the points which we should deem to have been established in the course of our discussions.

But if we are prepared to go further (and we must go further) and are prepared to regard as powerful implements which should be the subject of special provisions—prohibition some say, internationalisation we say—not only all material capable of destroying permanent fixed organisations, in a word, fortifications on land or at sea, but also all material capable of destroying defensive organisations created on the field of battle, we shall be faced with a serious problem which, if I may say so, you will only be able to solve by accepting the proposals for the internationalisation of such material put forward in the French plan. Then—and this brings us back to the political problem—we must be quite sure that aggression is not possible, that the system of security established is sufficiently strong and sufficiently rapid in its action to ensure that no country shall ever run the risk of seeing the circle of defences which it has been able to set up broken through. We must be quite sure
that no country will ever run the risk of having an invader instal himself in its territory and
take possession of those defensive organisations which (as the experience of all has shown),
can subsequently be destroyed only by the most powerful weapons. The problem
then is this: is it possible to provide the various countries with an organisation of
security which will afford them that certitude? This appears to be a very difficult result to
obtain, because even the application of the political measures we advocate and their
immediate entry into action cannot immediately produce the desired result and preclude
aggression in every case. Do you think, then, that countries will agree to forego
volumes of material that may be their only means of driving forth the enemy installed in their
territory, unless they are assured that the material taken from them still exists and is
available somewhere under the protection and supervision of the League, to be placed in
fact at the disposal of the victim of aggression and invasion?
But let us reflect. We are tenaciously endeavouring to build up a system under which,
in case of aggression, effective aid will be given to the party attacked, because that is the very
aim of the League of Nations. To this effect, we have created a system of financial assistance.
Well, then, is there not an obvious contradiction between our endeavours to secure effective
aid, which is the whole object of the League of Nations, and the destruction of material which
already exists, instead of placing that material at the disposal of the League?
Financial assistance and at the same time destruction of material—I am not referring to
material which, it has been decided, shall be banned, because it is capable of destroying
permanent organisations, but the destruction of the material which a country requires to
free itself from a temporarily and partially successful invasion: the destruction of such
material on the one hand and financial assistance on the other? Is the country thus attacked
to be supplied with money in order that it may endeavour to free itself from the invader?
Is it to be supplied with money, and are factories and workshops to strain their nerves to
reconstruct, at great cost, the necessary material which is at present in existence and which it
would be sufficient for the League of Nations to take over, if it had a little confidence in itself
and really desired to fulfil the rôle entrusted to it?
That is why, in our plan, though we entirely accept discrimination between implements
of war and accept qualitative reductions, we have also proposed the internationalisation of
material.
This line of reasoning is still more obvious and cogent in the case of aviation. I pointed
out to you just now, briefly, that the French plan endorsed the undertaking which we agreed
upon on July 23rd last. This is another definite resolution of the Conference, which proves
that, in spite of our slowness and the difficulties encountered, we nevertheless achieved
certain results that are not negligible when regarded as a whole.
I told you that the French plan specifically contained the undertaking of July 23rd,—the abolition of air bombardment and bombing aircraft. Here I again find the valuable
support of M. Lange, to whose speech I listened yesterday. It is impossible not to see that it
is precisely in the matter of aviation, and by the constitution of forces that can be organised
on international lines, that the taking-over of the organisation of general security by the
League should begin. As he rightly said, it is in this respect, materially and even morally,
that this form of international action is the most practical, owing to the extreme mobility
of the material, and owing to the very psychology of those who man the machines, and whose
international contact ensures that they are better fitted than any other men to be the soldiers
of the law and the League of Nations.
Such are the ideas of the French plan in regard to material and qualitative disarmament,
and such is our justification of them. We have gone further, however, by taking
into consideration two ideas that have emerged in the course of our work. The first arises out
of the extension of this qualitative conception to the forms of armies themselves. The second
is that, if we could not act on those lines, we could not find an equitable solution for that
problem of effective aid which was raised so clearly by the American proposal. In regard to
that reduction of effective, which was obviously to be one of the important parts of the future
Convention, the Effectives Committee, as soon as it got to work, found that, in the existing
diversity of forces, in their origin, their method of recruiting, their period of service, their
character—whether exclusively military, or partly military and partly civilian, according
to the organisations and countries concerned—it was impossible to arrive at equitable comparis-
sons, and hence at equitable reductions, without establishing equivalences and coefficients,
which, it is not unfair to anyone to say, the Effectives Committee found to be useless. From
the military standpoint, it is very difficult to decide what is the value of a soldier
whose period of service is so much, and what is the value of another soldier. It is impossible
to make comparisons, and consequently reductions, unless we can find some equivalences
that have not been found as yet, and unless we can arrive at one for the world as a whole, but for
a certain number of nations for which the problem of land effective is a particularly pressing
one—at a preliminary standardisation of systems, on which we can then base consistent reductions.
I am coming to this idea for the first time—I shall return to it shortly—and I must touch
upon the criticism that has been levelled at the French plan on the ground of its diversity,
and thereby we do not apply the same system and the same obligations to different parts of
the world and to different nations. That is inevitable if we are to do any practical work.
In the naval sphere, we have witnessed extremely valuable efforts and concrete results, because
it is the chief naval Powers alone that have endeavoured to conclude these agreements among
themselves. Why, I ask you, should we reject the idea of special agreements on the subject
of land forces among a number of nations for which that question is of special importance?
come to a point when we can no longer conceal our true intentions from one another. We must make our choice.

I quite realise that, as in the case of material, these are not absolute conceptions, and we cannot say that any particular form of army is purely defensive or purely offensive. But, as in the case of material, in all our decisions, we are in the domain of complexity and relativity. In order to make a choice, we must take our stand on a mass of considerations, and decide which of them should prevail over the others.

M. Politis has defined the basis of this choice in a speech which was the more moving because he linked the conception he was putting before you with a great man, now dead, whom all must honour and regret, for it was he, perhaps, who saw from the furthest distance the approach of the catastrophe which broke upon the world, and which he would have desired to avoid. M. Politis told you the reasons, and I need not return to them for they are those that have inspired the French plan—why, since comparison and reduction involve choice, that choice should beyond question fall upon armies with short-term service. Slow to mobilise, slow to be brought into action—the slower in proportion to their nearness to the militia form—they have the advantage (an essential point in the work on which we are engaged) of giving some hope that the procedures of the League may be conducted without the League’s being confronted by any fait accompli brought about by a coup de force. There is no doubt that, just as there are weapons better suited than others for adventures, coups de force, and sudden attacks, so there are forms of army which, I will not venture to say are intended for such purposes, but which are better suited to be used for those purposes if desired. Professional armies are better suited to rapid attacks, to coups de force, to adventures, than those short-term armies taken from the heart of the nation, who are called up for periods of training, who then return to their homes, and who, before they can again become armies, must be mobilised and trained over again. That very slowness which, from the strictly military standpoint, is a drawback, is a guarantee, for the chances of success of our peaceful procedures, that we cannot afford to neglect. I repeat that the idea emerged, in the course of our previous work, that we could not arrive at any consistent reductions of effectives unless we could reduce the various forms of army to a standard type.

This, of course implies that, when the choice has been made between the professional army and the short-term service army, there must be either the one or the other, and not both—the forces peculiar to nations which have to maintain order in great colonial empires being disregarded, as they very rightly were in the United States proposal. This condition consequently involves stages, which it will be extremely difficult to determine.

The French plan seeks to lay down principles corresponding to the determination of these stages. The further details necessary will emerge during the study of the plan, if you so decide. But it is obvious—and this brings me to the third part of my explanations—that such standardisations, such transformations, which I am profoundly convinced will ultimately contribute greatly to the maintenance of peace, cannot be accomplished without an atmosphere of security and guarantees of security.

I come back again to my starting-point. What are the criticisms that have been levelled against the French plan on this point? They are those very criticisms that ought to be levelled against all the decisions of the Assemblies and Committees of the League since 1925, since the date when the Protocol, following the Treaty of Mutual Assistance, was rejected.

We are asked: how are systems of security to be established, how can you limit to one part of the world, to Europe, and not even to the whole of Europe, an organisation that you believe to be salutary and necessary? Are we not here to establish rules common to all and equal for all?

Gentlemen, we must understand one another. If, when those great general instruments, the Treaty of Mutual Assistance and the Protocol, were proposed, it was argued that universal legislation was impossible, it is not right that, when we begin to move along the line laid down by our own Committees and by our own Assemblies, a plan that proposes to take account of these necessary elasticities and of these diversities of historical and geographical origin should meet with the answer that universality is preferable. That would truly be a Penelope’s web at the far end of which we should never see the ships of Ulysses return or appear. M. Politis reminded us the day before yesterday that the French plan was following exactly the line traced by our earlier work.

Allow me to say—and excuse me if I speak with complete frankness—that we have come to a point when we can no longer conceal our true intentions from one another. We must make our choice.
Seeing that, since 1925, the League, finding to its regret that, whereas it aims at universal-
salitv, which is the source both of its sorrows and of its greatness, the diversity of countries is such
that the same rules cannot be applied to the whole world or even to a whole tract of it, since,
as I have attempted to show, we cannot, we have no right to, seek to effect the large reduc-
tions of armaments that we defined as our ultimate goal in our resolution of April 19th unless we can
find and establish new ideas of security, where is the possibility of those large reductions except
in regional agreements?

This, of course, applies primarily to Europe. We must, I fear, apologise to all our colleagues
from other continents or countries. It is so often necessary to talk of Europe when talking
of security! Since Europe is seeking security, what arguments can relieve her of the necessity
of beginning by establishing it on her own account?

Wake up, Europe! Instead of asking the four quarters of the globe for the guarantees
you need, can you not find them in yourself? When we have made that effort, perhaps we
shall be justified in asking others to supplement it. That is the idea of the French plan.

The European continental pact is only possible with the full sympathy of that great
nation which, though closely linked with Europe, is at the same time, with its vast colonial
empire, with its dominions, inter-continental. That full sympathy, that encouragement, has
been extended to us by the delegate of the United Kingdom. Once established, of course,
the European pact will operate within the Covenant of the League, which will retain all its
binding force.

We cannot neglect the fact that we have here before us great nations which are not
Members of the League, and which are bound by that great instrument—not sufficiently
legal for my taste, but of high moral value—which is called the Pact of Paris, or, if you prefer
to attach to it names that are dear to you, the Briand-Kellogg Pact.

While the French plan requires in the first instance an effort to establish European pacts
of mutual assistance, it does not contemplate them independently of such general obligations
as derive from other pacts and should, in our view, be made more specific if they are to assume
their full value.

The Briand-Kellogg Pact is the outlawry of war—a magnificent major excommunication.
But what if someone none the less makes war—if someone resorts to force? We must not
leave this Conference without having agreed, all of us, on the fact that such an excommunication
will after all involve, in financial, economic and commercial relations, consequences which,
if accepted, would give the entire world a higher standard of security.

I am always very cautious in making use of any particular act in the domestic policy of
other countries, and I am specially careful to refrain from interpreting such acts. At the same
time, I cannot help feeling that during these last few months, by a message from the President
of the United States to Congress, by the ensuing report by Senator Borah and the motion that
was the outcome, and by a recent letter in January last from the Secretary of State to Peru,
these ideas which I am merely outlining seem to have taken, if not substance, at all events a
direction that offers us some hopes. I will also mention the extremely valuable support that
this idea received the other day from the delegate of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.
I attach great importance to this acceptance of the general consultative pact, the natural
corollary of the Briand-Kellogg Pact which, hitherto, had only moral force, and the legal
consequences of which we are now trying to establish.

Thus we are not in the domain of chimeras. We certainly are in the domain of difficulty
—of extreme difficulty. The fact remains that, in connection with this general consultative
pact—the most comprehensive of the three pacts we have contemplated—the French plan has
endeavoured to take into consideration everything that has been accomplished, and
not to build upon uncertainty and an unforeseeable future. I would ask you to bear this idea
in mind when you judge and decide upon our plan.

I shall have ended when I have answered, in connection with this political organisation,
and more especially with the European pact, the last two objections which, if I remember
rightly, have been raised against it. The first was that its basis for determining the operation
of mutual assistance was not the unanimous decision of the Council, but a majority decision.
I think it was the representative of the Netherlands who raised this objection, and said that
we were running counter to the principles of the Covenant, which in this matter may be regarded
as the guarantee of the sovereignty of the nations belonging to the League.

I may be allowed to reply that, if, in accordance with the previous resolutions which I
read at the beginning of my explanations, we are contemplating more specific pacts, the
intention is obviously to strengthen the obligations under the Covenant. What we are
contemplating is that the nations of continental Europe, or, as M. Beneš and M. Politis suggest,
a certain number of them, shall conclude—as they were invited to do in 1925 by Sir Austen
Chamberlain, in 1926 by the Assembly, in 1927 by the Assembly, and in 1928 by the
Assembly, regional agreements designed to secure, within the Covenant, more precise
application of its provisions. So far from departing from the principles of the League,
they will surely be strengthening those principles where they need to be strengthened,
because it is at that point that a more pressing need of security is being felt.
The other objection, which I so often hear expressed in this Conference, is this: the outcome, the object, the aim, of this pact is to operate in the event of aggression. But where is the aggressor? And how difficult it is to define the aggressor!

I have always been struck by this difficulty of designating the aggressor, which seems to be regarded as insuperable. These discussions about aggression remind me somewhat of that character of Molière's who argues the question whether one should say "la forme d'un chapeau" or "la figure d'un chapeau". It seems to me that, at all events when there is a concrete case, the aggressor generally reveals himself so plainly that, if we really wish to do so, we can always name him. Here again—and I should like to emphasise this support—M. Litvinoff has contributed certain specific points, some of which coincide with the actual definition of the aggressor given in the French plan. I quite understand that in that list of cases of aggression he has attempted to plant a few arrows in the hide of the capitalist States. That is sound warfare. But the fact remains that M. Litvinoff has formulated proposals which, taken as a whole, approach very closely to the actual definition given in the French plan, the most concrete and clear definition—namely, that the aggressor is the country that invades or attacks any other country by sea, by land, or by air.

I agree that there are difficulties; but they are not insuperable. Do at least believe that they are no more insuperable than the difficulties that would arise for certain countries in regard to effective and material, and would result, should you refuse to move in this direction of new forms of security, from the obligation that would be incumbent upon those countries to disorganise completely their own defence forces without being given any form of international security.

The President declared closed the general discussion on the memorandum by the French delegation.

67. DEATH OF COUNT APPONYI, FIRST DELEGATE OF HUNGARY: MESSAGE OF SYMPATHY ADDRESSED TO COUNTESS APPONYI.

The President read the following letter he had sent to the Countess Apponyi:

"It is with the deepest sorrow that the General Commission of the Disarmament Conference has heard of the death of Count Apponyi.

"On behalf of this Commission, I send you our deepest sympathy in this irreparable loss—irreparable, not only to yourself and the Count's family and personal friends, but also to all of us and to the world at large.

(Signed) Arthur Henderson,
President."

He had received the following reply:

"In my own name and in the name of my family, I send you my heartfelt thanks for the words of true sympathy you sent me, and request you to transmit our best thanks to the members of the General Commission of the Disarmament Conference, with whom my husband was so happy to work in preparing peaceful future days in a war-free world.

(Signed) Clotilde Apponyi."

THIRTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held on Monday, February 13th, 1933, at 3.30 p.m.

President: The Right Honourable A. Henderson

68. PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL COMMISSION: RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE BUREAU.

The President reported that, on the conclusion of the debate on the French plan, the Bureau had met to consider the agenda for the General Commission. The draft proposals of the United Kingdom delegation had formed the basis of a discussion which had lasted for two meetings. The Bureau had agreed to recommend to the General Commission that the Political Commission should consider the United Kingdom proposals and all other proposals relating to security. As regards Head B of Chapter II of the United Kingdom proposals,
relating to disarmament, the Bureau had decided to recommend to the General Commission that the latter should itself consider the various points enumerated therein, as well as any other points on disarmament which the delegates might wish the General Commission to consider.

The President thought it right to state that the Italian delegation had made an express reservation with regard to the order in which these questions should be considered, as it would like the General Commission to discuss first the question of land war material. The German delegation, while sharing the Italian delegation's view on this matter, felt that, in practice, the General Commission would probably refer the question of effectives to the Committee on Effectives, and thereupon be in a position to take up itself the question of land war material.

It would be for the General Commission to decide whether it would itself examine the questions in the order set forth in the United Kingdom proposals, or refer some of them—as, for instance, the question of effectives—with such terms of reference as it might deem advisable, to committees.

It had been pointed out by certain delegations that the list of items included in the United Kingdom proposals did not contain certain questions, as, for instance, the trade in and private and State manufacture of arms and implements of war, the limitation of national defence expenditure, supervision, and chemical and bacterial warfare. The President would recall what he had already said in the Bureau, that these questions had not and could not be forgotten. The General Commission would remember that they had been specifically mentioned in its resolution of July 23rd, 1932, and referred to the relevant Commissions. Two of them—supervision and chemical and bacterial warfare—had been almost completely examined, to the extent that the General Commission might in due course receive draft texts on those two questions. The question of the trade in and private and State manufacture of arms was at present being dealt with by a special Committee, in accordance with the resolution of July 23rd, 1932. The position was the same as regards the question of national expenditure on armaments, which had been studied with almost no interruption by the Commission on National Defence Expenditure from the very beginning, and especially by its Technical Sub-Committee, as, indeed, the President had had occasion to remind the General Commission at its last meeting in December.

To sum up, on the questions of supervision and chemical and bacterial warfare the Commission would before long receive draft articles for consideration, while on national defence expenditure and trade in and manufacture of arms the competent Committees were still at work, and, as soon as this work was finished, they would no doubt present their reports to the General Commission.

It ought not, therefore, to be concluded that the total absence of any mention in the United Kingdom proposals of the four items to which he had referred and of the question of moral disarmament was any indication that those questions had either been forgotten or dropped.

In conclusion, therefore, the President submitted the two following recommendations by the Bureau:

The General Commission is asked:
(1) To agree to the recommendation of the Bureau to send forthwith to the Political Commission Head A of Chapter II of the United Kingdom proposals and, in general, questions relating to security;
(2) To agree to the Bureau's recommendation that the General Commission should itself take up, in the order in which they appear, the questions relating to disarmament appearing under Head B of Chapter II of the United Kingdom proposals.

The first of the Bureau's recommendations was adopted.

The President pointed out that the second recommendation was that the General Commission should study the questions in the United Kingdom proposals under the heading "Disarmament". The questions included were "Effectives", "Land War Material", "Air", and "Naval Forces".

M. NADOLNY (Germany) recalled that the Italian and German delegations had proposed to change the order in which the two questions to be examined by the General Commission should be considered. If this suggestion were accepted, the General Commission would examine first Chapter II, B (b), that was to say, the question of land war material—and would refer the question of effectives to the Committee on Effectives.

It would be remembered that it was precisely this question of material—the question of the abolition of offensive arms—which had occupied the Conference's attention from the outset. The Commission would remember the proposals which had been made in this connection and the timely initiative of certain Powers. To quote only one instance: the proposal submitted by Mr. Gibson on behalf of the United States of America said 1:

"The General Commission believes that the abolition of aggressive weapons would constitute a first and essential requisite, not only for the reduction of armaments, but for the establishment of security, etc. . . ."

1 See Minutes of the General Commission, Volume I, page 41.
He further had in mind the resolutions which the General Commission had adopted in April 1932, to the effect that the Conference should first examine qualitative disarmament—that was to say, the abolition of aggressive arms. It was held that this might lead the Conference to take a first decisive step which would demonstrate to the world that all its members were firmly resolved to achieve a positive result in the domain of the reduction of armaments.

Finally, the Commission would recall that the resolution of July 23rd, 1932, adopted after so much effort, noted the fact that it was in the domain of qualitative disarmament, that was to say, in the domain of the abolition of aggressive weapons—that the Conference had obtained some results. This should be the first phase of the Conference's work. The second phase would be the examination of the question of effectives, on the basis of President Hoover's proposal.

It was for these reasons that the Italian and German delegations had proposed, when the Bureau had discussed the order in which these questions (i.e., material and effectives, respectively) should be dealt with, that the question of material should be taken first, because in this sphere certain results had already been obtained, and because it might be possible to reach decisions which would prove that the Conference was indeed working along positive lines and was not for ever changing its methods.

The United Kingdom programme expressly laid down, in connection with effectives, that the Committee on Effectives should be instructed to submit, within a definite time-limit, recommendations concerning the manner in which the forces necessary to ensure internal security should be calculated. First of all, then, a special committee should be appointed to examine these questions and submit practical recommendations to the Conference in as short a time as possible.

He thought it extremely desirable that the Commission should follow the order proposed by the two delegations in question—namely, to refer the question of effectives to the Committee on Effectives, and then to take up immediately the question of material, with regard to which certain decisions might be reached. This field naturally included a variety of different problems. The Commission ought to make up its mind as to the order in which these problems would be examined.

The immediate task was therefore to decide on the terms of reference of the Committee on Effectives. In this connection, the German delegation would submit a few amendments, if this suggestion were adopted. It would be desirable, as the United Kingdom delegate had proposed, to fix a time-limit within which the Committee would be called upon to submit its recommendations to the General Commission. When it had the Committee's recommendations before it, the General Commission could take a decision.

The President reminded the Commission that a recommendation for a programme of work had been received from the Bureau, and it would be for the Commission to decide whether to accept that recommendation. If it did so, every item contained in the list which he had previously read out would be subject to the Commission's decision as to which had to be discussed first, and M. Nadolny's point would arise then. The President's business at the present juncture, however, was to see whether the Commission accepted the Bureau's recommendation or not. That recommendation was that the Commission itself should deal with all the questions under the heading of "Disarmament" in the United Kingdom proposals. If that were agreed, the Commission would then decide which question should be taken first.

His own idea was that the sooner the question of effectives could be referred to the Committee on Effectives with a proper term of reference the better; and not only with a term of reference, but, as M. Nadolny had said, with a time-limit in which to work. He would say the same with regard to the question of aviation. The sooner that matter was sent to the Air Committee with definite terms of reference and with a time-limit in which to work, the sooner the General Commission would get on with its work.

The President thought that, with the foregoing explanation, the Commission could accept the Bureau's recommendation. Such a decision would not, of course, prevent the Commission from referring any of these questions to any committee which it might care to set up.

The second recommendation of the Bureau was adopted.

69. Question of Effectives.

The President recalled that, in its resolution of July 23rd, 1932, the Commission had dealt with the question of effectives in the following terms:

"A strict limitation and a real reduction of effectives shall be brought about."

"For this purpose, the Conference invites the Bureau to examine, with the collaboration of such delegations as it considers necessary, the proposal of President Hoover relating to effectives. These studies should take into consideration, in the case of each country, the actual conditions of defence and the number and character of its forces."

In pursuance of the foregoing resolution, the Bureau had, on September 22nd, 1932, decided that the question of effectives should be considered by a special committee consisting of Government delegates. The Special Committee had decided to take as a basis for its work the division of

1 See Minutes of the seventeenth meeting of the Bureau.
The Special Committee had also appointed a Colonial Sub-Committee to consider what factors should be taken into consideration in the determination of the coefficients to be applied in the case of overseas forces. This Sub-Committee had so far been unable to reach an agreement.

That was the present position of the question of effectives.

The German delegation, which had taken no part in the work of the Committee or its Sub-Committees since the resumption of work last September, having returned to the Conference, it was desirable to give a new impetus to this question in order to achieve concrete results.

The President accordingly invited the Commission to decide whether it desired to engage on a preliminary discussion of the question of effectives or to refer it immediately to the Committee on Effectives, in accordance with the proposal made by the United Kingdom, accompanied by some terms of reference and instructions to report within a specified time-limit.

Mr. Eden (United Kingdom) moved that the Commission should send to the Committee on Effectives the terms of reference given in the United Kingdom Government's programme of work, with instructions to consider them and report within a term of, say, twenty-one days.

The President said that the terms of reference to which Mr. Eden had referred were as follows:

"(i) In accordance with the plan for the calculation of land forces contained in the proposals of President Hoover, compute the totals of personnel of the 'police component' (the irreducible component) of the existing land forces of each country, both metropolitan and overseas. For this purpose, it shall instruct the Committee on Effectives to make to it, within twenty-one days, recommendations concerning the ratios to be employed in this calculation. If within that time the Committee on Effectives has been unable to reach a unanimous recommendation, it must report fully to the General Commission the state of its discussions, and it will be for the General Commission to take a definite decision.

(ii) Agree upon the percentage by which the 'defence component' (the excess over the 'police component') of each State shall be reduced, such reduction to be effected by a certain date or dates to be specified.

(iii) Determine the stages and methods by which continental European armies may be brought into harmony with the general type of organisation adopted (see I (5)). For the discussion of this point, the General Commission may require the Committee on Effectives to submit recommendations."

M. Paul-Boncour (France) thought it should be clearly realised that, under the external form of procedure, what actually was at stake was the substance of the respective views of the various delegations.

It was suggested that the question of effectives should be referred back to a committee or sub-committee which, in spite of a diligence that had earned the praise of all, had been obliged to note that, until certain questions of principle were settled, it could not possibly put forward any definite proposals.

There could be no doubt that certain delegations, which were inclined to favour the idea of simply handing over the question of effectives to the Committee on Effectives, believed that in this way the ground would immediately be cleared so that the General Commission would itself be able to attack the problem of material, because—it was alleged—this question was so much more mature, so much further advanced, than the question of effectives that it would be possible in this sphere to reach speedy and clear solutions, acceptable to all.

He felt bound to submit one fundamental consideration on this point. He, like M. Nadolny, was very anxious to secure continuity in the work of the Conference. Such continuity was essential to its success. Consequently, in order to decide on one form of procedure rather than another—though this procedure was, as he had said, merely the exterior, the figment covering a much more important reality composed of the various concepts of substance—he would look at matters exactly as they stood—i.e., what had been agreed upon and what had not been agreed upon, because it was admitted that certain points had been agreed upon which were by no means negligible and would amount, as soon as one or two further definitions (but

important definitions) had been decided upon, to a first result, to the accomplishment of
a first satisfactory stage.

In the matter of the points already accepted, taking for instance the question of effectives
—and the President had very clearly explained to the General Commission what had been
achieved—he noticed above all that there were queries to be answered and blanks to be filled.

With regard to the question of material, there was the resolution of July 23rd, 1932. That
resolution referred to two subjects: air forces and land forces. The question of air forces had
undoubtedly advanced further than any other part of the Conference's work, and from the
text of the resolution adopted, which formed part of the matters agreed upon, there could be
no doubt that the reciprocal undertaking to abolish air bombardments, the decision reached
that "there shall be effected a limitation by number and a reduction by characteristics of
military aircraft", that "civil aircraft shall be submitted to regulation and full publicity and
that, further, civil aircraft not conforming to the specified limitations shall be subjected
(except for certain regions where such a regime is not suitable) to an international regime such
as to prevent effectively the misuse of such civil aircraft", were subjects which, though not
definitely settled, had already—beyond all doubt—reached such an advanced stage as to
warrant the possibility of a very considerable reduction in air forces. There could be no
objection to carrying this agreement, as soon as possible, one stage further, so that a definite
and extremely satisfactory result might be obtained.

In the matter of land armaments, however, the text read as follows:

"1. All heavy land artillery of calibres between any maximum limit as determined
in the succeeding paragraph and a lower limit to be defined shall be limited in number."

This text clearly showed that the whole problem was to decide what degree of maturity
and definiteness had been reached in this matter. The succeeding paragraph ought to show
that. How did it read?

"2. The limitation of calibre of land artillery shall be fixed by the Convention.

"Subject to an effective method being established to prevent the rapid transformation
of guns on fixed mountings into mobile guns, different maxima for the calibre of land guns
may be fixed as follows:

"(a) A maximum limit for the calibre of coastal guns, which shall not be less
than the maximum calibre of naval guns;

"(b) A maximum limit for the calibre of guns in permanent frontier or fortress
defensive systems;

"(c) A maximum limit for the calibre of mobile land guns (other than guns
employed for coastal defence).

"(b) Tanks.

"The maximum unit tonnage of tanks shall be limited."

Agreed. But the Commission should note that the question was one of maxima—
nothing more. These agreements of principle were extremely interesting, but the whole
discussion would turn on maxima, and, until those maxima had been determined, the
agreements on principle would be of no value.

In his opinion, the question of material was no more advanced than that of effectives.
Their colleague who was best qualified to judge the stage which this question had reached
(since the Conference had rightly relied on him to get into touch with the various delegations
and ascertain the points on which it might be possible to reach an understanding) had twice
made the important statement that he considered a serious, firm and sincere agreement
impossible without the inclusion of some organisation for security and guarantees.

M. Paul-Boncour frankly and definitely adopted the conclusion at which M. Buero had
arrived and assured the Commission that it was impossible for the French delegation to proceed
any further in the matter of material and to state, with that clearness which an agreement
necessitated, that above a given maximum, a given calibre, a given tonnage, there should be
prohibition, destruction or internationalisation.

He was bound to declare, on behalf of his delegation, that he could not supply these
details until it were known what armies would be called upon to utilise this material. He
would beg the Commission, therefore, to have the courage to look at the actual realities of
the situation. Offensive or defensive characteristics were determined by two factors, of which the
first was perhaps not the more important. Obviously the intrinsic nature of the weapon, its
calibre and its tonnage were important, but still more important was the question of the army
which would use it.

The French delegation would be very reluctant to associate itself with enquiries or studies
or attempts at agreement based on a precise definition of the " qualitative " idea—the great
fruit of the work of the Conference, as it had well been called—just when " qualitative "
no longer related to inanimate material but to the armies making use of it. The French
delegation could not agree to that.

His delegation was perfectly ready to give figures, exact figures, in connection with the
important agreements of principle reached on July 23rd, 1932 by which, by the whole of which,
France stood as by any other agreement. It was perfectly prepared, by means of figures, to
confirm these agreements of principle, which would at any rate set a maximum limit and prevent competition in qualitative armaments; but the figures would vary completely according to whether there was or was not a definition of the forms of armies, of the military organisations which would make use of the armaments in question. Hence, while ready to agree to the proposal of the Bureau and to the United Kingdom proposal referring the question of effective to the Committee on Effectives, M. Paul-Boncour did not mean to agree to anything other than was contained in the actual words of the United Kingdom proposal. If, with a desire to reach an understanding, the French delegate had supported the United Kingdom proposal the other day in the Bureau, his support obviously was subject to the condition that the proposal should remain as it was at the time when he accepted it: otherwise the whole discussion would begin over again.

There was one very clear point in the United Kingdom proposal in regard to effectives—he was grateful to the United Kingdom delegation for that—which exactly reproduced one of the essential elements of the French plan, namely, the proposal to fix the stages and methods by which the continental armies of Europe could be brought into line with the general model of organisation adopted. That was an essential point of the French plan; for no one surely would claim to exclude solely the effort made by France, when all the different delegations had been expressly asked to assist the Conference by definite proposals and consistent and constructive plans. Nor, he imagined, would anyone deny that, in the resolution of July 23rd, 1932, it was stated in Part IV, in the clearest possible manner, that the resolution adopted “in no way prejudices the attitude of the Conference towards any more comprehensive measures of disarmament or towards the political proposals submitted by various delegations.” In saying that, he was answering a criticism which had just been made, or at any rate implied, by the German delegate when he said—as well he might—that the Conference must not pass its time in substituting one method of work for another. He begged the German delegate to note that, in so far as the French plan was concerned, the attitude of France had never varied since February 2nd, 1932, and that it was in order to facilitate the work that France, associating with the problems of disarmament certain questions of principle which were of a political character and, as such, extremely delicate in themselves, had agreed to the postponement of the discussion. But France had never agreed to forgo the discussion.

When, in November last, the French delegation brought forward its plan, it was not to induce the Conference to follow a different path from that followed up to that time. It was in compliance with the wish expressed by the Conference itself that the plan was introduced, in order to combine more closely, on the one hand, the organisation of security which had always, from the first day of the Conference, been one of the intentions of the French delegation, and, on the other hand, reductions of armaments, i.e., the counterpart of disarmament—the association of which had not perhaps been sufficiently close in the past—in such a way as to make it quite clear, and to preclude any false assumptions on the point, that the organisation of security might be accompanied by extensive reductions of armaments which were its counterpart.

France had not sought, in so doing, to switch the Conference on to a new track or to cause it to embark on interminable labours. The French delegation had summarised its country’s point of view in formule sufficiently simple to enable the Conference, if it were so desired, to give its opinion very rapidly. Whatever that opinion might be, France would continue to be associated with the work of the Conference. Whatever that opinion might be, France would continue to consider what reductions were possible under present circumstances. The plans she would prepare in the two eventualities would differ. In the one case there would be a maximum of reduction, and in the other a minimum of reduction. But she must know what the answer would be. On so important a matter as the question of material, France was not prepared to make any proposal or to accede to any proposal until she had an answer to the questions she was putting to the Conference and to the General Commission, with the utmost respect and friendliness, but with great firmness.

The United Kingdom delegation had perfectly understood this, and he was grateful to it. It had expressly included in that part of its plan which dealt with effective and the questions which must be referred to the Committee on Effectives a passage which he had read summarising quite clearly and accurately one of the essential points in the French proposals. But, according to the report which the President had just made, the Committee on Effectives found its path blocked by a tangle of difficulties arising out of the infinite variety of so many armies (other than regular armies), which, while not regular armies, were nevertheless important potential forces. Did the General Commission think it possible, under these circumstances, for the Committee on Effectives to take up a question like that, which, if not in its essence political, at any rate concerned the general organisation of peace, and as such was a matter for the General Commission, before the latter had given it the mandate which was necessary to enable it to obtain results.

M. Nadolny (Germany) said that he would first like to know whether he was right in thinking that the only point which remained to be settled was whether the question of effective would be referred to the Committee on Effectives or not. and that the General Commission was not called upon at this stage to discuss the terms of reference which, if necessary, it would transmit to this Committee: if so, the German delegation would like to explain the proposed amendments which it had already submitted to the Commission.

As M. Paul-Boncour had raised this question, he would reply to him briefly. M. Paul-Boncour had said that, in his view, the question of effectives and that of war material were...
submitted this request. The Conference had hitherto followed a different course. Moreover, he 
question of interdependence, had existed since the beginning of the Conference. So far as 
could quite well be taken.

that was to say, the maximum allowed would have to be fixed and any surplus abolished.
of qualitative disarmament would have to be discussed from the point of view of material—
of all necessary to determine what material would be forbidden to all armies. The question
similar examples might be mentioned. But the Commission was not primarily concerned with
ask the Commission first of all to discuss the question of naval forces. A large number of
largely dependent on the reduction of its naval forces, and that country might consequently
to achieve any results. In the case of a given country the reduction of its land forces might be
first the question to which it personally attached the greatest importance, it would be impossible
were a large number of interdependent questions, and, if each State wished to have examined
intended, it would not be possible for him to take a decision in regard to the material itself.

M. Nadolny was aware, this was the first time that the French delegation had asked for the
question of effectives to be discussed before the question of material. Only now had it
submitted this request. The Conference had hitherto followed a different course. Moreover, he
thought it was somewhat exaggerated to go too fully into this matter, as he was certain that in
practice all these questions could be settled much more easily than was supposed. If the
Committee on Effectives were asked to study this question and to submit its recommendations
within a short space of time and if, at the same time, the General Commission discussed the
prohibition of certain material and fixed the figures, he thought that progress would be made
simultaneously in regard to these two points. If, during the discussions, the two points were
found to be interdependent, it would always be possible to discuss them in the General
Commission and to find a solution which would take into account the arguments put forward
by the French delegation. He therefore thought that the proposal made by the United Kingdom
representative was an essentially practical one. According to this proposal, the General
Commission woul at once fix the terms of reference of the Committee on Effectives, which it
would ask to submit recommendations within a relatively short space of time; in the meantime
the General Commission would deal with the question of material, with the exception of the
point raised by M. Paul-Boncour, that was to say, aviation, which in his opinion was of an
urgent nature; this point might consequently be referred to a special committee. He thought
in this way final results could be achieved fairly quickly.

The President, in reply to M. Nadolny's question, said that his idea was that, at the close
of the present discussion, the question of effectives should be referred to the Committee on
Effectives, but it appeared to him that it would be advisable to have some terms of reference to
send to that Committee. A number of amendments to those proposed in the United Kingdom
programme of work had been handed in by the German delegation, and it would not be very
easy to deal with those amendments in so large a body as the General Commission. At the
close of the discussion, therefore, the President was intending to suggest that a small drafting
committee be elected to consider the amendments of the German and any other delegations and
to make recommendations as to what terms of reference should be given to the Committee on
Effectives, including a time-limit. The drafting committee would, he hoped, be able to
report to the General Commission at its next meeting.

Tevfik Rısrı Bey (Turkey) had no intention of opposing the United Kingdom proposal. If
this were acceptable to the majority, his delegation would willingly accede to it. He wished,
however, to submit a proposal resulting from the actual position of his delegation. That
delegation was not represented on the Bureau or on the Committee on Effectives; hence, it was
anxious that essential problems should be discussed in the General Commission.

In addition to this special reason of the Turkish delegation, there was also a reason of
expediency. If, as regards essential problems, the General Commission laid down definite
guiding principles, the task of the Committees to which those questions were referred would be
greatly facilitated and the work would be expedited. It might perhaps be advisable, therefore,
to study a procedure by which the problem of effectives and the problem of war material would
be discussed alternately by the General Commission, which would formulate more or less definite
guiding principles for the Committee on Effectives in regard to questions relating to effectives,
and for any provisional committee which the General Commission might consider it necessary to
set up during the discussion of war material:

M. Nadolny (Germany) thanked the President for his proposal of principle under which the
question of amendments would be settled in a drafting committee which would draw up
the terms of reference of the Committee on Effectives. He fully approved of this proposal.

In view of the explanations given by the Turkish delegate, he hoped that the General
Commission would take into account the special situation of certain States which might possibly be particularly anxious to participate in the work entrusted to this Committee on
which they were not represented.

General Burhardt-Buracki (Poland) said that, since it was proposed to lay down guiding principles for the Committee on Effectives, he thought it essential to make it quite clear that the recommendations of that Committee could not, in the Polish delegation's opinion, conflict with existing legal obligations, as the Committee had no political powers, which were exclusively reserved for the General Commission. The Polish delegation reserved the right to define its attitude towards the work of the Committee on Effectives in the General Commission in due course.

M. Beneš (Czechoslovakia), Rapporteur, felt obliged to express certain doubts as to the satisfactory progress of the work, and wished to submit the following consideration to the General Commission. If the General Commission decided that important questions, such as the question with which it was then dealing, should be referred to the Committee on Effectives, he thought it absolutely essential to give that Committee general instructions and to take decisions of principle to enable it to do its work.

As regards the third question in the chapter of the United Kingdom proposal dealing with effectives—"Determine the stages and methods by which European continental armies may be brought into harmony with the general type of organisation adopted . . ."—it was absolutely essential for the General Commission to decide this question of principle; otherwise the Committee on Effectives would not be able to do anything in the matter.

Moreover, he thought that the time had now come for the General Commission to take decisions of principle, not only in this connection, but also in regard to material. The Committees must be told what they had to do. Only in this way could results be achieved.

M. de Madariaga (Spain) pointed out that the idea expressed by the Turkish representative had now been taken up by the Rapporteur-General. In the matter of disarmament, ever since 1921, questions had been constantly referred from one Commission to another.

He fully agreed with M. Beneš that the time had come for the General Commission to shoulder its responsibilities. He had himself approved the reference of Head A of Chapter II of the United Kingdom proposal to the Political Commission because he considered that the Political Commission had similar powers to the General Commission; there was no harm in doing this, as the former Commission was practically a plenary commission. But he would be very reluctant to adopt a procedure whereby all questions not adequately settled in the General Commission would be referred to Committees which would be absolutely incapable of working on them, because the General Commission had not decided certain questions of principle. The result would be that those Committees would send back to the General Commission reports, if any, in which there would be evidence of disagreement and difficulties. The general impression would be that technical difficulties had arisen.

For his part, he wished to state frankly that, as a result of his already lengthy experience of disarmament, he had reached the conclusion that there were no technical difficulties in regard to any question of disarmament; there were only political difficulties. Those political difficulties should therefore be settled in the General Commission, and should therefore be dealt with as lucidly, precisely and energetically as possible.

As regards the application of these general ideas which, moreover, he proposed to develop also in regard to the material of air forces and more especially of naval forces, and in regard to all questions which might arise in connection with the problem under discussion, he suggested the following solution: a draft text laying down the terms of reference of the Committee on Effectives should be prepared and submitted to the next meeting of the General Commission. It should be discussed by the latter and should be drawn up in such a way as to compel the delegations to pronounce definitely upon each question of principle concerning effectives: the precise aims of the General Commission would thus be known. In this way, the Committee on Effectives would be able to work speedily and effectively.

He had prepared a text proposing that this question should be dealt with by the Bureau of the General Commission, though he had no objection to the appointment of a larger drafting committee. This text read as follows:

"The General Commission invites the Bureau to submit to it draft terms of reference for the Committee on Effectives, in which the questions of principle raised by the resolution of July 23rd, 1932, the French plan and other proposals before it will be formulated sufficiently clearly to enable the General Commission, if it accepts the Bureau's draft with or without amendments, to pronounce upon all those questions before referring them to the Committee on Effectives."

"The authors of the proposals are invited to co-operate with the Bureau of the Commission in framing these draft terms of reference."

M. Antoniade (Roumania), after the observations of M. Beneš and M. de Madariaga, would confine himself to saying that the Roumanian delegation would be prepared to agree to the reference of the question of effectives to the Special Committee, if it were certain that the fact of this reference would provide this Committee with the necessary guidance for attaining the aim which would be assigned to it. But, according to past experience, and according to what M. Buero had repeatedly said, that was not the case.
As everyone knew, the question of effectives was dominated by the question of the organization of a general type of army. On this point, there was a special proposal in the French plan, and, if the Committee on Effectives was to pronounce on the questions which were to be referred to it, it could not usefully do so before this question of principle had been settled. It seemed to M. Antoniade that for this question, as for all the others mentioned by M. de Madariaga, it was absolutely necessary that definite directions should be given, and the only authority able to give such directions was the General Commission. To avoid any loss of time and the continual reference of questions from one Committee to another, the Roumanian delegation was of opinion that the question of principle which governed the whole subject of effectives should first be settled, and the matter then referred to the Special Committee with detailed instructions.

Mr. EDEN (United Kingdom) said that he had listened with great interest to the proposals of M. de Madariaga and the Rapporteur-General, and they did not seem to him to diverge in any essential degree from those which the President had already put before the General Commission. He agreed with M. de Madariaga that it was of the first importance that the instructions received by the Committee on Effectives should be clear and precise, so that the Committee might know exactly what work it had to do and do it as quickly as possible. It was for that purpose, however, as Mr. Eden understood it, that the President had proposed the drafting committee. The drafting committee would take the text submitted by the United Kingdom delegation, improve on it if it could, examine the amendments proposed in relation to it, and then put before the General Commission at its next meeting the issues of principle, whatever they might be, which it found that the Commission must decide. The latter could then decide them and let the Committee on Effectives get to work. That seemed to Mr. Eden to be the correct procedure; he thought it was a good one and that it could not be begun too soon.

M. MOTTA (Switzerland) entirely agreed with Mr. Eden's proposal.

M. DE MASIREVICH (Hungary) thought that, as regards the order of discussion of the sub-headings of Head B, it would be preferable, in principle, to examine first of all the question of the qualitative limitation of material. He believed that this question had been considered as the most important during the first stage of the Conference and all the technical aspects had been sufficiently cleared up during the debates in the Technical Commissions. The question of effectives was certainly also a very important one. Nevertheless, the discussion of this point should not take precedence over and delay the debates on qualitative limitation. For this reason, the Hungarian delegation supported the suggestion that these two points, material and effectives, should be discussed simultaneously in the General Commission and in the Committee on Effectives respectively.

This did not mean that the General Commission should not give detailed instructions to the Committee on Effectives, but the discussion of the question of material should not be delayed by any other consideration.

The President asked whether, in view of Mr. Eden's statement, M. de Madariaga still maintained his draft.

M. DE MADARIAGA (Spain) replied that he was entirely in the hands of the Commission, but he thought that, although that went without saying, it would nevertheless be better to say it.

The President, after recalling the terms of M. de Madariaga's motion, observed that Mr. Eden had also proposed that the matter be referred to a drafting committee which would take into consideration the various suggestions made, including all the amendments submitted in the name of M. Nadolny. There was not very much difference between these two suggestions, and the President therefore hoped that M. de Madariaga would agree that the whole matter be sent to a drafting committee.

M. DE MADARIAGA (Spain) wished to make it quite clear that the drafting committee would have as its main task the drafting of a text which would enable the General Commission to take decisions of principle. If that was understood, he did not insist upon his own text being taken into consideration.

The President thought that both Mr. Eden and M. Beneš had stressed that point. Everyone was anxious to get on with the work, and the Committee on Effectives must be given definite decisions with regard to principle. He took it that, on that understanding, M. de Madariaga agreed to his proposal for a drafting committee.

The proposal of the President was adopted.

On the proposal of the President, it was decided that the Drafting Committee should be composed of the representatives of Czechoslovakia, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the United States of America, with M. Politis, Vice-President of the General Commission, as Chairman.
Mr. EDEN (United Kingdom) suggested that, if the report from the Drafting Committee was not ready, there should be a meeting of the Air Committee. He felt sure there was general agreement in the General Commission that the Air Committee, which had a great deal of work to do, should be got going as soon as possible.

M. NADOLNY (Germany) considered that the United Kingdom representative's proposal was a very practical one and was in keeping with the German delegation's wish to facilitate the work of the Conference as much as possible. He had no objection to referring the question of aviation to a Special Committee. Nevertheless there was a question of principle on which the General Commission would first of all have to take a decision—namely, whether military aviation should be completely abolished or not. On the decision regarding this question all the rest depended.

The PRESIDENT asked whether Mr. Eden could assist the Commission by circulating draft terms of reference which might be discussed by the General Commission at its next meeting, if the Drafting Committee was not in a position to report by then. In that event, the Commission could discuss the question of principle.

Mr. EDEN (United Kingdom) intimated his assent to the President's suggestion.

The PRESIDENT said that, in that case, the Commission could discuss what line could be taken with regard to the air forces.

The General Commission agreed with the President's suggestions.

THIRTY-FIFTH MEETING

Held on Thursday, February 16th, 1933, at 3.30 p.m.

President: The Right Honourable A. HENDERSON.

71. AIR QUESTIONS : PROPOSAL BY THE UNITED KINGDOM DELEGATION.

Mr. EDEN (United Kingdom) presented the following draft proposal:

"The United Kingdom delegation proposes that the General Commission decide to constitute a committee of representatives of the principal air Powers with the following terms of reference:

"'To examine the possibility of the entire abolition of military and naval machines and of bombing from the air, combined with an effective international control of civil aviation.'"

Commenting on his proposal, Mr. Eden said that the members of the General Commission would be in agreement that the progress of work of the Conference had brought out both the importance and the extreme complexity of the problems of air disarmament. Yet there could be no doubt that there was no element in respect of which the general public, more particularly of great cities, viewed the progress of modern science and the skill of modern engineering with more concern. The progress of the Conference's work had also made plain that this problem could not effectively be studied in one of its aspects alone. The problems of naval and military aviation could not be fully solved, unless some solution could be found for those of civil aviation also.

The terms of reference for the special air committee submitted by the United Kingdom delegation contemplated a procedure that was merely designed to give effect to the proposal first put before the Bureau by Sir John Simon in all its details and conditions on November 17th, 1932. The immediate purpose of the committee of representatives of air Powers which the United Kingdom delegation had in mind was to determine whether any practical and effective system for the international control of civil aviation could be agreed upon and universally applied, in order to facilitate further decisions of the Conference upon the possibility of abolishing air armaments and of thus removing the menace of bombing from the air. These three questions were, in Mr. Eden's view, interdependent, and His Majesty's Government

2 See Minutes of the Bureau of the Conference, page 93.
considered that they should forthwith be fully and openly discussed in order to determine whether an agreed solution could be found. When the General Commission was in possession of the results of this examination, which he trusted would be speedy, it would be in a position to take decisions for which at present it lacked the necessary data.

The reason for the suggestion that the committee in question should be made up of representatives of the principal air Powers was the desire to enable the committee, once it was set up, to get on with its work as quickly as possible. If the General Commission wished, it would, of course, be possible to insert some time-limit, although there was none in the draft resolution. It would, Mr. Eden believed, conduce to the speediest results if the committee were no larger than absolutely necessary. He was, moreover, sure that his colleagues would appreciate that it was the air Powers which had, inevitably, specialised knowledge of the difficulties and the complexities of the problem, and by whom the consequent action, if any, must be taken. Nor would the General Commission overlook the fact that it would not, of course, be for the special committee to take decisions; that would be the task of the General Commission, when it was in possession of the results of the committee’s work. The suggestion for the committee of air Powers was therefore only made because it was believed that it would best serve the purpose. He would add that the fact that the terms of reference followed closely the terms of the first part of the air proposals contained in the United Kingdom programme must not be taken as meaning that the second part of these proposals dealing with qualitative and quantitative disarmament was now abandoned.

One word as to the composition of the committee, to which the United Kingdom delegation attached some importance. If the General Commission could agree to set up a committee with some such terms of reference as those proposed, it was not the United Kingdom delegation's idea that the committee should be composed of technical experts. On the contrary, Mr. Eden felt confident that the importance attached to the work of the committee would be more effectively emphasised and the rapid progress of its work more certainly furthered, if members of the Governments concerned were appointed to serve directly upon it.

He believed that one or two members of the General Commission would prefer that the decision as to the desirability of abolishing naval and military aircraft should be taken before the results of the special committee's work were known. Mr. Eden himself felt confident that that should not be done. The Commission should first set up the special committee, make it as authoritative as possible, help it to reach its conclusions as speedily as possible, and with the greater certainty and justice, and with fuller authority, the Commission would then be able to take the decisions which it thought best and which were its sole responsibility.

Mr. Gibson (United States of America) desired, in order to make his position clear at the present stage, to read paragraph 2 (b) of the resolution of July 23rd, 1932, referring to civil aviation:

"Civil aircraft shall be submitted to regulation and full publicity. Further, civil aircraft not conforming to the specified limitations shall be subjected to an international regime (except for certain regions where such a regime is not suitable) such as to prevent effectively the misuse of such civil aircraft."

The United States Government's advocacy of a regional treatment for this phase of the problem had been the subject of discussion on several occasions, notably during a very interesting debate in the twenty-fifth meeting of the Air Commission on June 22nd, 1932, when the entire question had been gone into very fully, largely by M. de Jouvenel and by Mr. Dulles. Mr. Gibson was not aware that in that or in other meetings real difficulty had been raised about the regional treatment in question, which had, in fact, been embodied in the general resolution of July 23rd, 1932.

On November 22nd, 1932,2 the Bureau had discussed M. de Madariaga's report in regard to air questions and, on that occasion, Mr. Wilson had invited attention to the fact that the conception of regional treatment of the problem of civil aviation had been omitted. M. de Madariaga had been good enough to recognise that fact, and it had been understood that reference to it would be included in the report. In private conversations on this question with his colleagues in the Conference Mr. Gibson had explained the position of the United States in regard to civil aviation. He had never found in those conversations any disposition to question the soundness of his delegation's arguments, and if he had refrained from making a public statement of its position and the reasons therefor, it had been because he had felt that the matter was adequately met by statements of the resolution of July 23rd, 1932, and had therefore been reluctant to take up the time of the General Commission with further public statements. However, no sooner was this regional concept inserted in one document before the Conference, than it disappeared nimbly from the next one. In the present case again the basis of the Commission's discussion was a document which omitted all reference to the conception.

--- Document Conf.D.I 154. ---

--- See Minutes of the Bureau of the Conference, page 109. ---
which was understood to have been accepted as regards the control of civil aviation. Mr. Gibson would therefore like briefly to recapitulate some of his delegation's views on that question.

The situation in regard to civil aviation in the United States differed from that in any other country. American civil aviation—and particularly commercial aviation—was required to meet conditions of terrain, a geographical situation and meteorological variations which were not paralleled in any other country. The special situation in the United States necessitated planes capable of rising to a height of 5,000 metres and more, in order to surmount obstacles that could not otherwise be surmounted in that territory. It was possible to fly round the Alps, but not round the Rockies. Sudden storms, varying conditions of temperature and extreme variations in weather demanded the provision of machines that had characteristics, all of which were quite uncalled for in other regions.

The progress of civil aviation in Mr. Gibson's country might be shown from the fact that there were at present registered with the United States Department of Commerce approximately 11,000 machines, a greater number of civil machines than was found to-day in the whole of Europe. In general, the United States had the only commercial aviation in the world that was quite self-supporting. It was not dependent upon and did not receive Governmental subsidy. Needless to say, the development of types of machines resulted, not from the idea of their subsequent military use, but to meet compelling technical and commercial problems. A recent examination of over 10,000 of these machines had revealed the fact that only seventy-four of them were capable of military combatant use. In the circumstances it would be seen that Mr. Gibson's country had no fear of the transformation of their subsequent military use, but to meet compelling technical and commercial problems. A recent examination of over 10,000 of these machines had revealed the fact that only seventy-four of them were capable of military combatant use. In the circumstances it would be seen that Mr. Gibson's country had no fear of the transformation of civil aviation for military use and did not contemplate the use of civil aviation in any military emergency. His delegation's insistence on the freedom of American civil aviation from international control was based on the existing situation.

The only doubt which he had heard expressed in the conversations at Geneva was based on the rapidity of technical progress, a progress which was said to be so rapid that it might soon come about that the sun would be darkened by squadrons of civil planes which had traversed the Atlantic to deal death and destruction in America, or vice versa—especially vice versa. But the delegations had come to Geneva to deal with existing problems and not to usurp the copyrights of Jules Verne or H. G. Wells. When those problems changed, the proper solution would have to be sought. It was contemplated that the Permanent Disarmament Commission would deal with any problems that arose. Accordingly the General Commission should proceed on its way on firm ground and deal with the situation as it existed now, and where it was considered to be a menace.

Finally, Mr. Gibson would repeat that, so far as the American part of the world was concerned, his Government was not prepared to accept any international control of civil aviation. To make his point quite clear, he would propose to amend the British draft by inserting after the words "international control of civil aviation", the words, "among the States of Europe". With this amendment, he was happy to accept the British proposal, and trusted that, in view of the importance of the question to be discussed, the debates would be held in public.

M. Nadolny (Germany) said that the proposal presented by the United Kingdom delegate was a repetition of the programme submitted by the United Kingdom delegation itself to the General Commission. The Commission had also before it the German proposal containing a draft amendment to the United Kingdom proposal, suggesting that the General Commission should decide "if the entire abolition of military and naval aircraft combined with an effective international control of civil aviation shall be effected, and if bombing from the air shall be absolutely prohibited". Only if the General Commission replied in the negative to the question concerning the entire abolition of military and naval aviation, would it become necessary to consider the measures recommended by the United Kingdom delegation.

In M. Nadolny's opinion, it would be far more convenient first to settle the question of principle, and, following on that decision, to say whether it was desired to abolish completely or not military and naval aviation and bombing from the air. Mr. Eden's explanations had not convinced the German delegate of the practical advantages of his proposal.

All the delegates knew that the complete abolition of military aviation was one means of disarmament. The entire abolition of this arm in the peace treaties showed to what extent it was regarded as a means of offensive warfare, the prohibition of which was essential. The members of the General Commission were not unaware that the air arm had developed to such an extent during recent years that it was at present considered as the most formidable arm; its particularly threatening character had been recognised by the Conference.

Further, the President of the Air Commission, M. de Madariaga, as well as a number of other delegates, had recently pointed out that the technical aspect of the question was sufficiently elucidated to enable the necessary decisions of principle to be taken at last. M. Nadolny therefore considered, now as before, that the General Commission must decide the question itself without referring it to a committee. If, however, the majority of the Commission

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was not of his opinion, he would have no objection to referring it to a committee. But, in that case, he would consider it essential for the General Commission to give that committee precise instructions, and to state whether or not it was in favour of the entire abolition of military and naval aircraft. This would greatly facilitate the committee's work, for it would have a basis upon which to examine the question and take its decisions.

On the other hand, M. Nadolny thought that, in any event, the question of bombing from the air must be separated from that of the abolition of military aircraft. Indeed, even if the proposal entirely to abolish military aircraft were abandoned—which would, in his view, be most regrettable—the question of bombing from the air would have to be considered, and he dared hope that it would be concluded that this kind of bombing must be absolutely prohibited.

The President, with reference to the amendment proposed by Mr. Gibson, called the United States delegate's attention to the fact that the following words had been adopted in the resolution of July 23rd, 1932: "except for certain regions where such a regime is not suitable". The President thought that the amendment moved by Mr. Gibson narrowed the position very considerably as compared with those words. He hoped that Mr. Gibson would consider the words in question, because it seemed to him that, as President, he must protect what had already been accomplished; little as that might be, he could not allow it to be made smaller. He would like to have Mr. Gibson's assurance, should he persist in his amendment, that he was prepared to alter it to the language just read out.

Mr. Gibson (United States of America) replied that, if he might interpret the President's remarks to mean that the language of the resolution of July 23rd, 1932, covered the statement of the United States position which he had already made, he was prepared to agree to the President's suggestion and to alter the amendment accordingly.

M. de Madariaga (Spain) emphasised that the General Commission was at present discussing a question of procedure, and not the substance of the United Kingdom proposal. Having said this, he pointed out to the United Kingdom delegation that its instructions to the committee it was proposed to appoint did not develop in sufficient detail the principles to be defined by the General Commission to enable the special committee, following the Conference's methods of work, usefully to discuss the matter. M. de Madariaga thought a distinction should be drawn between the two following questions:

1. Is it advisable to abolish all aircraft for war purposes, if it is possible to do so? In other words, is this abolition desirable?

2. Under what conditions would its abolition, already declared to be desirable, be possible, in particular, under what conditions concerning the measures to be taken to prevent the substitution of civil for military aircraft? What conditions must be laid down with regard to international air police to bring about this desirable situation? How would this international air police be organised in detail?

M. de Madariaga was, however, prepared to support the United Kingdom proposal. At the same time, it would give him great pleasure to hear from the United Kingdom delegate that, in his view, these two questions must be cleared up in the Air Committee — M. de Madariaga would have preferred this to be done in the General Commission — in the order just indicated. Moreover, Mr. Gibson's speech would suffice to illustrate the need for giving the committee definite instructions. The United States of America could abolish military aircraft without controlling civil aircraft. Marvellous! one might reply. In that case, the United States would be prepared to abolish military aircraft immediately, for they need attach no conditions thereto.

A decision must therefore be taken on these questions; otherwise, the Committee's work would be beset with confusion.

In passing, M. de Madariaga repeated that, if it were not decided to abolish military aircraft, the prohibition of bombing from the air would, in his view, be quite useless; this amounted to a desire to humanise war, which was impossible. When one made war, one could not conceivably do it humanely.

M. de Madariaga then said he would agree to the constitution of the committee Mr. Eden had proposed and asked, like Mr. Gibson, that it should sit in public. This seemed to him indispensable.

The Spanish delegate also concurred in Mr. Eden's proposal that this committee should be composed of politicians, and not of experts. Finally, it would be advisable to allow it a period not exceeding two weeks for its work.

M. Nadolny (Germany) did not share M. de Madariaga's view that suppression of air-bombing was useless, even if the Conference did not decide upon the complete abolition of military aviation.

The measure was, in fact, one for the humanisation of war, but measures of that kind had been taken or were being worked out in other spheres—chemical and bacterial warfare, dum-dum bullets, etc. There were, therefore, many prohibitions which formed part of international law, and any State that infringed them would be branded as having offended against morality and against international law.