PARTICIPATION IN THE PREPARATORY COMMISSION TO CONSIDER QUESTIONS OF REDUCTION AND LIMITATION OF ARMAMENTS

FEBRUARY 12, 1927.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. Fish, from the Committee on Foreign Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. J. Res. 352]

The Committee on Foreign Affairs, to which was referred House Joint Resolution 352, providing for the expenses of the participation of the United States in the work of a preparatory commission to consider questions of reduction and limitation of armaments, having had the same under consideration, reports it back with a slight amendment and recommends that the resolution as amended do pass.

Page 2, line 3, after the word "subsistence" at end of line insert "in amounts authorized in the discretion of the Secretary of State."

The resolution is as follows:

[H. J. Res. 352, Sixty-ninth Congress, second session]

JOINT RESOLUTION To provide for the expenses of the participation of the United States in the work of a preparatory commission to consider questions of reduction and limitation of armaments

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That in compliance with the recommendation of the President contained in his message of January 7, 1927, the sum of $75,000 is hereby authorized to be appropriated for the expenses of further participation by the United States in the work of the preparatory commission at Geneva, Switzerland, for the purpose of making preliminary studies and preparations for a conference on the reduction and limitation of armaments; and for each and every purpose connected therewith, including compensation of employees, travel, subsistence or per diem in lieu of subsistence (notwithstanding the provisions of any other act); and such other expenses as the President shall deem proper, to be expended under the direction of the Secretary of State.

The passage of this resolution is recommended by the President of the United States, and the facts are fully set forth in his message dated January 7, 1927; said message, together with a letter from the Secretary of State addressed to the chairman of your committee,
dated January 11, 1927, and a later message from the President, dated February 10, 1927, in re "Limitation of naval armament," are incorporated in this report, as follows:

[Senate Document No. 192, Sixty-ninth Congress, second session]

To the Congress of the United States:

In a message which I submitted to you on January 4, 1926, I recommended the appropriation of the sum of $50,000 to cover the expenses of American participation in the work of the "Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference, being a commission to prepare for a conference on the reduction and limitation of armaments." By House Joint Resolution 107, approved February 1, 1926, you authorized the appropriation of this amount.

The preparatory commission met at Geneva on May 18, 1926. Its work has continued, through plenary sessions and subcommittee meetings, since that date. The task of the commission's subcommittees, to which was delegated the detailed study of many of the problems presented to it, has virtually been completed, and it is planned to hold another plenary meeting of the commission, probably in March, to consider the subcommittee reports. Although it is difficult to predict the exact duration of the forthcoming sessions, it can reasonably be assumed that they will continue over a period of some months. It is the avowed purpose of the preparatory commission at the forthcoming meetings to evolve a definite agenda for a conference for the reduction and limitation of armament, which is, of course, the end to which the deliberations of the preparatory commission are directed.

I believe that the preliminary work has been useful, and that there is good reason to hope for concrete results from further meetings. Our representatives have consistently endeavored to play a helpful part and to direct the attention of the commission to the possibility of practical accomplishment.

I believe that we should continue to give our full cooperation to the work of the preparatory commission with a view to bringing about, as quickly as possible, a final conference, at which further steps may be taken to reduce and limit armaments.

The policy of this Government to favor measures which hold out practical hopes for the limitation of armament is firmly established. By continuing our hearty cooperation in the preparatory work, we shall be able to do our share in formulating an agenda for the final conference which will give promise of actual agreements for arms limitation.

The appropriation of $50,000, already made for this work has been exhausted. I therefore recommend that there be authorized further appropriation of $75,000 to cover the expenses of American participation in the forthcoming activities of the preparatory commission. I recommend this sum because, when the commission undertakes the actual drafting of an agenda, it may be necessary to send a considerable number of American representatives to insure adequate representation in all phases of the work. Since the exact requirements can not be foreseen, and will depend on developments, it appears wise to provide a sufficient appropriation to meet contingencies that may arise.

In relation to the form of the appropriation, the prices prevailing at Geneva and the nature of the responsibility devolving upon the members of the delegation make it important that their expenditures for subsistence be exempted from the restrictions imposed by existing law and be made discretionary with the Secretary of State.

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, January 7, 1927.

CALVIN COOLIDGE.

JANUARY 11, 1927.

HON. STEPHEN G. PORTER,
Chairman Foreign Affairs Committee,
House of Representatives.

MY DEAR MR. PORTER: I learn that certain Members of Congress feel some misgiving as to the desirability of appropriating funds for our further participation in the work of the Preparatory Commission on the Limitation and Reduction of Armaments, which was recommended in the President's message of January 7. These misgivings appear to be based on the feeling that the preparatory com-
mission has achieved nothing in the way of the limitation and reduction of armaments. It is clear that this is due to a misapprehension as to the task of the preparatory commission, and it seems to me that I can not do better than to outline briefly for your information the purpose of the preparatory commission and the work thus far performed by it.

In the first place, the preparatory commission was not convened for the purpose of concluding agreements for the reduction and limitation of armaments. It was felt that if the representatives of all governments met in a conference to seek a solution of the complicated problems of disarmament on land, sea, and in the air, and conclude definite agreements for the limitation and reduction of armaments it would prove to be a hopeless task and no definite results could be achieved. It was therefore considered desirable to convene the representatives of a limited number of States to conduct a preliminary survey of the general problems involved and to draw up, if possible, an agenda which could serve as the basis of discussion of a final conference.

The American Government felt that it could not fail to give its full cooperation to any effort of this sort, particularly in view of the fact that it has at all times earnestly advocated practical measures looking to the effective reduction and limitation of armaments, and accordingly a full and well equipped delegation was sent to Geneva with instructions to cooperate in the most generous and friendly spirit.

You are doubtless familiar with the questions which were submitted for the study of the preparatory commission and I need not, therefore, go into them in detail. However, a copy of the questionnaire is transmitted herewith for your convenience in reference. It can not be justly said that there has been no progress although it is as yet too soon to prophesy with any certainty as to how far definite achievement will prove practicable, but it is the view of this Government that so long as there is any hope of attaining definite results it would be inconsistent with our traditional policy for us to withhold our full cooperation.

When the preparatory commission met there were many divergent views expressed as to what constituted practical solutions for the various problems set forth in the questionnaire. These problems were referred to various technical subcommittees which, after discussing them during several months, succeeded in eliminating a number of conflicting views and narrowed the field to two principal schools of thought.

One school of thought, which is representative of the views of a group of governments chiefly situated within a limited area of the European Continent, may be generally indicated by five of its fundamental principles:

1. That security must be guaranteed by some form of military assistance against aggression as a necessary condition precedent to the reduction and limitation of armaments.
2. That agreements for the reduction and limitation of armaments must be guaranteed by an international inspection and control of the military establishments to ascertain whether treaty obligations were being faithfully executed.
3. That there exists a complete interdependence of armaments and that it is impossible to deal with any single category (land, sea, or air) without simultaneously dealing with the others.
4. That it is not sufficient to deal with the actual peace-time armaments of nations but that industrial, financial, economic, and other factors must be taken into account in any general scheme that may be drawn up.
5. That any agreements on the limitation and reduction of armaments in order to be effective must be universal and that there must be a single standard system applicable to all countries of the world.

This scheme appears to us to involve so many complicated and difficult factors that its adoption would retard rather than forward the limitation and reduction of armaments. Consequently at the beginning of the conference the American delegation presented certain principles for consideration which may be briefly stated as follows:

1. That there should be a direct approach to the question of limitation and reduction of armaments without awaiting complicated measures for providing security, in the belief that the cause of security will be promoted through the reduction and limitation of armaments and the elimination of suspicion and ill will which can be expected to follow.
2. That in order to be really effective agreements for the reduction and limitation of armaments must be founded upon a respect for treaty obligations and a belief in the good faith of the contracting parties. It is our belief that any agreements founded upon distrust and providing for a machinery of inspec-
tion and control will not only fail to achieve its purpose but will create new elements of suspicion and ill will.

(3) We believe that insistence upon a joint consideration of land, sea, and air armaments will tend to render needlessly complicated the task of a final conference and will tend to render more difficult achievement in regard to the limitation and reduction of any single category of armament. For that reason we feel that ultimate success lies along the line of isolating from the general problem as many concrete questions as possible and dealing with them in a direct and practical manner.

(4) We feel that the only practical approach to the question of the limitation and reduction of armaments is through dealing with visible armaments at peace strength. We feel that this is a relatively simple problem where we are dealing with known quantities and where, through the exercise of patience and good will, we can hope for constructive achievement. We feel, on the other hand, that any scheme involving the complicated and variable industrial, financial, and economic factors would tend to inject a needless complication into the problem and render more difficult any hope of real achievement.

(5) It is our view that there is no possibility of devising a system for the limitation and reduction of armaments which could be made either applicable or acceptable to all countries of the world and that any attempt to reach such a solution would merely mean an indefinite postponement of achievement. We feel that land and air armaments constitute an essentially regional problem and that different solutions can best meet the needs of different regions; that naval armament can best be dealt with through direct agreement among a limited number of naval powers.

I may state, for your information, that when we entered the preparatory conference in May, 1926, we had no previous arrangements or understandings with any government. Our representatives stated our views at the opening meeting and we feel that the six months discussions which followed have only served to confirm the soundness of the stand taken by our representatives. This is further confirmed by the fact that from a position of almost complete isolation at the beginning of the conference our thesis has so far commended itself to other delegations that before the recent adjournment in November almost half of the conference voluntarily came to support our views without any changes, concessions, or abandonment of principle on our part.

It seems to me that it has been a distinct step in advance to eliminate many divergent views and narrow the field down to a choice between two schools of thought. This work has been carried as far as it could be by the technical representatives who conducted most of the discussions at the first meeting.

At the meeting in March, the entire problem will be taken up by our political representatives, whose essential duty is, so far as possible, to conciliate the conflicting views which I have set forth for your information and to prepare an agenda for a general conference. I may say that we believe that such conciliation is possible, in that we feel that some features of the other thesis while not acceptable to us, may be entirely applicable to the special needs of other countries. Our thesis is tolerant in that it seeks to understand the problems and requirements of other countries and other regions, and we believe it is best calculated to lead to direct and practicable achievement.

My purpose in outlining these two schools of thought is to bring out the necessity for the sort of preliminary work that is being done by the preparatory commission and the hopelessness of trying to call a general world conference to conclude treaties until we have reached some measure of agreement as to the problems to be discussed. Until such agreement is reached, it would be impossible even to draw up a program for a conference, and accordingly, the preparatory commission will have achieved a full measure of success if it is able to present a definite agenda acceptable to all governments.

I feel very strongly that in view of our consistent advocacy of the limitation and reduction of armaments, we can not withhold our full and cordial cooperation in any effort of this sort to explore the subject and facilitate a practical approach to the problem. Furthermore, I desire to point out, for your consideration, that if after participation in the work of the preparatory commission during the six months we now withdraw for lack of necessary funds, it would not be surprising if the inference were drawn in some quarters that we were not sincere in our advocacy of the limitation and reduction of armaments.

I am, my dear Mr. Porter, sincerely yours,

FRANK B. KELLOGG.
QUESTIONNAIRE

Question I: What is to be understood by the expression "armaments"?
(a) Definition of the various factors—military, economic, geographical, etc.—upon which the power of a country in time of war depends.
(b) Definition and special characteristics of the various factors which constitute the armaments of a country in time of peace; the different categories of armaments—military, naval and air—the methods of recruiting, training organizations capable of immediate immediate military employment, etc.

Question II: (a) Is it practicable to limit the ultimate war strength of a country, or must any measures of disarmament be confined to the peace strength?
(b) What is to be understood by the expression "reduction and limitation of armaments"?
The various forms which reduction or limitation may take in the case of land, sea, and air forces; the relative advantages or disadvantages of each of the different forms or methods; for example, the reduction of the larger peace-time units or of their establishment and their equipment, or of any immediately mobilizable forces; the reduction of the length of active service, the reduction of the quantity of military equipment, the reduction of expenditure on national defense, etc.

Question III: By what standards is it possible to measure the armaments of one country against the armaments of another, e.g., numbers, period of service, equipment, expenditure, etc.?

Question IV: Can there be said to be "offensive" and "defensive" armaments? Is there any method of ascertaining whether a certain force is organized for purely defensive purposes (no matter what use may be made of it in time of war), or whether, on the contrary, it is established for the purposes in a spirit of aggression?

Question V: (a) On what principle will it be possible to draw up a scale of armaments permissible to the various countries, taking into account particularly—Population; resources; geographical situation; length and nature of maritime communications; density and character of the railways; vulnerability of the frontiers and of the important vital centers near the frontiers; the time required, varying with different States, to transform peace armaments into war armaments; the degree of security which, in the event of aggression, a State could receive under the provisions of the covenant or of separate engagements contracted toward that State?
(b) Can the reduction of armaments be promoted by examining possible means for insuring that the mutual assistance, economic and military, contemplated in article 16 of the covenant shall be brought quickly into operation as soon as an act of aggression has been committed.

Question VI: (a) Is there any device by which civil and military aircraft can be distinguished for purposes of disarmament? If this is not practicable, how can the value of civil aircraft be computed in estimating the air strength of any country?
(b) Is it possible or desirable to apply the conclusions arrived at in (a) above to parts of aircraft and aircraft engines?
(c) Is it possible to attach military value to commercial fleets in estimating the naval armaments of a country?

Question VII: Admitting that disarmament depends on security, to what extent is regional disarmament possible in return for regional security? Or is any scheme of disarmament impracticable unless it is general? If regional disarmament is practicable, would it promote or lead up to general disarmament?

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES FEBRUARY 10, 1927—LIMITATION OF NAVAL ARMAMENT

To the Congress of the United States:
Pursuant to my instructions the American ambassadors at London, Paris, Rome, and Tokyo, will to-day present to the Governments of Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan, a memorandum suggesting that they empower their delegates at the forthcoming meeting of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference at Geneva to negotiate and conclude at an early date an agreement further limiting naval armament, supplementing the Washington
treaty on that subject, and covering the classes of vessels not covered by that treaty. I transmit herewith, for the information of the Congress, a copy of this memorandum.

I wish to inform the Congress of the considerations which have moved me to take this action.

The support of all measures looking to the preservation of the peace of the world has been long established as a fundamental policy of this Government. The American Government and people are convinced that competitive armaments constitute one of the most dangerous contributing causes of international suspicion and discord and are calculated eventually to lead to war. A recognition of this fact and a desire as far as possible to remove this danger led the American Government in 1921 to call the Washington conference.

At that time we were engaged in a great building program which, upon its completion, would have given us first place on the sea. We felt then, however, and feel now, that the policy we then advocated—that of deliberate self-denial and limitation of naval armament by the great naval powers—promised the attainment of at least one guarantee of peace, an end worthy of mutual adjustment and concession.

At the Washington conference we found the other nations animated with the same desire as ourselves to remove naval competition from the list of possible causes of international discord. Unfortunately, however, it was not possible to reach agreements at Washington covering all classes of naval ships. The Washington treaty provided a specific tonnage limitation upon capital ships and aircraft carriers, with certain restrictions as to size and maximum caliber of guns for other vessels. Every nation has been at complete liberty to build any number of cruisers, destroyers, and submarines. Only size and armament of cruisers were limited. The signatories of the Washington treaty have fulfilled their obligations faithfully and there can be no doubt that that treaty constitutes an outstanding success in its operation.

It has been the hope of the American Government, constantly expressed by the Congress since the Washington conference, that a favorable opportunity might present itself to complete the work begun here by the conclusion of further agreements covering cruisers, destroyers, and submarines. The desirability of such an agreement has been apparent, since it was only to be expected that the spirit of competition, stifled as regards capital ships and aircraft carriers by the Washington treaty, would sooner or later show itself with regard to the other vessels not limited under the treaty. Actually, I do not believe that competitive building of these classes of ships has begun. Nevertheless, far-reaching building programs have been laid down by certain powers, and there has appeared in our own country, as well as abroad, a sentiment urging naval construction on the ground that such construction is taking place elsewhere. In such sentiments lies the germ of renewed naval competition.

I am sure that all governments and all peoples would choose a system of naval limitation in preference to consciously reverting to competitive building. Therefore, in the hope of bringing about an opportunity for discussion among the principal naval powers to ascertain whether further limitation is practicable, I have suggested to them that negotiations on this subject should begin as soon as possible.

The moment seems particularly opportune to try to secure further limitation of armament in accordance with the expressed will of the Congress. The earnest desire of the nations of the world to relieve themselves in as great a measure as possible of the burden of armaments and to avoid the dangers of competition has been shown by the establishment of the preparatory commission for the disarmament conference, which met in Geneva last May, and which is continuing its work with a view to preparing the agenda for a final general conference. For more than six months, representatives of a score or more of nations have examined from all points of view the problem of the reduction and limitation of armaments. In these discussions it was brought out very clearly that a number of nations felt that land, sea, and air armaments were interdependent and that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to agree upon the limitation of one type of armament without simultaneously limiting the other types.

The consequence to be feared is that a deadlock will be reached, should even partial progress in the reduction of armaments be conditioned upon the acceptance of some universal plan covering land, sea, and air forces together. If the prospective deadlock can not be broken, it is probable that little progress will be made for the time being. It appears to me to be the duty of this Government, which has always advocated limitation of armaments, to endeavor to suggest...
some avenue by which concrete results may be achieved, even though such results may be short of an ultimate ideal solution for the threefold problem of land, sea, and air armament.

Our delegates at Geneva have consistently expressed the view that under conditions as they exist in the world to-day the problems of land and air armaments are most susceptible of solution by regional agreements covering regions within which the land or air armaments of one country could constitute a potential threat to another country. Geographical continents have been suggested as regions appropriate for land and air limitation agreements.

The American land and air force constitute a threat to no one. They are at minimum strength; their reduction has been suggested by no one as a necessary condition precedent to general arms limitation. This reduction of our land forces has been rendered possible by our favored geographical position. I realize that the problems of armaments on land and in the air in Europe are beset with difficulties which in all justice we must recognize and, although this Government will always be ready to lend its assistance in any appropriate way to efforts on the part of European or other Governments to arrive at regional agreements limiting land and air forces, it would hesitate to make specific proposals on this subject to European nations.

The problem of the limitation of naval armament, while not regional in character or susceptible of regional treatment, has been successfully treated, in part, by an agreement among the five leading naval powers, and, in my opinion, can be definitely dealt with by further agreements among those powers.

It will be a contribution to the success of the preliminary work now going on at Geneva should the great naval powers there agree upon a further definite limitation of naval armament.

It is my intention that the American representatives at Geneva should continue to discuss with the representatives of the other nations there the program for a general limitation of armaments conference. If such a conference should be possible in the future, on a basis generally acceptable, this Government would, of course, be highly gratified. Pending the formulation of the plan for such a general conference, however, I believe that we should make an immediate and sincere effort to solve the problem of naval limitation, the solution of which would do much to make the efforts toward more general limitation successful.

CALVIN COOLIDGE.

THE WHITE HOUSE, February 10, 1927.

MEMORANDUM

The American Government has followed with close attention the proceedings of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference, and, after the most careful deliberation, has concluded that it can helpfully make certain observations at this time which, it hopes, may contribute materially to the success of that conference—a success earnestly desired by the Government and people of the United States.

The conviction that the competitive augmentation of national armaments has been one of the principal causes of international suspicion and ill will, leading to war, is firmly held by the American Government and people. Hence the American Government has neglected no opportunity to lend its sympathy and support to international efforts to reduce and limit armaments.

The success of the Washington conference of 1921-22 demonstrated that other powers were animated with a similar desire to do away with this dangerous source of international discord. The Washington conference made a beginning, however, and it has been the continued hope of the American Government, since 1922, that the task undertaken at Washington by the group of naval powers could be resumed and completed.

For this reason the American Government was happy to observe that the efforts looking toward the holding of a general international conference for the limitation of armament, which had been in progress for several years under the auspices of the League of Nations, had reached, in December, 1925, a stage sufficiently advanced, in the opinion of the Council of the League of Nations, to warrant the establishment of the preparatory commission, to meet in 1926 to prepare the ground for an international conference at an early date. The American Government, pursuant to its policy of cooperation with all efforts calculated to bring about an actual limitation of armament, accepted the invitation of the council to be represented on the preparatory commission. The
American representatives on that commission have endeavored to play a helpful part in its discussions, and they will continue to be guided by that policy.

The American Government believes that the discussions of the commission have been most valuable in making clear the views of the various governments as to the problems presented, and in demonstrating the complexity and diversity of the obstacles to be overcome in the preparation and conclusion of a general agreement for the limitation of all armament.

At the same time, these very complexities and difficulties, as brought out in the preparatory commission, have clearly pointed out that a final solution for the problem of armament may not be immediately practicable. Indeed, at the latest meeting of the Council of the League of Nations several distinguished statesmen, leaders in the movement for the limitation of armament, sounded a note of warning against too great optimism of immediate success.

The American Government is most anxious that concrete results in the limitation of armament may be achieved. The discussions of the preparatory commission have emphasized the fact that a number of Governments consider that one of the chief present obstacles to the general reduction and limitation of armaments lies in the interdependence of land, sea, and air armaments, and in the consequent impossibility of reducing or limiting one of these categories without dealing simultaneously with the others. On the other hand, the discussions have demonstrated even more emphatically that, should all effort to bring about the reduction or limitation of armament be conditioned upon the acceptance by all the world of a comprehensive plan covering all classes and types of armament, there would be little, if any, prospect of actual progress toward arms limitation in the near future.

The above difficulties must be frankly recognized. The American Government believes that they can be overcome and that they must be overcome, since the consequences of a failure to overcome them and to make some definite, if only partial, agreement for the limitation of armament would constitute a setback to the cause of international peace too great to deserve serious contemplation as a possibility.

Admitting reluctantly that the existing political situations in certain parts of the world may render the problem of universal limitation incapable of immediate solution as a whole, the American Government believes that it is entirely practicable for the nations of the world to proceed at once to the isolation and separate solution of such problems as may appear susceptible of such treatment, meanwhile continuing to give sympathetic consideration and discussion to comprehensive proposals aimed at the simultaneous limitation of land, sea, and air armaments by a general agreement when such an agreement may be warranted by existing world conditions. The American Government believes that the adoption of such a course is the duty of the Governments represented on the preparatory commission, and that by so doing they will insure the achievement by the commission and by the general conference of concrete, even though perhaps only partial, results, thus facilitating progress toward the final solution of the general problem.

The American Government, as its representatives on the preparatory commission have repeatedly stated, feels that land and air armaments constitute essentially regional problems to be solved primarily by regional agreements. The American Army and air force are at minimum strength. Agreement for land and air limitation in other regions of the world would not be dependent upon the reduction or limitation of American land and air forces. Therefore the American Government does not feel that it can appropriately offer definite suggestions to other powers in regard to the limitation of these categories of armament.

The problem of the limitation of naval armament, while not regional in character, can be dealt with as a practical matter by measures affecting the navies of a limited group of powers. This has been clearly established by the success of the Washington treaty-limiting naval armament. The United States, as the initiator of the Washington conference, and as one of the principal naval powers, has a direct interest in this question, and, being both ready and willing to enter into an agreement further limiting naval armament, feels itself privileged to indicate a course of procedure which will, in its opinion, lead to such an agreement.

The discussions over a period of six months in Geneva have been most useful in the opportunity afforded for an exchange of views as to the general problem of naval limitation, and on the basis of these discussions it is felt that there is a possibility of reconciling many of the divergent views which have been expressed in such a manner as to meet the requirements of the naval powers and enable them to decide upon acceptable measures of limitation.
In order to advance definitely toward a limitation agreement, the Government of the United States takes this method of addressing an inquiry to the Governments signatories of the Washington treaty limiting naval armament as to whether they are disposed to empower their representatives at the forthcoming meeting of the preparatory commission to initiate negotiations looking toward an agreement providing for limitation in the classes of naval vessels not covered by the Washington treaty.

The American Government is not unmindful of the fact that the preparatory commission is not specifically charged with the duty of concluding international agreements, and that its task is primarily that of preparing the agenda for a conference to be called at a later date. Nevertheless, being sincerely desirous of the success of the preparatory commission, the American Government makes this suggestion in the firm belief that the conclusion at Geneva, as soon as possible, among the powers signatories of the Washington treaty, of an agreement for further naval limitation, far from interfering with or detracting from the success of the preparatory commission’s aims, would constitute a valuable contribution to the sum of achievement attributable to that commission and would facilitate the task of the final conference in dealing with the particularly complex problems of land and air armament, perhaps capable of solution for the present only by regional limitation agreements.

It seems probable that under any circumstances the final conference will not be able to meet during this calendar year. The coming into effect of agreements reached by it might be delayed for a considerable period for a multitude of causes. Therefore the American Government believes that those powers which may be able to arrive at an agreement for further naval limitation at an earlier date would not be justified in consciously postponing that agreement and thereby opening the way for a recrudescence of a spirit of competitive naval building—a development greatly to be deplored by all governments and peoples.

The American Government feels that the general principles of the Washington treaty offer a suitable basis for further discussion among its signatories. Although hesitating at this time to put forward rigid proposals as regards the ratios of naval strength to be maintained by the different powers, the American Government, for its part, is disposed to accept, in regard to those classes of vessels not covered by the Washington treaty, an extension of the 5–5–3 ratio as regards the United States, Great Britain, and Japan, and to leave to discussion at Geneva the ratios of France and Italy, taking into full account their special conditions and requirements in regard to the types of vessels in question. Ratios for capital ships and aircraft carriers were established by that treaty which would not be affected in any way by an agreement covering other classes of ships.

The American representatives at the forthcoming meeting at Geneva will, of course, participate fully in the discussions looking to the preparation of an agenda for a final general conference for the limitation of armament. In addition, they will have full powers to negotiate definitely regarding measures for further naval limitation, and, if they are able to reach agreement with the representatives of the other signatories of the Washington treaty, to conclude a convention embodying such agreement, in tentative or final form, as may be found practicable.

The American Government earnestly hopes that the institution of such negotiations at Geneva may be agreeable to the Governments of the British Empire, France, Italy, and Japan, and that comprehensive limitation of all types of naval armament may be brought into effect among the principal naval powers without delay.