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THE FRENCH APPROACH TO DISARMAMENT
BETWEEN 1920-1930;

Policy Making Process, Principles & Methods

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ABSTRACT

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THE FRENCH APPROACH TO DISARMAMENT BETWEEN 1920-1930:
POLICY MAKING PROCESS, PRINCIPLES & METHODS

by Lamri Chirouf

This thesis analyses France's disarmament approach between 1920 and 1930, arguing that this was designed by the military, aided by experts, to shield the country's defence capabilities from disarmament. This is illustrated by analysis of the French security concept, the disarmament making process, and the method and principles underlying its disarmament policy.

Security is approached from two angles: concept and means. The concept consisted of three dimensions: security against Germany; security of the empire; and the preservation of the status quo of the world order. The means set to achieve this security were alliance with America and Britain, collective security and France's own military capabilities. France failed to achieve the first two and her own army was overwhelmed by internal and external problems. The result was the country's vulnerability and the subordination of disarmament to security.

The formal process by which this conditional disarmament was elaborated consisted of the French Service of the League of Nations and the Supreme Council of National Defence (Le Conseil Supérieur de La Defense Nationale (CSDN)) which had two subsidiaries: the Permanent General Secretariat and a Study Commission. These institutions were largely staffed by the military and experts whose say in disarmament was dominant to the point of relegation of the executive's role to rubber stamping and the almost complete exclusion of parliament.

Such a process produced a disarmament approach based on a constant set of principles and methods. The three principles were: no disarmament without security, interdependence of forces, and war potential. The methods related to three ways of carrying out disarmament: by limitation of effectives, military expenditure, or material. France adopted different views on each of these methods according to its defence organisation and security needs.

The thesis concludes by confirming that the French disarmament approach between 1920 and 1930 was designed by the military and the experts who had a monopoly over the decision making process. The set of principles and methods composing this approach were calculated on the basis of the country's defence and security weakness in order to counteract disarmament.

DEDICATION

To my father Ahmed, and brothers Salah and Mohammed Chirouf, who fought and died for the independence of Algeria. To my mother also, for her continuing love and support.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an analysis of the French disarmament approach between 1920 and 1930. It argues that the approach was designed by the military, aided by experts, to shield France's defence capability from any disarmament measures. The argument will be developed, following a historical inductive approach, by looking at the French concept of security, the disarmament policy-making process and its actors, and the principles and methods upon which the whole approach was founded and implemented. Further, to illustrate how this approach was put into practice, two cases will be studied.

In order to develop the central proposition with clarity it is important that some sort of a context is provided at the beginning within which the various components of arguments may be related, compared, or contrasted. This will be provided by a brief historical account of French disarmament attitudes prior to 1914 which will look at various disarmament attempts involving France and argue that prior to this date France had only ad-hoc attitudes to disarmament.

After 1914 and the disaster of the First World War, French foreign policy in the domain of disarmament underwent a fundamental change. Security became the central thesis of such a policy, embracing every aspect of it. In this regard France argued that security and disarmament were inextricably linked but in the following order: Security first.¹ It is therefore imperative for any study of French disarmament during the 1920s to look at the issue of security. This topic has already been the subject of abundant studies.² However, it should be noted that the aim of this thesis is not to produce another such study of the subject, but to identify the main elements of the concept and the means chosen by France with which to protect herself. As security is a subjective concept the definition adopted here will be based on the official version as given by French disarmament policy makers and the country's leaders during the period under study. The definition of the concept and how this related to the means chosen by French leaders to protect what they saw as their right constitutes the key point to an understanding of France's security

dilemma throughout the 1920s. It will be argued that since the concept and means of security were never matched in practice, at least in the eyes of French decision makers, this acted as a causal factor in the link between security and disarmament. Further, the definition of the concept itself is particularly important in this causal relationship between disarmament and security. It provides a yardstick by which to measure how the elements of the concept reflect themselves in the principles and methods of disarmament. In this respect, this thesis will argue that the French concept of security as defined by its disarmament makers consisted of three dimensions: security against Germany, imperial security 'Sécurité impériale', and generally, the preservation of the status quo of the world order which emerged from the Versailles settlement.

French disarmament policies between 1920 and 1930 were formulated in a complex bureaucratic and institutional set up previously unknown in the history of the country. The establishment of this system began immediately after the Versailles Settlement. Disarmament was seen as a question of national defence which was undergoing reorganisation and review in the light of the experience of the war. The task of overseeing the issue of disarmament was assigned to the National Defence Council (Conseil Supérieur de La Defense National [CSDN]); an inter-ministerial body which also included some parliamentarians. There was also the establishment of the French Service of the League of Nations (Le Service Français de La Société des Nations) which was based in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and consisted mainly of experts from various ministries including those of the ministries of War and of the Navy. This body was also assigned the oversight of disarmament issues, and controlled mainly by military experts. In theory both the CSDN and the French Service of the League of Nations were jointly responsible for disarmament policy analysis and formulation within their respective administrative confines, but in practice it will be argued that the CSDN had the upper hand.

Although both services were inter-ministerial and implied wide institutional participation in disarmament matters, it will be contended that the whole process was manipulated by the military and the experts (who were both military and civilian) to the subordination of the Executive and the almost total exclusion of parliament as an institution.

Further, it will be illustrated that whilst the power of the military was generally derived from their institutions, the role of the experts stemmed from the military's appreciation of their skill and ability to deal with disarmament and its consequences for French military capabilities.

The policies elaborated by the military and the experts throughout the 1920s were based upon a set of principles and methods which together formed a unified approach. The principles were: that disarmament was the function of security; that disarmament applied to everything, ie interdependence of forces; and that war potential of countries involved in disarmament must be taken into consideration. With regard to the methods, these consisted mainly of three: military expenditure, effectives, and material.

The manner in which these methods and principles were put into practice will be tested by two case studies. One case relates to France's disarmament behaviour with regard to air armaments at the Washington Naval Conference of 1922, in the context of her relations with Britain during the first part of the 1920s, and in the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference. The other case relates to the CSDN's reactions to the Draft Convention prepared in 1924 by the League of Nations for the International Conference on Arms Trade and the Manufacturing of War Material which was held in Geneva in 1925. Whilst the first case concerns an issue of major strategic implications, the subject of the second is of a more minor nature, yet each provides a useful test field for the implementation of principles and methods underlining France's disarmament approach. On the basis of these cases, it will be shown that the methods and principles were used in selective combinations determined by what was at stake. Further, such combinations whether partial or total, were often worked out on the basis of one aim: to shield French military capabilities from any disarmament measures.

The seriousness and expertise put into the design of the French disarmament approach gained its experts the following praise:

"The French had studied disarmament far more carefully than had any other nation."³

It will be asserted however that the French approach, while appearing complete and coherent, was actually flawed with inconsistencies.

By arguing the points set out above, this thesis aims to accomplish two objectives: to close the gaps in English literature on the study of French disarmament policies, and to complement the French which has benefited from recent works undertaken in respect of those policies.

English literature on the topic of disarmament in the 1920s, despite its abundance, remains in need of a complete work wholly devoted to the French approach during this period. The only major research undertaken in English on French disarmament found during research work for this thesis was a PhD thesis by Roberto Enrique Socas entitled "France, Naval Armaments and Naval Disarmament 1918-1922"⁴ This focuses mainly upon the inter-allied negotiations leading to the naval terms of the Armistice, the negotiations leading to the naval terms of peace and the naval forces of the Washington Conference. These negotiations are looked at in the context of French international debate on naval armaments, naval doctrine, naval disarmament, national security policy, foreign and domestic policies. However this study is limited in time and scope.

The remainder of the English literature dealing with France and disarmament are either works of a general informative nature or dealing with other foreign and defence policies including the aspect of disarmament. Such works tend to be confined to the traditional rational model of foreign policy,⁵ leaving aside the internal process of disarmament policy-making which this thesis analyses in detail.

With regard to the French literature, it is much more complete than the English. This task was undertaken by Maurice Vaisse who produced an impressive work covering French disarmament policies from 1920 to 1934 with particular reference to France's role in the World Disarmament Conference of 1932.⁶ However this thesis complements Vaisse's work by use of additional archive material.

INTRODUCTION

R E F E R E N C E S

1. See for example the excellent book by Maurice Vaisse "Sécurité d'Abord: La Politique Française en Matière de Désarmement, 9 Decembre 1930 - 17 Avril 1934", Editions A Pédone, Paris, 1981; General E Debeney "Sur la Sécurité Militaire de La France", Payot, Paris, 1930; Melvyn P Leffler "The Elusive Quest: America's Pursuit of European Stability and French Security, 1919-1938", University of North Carolina Press, 1979.
2. In addition to the above-mentioned books see for example: W M Jordan "Great Britain, France and the German Problem, 1918-1939: A Study of Anglo-French Relations in Making and Maintenance of the Versailles Settlement", Oxford University Press, 1943; Arnold Wolfers "Britain and France Between the Two Wars: Conflicting Strategies of Peace Since Versailles", Harcourt, New York, 1940; R Poidevin and J Bariety "Les Relations Franco-Allemandes 1915-1975", Armand Colin, Paris, 1977.
3. Temperley "The Whispering Gallery of Europe" quoted in Maurice Vaisse, op cit, p46, Footnote No 95.
4. See for example Roberto Enrique Socas "France, Naval Armaments & Naval Disarmaments 1918-1922", Colombia University, PhD Thesis, 1965.
5. This type of work on disarmament includes: John W Wheeler-Bennett "Disarmament & Security Since Locarno:1925-1931", George Allen & Unwin Limited, London, 1932; Professor P J Noel Baker "Disarmament", The Hogarth Press, 2nd edition, 1927; A M Gunji Hosono "International Disarmament", Société d'Imprimeries D'Ambilly-Annemasse, 1926; Secretariat of the League of Nations "Ten years of World Co-operation" Great Britain 1930s Chapter II: The organisation of peace and disarmament, pp49-124; and C K Webster and Sydney Herbert "The League of Nations in Theory and Practice", George Allen & Unwin Limited, London, 1933, Chapter XII, pp180-204.
6. Maurice Vaisse, op cit.

CHAPTER ONE

France and Disarmament Prior to World War I

This Chapter provides a brief historical account of French disarmament attitudes prior to 1914. The aim of this exercise is to identify the main disarmament issues of concern to France and her reaction to them. This will be carried out in two sections as follows:

1. Disarmament attempts prior to the Hague Conference
2. France and the Hague Conference.

1. Disarmament attempts prior to the Hague Conference

In the modern history of progressive political ideas and actions, France has earned herself a prominent position among the nations of the world. Through the industrious work of her liberal thinkers and the Revolution of 1789, she not only contributed to the process of social and political change which took place but also provided theoretical guidances as expressed in the triad "Liberte fraternite et equalite". The issues of peace and disarmament constituted part and parcel of French liberal political thinking.

Indeed, even before such a liberal tradition matured and became accepted if not as a rule at least as an ideal, the questions of peace, arms control, and disarmament were advocated in the work of those French philosophers preoccupied with the world affairs of their era. As early as the Thirteenth Century, the French Lawyer Pierre Dubois was one of the first to call for the establishment of international organisations as a way of ensuring peace and tranquility. Henry IV proposed what has become known as the "Grand Design" which called for the reorganisation of Europe. In the early part of the Seventeenth Century the French writer Emerie Cruce published a book in which he proposed the establishment of an international organisation to include both Turks and Christians.' A century later in 1738, the Abbé de St Pierre not only proposed one of the best plans of his time for a perpetual peace, but also campaigned very

hard to convince Kings and Ministers to create a union between the sovereigns of Europe as a precondition to preserving an unbroken peace.² The work of St Pierre had great influence on other French thinkers such as Montesqueu, and Jeans Jacques Rousseau who explicitly praised the enterprise of an organised and lasting peace when he said: "Never had a project as great, more beautiful and more useful dominated the human spirit, as that of a universal and perpetual peace among all peoples of Europe".³

Although the preoccupation of these French thinkers was one primarily concerned with peace and hardly bore a straightforward and explicit link with disarmament or arms control, it is relevant to the latter in two ways. First by achieving peace, the conditions for controlling the arms race become more favourable than in a situation where conflict prevails. Secondly, peace thinkers furnished the moral basis on which later followers could campaign not only for peace but also disarmament.

It did not take very long in fact before admirers of such great thinkers began to turn their ideas into action. In the first part of the Nineteenth Century, peace movements gained momentum in Europe and America. In France their rise occurred as early as 1821 and by the turn of the century there were sixteen different movements.⁴ These movements earned the sympathy of such authoritative French scholars as Victor Hugo who stated in his inaugural address at the Paris Congress of 1849, which had been organised for the propagation of peace:

"A day will come when you, France-you, Russia-you, Italy-you, England-you, Germany-all of you, nations of the continent, will, without losing your distinctive qualities and your glorious individuality, be blended into a superior unity, and constitute a European fraternity, just as Normandy, Brittany, Burgundy, Lorraine have been blended into France...A day will come when bullets and bombshells will be replaced by votes, by the universal suffrage of nations, by the venerable arbitration of a great sovereign Senate, which will be to Europe what the parliament is to England, what the Diet is to Germany, what the legislative Assembly is to France."⁵

Victor Hugo, according to Beales, also added, that when that day comes "a cannon would be a museum exhibit and the world would have learnt better than to spend £128,000,000 on armaments in thirty-four years".⁶

Historically also peace, disarmament and arms control were issues of interest to states, and France in its past relations with other nations had demonstrated this many times. In illustration it is important that the terms arms control and disarmament be defined so as to provide a basis upon which to indicate the relevance of the examples being examined. Here, Hedley Bull's widely used definition will be adopted. That is to say:

"Disarmament is the reduction or abolition of armaments. It may be unilateral or multilateral; general or local, comprehensive or partial; controlled or uncontrolled".

"Arms Control is restraint internationally exercised upon armaments policy, whether in respect of the level of armaments, their character, deployment or use".⁷

Examples of pre-Hague Conference arms control and disarmament undertakings involving France and which fell within Hedley Bull's definition are set out in Table 1 on page 9 below.

In these and other cases, disarmament and arms control were not primary objectives of the agreements. They were subordinated to the overall settlement of specific conflicts of leading state alignment and realignment within the changing European political order. As such it would be difficult to deduce any sound and definable attitudes on disarmament as aspects of a state's foreign policy during this period. However, by the end of the Nineteenth Century and with the start of the Hague Conferences, disarmament had emerged as an independent aspect of world diplomacy, and in this context French policy began to assume a distinctive and tangible shape.

TABLE 1 *Some pre-World War I examples of arms limitation or demilitarisation involving France (treaties, agreements or negotiations)*

Example	Description
Munster Treaty 30 January 1648	Agreement on the prohibition of construction of new fortifications and the abolition of old ones. ⁸
Franco-Spanish Treaty 7 November 1659	Agreement postulating that fortification of Nancy would be demolished before it is restored, and all artillery & ammunition withdrawn, and the Duke shall not be allowed to fortify it again. ⁹
Utrecht Treaty 13 April 1713	Promise made by France to demolish the fortification of Dunkirk and to fill up its harbour. ¹⁰
Anglo-French Agreement 30 August 1787	Both parties agreed not to increase armaments above peace footing nor to commission more than the 6 warships already commissioned. ¹¹
Disarmament proposal by Louis Phillipe Summer 1831	French Foreign Minister Sebastian proposed a reduction of armed forces to a normal peace footing. ¹²
Disarmament proposal by Napoleon III 4 November 1863	Napoleon observed Europe was crumbling and called for European Congress to settle differences. When Britain reacted negatively, French Foreign Minister M D'ronign de Lilwys replied "Must we renounce without fresh attempts at conciliation the hope of lightening the burden imposed on the nation by the disproportionate armaments occasioned by mutual distrust?" ¹³ Later, in 1867 Napoleon renewed his proposal with Emperor Alexander II of Russia & William I of Prussia but without success. ¹⁴
Napoleon III April 1868	Attempted to convince Prussia to talk disarmament with France in order to avoid conflict. Despite British mediation between the two countries to achieve this objective Prussia declined the offer and war erupted in 1870.

2. France and the Hague Conference

By 1899, when Tsar Nicholas II proposed a conference on disarmament to the nations of the world, French foreign policy had already been intensely preoccupied with efforts to secure an alliance with Russia. But because the Tsar had not consulted French leaders on the proposal beforehand, this was read in Paris as a sign of Russia's reluctance to give much consideration to France's interests.¹⁵ Despite this perception, French Foreign Minister Delcasse - after consultations with his Ministers of War and the Navy - reacted positively to the Tsar's invitation.¹⁶

The Russian proposal for the 1899 Conference which was contained in the Mouravief Circular,¹⁷ included four key ideas perceived as necessary to lessen the burden of the arms race then underway amongst world powers: (1) the reduction of army effectives (ie the number of men under arms) and military expenditure; (2) prohibition of deployment of new firearms, explosives, gun and cannon powders of greater power than that already in use; (3) restriction on the use of powerful explosives, and prohibition upon the discharge of any kind of projectiles or explosives from balloons or by any other means; and (4) prohibition of the use of submarines or diving torpedo-boats, and agreement not to construct future warships armed with rams.¹⁸ All these issues were discussed in detail and with the exception of those questions with a moral aspect, France's attitudes were mainly of refusal and reluctance varying only in tone and emphasis.

Land warfare weapons were the subject of two propositions (both discussed by the Military Sub-commission), one put forward by the Russians and the other by the Dutch Delegation. The Russian approach was based on the following formula relating to infantry rifles upwards:¹⁹

- (1) The minimum weight of the gun shall be 4kg.
- (2) The minimum calibre shall be 6½mm.
- (3) The weight of the bullet shall not be less than 10½ grams.
- (4) The Initial Velocity shall not exceed 720 metres.
- (5) The rapidity of fire shall be kept at 25 shots per minute.
- (6) It is understood that explosive bullets, as well as automatic loading, are prohibited.

The Dutch also proposed a five year moratorium against any improvement which would also change the existing nature, type or calibre of guns then in use.²⁰ The overwhelming majority of participants were not however in favour of such a proposition and consequently the Dutch delegation modified its proposal twice, each time giving more grounds for compromise.²¹ French behaviour during the discussion of guns limitation in the military field was negative vis-a-vis both approaches.²²

However when the question of big naval guns was discussed by the Naval Sub-commission the French delegation emerged strongly in favour of limitation and forwarded their own proposition which read:

"The contracting nations undertake,...not to subject the existing types of cannon to radical transformation similar to that by which the muzzle loader was replaced by the breech loader. In no case shall the calibre now in use be increased".²³

France assumed a negative stance towards ideas concerning the prohibition of the submarine in naval warfare. The French representative argued that "the submarine torpedo had an eminently defensive purpose", and therefore "the right to use it should not be taken from a country".²⁴ Yet France was prepared to join any general agreement prohibiting future construction of war vessels although this was not forthcoming.

A clear selective approach to proposals by the French delegation was also evident in French reaction to proposals regarding limitation of military and naval effectives (ie numbers of men under arms) and military expenditure. When considered in the military field France shared the opinion held by the overwhelming majority of participants who rejected it on technical grounds, yet they contemplated themselves with the following pious resolution:

"The Commission is of the opinion that the restriction of military charges which are at present a heavy burden on the world is extremely desirable for the increase of the material and moral welfare of mankind."²⁵

Yet when this was proposed in the naval field and rejected in the same fashion, France sided with the minority who favoured the proposal and who also were mainly small powers: Japan, The Netherlands and Sweden.²⁶

On other questions like control of the use of explosives and the launching of projectiles from balloons France kept a low profile. She followed the majority of big powers who either adopted an outright rejectionist attitude: eg control over the use of explosives,²⁷ or strived to weaken the stringencies of certain measures keenly supported by the small powers, eg prohibition of the launch of projectiles from balloons.²⁸

Whilst at the First Hague Conference French attitudes oscillated according to whether the question of limitation was naval or military depending upon the type of weaponry concerned and the role attached to it, this seems not to have been the case when approaching certain weapons from a moral angle. Indeed French delegates were quite consistent in this respect. For instance they were of the view that "The use of explosive bullets which expand or flatten easily when penetrating the human body, such as bullets with a hard envelope which does not entirely cover the core or is pierced with incisions, should be prohibited".²⁹ On the same grounds, they supported prohibition of the use of projectiles charged with explosives which spread asphixiating gases. Along with the representative of Austria-Hungary French delegates believed that such a means of death was more cruel than death caused by bullets.³⁰

At the Second Hague Conference in 1907 French attitudes had reversed over questions of limitation of military expenditure and the launching of projectiles and explosives from balloons. On the former issue they were swayed by a need to reduce the burden of military expenditure initiated by Britain whose own motives were to keep Germany's rising naval power in check.³¹ Speaking in the Chamber of Deputies Sarrien, the French premier, urged that military budgets be lessened in accordance with the spirit of the Resolution adopted by the Hague Conference in 1899.³² Secondly the French delegation emerged overtly against any prohibition of the launching of explosives and projectiles from balloons, thus aligning itself with the initial American position at the First Hague Conference. In justification they argued that "the

problem of aerial navigation is progressing so rapidly that it is impossible to foresee what the future holds for us in this regard. One cannot, therefore, legislate with a thorough knowledge of the question. One cannot forbid in advance the right to profit by new discoveries which would not in any way affect the more or less humanitarian character of war, and would permit a belligerent to take effective action against his adversary".³³ But instead of outright prohibition they argued that the Hague Conference regulation of the bombardment of undefended towns, and in particular Articles 25 and 27,³⁴ should be made applicable to the use of such means of war.

Whilst France's technological breakthrough in the test-building of dirigible balloons clearly accounted for their attitudes on the launch of explosives by this means, their overall approach is quite consistent with the guidelines drawn up by Delcasse in consultation with the Ministers of War and Navy and issued to the French delegation of the First Hague Conference. Useful clues towards an understanding of the French Delegation's behaviour can be derived from these guidelines which themselves can be summed up by three points based on the Ministers' study of the Mouravieff Circular:³⁵

- "(1) The French Delegation was requested not to take any initiative with regard to the limitation of naval and military effectives. Should, however, the majority of participants insist on such a limitation the only proposition that would be viable for France's support would be to maintain the status quo of all effectives for a period of five years. Should a proportional limitation of effectives in accordance with the number of population be suggested, the French Delegation would specify that France's population included all her empire and not just the metropolitan.
- (2) With respect to the limitation of effectives or war budgets, the French Delegation should argue that the Russian proposal was not likely to provide a serious framework for such a limitation and technical study of the question was more important. The limitation of military budgets would be impractical in the absence of reliable control and sanctionary measures, which in themselves were incompatible with states' sovereignty.

The introduction of war arms could be of deterrent effect which would bring a more peaceful solution to conflicts. But the use of new engines of destruction, destined to increase the power of armies and fleets, should be acceptable only on the

condition that these inventions would not further the inevitable cruelties of war and the suffering of combatants. With this human thinking the French Delegation should associate itself with any declaration envisaging the prohibition of the use of projectiles, bullets that open up inside the body, or the use of asphixiating projectiles. But a distinction should be made between those which were of such effect by destination and those which were so only by accident.

- (3) The question of the use of submarines in future wars and the launching of destructive engines from balloons constituted a problem not yet completely resolved and as such they could not be usefully considered by the conference.

As to the issue of rams the question fell outside the sphere of the conference's competence, because they constituted only a simple form of construction. But if approached in the context of method of combat by shock, which anyway could be used without resort to rams as such, the French government would regard this as a matter of strategy whose prohibition in principle could not be accepted."

As is clear from these guidelines France was only "prepared" to give ground on moral issues. Why? The answer lies in a combination of factors. To begin with France's chief objective in Europe after the 1871 defeat at the hands of Bismarck was to recover Alsace and Lorraine which she had lost to Germany as a consequence. As one French statesman put it "events will return Alsace-Lorraine to us" and for this reason "all our foreign policy must be subordinated to this end".³⁶ France was too weak to face Germany by herself to achieve this goal and had to try to compensate for such a situation. Winning friends in Europe became both a major objective and a difficult one since Germany was working hard to prevent just that and to keep France in isolation. The other path was for France to make up for its inferiority by expanding her colonial empire which she managed to achieve with an increase from 3 million in 1870 to 60 million by 1914³⁷. In this respect she was encouraged by Germany in order to make her forget L'Alsace Lorraine.

A fundamental contributor to this French foreign policy orientation was the falling numbers of France's population. Since 1850 France's rate of population growth had slowed down compared to that of other European powers, as Table 2 on page 15 below illustrates.³⁸

Furthermore, in the decade immediately preceding the First Hague Conference, France's birth and death rates were, on average, of almost equal amount as shown in Table 2 on page 15 and Graph 1 on page 16 below.³⁹ During the Nineteenth Century Germany increased her population by 32 million, Britain by 26 million, and Russia by 70 million, while France increased hers by only 12 million,

TABLE 2 *Rate of population growth in Germany, France, Britain and Russia between 1850-1910*

	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910
Germany	(35.9)	(38)	(41)	45	49	56	65
France	35.8	37.4	36	37	38	39	39
Britain	27.6	29	31	35	38	41	45
Russia	57	63	77	89	95	103	111

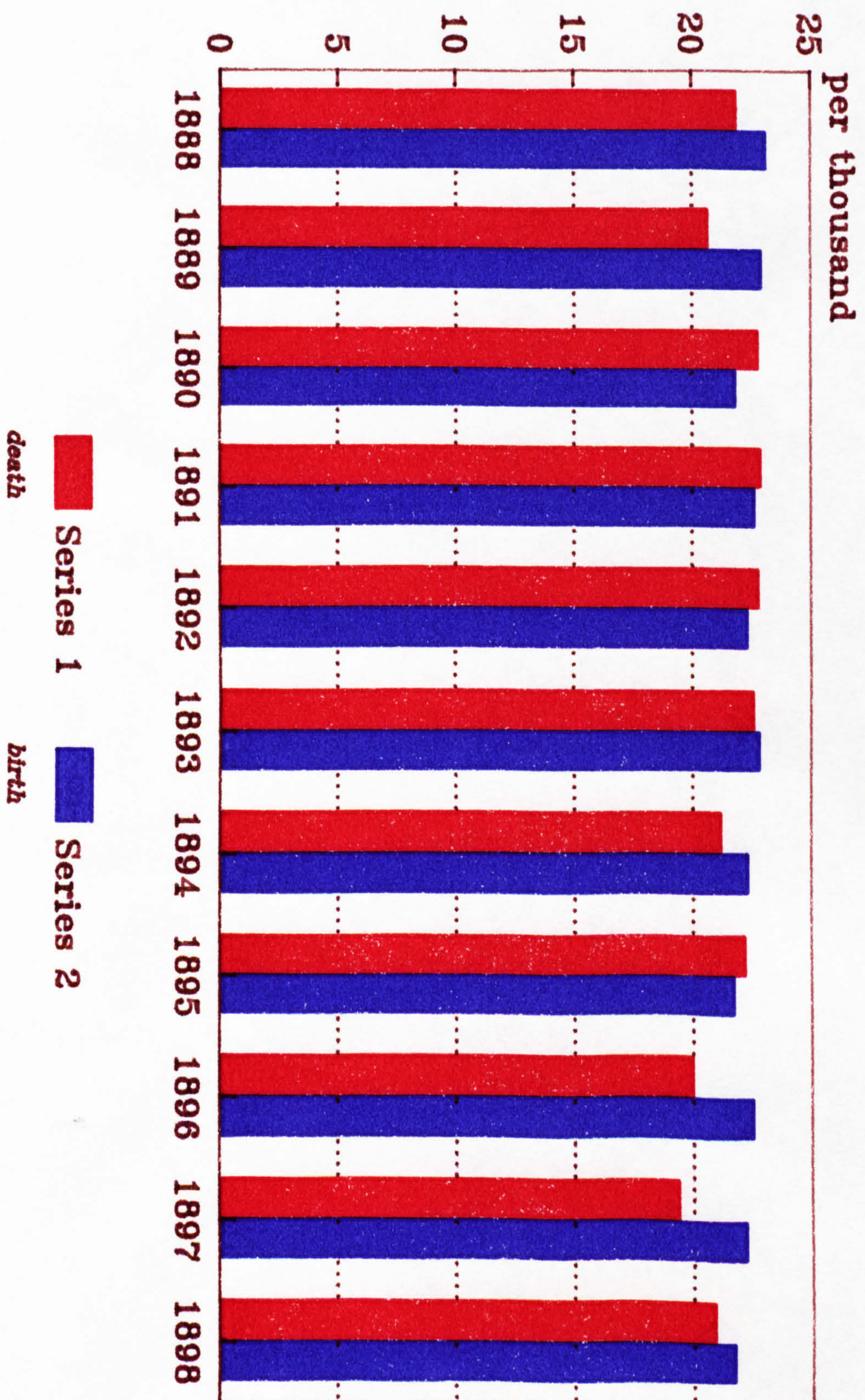
Source: Allan Bullock & F W D Deakin (eds), A J P Taylor "The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918" in Oxford History of Modern Europe, Oxford University Press, 1954, pXXV.

TABLE 3 *French birth and death rates between 1888-1898 (per 1,000)*

Year	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898
Death	21,9	20,7	22,8	22,9	22,8	22,6	21,2	22,2	20,0	19,4	20,9
Birth	23,1	22,9	21,8	22,6	22,3	22,8	22,3	21,7	22,5	22,2	21,7

Source: Peter Fora "State, Economy and Society in Western Europe 1815-1975, Vol II, The Growth of Industrial Societies and Capitalist Economies", MacMillan Press, London, 1987, pp54-55.

Graph 1: French death-birth rates 1888-1898



It is therefore understandable why France remained unyielding on the limitation of naval and military effectives. While in this case such limitation would seem to have worked in France's favour, the then French Minister of War argued that this would be so only in appearance because the measure could in no way prevent those powers with a growing population from organising their reserve forces at any time they wished.⁴⁰ Hence the question of disarmament was hardly compatible with the aforementioned foreign policy objectives which required more effectives and more armaments.

Although defence policy is often the function of foreign policy and thus what has just been said about foreign policy objectives in relation to disarmament could also be said of defence, the distinctive importance of the latter lies rather at the level of its strategy's influence upon bargaining behaviour. Immediately after the defeat of 1871, France set herself the task of rebuilding and revitalising her defence forces.⁴¹ By the end of the century a new strategy with new weaponry for its implementation had been accomplished. This strategy was one of "offensive à outrance", governed by the dictum "to win you have to advance".⁴² To adopt such a strategy is to opt basically for light weaponry, and the French innovation was successfully ahead in this respect. The French army was the first to acquire "the magazine rifle" - the Lebel - which was adopted in 1899. Two years before, the French had started producing the 75mm quick firing field gun, by far the best piece of light artillery in existence at the time and considerably superior to the German 77 gun.⁴³ Thus harmony here did not appear to be of pure chance, but indeed as a result of conscious decision. As one army representative explained in 1909, "You talk to us of heavy artillery! Thank God we have none! What gives the French army its strength is the lightness of its cannons".⁴⁴ Hence the necessity for such strong opposition to artillery guns limitation was understandable.

The French strategy was mainly land based. Since threats to French security were predominantly seen to be coming from the East, ie from Germany, it was the army which possessed the primeordial role of the offensive. To the navy was assigned the role of servant and the defence of the coasts. To perform such a role it was to be constituted of a

mobile force of small torpedos, and the war strategy of squadrons was replaced by the tactics of hit and run. On account of their size Torpedos could operate quite inconspicuously under cover of darkness, although by day they became more vulnerable to the enemy. However the advent of the submarine made up for this strategic vacuum since it had become possible to achieve what small torpedos could not do in daylight: ie hit and run.⁴⁵ The strategic necessity of the submarine explains France's uncompromising attitudes in this respect at the Hague Disarmament Conferences. As Lockery wondered "would it not be a serious loss to suppress (the submarine), which makes our strength"?⁴⁶

The subordination of disarmament to foreign and defence policies and strategy found an echo in French society at large. Disarmament was viewed with suspicion through the eyes of a public who had not forgotten Alsace-Lorraine. As the First Hague Conference got underway many French newspaper editorialists "...hoped that the deliberation on arms limitation would fail. The attempts of pacifist societies, socialists, and suffragette groups to mobilise opinion in favour of the Conference received no support".⁴⁷

After the Second Hague Conference, arms control and disarmament lost momentum in French diplomacy and hardly preoccupied the public mind. This state of affairs continued until after the First World War when disarmament became one of the most pressing issues of international affairs.

CHAPTER ONE

France and Disarmament Prior to World War I

R E F E R E N C E S

1. T N Duprey & G M Hammerman (eds) "A Documentary History of Arms Control & Disarmament", R R Bowker & Company, New York & London, 1973 (p16).
2. See ibid pp22-26. See also Mele L Perkins "The Moral and the Political Philosophy of the Abbé de St Pierre", Librairie E Dioze, Geneva, 1959.
3. Quoted in Maurice Vaisse "Sécurité d'Abord...".
4. For the history of these movements in France see E Potonie Pierre: "Mouvement Pacifique" 1899 and also A C F Beales MA "The History of Peace: A Short Account of the Organized Movement for International Peace", G Bell & Sons Limited, London, 1931.
5. Quoted in Beales, ibid p29.
6. Ibid p79.
7. See Hedley Bull "The Control of the Arms Race: Disarmament and Arms Control in the Missile Age", Institute for Strategic Studies, 1961, p ix. For a comprehensive elaboration on this definition and the relationship between the two concepts see Ken Booth "Disarmament and Arms Control" in J Baylis, Ken Booth, J Garnett & P Williams (eds) "Contemporary Strategy: Theories and Policies", Croom Helm, London, 1975.
8. This was part of the Treaty of Westphalia.
9. See Jenkinson, "A collection of all treaties of peace, alliance and commerce between Great Britain and other powers, from 1648 to 1783", London, 1785, Vol.1, p120.
10. See T N Duprey & G M Hammerman, op cit.

11. This agreement broke down when France decided to support the republicans in Holland against the Prussian backed Stadtholder and Britain sided with the latter. However on 27 October 1787 both parties consented to restore the initial agreement. See A M Gunji Hosono, op cit, pp18-19.
12. European powers reacted positively to this proposal and agreed to begin disarming as from 1 January 1832, and to continue until their armies were reduced to their respective peace establishments. To this end a protocol was signed in 1831 by England, France, Austria, Russia and Prussia which stated: "for the purpose of strengthening the general armaments which have been imposed upon them", they recognised "with a keen satisfaction, after careful examination of the present situation in Europe, that the relations of union and of good harmony happily established among the powers and based upon the independence of the states as well as upon the unalterable principle of the maintenance of treaties, rendered possible today the adoption of a measure which forms the object of the most ardent wishes of their governments, namely, that of a general disarmament", ibid, p66, footnote no.1.
13. Parliamentary Papers (1864), LXVI, pp5-6.
14. Dubois "Des Charges Militaires de la Paix Armée et de la Limitation des Armements", p79.
15. See E Malcolm Carroll "French Public Opinion and Foreign Affairs: 1870-1914". The Century Co, New York & London, 1931, p184.
16. Ministère Des Affaires Etrangères; Documents Diplomatiques; Français: 1871-1914, 1^{re} Serie, 2 Janvier 1899-4 Novembre 1899, Vol 15, Doc No 75, p120. "M Delcasse, Ministère Des Affaires Etrangères, A M De Montebello, Ambassadeur De France a Saint-Petersbourg".
17. Mouravieff was the Russian Foreign Secretary.
18. For the Mouravieff Circular see Ministère des Affaires Etrangères Français, Documents Diplomatiques Français, 1^{re} Serie, Tome XIV, op cit, Document No.304, op cit.
19. See Scott "Proceedings of the Hague Conferences: the Conference of 1899", pp331, 335, 337.

20. The initial Dutch proposition was that "The nations agree not to use in their armies and fleets, during five years from the date of signature of the present documents any other guns than those in use or under consideration. With respect to guns under consideration, only those of an existing type and of a calibre ranging between 6 and 8 mm. shall be allowed. The improvement allowed shall be of such a nature as not to change the type, calibre, or initial velocity now prevailing", *ibid*, p337.
21. See Scott, "Proceedings of the Hague Conference: the Conference of 1899", *ibid*, p345 & 347.
22. *Ibid*, pp339-341.
23. *Ibid*, p363.
24. *Ibid*, pp367-358.
25. *Ibid*, p319.
26. See A M Gunji Hosono, *op cit*, pp96-97.
27. The limitation of the use of explosives, or the deployment of new ones was mainly opposed by the big military powers. See A M Gunji Hosono, *ibid*, p89.
28. The Russian proposal to prohibit the discharge of projectiles or explosives from balloons for a period of ten years was countered by an American proposal for the prohibition of five years only, which was adopted in the end. See *ibid*, p93.
29. *Ibid*, p90, footnote No 1.
30. *Ibid*, p92.
31. *Ibid*, p101.
32. *Ibid*.
33. See Scott, "Proceedings of the Hague Conferences: Conference of 1907", Vol III, p147.

34. See Articles 25 & 27.
35. See Ministere Des Affaires Etrangeres: Documents Diplomatique : Français 1871 - 1914, 1^{ère} Serie, 2 Janvier 1899 - 4 November 1899, Vol 15, Document No 175, p284 "M Delcasse, Ministere Des Affaires Etrangeres, A La Delegation Française a La Conference De La Hague".
36. See E Malcolm Carroll, op cit.
37. See C A Leeds "European History 1789-1914", H & F Handbooks, 2nd edition, Macdonald & Evans Limited, 1979, p132.
38. See A J P Taylor "The Struggle for Mastery in Europe: 1848-1919", Oxford University Press, 1957, p xxxv.
39. See "The Colonial Weakness of France" in "The Nineteenth Century: A Monthly Review, Vol 45, Jan-June 1899, p57. See also Peter Flora "State, Economy and Society in Western Europe 1815-1975: A Data Handbook. Vol II: The Growth of Industrial Societies and Capitalist Economy", MacMillan Press, London, 1987, p54.
40. See M De Freyanet, Ministre de la Guerre, A M Delecasse, Ministre Des Affaires Etrangeres", in Documents Diplomatique Français, op cit, p113.
41. Richard D Challener "The French Theory of the Nation in Arms 1866-1939", Russell & Russell Inc, New York, 1965.
42. See William L Shirer, op cit, p60-63.
43. Ibid, p63.
44. Quoted in ibid, p63.
45. See Rene Jonan "Histoire de La Marine Française: De la Revolution a Nos Jours", Passport, Paris, 1932, p262.
46. See Documents Diplomatique Français, op cit, p107.

47. See Pierre Renouvin & Jean-Baptiste Durosalle "Introduction to the History of International Relations", Frederick A Praeger Inc, 1967, p223.

CHAPTER TWO

Security: The Concept and Means

After the First World War the global situation had undergone drastic change and a new international order was established by the Versailles settlement of the conflict. For France, whilst the new order was satisfactory enough to prevent another invasion episode of the kind which had twice previously befallen her in the space of fifty years (in 1870 and 1914), its durability was not certain. Because of this uncertainty French foreign and defence policies including the question of disarmament were essentially based upon security calculations. To study their approach to disarmament during this period it is therefore necessary, and is the aim of this Chapter, to commence with the question of security. It should be mentioned however, that it is not intended here to provide a full study of the French security problem as this has already been the subject of numerous other studies.' Instead, this Chapter will focus upon two essential points: firstly, the concept of security - ie what French leaders actually meant by security, and secondly, the means they set themselves to guarantee their security.

1. The Concept

This section focuses upon the identification of essential elements of France's security in the post-Versailles era as defined by her politicians and military leaders. These will be preceded by a brief account of the difficulties in coining a common conceptualisation of security, thereby justifying the approach adopted here.

1.1 Definition

Security is a word used widely in diplomatic and military communication, yet which remains at the same time one of the most ambiguous concepts. For example, when two states go to war with each other, they both justify their belligerent behaviour upon the grounds of

security. In terms of abstract logic such claims should cancel each other out and these states should achieve security by each refraining from its belligerent actions. Yet human behaviour does not lend itself easily to abstract logic, and the source of ambiguities of security are complex.²

The literal meaning of the word 'security' is described as the quality of feeling secure, that is feeling free from danger, fear and uncertainty.³ When applied to:

"a nation state it seems to be related to the likelihood of survival, to confidence in the maintenance of the state's boundaries, to the nation's well-being and its ability to preserve its territorial, cultural or ideological integrity".⁴

On the basis of this definition the general concept of security appears to be based upon two elements: the "subjective awareness of an absence of danger to vital interests of a state", and "the existence of means which seem sufficient to meet such a danger should it occur".⁵ The concept is therefore subjective and variable. Further, as Robert E Osgood argued:

"It is not only the subjective nature of security and its dependence on milieu goals that give the conception of national security its protean quality. It is also the broad and intangible character of the national self that is to be secured. The people of the nation personify the state and project upon it ideas of honour and prestige that become as much a part of their vicarious collective personality as are the nation's territory, allies, and vital interest."⁶

In line with this definition of the concept of security, Jean Fabry, one of France's staunch French security-minded leaders of the interwar period, observed that:

"There is not, and there cannot be, any uniform notion of security. Everyone defines it in his own way".⁷

Hence the question, what did the French mean when they claimed their legitimate right to security?

The literal meaning of the French word "sécurité" refers to a situation where there is no danger to be feared and the tranquility of mind that results from it. The word "sécurité" has some synonymity with the word 'sureté' but one should not "Confuse sécurité, the feeling of having nothing to fear and sureté, the state of having nothing to fear"⁹.

The phrase "feeling of fear" is a keynote to the definition of the security image which French leaders built for themselves during the Twenties and which acted as the guiding principle of their foreign and defence policies. Such an image will be identified by looking at the sources of fear which haunted French politicians and military men alike during the post-First World War years.

1.2 Control of the Rhineland

The main source of France's "feeling of fear" was Germany. To many politicians and theorists who lived through the First World War, post-Versailles Germany was a weak, demoralised, and disarmed nation. To see it under any other light would be, in their view, ironic. Yet to the French, however ironic or pathologically obsessive such a view might have been, Germany remained in their eyes a threatening force to be reckoned with. A Senate Report in 1920 made this crystal clear by stating that the Germany of Versailles:

"...is undoubtedly a conquered Germany, but she is also a Germany remaining compact, conserving - even reinforcing her unity; she is a Germany able, no matter what the pretences made,...if she is not watched, of preparing revenge which her power permits".¹⁰

The cause of concern was not, therefore, the present or immediate future but the potential revival of Germany revival and the regaining of her previous power position. As Joseph Paul-Boncour declared in the Chamber of Deputies in 1924,:

"The dangerous years are not the present ones but those which will come after".¹¹

These had been termed the hollow years (*les années creûses*). The essence of the German potential was seen to lay in the elements of unity still operational despite her crushing defeat in the War. These elements were ideological, economic and demographic. Ideologically German people were judged to be aggressive, philosophically bound together and consequently could easily be unified again into a single and powerful entity. A nation in whom militarism was ingrained and virtually impossible to uproot, and thus she would remain "une menace redoutable".¹¹

Combined with these beliefs was also the fact that whilst Germany's economy remained almost intact the French economy was devastated. 7% of French territory which had been overrun during the war, constituted in 1914 the biggest industrialised area of the country. It was then producing 66% of French textiles, 60% of mined coal, and 55% of steel. This same area was inhabited by 10% of the total population and 14% of the industrial population of the whole of France.¹² The losses incurred by this area were disastrous. About 222,132 houses were completely ruined, and a further 342,197 partially destroyed. Industrial production fell considerably. For example in the coal mining industry of the north alone, output fell from 18,662,000 tons in 1913 to 2,433,000 tons in 1920.¹³

However, of all elements of German power potential the imbalance in numbers of population between the two nations weighed like a nightmare on the minds of French leaders. Marshal Foch, in 1919, conceded that whatever political organisation Germany may adopt, there would always be to the East of the Rhine, a German population of between 64 and 75 million subjects united by language and thought, bound together by common interests.¹⁴ France had a population of just less than 40 million.

As was shown in the Chapter One above, concern over the population disparity, began a long time before the First World War had become a constant factor in French foreign and defence policy calculations throughout the interwar period. The substance of the disparity resided in the imbalanced trend of growth of the two populations. As illustrated

by Graphs 2 and 3 on pages 29 and 30 respectively, from 1841-1936 Germany had a higher birth rate and lower death rate compared to France.

Concern over the decline of the French population's growth rate as a parameter of France's foreign policy produced feedback in the sphere of domestic politics, particularly after 1919. It was so disturbing to political leaders almost across the political spectrum that different French governments were unanimous in their tough stance against abortion and birth control. Some extremist patriots went even so far as to claim that:

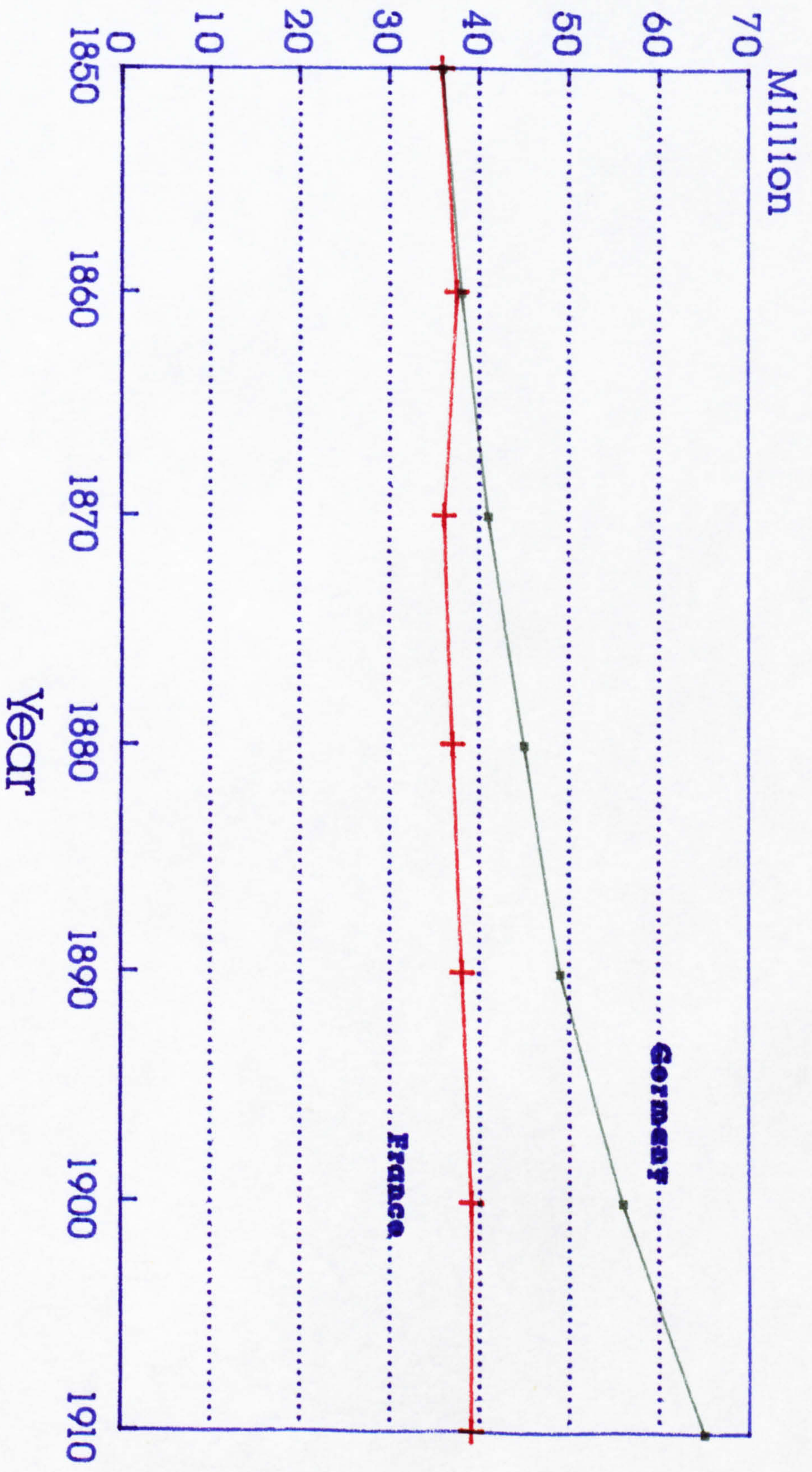
"...birth control propaganda was subsidised by the Germans, and that anyone who sympathised with spreading such information was a willing tool of the nation's enemy.'¹⁵

The conclusion French leaders drew from all this was that although France had been invaded twice by the same intruder (Germany) from the same direction (East), this vanquished intruder remained a potential threat only if the elements of its potential powers were allowed the opportunity to join forces. The way to prevent such a thing happening would be to sit on the Rhine with an observing and constantly watchful eye, and to stifle every attempt to turn that potential threat into a real one.

It was in this context that the Rhine emerged as a pivotal aspect of the French security concept. As expressed by Marshal Foch:

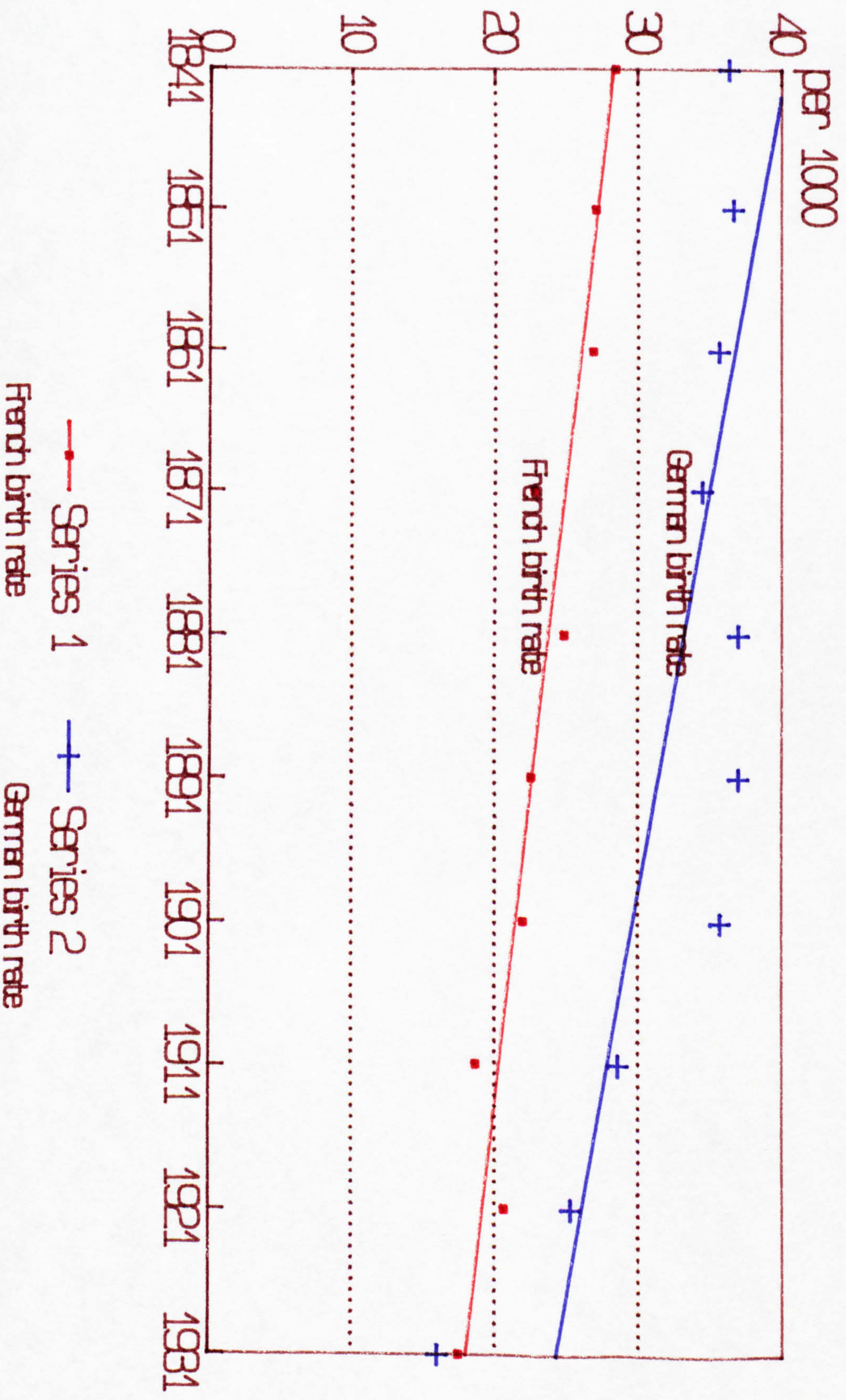
"If we are in control of the Rhine, we are in control of all the Rhineland, if we are not we would have lost everything".'¹⁶

The Rhine was described as the natural frontier behind which France could nurture and flourish her security. Without it France's security would perish. This frontier was valued highly by French leaders, particularly Marshal Foch who saw no trade off for it. His firm stance on this caused Georges Clemenceau'¹⁷ some uneasiness during the negotiation of the Versailles Treaty. The latter, under pressure from the Americans and the British, showed some flexibility in moderating of his position by accepting the temporary occupation of the Rhine in exchange for an Anglo-American guarantee of security, whilst Foch remained in uncompromising mood.

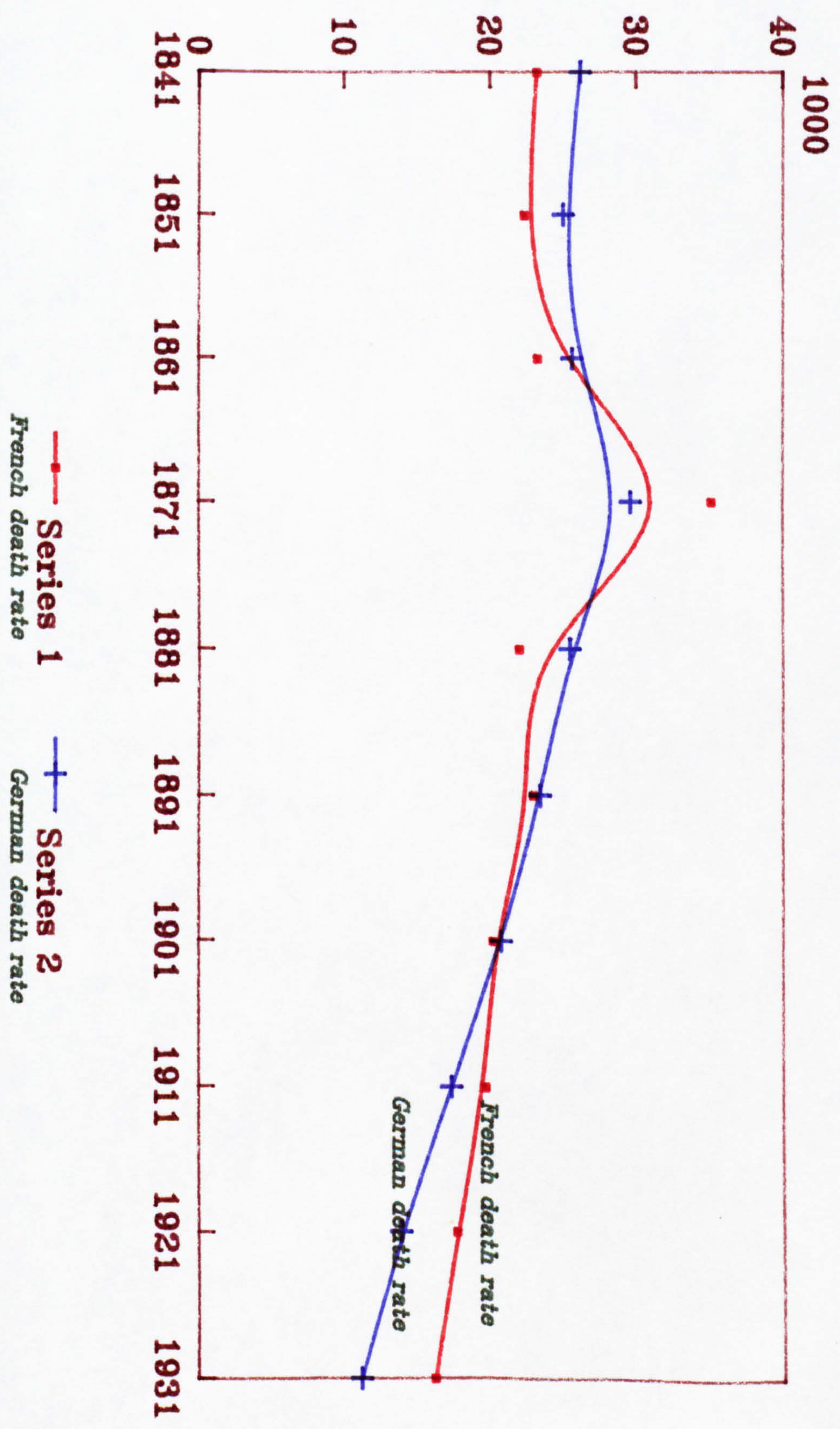


Graph 2: Total growth of French and German populations (1850-1910)

Graph 3: French and German birth rates 1841-1931



Graph 4: French and German death rates 1841-1931



Although he finally had the upper hand, Clemenceau's flexibility over the Rhine question was not confined to Marshal Foch's disagreement. For example, when introducing to the Chamber of Deputies the Treaty which embodied the compromise he had made over the Rhine, Clemenceau faced a hostile reception. The security value of the Rhine therefore was shared widely across the French political spectrum.¹⁸

1.3 'Sécurité Imperiale'

While the control of the Rhine was extremely important and one may conclude that French security was wholly based upon it, this was only so in a narrow sense. Indeed security on the Rhine was inextricably linked with other French interests continentally and internationally in a two-way relationship, ie the achievement of one depended upon the other. Maurice Barres, one of the entrepreneurs of colonialism in France during this period, joyfully praised such a link by stating that:

"One is almost tempted to thank the Germans for opening the eyes of the whole world to the importance of colonial questions...everything has changed. Colonial policy has become a part of our general policy, and the question of the Rhine now closely linked with that of the Congo."¹⁹

However, the importance of the link between the security of the Rhine and that of the empire was a subject which varied considerably between different leaders as did their perception of individual political priorities. Clemenceau, for example, did not judge the question of the French empire to be an issue of such high importance as to prevent France from gaining an alliance with Britain in Europe. He indicated this during negotiations with his British counterpart by stating that:

"...nothing must separate the great powers which the war has brought together. To maintain this entente I shall make all the sacrifices I have to..."²⁰

At the Cannes Conference, Briand agreed with Lord Curzon who told him that:

"If we were going to have a guarantee of [French] security against invasion...this stupid question of Tangier must not be allowed to stand in the way".²¹

Poincaré also, after succeeding Briand, assured Lord Curzon that the security pact between Britain and France overrode all other considerations.²²

Notwithstanding this underevaluation of certain colonial questions by leaders such as Clemenceau, Briand and Poincare in relation to the achievement of some sort of security pact arrangement with Britain, the link between security on the Rhine and that of the empire remained an underlying aspect of French security objectives. What consolidated this was the force of colonialist parties, groups and individuals, whether within or outside the political establishment, who stood firmly to defend security interdependence between the Rhine and the colonies.

Paul Deschanel, immediately after his election to the presidency of the Republic on 17 February 1920, emphatically declared that:

"Not for a moment during my whole life or during the course of the war have I stopped thinking about the East...The Eastern frontier on the one hand, the Mediterranean and the Near East on the other, are the two corner-stones of our foreign policy."²³

The security value of the colonies was viewed both in economic and military terms. Colonialist politicians were not fully satisfied with the formula of "l'Allemagne Paiera", ie reparation, to restore the war-devasted French economy and saw their colonies as a real "visa for recovery".²⁴ The military attractiveness of the colonies, predictably enough, resided in their potential to offset the French population deficiency vis-a-vis Germany. Here even Clemenceau showed a keen interest, who as has been mentioned earlier, was prepared to show lenience on the colonial question in order to achieve a security pact with Britain. He argued that:

"The organisation of large black force was the only method by which France could maintain her military strength in view of her dwindling population".²⁵

French policy in this area is further developed in Chapter Four below.

French admiration for colonial troops stemmed from the latter's fighting character, and their contribution in the defence of France during the First World War where they were thought to have made:

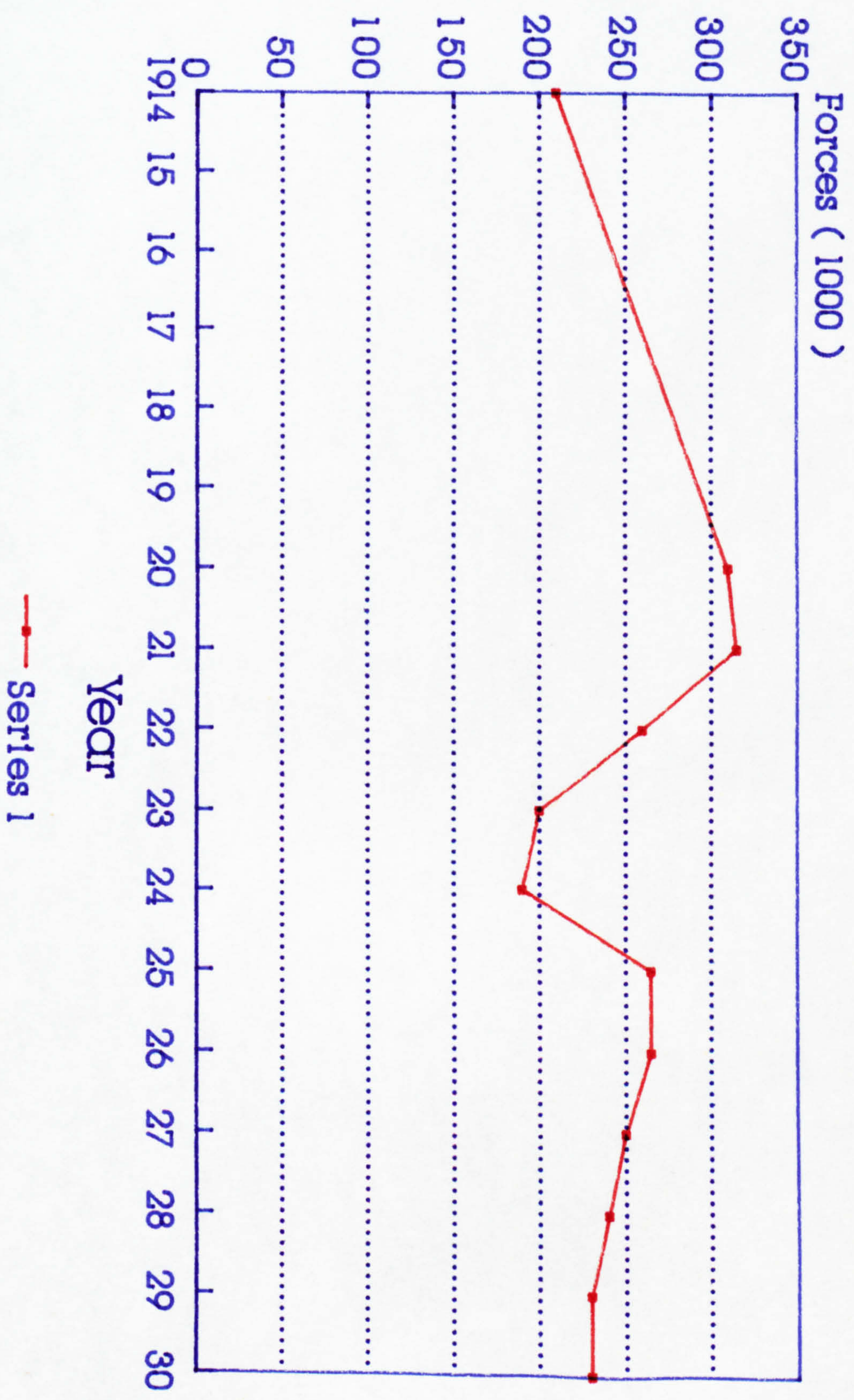
"...the enemy feel the weight of...(their)...iron fist...".

In part, these constituted the reasons for France's presence in the Middle East. General Hutziger, the military commander in Syria, drew attention to the fighting qualities of the Alawis and the Druzes, the two dominant sects of the Syrian society.²⁶

However, the highly-valued role of the colonies in the security of the home country was not however burden-free. In order for them to perform their protective role they needed to be protected themselves: 'sécurité imperiale'.²⁷ France had to keep a large number of troupes stationed in its colonies in Africa and Asia throughout the 1920s. Further, in some colonies such as Morocco, Syria, and equatorial Africa, troop reinforcements were needed in order to deal with internal insurgencies against colonial rule.²⁸ (For an overall evolution of French colonial forces see Graph 5 on page 35 below).

In 1921 War Minister Louis Berthon, in a document addressed to the Prime Minister, summed up France's security obligations as follows:²⁹

- "1. France must:
 - maintain law and order inside the national territory
 - ensure the integrity of her colonial empire
 - protect the integrity of her territory against external invasion
2. International obligations borne by the Versailles Treaty:
 - occupation of the Rhine provinces
 - maintaining law and order in the Sarre
 - maintaining law and order in the Upper-Silesia
 - mandates on Syria, the Camaroon and the Togoland."



Graph 5 : Evolution of French Colonial Forces 1914-1930

1.4 Status quo

France went beyond the control of the Rhine and 'sécurité imperiale' to give her definition of security a global dimension designed to protect the status quo established by the Versailles settlement. As Arnold Wolfers stated, the concept:

"...referred to a state of things in which not only was the danger of a German invasion of French soil to be eliminated: security in the narrow sense of the word - but in which the entire new status quo as established in the peace treaties would be firmly protected..."²⁹

With such a global perception of security France took it upon herself to defend not only her own frontiers:

"but...the frontiers,...of all the people".³⁰

According to Georges Leygues, Minister of Marine, this:

"...was a policy of a great people resolved to defend its positions everywhere where they would be threatened, and to maintain...its world position dictated by its traditions, dignity, interests and rights".³¹

Finally, while Georges Leygue's quote may sound like mere rhetoric the fact is that French leaders were genuine about all the aforementioned security elements as is illustrated by discussion documents and notes about the issue exchanged between French leaders during the period under study.

Having defined the elements of its security, France began to search for the means to protect it. The priority shared by all French leaders was to have the security of their country organised before 1935,³² the year by which the control of the Rhine as stipulated in the Versailles Treaty was to expire.

2. Means of Security

French hopes of achieving the security objectives described in the previous section were based upon three protective military guarantees, obtaining sound and strong alliances; the construction of a collective security system through the League of Nations; and her own military capabilities.

2.1 Alliance Guarantees

One essential lesson learned by French leaders from World War I was that France had come out victorious because of the help received from other countries which had fought alongside her - particularly America and Britain. They concluded from this lesson that in order to protect the security of their country they had to ensure that these allies remained committed to come to their aid whenever such a need arose.

Such peacetime allies were Britain and America. Russia had fallen to the Bolsheviks and its relationship with France became "...one of aloofness if not of hostility".³⁴ Italy, another major European power and an immediate neighbour of France, had left the Versailles Conference dissatisfied and resentful. Its relationship with France remained tense and strained throughout the pre-Hitlerian era.³⁵

The search for Anglo-American peacetime guarantees commenced with the Versailles Settlement. The hard position taken by France over the occupation and demilitarisation of the Rhine zones³⁶ was compromised only after she was offered Anglo-American guarantees.³⁷ Although concluded by separate agreements between France on the one hand, and Britain and America on the other, these guarantees were in essence identical: both stipulated that if Germany contravened the peace treaty clauses regarding the Rhineland, Britain and America would immediately come to France's assistance.³⁸ The agreements containing Britain and America's guarantees towards France were signed on 28 June 1919. However, on 19 March 1920 the United States Senate refused to ratify the Versailles Treaty, and consequently the guarantees promised to France fell through. This blow to France was not just limited to the loss of

American guarantees but included the British also which were conditional upon the former.³⁹

French leaders, whilst seeming to view failure in securing guarantees from Britain and America as a setback, still regarded the situation as being potentially retrievable and thus commenced efforts to rescue the deals. To start with, Aristide Briand - President of the Council - took the opportunity of the Washington Naval Disarmament Conference to try and win back the Americans. Before he departed to Washington he summed up the aims of his mission before the Chamber of Deputies on 21 October 1921. He told his deputies that he would tell the Conference:

"Let everything be done so that [France] will not be threatened in the future...Let all guarantees be given so that France has nothing to fear, so that liberty has nothing to fear, and France will not be the last to limit her armaments. However, we must have these guarantees; they are essential. France must demand them for herself and for the world."⁴⁰

His hopes in this respect were raised by American assurances that France's security was not only important to herself but mattered also to everyone else. Jasseraud, France's Ambassador in Washington, informed Briand by a telegram dated 13 July 1921, that he had briefed the American President on France's security situation and the President had replied that:

"...France's security was of prime importance for her and for everyone; that nothing harmful would be expected from her; and that we could only seek an agreement with her which would be of such a nature as to alleviate her burdens without reducing her security".⁴¹

Another factor which appeared promising to Briand and his conference team was that they understood the purpose of the Conference to be primarily concerned with rivalry between America and the Far East. On this basis they expected it would provide France with the chance of a strong bargaining position from which to sell her support for America at the conference in exchange for security guarantees whilst at the same time gaining the sympathy of American public opinion.⁴² In the event however, Briand and his team ended up in an isolated and "painful"

situation. They did not achieve the sought-after American security guarantees for their country and were also relegated to Italy's naval rank in the final treaty of the conference. This experience was to haunt them throughout the decade whenever naval disarmament, or for that matter disarmament generally, was discussed.⁴³

Failure at the Washington Conference however did not end the French leadership's efforts to regain American security guarantees. Indeed a year later, Georges Clemenceau, a former Prime Minister who enjoyed considerable moral prestige in America, went there to promote the security cause of his country. In his speech on 22 November 1922 at the New York Metropolitan Opera, he complained about Britain's breach of its commitment to security guarantees toward France by stating that: "Mr Lloyd George has not given us his guarantee and the USA was not interested in the implementation of the Treaty". He then drew his audience's attention to:

"...the consequences of an agreement which would prevent German militarism from having access to the Rhine. Nothing would be more in accordance with your views and those of Britain, for, if you give your guarantee to the Rhine frontier, everyone will understand that the less decisive guarantee works in Germany's favour, since we could not attack it ourselves without losing the support of our best friends.

Hence there should be security for all. This would be a beginning of cooperation with a view to preserving peace which, by its certain success, could not fail to produce an effect of appeasement in numerous parts of Europe."⁴⁴

All attempts to win American guarantees having failed, French leaders concentrated their offensive upon obtaining security guarantees from Britain. Their relations with the latter were to dominate European diplomacy for the whole of the interwar period. During the period 1920 to 1930 the issue of these guarantees was discussed between the two countries bilaterally, as well as within the League of Nations forums as detailed under Section 2.2 below.

Bilateral discussions were held in particular between 1919 and 1923 and were continuous.⁴⁵ Most important of these discussions was the Cannes Pact.⁴⁶ Britain offered to place her naval, military and air

forces at France's side in the event of direct and unprovoked aggression against the soil of France by Germany. But France was not totally satisfied with this offer since her underlying desire was to conclude an "extensive alliance" whereby the two countries would be militarily and reciprocally bound together for the defence of each other. France also wanted the alliance to have wider jurisdiction so as to protect the European political order rather than being limited to direct and unprovoked aggression against French soil.⁴⁷ For Britain, the offer of guarantees to France was only a carrot: a marginal issue to achieve other objectives such as the curbing of France's submarine force which the latter refused to have included in the Washington Naval Disarmament Conference. Britain also wanted to bring about a European economic reconstruction so as to include the Soviet Union which it regarded as a potential market for her own economy.⁴⁸ As such the initiative failed: France's aims remained unaccomplished yet unabandoned and her pursuit of Britain shifted to the League of Nations forums.

France's search for allies was not limited to America and Britain, it also included other smaller powers which carried some security value for France against the German threat. To this end she concluded defensive treaties with a number of countries neighbouring Germany with the aim of encircling the latter with hostile states as part of an overall security programme drawn up in 1918.⁴⁹ The implementation of this programme began with the Secret Treaty signed with Belgium in September 1920 which stipulated common action by the two countries in the event of German aggression.⁵⁰ This was followed by the 'entente cordiale' which took the form of a commercial convention and a political agreement signed between France and Poland in February and May 1922 respectively.⁵¹ A third phase of this encirclement was the conclusion of treaties between 1924 and 1926 with countries of the little entente: Rumania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. These alliances were by no means a substitute for the sought after Anglo-American guarantees. Taken at face value such alliances were more of a burden than help to France. For one thing, these small states had competing policies against each other,⁵² and created the risk for France of entanglement in Central European wars. They also created more obligations for France as they relied heavily upon her assistance. They therefore seemed to be incompatible with France's

search for allies to provide external assistance sufficient enough to cope with any German aggression. However, the role of these small state alliances had a different dimension to those sought with America or Britain. Rather than being perceived as a source of direct assistance to France the small state alliances were aimed at preserving the Central European political order and preventing possible German power-building through alliance with Rumania, Czechoslovakia or Yugoslavia. As J Nere argued:

"...Many people in France, even among responsible men in politics and diplomacy, believed that they had found in these men the elements of a new 'reverse alliance' - still necessary in the face of German power, but which could no longer be guaranteed by Russia since the Bolshevik revolution."⁵³

Irrespective of the value placed by French leaders upon this 'reverse alliance' it is certain that it did not fulfil their security aspirations and could not be regarded as a satisfactory substitute for the security guarantees which they desired to obtain.

2.2 Collective Security

A central role sought by French leaders for the League of Nations was its protection of the security of its members. The material form they envisaged for this role was that the League be equipped with a military force so as to enable it to thwart war aggression and ensure peace. While this provision was adamantly opposed by Britain and America and was not included in the League Covenant,⁵⁴ France continued to press for League-organised security.

The first initiative taken in this respect was the organisation of mutual assistance⁵⁵ engineered by Henry De Jouvenel, which became the cornerstone of collective security. France's aims in the Treaty of Mutual Assistance were largely to legitimise the alliance system, which had been condemned in the aftermath of the war, and make it acceptable to the League of Nations as a means of security. Britain refused to have a part in the Treaty since she perceived its alliance character to represent a revival of "militarism".⁵⁶ Colonel Requin, French delegate to the League

of Nations, regarded the reason for British rejection of the Treaty as simply her systematic opposition to any project likely to trouble traditional British policy on the continent. According to Requin, the motto of this policy was "Do not get involved in advance keep your hands free".⁵⁷

The failure of the Treaty of Mutual Assistance was followed shortly afterwards by another French initiative which was based on the famous trilogy: Arbitration-Security-Disarmament, the Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of Disputes between states adopted in October 1924. According to Benes, one of the engineers of the Protocol, its purpose "...was to make war impossible, to kill it, to annihilate it".⁵⁸ But that aim was not to be. Only fourteen members signed it. Britain, then under new conservative government led by Austin Chamberlain, was one of those countries which rejected the Protocol.

A year later in 1925, Britain succeeded in bringing France face to face with her enemy - Germany - to conclude the Locarno agreement. Whilst inspiring a more relaxed political atmosphere Locarno did not totally wash away France's fears of insecurity. She went on searching for guarantees and in 1928 she concluded the Paris Pact, also known as the Kellogg-Briand Pact, which renounced war as an instrument of national politics. With this Pact Briand aimed to appease American public opinion which was hostile to France and bring America into European affairs as an ally.⁵⁹ While reducing the risks of conflict the Pact did not allay French security worries⁶⁰ and by the end of the decade, French hopes of constructing a collective security system had not materialised.

2.3 Own Military Capabilities

If France's military capabilities of the 1920s are taken at face value the inevitable conclusion to be drawn is that her misfortunes in achieving alliances and a collective security system were not important because she did not need these in the first place. France came out of the First World War as one of the strongest powers in the world. Her officers were called upon to reorganise the armies of other nations⁶¹ such as Czechoslovakia and Poland. Her professional officers, graduates

of the Military School (L'Ecole Militaire de Guerre), were described as unmatched anywhere else in the world.⁶² Such military strength led to her being labelled a militarist nation yet despite this, French leaders were never complacent. From the outset of the era of peace they began a military reorganisation based on the need to arrange the nation's capabilities so as not to be a drain upon its resources whilst at the same time meeting its security requirements.⁶³

The evolution that followed ran into a number of difficulties affecting military manpower, ie effectives, planning and material.

Difficulties faced with regard to effectives related to military conscription and the need to shorten the period of military service. This was understandably a very popular demand. After four years of war during which the country had incurred considerable human and material losses and Frenchmen had suffered hardships unprecedented in their lives, the need for a relaxation of conscription appealed to nearly every segment of the political spectrum. The issue was accepted by almost every leader although not without an awareness of its logical consequences, particularly since Germany appeared from the outset unwilling to implement the clauses of the Versailles Treaty. Initial military legislation seemed to reflect this state of opinion, attempting to prevent extremity whether it be in favour of total relaxation or preaching harshness.⁶⁴

The general trend was at first in favour of a period of military service shorter than the three years introduced in 1913. An eighteen month term was acceptable to the Cabinet as a whole apart from Andre Lefevre who was appointed War Minister in January 1920. That October he proposed a two year term of military service arguing in justification of his proposal he argued that an eighteen month term was not adequate to provide enough manpower for France to implement the Versailles Treaty and also guard its security against Germany, which far from disarming was manufacturing arms and ammunition.⁶⁵ But he neither convinced the Chamber Army Commission nor his own Cabinet colleagues, including Prime Minister Alexandre Millerand a friend to whom he owed his Cabinet appointment. Millerand told him that one should not be so fanatical

about maintaining the burden of a two year military service requirement when it was not necessary. The debate continued throughout October and November, at the end of which and after pressure from his colleagues, Lefevre reluctantly accepted the principle of eighteen months as the required term of military service.⁶⁶

One would have thought that such a line of argument by Lefevre would be attractive to military leaders but the Supreme War Council (Le Conseil Superior de La Guerre) supported the government by a majority. Although people like Marshal Foch shared Lefevre's pessimistic perception of Germany, he remained silent. The government did however make the implementation of an eighteen month term of military service conditional upon certain measures of military reorganisation. At the time specific measures of this nature had already been introduced: military service was reduced to two years and included in Bills applicable to the 1921 and 1922 classes while concurrently, various other finance Bills were making a start in the reorganisation of the armed forces. The preconditions of the military reorganisation before the implementation of the eighteen month term of service were that:

"...the new term of service would be dependent on a substantial increase in the number of career military men (not including officers), native Africans or Indo-Chinese serving under the colours, and civilian employees replacing soldiers in essentially non-military jobs".⁶⁷

Lefevre's dissent over the government proposal led to his resignation in December 1920. But when the government subsequently brought the legislation before the Chamber of Deputies it found itself defending the very principles upon which Lefevre had fought this proposal. The reason was that the government found itself confronted by radical socialists and other deputies who were counterproposing further reductions to decrease the term of service to one year or even less.⁶⁸ However, the government was finally adopted although it did not altogether dissipate the pressure for bringing the period of military service down to one year which was later incorporated into the 1928 legislation of military reorganisation. Like its predecessor of 1923, the legislation of 1928 was accepted by the Conseil Supérieur de La Guerre

but on condition that the total number of military career officers be increased to 106,000, that there be additional recruitment of 15,000 policemen (agents militaires), an increase in the number of civilian employees to 30,000, and an extra 15,000 mobile republican guards.⁶⁹ The implementation of these preconditions was to be completed by 1930.

Yet neither of the preconditions stipulated in 1920 and 1928 were ever carried out to the satisfaction of the military leaders. By 1922 it appeared that the economic situation was not conducive to an increase in professional military men, with low pay and uncertainties about retirement benefits hindering the recruitment of the required numbers of cadres. The Conseil Supérieur de La Guerre argued that the situation should not prevent the implementation of shorter military service.⁷⁰ Originally the military acceptance of eighteen months' service had been based on the understanding that 100,000 professional soldiers, excluding officers, would be recruited. In fact the figure never rose much above 70,000. Similarly the condition agreed to by the government in the 1928 legislation was not totally fulfilled.⁷¹ After the second legislation came into force the evolutionary trend of effectives stood as shown in Table 4 below.⁷²

TABLE 4: *Evolution of military service and its impact on effectives*

Year	1913	1914	1921	1924	1931
Service period	2 years	3 years	3 years	18 months	12 months
Effectives	747,000	979,000	837,500	674,000	608,270

While the drop in the total number of effectives from 1924 to 1931 is significant the French army was still in fact the biggest in the world after the Soviet Union which had 900,000 men.⁷³ But to French leaders and the military in particular, the reduction was a sacrifice not to be underestimated and one which was constantly invoked in French disarmament political discourse.

In addition to a reduction in the number of effectives due to shortened military service, existing military personnel endured a hard socio-economic existence. Their pay was low and their living conditions bad. This situation was particularly exacerbated during 1925 and 1926 - years of acute inflationary difficulties. As a result, dismay and demoralisation was prevalent in the army corps:

"The Press carried stories of officers whose wives were forced to work, who themselves were compelled to find a second job, or who were separated from their families because they could not afford the expense of moving the household".⁷⁴

Others "could not bear the cost of settling in Paris for the two years necessary to follow the course at the Ecole Supérieure de Guerre" and consequently the number of applicants for military studies dropped. Furthermore, for those who entered or remained in the profession, promotion was slow. It was therefore natural for such a situation in the French army to cause some military leaders and strategists to raise the alarm. In 1926 one General complained that the army of peacetime had undergone an organisational damage that would make its task impossible to accomplish.⁷⁵ Another similarly-voiced warning claimed that the French army was at the edge of the grave.⁷⁶ By the end of the decade French military leaders assessed that if the army carried in this manner it risked ending up as an expensive façade quite unsuitable for war.⁷⁷

The other area in which French military capabilities encountered difficulties was in the elaboration of mobilisation plans to confront any German invasion. This issue constituted a major preoccupation for French leaders. The first mobilisation plan introduced to this effect was developed in 1920 and became operational in 1921.⁷⁸ The plan was offensive-oriented and envisaged the use of two fronts - those of the Franco-Belge and the Franco-Czechoslovak-Polish - to strike into the German heartland. Although at this time Czechoslovakia had no military alliance with France, it was involved through its own mobilisation plan known as 'Plan N' prepared following a French military mission to Prague and calling for:

"a military advance into Germany aiming at a junction with the French in Bavaria".⁷⁹

Plan P remained operational from June 1921 to March 1923 with a fundamental projection of French advances from the left bank of the Rhine aiming at "Germany's two closest industrial centres, the valleys of the Ruhr and the Main".⁸⁰ However in 1924 a new plan known as 'Plan A' was introduced. It was formulated amidst two important events - the Rhur occupation, and the introduction of the eighteen month term of military service. This plan called:

"for mobilising a slightly greater number of divisions whose aim would still have been a multiple crossing of the Rhine". But it was outdated before a year had elapsed.⁸¹

Two reasons accounted for this, firstly the government was leaning internally towards a one year military service requirement; secondly and more importantly, the country's colonial difficulties necessitated reconsideration of her army's mission. By this time France had more than 200,000 soldiers serving abroad. Both reasons introduced an element of uncertainty with regard to France's ability to meet the required number of effectives necessary for Plan A and the defence of the metropole generally should its plans continue to be offensively oriented. Military leaders found it therefore necessary to revise Plan A by assigning their forces at home a "protective posture for the defence of the national territory".⁸² The gradual move from offensively oriented mobilisation plans towards a total defensive reached its conclusion in 1929, when one year military service came into effect. Plan B, drawn up at a later date, derived its basis from that legislation. It assigned French troops stationed in the Rhineland at the outbreak of hostilities the role of merely "beating a retreat on successive lines of withdrawal".⁸³

The situation of French military capabilities with regard to military hardware varied between the three forces of the army, navy, and airforce. This variation is illustrated by Table 5 on page 48 and Graph 6 on page 49 below, which represent a summary of the expenditure on new material for each of the three forces.

TABLE 5 *Spending on new material in constant millions francs³⁴*

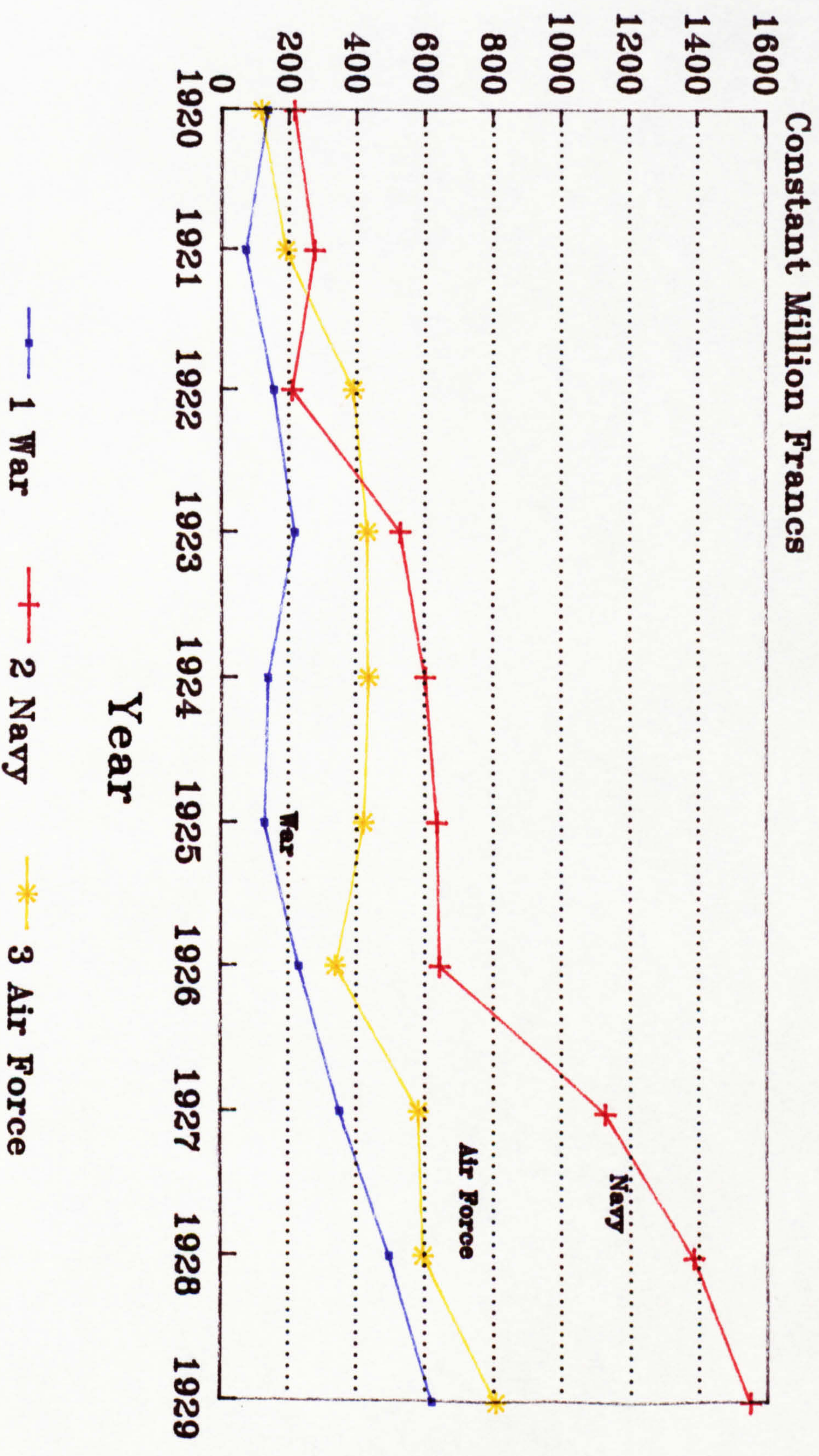
Year	War Ministry	Ministry of Marine	Airforce
1920	137	216	119
1921	74	276	194
1922	157	210	392
1923	219	529	434
1924	140	604	439
1925	130	636	422
1926	232	643	339
1927	351	1127	583
1928	497	1385	597
1929 - 1930 (12 months)	621	1551	808

Source: Robert Frankenstein "Le Prix du Réarmement Français, 1935-1939", Publication de La Sorbonne, Paris, 1982.

As Table 5 and Graph 6 demonstrate, the navy had the lion's share of expenditure on material resulting in an increase of naval material, expressed in terms of tonnage, from 500,000 in 1922 to 681,808 in 1930.³⁵ Among the reasons which constituted the driving force behind French naval renovation in the 1920s, two were fundamental: the Washington Naval Conference and a special budgetary method. The relegation of France to the status of Italy at the Washington Conference was seen by French leaders, and particularly the military, as degrading to France which had been considered a major naval power only a few years before. The injury to France's pride set in motion a naval process of renovation. A special method of budgeting, separate from conventional yearly budgeting, was established. Both factors are detailed further in Chapter Four below.

With regard to the army, as a consequence of the War it had inherited a large amount of material (see Chapter Four below), and was to a large extent sufficiently equipped to meet any immediate eventualities. Yet it did face the problem of how to keep up with technological progress so as not to let its military hardware fall behind that of other nations

Graph 6: expenditure on new material 1920-1929



and in particular, Germany. Conscious of this, in 1920 the Supreme National Defence Council (Le Conseil Supérieur de La Defense Nationale), began to adopt procurement programmes intended to keep the army's hardware level with technological progress.⁸⁶ These plans were not matched by achievement: very little modernisation was carried out and the majority of the army's hardware throughout the 1920s was pre-war dated.⁸⁷

The factors responsible for this situation were both of an internal and external nature. Internally, the strategic defensive choice based on constituting a nation in arms⁸⁸ required only a minimum effort and the reorganisation of 1927-28 was consonant with this choice.⁸⁹ Equally important were the financial strains borne by economic difficulties. Indicative of the pressure to halt the military drain on the nation's resources was the succinct reply given by Herriot who said

"Before finding out whether we live rich or poor, we must find out whether we are going to be alive at all".⁹⁰

The bureaucratic organisation was not helpful either. The responsibility for arms procurement in 1914 was assigned to a special ministry, the "Ministry of Armaments". After the war, however it was reassigned to the Artillery Department (Direction de l'Artillerie) as it had been before 1914. This provided a recipe for hostility from the military leadership whenever it had the upper hand in procurement programmes, and consequently a lack of provision and planning prevailed throughout the 1920s.⁹¹

Externally, the French invasion of the Ruhr and revolts in Morocco and Syria added another military and economic burden at a time when the French economy was experiencing difficulties. In the words of General Debeney:

"By a singular misfortune events rushed across our path: the rising in Morocco and Syria necessitated supplementary credits at the very moment when the uninterrupted fate of the franc was endangering public finance".⁹²

This situation was blamed for creating a breach in the process of modernisation.⁹³

As to the airforce, France emerged from the War as a leader in military aeronautics and the superiority of its fleet in number as well as category was unmatched by any other nation.⁹⁴ This superiority scared Britain and constituted a major preoccupation for British leaders⁹⁵ (see Chapter Five below). However, France's airforce superiority was not maintained during the 1920s. A number of factors accounted for this. Since Germany had been deprived of its airforce the importance of the French air fleet was generally regarded by France's leaders as subservient to the army and navy. Administratively it was part of the Ministry of War, upon which it remained dependant even after the creation of the Air Ministry in 1928.⁹⁶ In addition, its orientation was mainly geared to civilian use with minimum effort made towards military development.⁹⁷

The conclusion which this Chapter draws is that the French concept of security as defined by its leaders in the post-Versailles era was based on three challenges. Firstly, Germany was the main and immediate threat not only to France but to the whole of the European order and stability, and this despite it having been disarmed. The roots of such a threat lay in Germany's large population, its strong industrial base, and its militarist ideology which held the whole nation together. The key to keeping Germany under check was seen to reside in the control of the Rhineland.

Secondly, France had to protect her colonial empire because her security on the Rhine depended on the security of the empire itself. As France was in an inferior position to Germany with regard to the number of population, the colonies were seen to be a valuable source with which to plug this gap.

Thirdly, if France was to remain in the privileged position in which the settlement of Versailles had placed her vis-a-vis Germany, the whole status quo of that international system had to be protected and

maintained. That is why its leaders stipulated protection of all the frontiers of the whole world.

The means envisaged by France for the implementation of such a three-dimensional security concept consisted of building alliances, a collective security system and reliance upon her own military capabilities. These means did not prove to be easily obtainable.

Britain and America were not interested in being drawn into any alliance system having condemned such a notion as a thing of the past, and because they did not share France's view of a European peace based upon her own conception of security. Hence the failure of the Versailles treaties of military guarantees, the treaty of mutual assistance with Britain, and the Geneva Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes. The pacts which had been concluded, ie Locarno and Briand-Kellog, did not provide any of the military guarantees desired by France.

In the end France had only her own military capabilities available with which to protect her territory yet even these were not easily controllable. With the exception of the renovation of the navy, the army and airforce experienced difficulties of political, economic and strategic nature. While the airforce was ignored mainly for strategic considerations, the army was struck by a number of setbacks which were beyond the control of the military leadership, eg the falling number of effectives due to shorter military service, and hard economic realities exacerbated by mutinies in various corners of the Empire.

During the 1920s France was unable to match her means with the concept of security she defined for herself. This failure constituted a constant parameter of French foreign and defence policy of that era, and was the main platform upon which the French disarmament approach was founded.

CHAPTER TWO

Security: the Concept and Means

R E F E R E N C E S

1. See for example, Arnold Wolfers "Britain and France Between Two Wars", op cit.
2. For detailed analysis of the concept of security see Arnold Wolfers "Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics", The John Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1962, pp147-165; SIPRI (Year Book) 1977, pp51-60; Edward A Kolodziej and Robert Harkavy "Developing States and the International Security System", in International Affairs, Vol 34, No.1, Spring-Summer, 1980, pp59-87; and Richard H Ullman "Redefining Security", in International Security, Vol 8, No.1, Summer 1983, pp129-155.
3. See Webster's Third New International Dictionary, G & G Merriam, Springfield, Massachusetts, 1966, p1178.
4. SIPRI Yearbook 1977, p56.
5. Ibid, p56.
6. Robert E Osgood, "Limited War Revisted", Boulder, 1979, p103.
7. Jean Fabry "Anglo-French Negotiations", quoted in W M Jordan, op cit, p112-113.
8. Larrousse, Modern Dictionary quoted in Daniel Yergin "Shattered Peace: The Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State", Penguin Books, 1977, p193.
9. See Senate Foreign Affairs Report of 23 June 1920. Journal Officiel, Documents Parlementaires, Senat.1920.Annexe No.266, p257. Louis Berthou, War Minister, wrote in a document dated 12/9/1921: "Dans l'etat actuel de la Politique Européene l'integrité de notre territoire ne peut-être menacée que par l'Allemagne", Archives Diplomatiques, Serie Y International, Dossier No.499, p58.

10. For Joseph Paul-Boncour's statement see Journal Officiel, Debats Parlementaires, Chambre des Deputes, 1924, p3103.
11. See Documents Diplomatiques Français, Garanties de Sécurité, p10.
12. See Jacques Chastenet "Histoire de la Troisième République: Sang, Insouciance et Illusions", Hachette Literature, Librairie Hachette, 1952, p162.
13. Ibid, pp162-163.
14. Marshal Foch, op cit, pp10-11.
15. For detailed analysis of government attitudes towards birth control, see Judith M Hughes, "To the Maginot Line: The Politics of French Military Preparedness in the 1920s", Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 1971, p20-21.
16. Ministère Des Affaires Etrangères: Doc. Dip., Docs relatifs Aux négociations concernant les Garanties De Sécurité Contre une agression De l'Allemagne, 10 Jan 1919 - 7 Dec 1923, pp1-55.
17. See Jere King "Foch Versus Clemenceau" Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1960. Walter A McDougall "France's Rhineland Diplomacy, 1914-1924: The Last Bid for a Balance of Power in Europe", Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1978, p49 and 64.
18. See Judith M Hughes, op cit pp23-24.
19. Maurice Barres: quoted in C M Andrew & A S Kanya-Forstner "France Overseas: The Great War & the Climax of French Imperial Expansion", Thames & Hudson, London, 1981, p209.
20. Cited in ibid, p190.
21. Ibid, p233.
22. Ibid, p233.
23. Ibid, p213.

24. Ibid, p207-236.
25. See ibid, p191, and also Shelby Cullom Davis S E "The French War Machine", Allen & Unwin Limited, London, 1937, p31.
26. Christopher M Andrew & A S Kanya Forstner, op cit, p236.
27. Colonel A Grasset "Charges Imperials: Les Empires Coloniaux Devant le Probleme du Désarmement", in L'Illustration 29 Août 1931, p8.
28. Ibid, p8.
29. Arnold Wolfers "Britain and France Between the Two Wars", op cit, p20.
30. André Tardieu, quoted in ibid, p18.
31. Jacques Raphael-Leygues "Georges Leygues: Le Père de La Marine", Editions France-Empire, Paris, 1983, p228.
32. Louis Berthou, document dated 12/9/1921, Archives Diplomatiques, Serie Y International, Dossier No.499, pp56-57.
33. Henry De Jouvenel "La Paix Française, témoignage d'une génération", Editions des Partiques, Paris, 1932, p185.
34. See A Wolfers "Britain and France Between the Two Wars", op cit, pp142-152.
35. Ibid.
36. Thus France's hard position called for:
- a) La Sécurité commune des démocraties occidentales et d'outre-mer exige que L'Allemagne ne puisse pas recommencer L'attaque brusquée de 1870 et 1914.
 - b) Pour empêcher L'Allemagne de recommencer cette attaque, il faut interdire à ses forces l'accès de la rive gauche du Rhin et fixer au fleuve sa frontière occidentale.
 - c) Pour lui interdire cet accès, il faut occuper les ponts du fleuve.

Par le moyen, et par le moyen seul:

- a) L'Allemagne sera privée de sa base offensive;
- b) Les démocraties d'Occident trouveront une bonne protection défensive résultant, en premier lieu de la largeur de fleuve (obstacle à une attaque brusquée par tanks, gaz, etc), ensuite, de sa direction rectiligne (obstacle à une attaque enveloppante).

See "Memoire du Gouvernement Français sur La Fixation Au Rhin de La Frontiere Occidentale de L'Allemagne et L'occupation Interalliee des ponts du Fleuve", Document No.2, dated 25 February 1919, in Ministère Des Affaires Etrangères "Documents Diplomatiques, Documents Relatifs Aux Negociations Concernant Les Garanties de Securité Contre Une Aggression de L'Allemagne" (10 Janvier 1919 - 7 December 1923), Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, p20.

- 37. The compromise reached in this respect was incorporated in Articles 42, 43 and 429 of the Peace Treaty.
- 38. For the texts of the two agreements see Ministère Des Affaires "Documents Diplomatiques, Documents Relatifs aux Negociations Concernants Les Garanties de La Sécurité...", op cit, pp56-60.
- 39. The preamble of the Franco-British Treaty included the following qualifying clause: "Considérant que sa majesté Britannique est desirée, sous réserve de l'assentiment de son parlement et pourvu qu'une obligation analogue soit prise par les Etats Unis d'Amerique, de s'engager à Soutenir Le Gouvernement Français dans le cas d'un acte d'agression non provoqué dirigé par L'Allemagne Contre La France;", in ibid, p.56.
- 40. See Briand's speech appended as Document No.8 in J Nere "The Foreign Policy of France from 1914 to 1945" Routledge & Kegan Paul, London & Boston, 1974, p273.
- 41. See Telegram from Jasseraud, No.755-759, dated Washington 13 Juillet 1921. In Archives Diplomatiques, Serie Y, Dossier no.503, (27 Mai au 15 Novembre 1921).
- 42. See Survey of American Foreign Relations for 1928, quoted in Giovanni Engely "The Politics of Naval Disarmament", Williams & Norgate Limited, London, 1932, p3.
- 43. See for example, Note apportée par Mr Luis Aubert (Envoyé à Mr Fromageot), dated 21 February 1925, entitled "La France et le projet d'une Nouvelle Conference Du Desarmement Naval A Washington", in Archives Diplomatiques, Serie Y, Dossier no.502,

- (17 Fevrier 1925 - 4 Mars 1929), p13-16. This note opposed a Second Washington Conference called for 1925, and suggested a general naval disarmament instead, reminding of France of its bad experience at Washington in 1921.
44. Georges Clemenceau: "What I told the Americans", in L'Illustration, 9 December 1922.
 45. For full details of these negotiations see Ministere des Affaires Etrangeres "Documents Diplomatiques, Documents Relatifs Aux Negociations Concernants Les Garanties de la Sécurité Contre Une Agression de L'Allemagne", (10 Janvier 1919 - 7 December 1923), op cit.
 46. See ibid, pp90-152.
 47. See in addition to ibid, Edouard Bonnefous "Histoire Politique de La Troisième République, Tome 3: L'Après-Guerre (1919-1924)", Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1959, p275-278.
 48. See Edouard Bonnefous, ibid, p277; see also J Nere, op cit, p30.
 49. See "Programme of Security" drawn up by the French government in November 1918 for the guidance of the French delegation at the Peace Conference, in J W Wheeler-Bennett, "Information on the Problem of Security (1917-1926)", George Allen & Unwin Limited, London, 1927, p36.
 50. Ibid, p41.
 51. Ibid, Appendix A, p233.
 52. For example Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia preferred the annexation of Austria by Germany rather than to see the return of the Habsburg Empire.
 53. See J Nere, op cit, p43. For further analysis of this alliance see P Wandycz "France & Her Eastern Allies 1919-1925", University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1962.
 54. See for example F P Walters "A History of the League of Nations", Oxford University Press, Great Britain, 1965, pp61-62.

55. For the background information on the plan for the Treaty of Mutual Assistance see C K Webster & Sydney Herbert, op cit, 1933, pp150-153.
56. C K Webster & Sydney Herbert, op cit, p151.
57. See E Requin "d'Une Guerre a L'autre (1919-1939), Souvenirs", Charles-Lavauzelle & Co, Paris, 1949, p70.
58. Quoted in C K Webster & Sydney Herbert, op cit, p130.
59. See Maurice Vaisse, op cit, p33.
60. See for example Georges Leygues who pointed out the following prevailing difficulties:
- "- Possibilité de remise en discussion, tôt ou tard, du traité de Versailles
 - "- Mouvement d'unification des races Germaniques en Europe Central (Ausschluss).
 - "- Tendance marquée d'une entente Germano-Italienne.
 - "- Situation interieure de la Yougoslavie.
 - "- Imperialisme de L'URSS.
 - "- Efforts de L'Italie vers un rapprochement avec L'Espagne.",
- in Jacques Raphael-Leygues, op cit, p250.
61. See Maurice Vaisse, op cit, p58.
62. Loustaunnnan-Lacun "Memoires d'un Français Rebelle 1914-1948", Editions Robert Laffont, Paris, 1948, p54.
63. Journal Officiel Documents, 23 June, 1920, No.266, p257, cited in Richard D Challener, op cit.
64. See J M Hughes, op cit, p112.
65. Ibid, p114.
66. For more details on the debate which went on behind closed doors see Senate Army Commission, Proces-Verbal, 1920; Echo de Paris, 8 October 1920; 28 October 1920; 15 November 1920; 17 November 1920, 18 November 1920.
67. Judith M Hughes, op cit, p116.

68. See *ibid*, p125.
69. J Monteilhet "Les Institutions Militaires de La France (1914-1932): De La Paix Armée A La Paix Désarmée", Libraires Felix Alean, Paris, 1932, p407.
70. See Senate Army Commission, *Proces-Verbal*, 19 October 1922.
71. See General M Gamelin, "Servir", Vols I, II, III, Paris, 1946, 1947, p194.
72. Maurice Vaisse, *op cit*, p74.
73. *Ibid*, p74.
74. Judith M Hughes, *op cit*, pp168-169.
75. General Duval "La crise de notre organisation militaire" in *Revue de Paris*, 33, No.8 (15 April 1926).
76. Jirgi "L'armée Française Vivra" quoted in Maurice Vaisse, *op cit*, p59.
77. Maxime Weygand "Mémoires II: Mirages et Réalité", Flammarion, Paris, 1957, p.350.
78. For a detailed analysis of this plan see Judith M Hughes, *op cit*, pp83-87, and also: General P E Tournoux, "Défense des Frontières: Haut Commandement-Gouvernement 1919-1939", Paris, 1960, p333. For the relationship between this plan and the Franco-Belgian Alliance see: Jean Marie D'Hoop "Le Marechal Foch et La negotiation de L'Accord Militaire Franco-Belge de 1920", in *Melanges Pierre Renouvin "Etudes d'Histoire des Relations Internationales"*, Paris, 1966, pp192-193; *Documents Diplomatiques Belge*, I, no.175, pp406 ff.
79. *Ibid*, p85.
80. Judith M Hughes, *op cit*, pp192-193.
81. *Ibid*, p193.

82. Ibid, p193.
83. Ibid, p193.
84. Robert Frankenstein "Le prix du Réarmement Français, 1935-1939", Publication de La Sorbonne, Paris, 1982, p307.
85. Maurice Vaisse, op cit, p66 and 68-69.
86. For these various programmes see Jacques Minart "Le Drame Du Désarmement Français (Ses aspects politiques et techniques) La Revanche Allemande (1918-1939)", La NEF de Paris, 1959, pp14-19.
87. Maurice Vaisse, op cit, p65.
88. For details of the concept of the nation in arms see Richard D Challenger, op cit, particularly Chapter IV, p137-183.
89. Maurice Vaisse, op cit, p.63.
90. Joseph Paul-Boncour "Entre deux guerres: Souvenirs sur la III^{ème} République", 3 vols (Paris, 1945-1946), cited in Judith M Hughes, op cit, p151.
91. Maurice Vaisse, op cit, p.66.
92. General Debeney "Armée nationale ou armée de métier?", in Revue des Deux Mondes, 7^{ème} Periode, 53 (15 September 1929), p256.
93. See General Gamelin, op cit, T.II, p19, and Robert Jacomet, op cit, p88.
94. Maurice Vaisse, op cit, p.69.
95. John Ferris "The Theory of a 'French Air Menace', Anglo-French Relations and the British Home Defence Air Force Programme", in The Journal of Strategic Studies, Vol 10, No.1, March 1987, pp63-83.
96. Maurice Vaisse, op cit, p.69.

97. Ibid, p69.

CHAPTER THREE

Disarmament Making Process: The Predominance of the Military and of the Experts

The Third French Republic was a constitutional parliamentary democracy based on the principle of the separation of powers between the three branches of government, the executive, the legislative, and the judiciary. The role of each of these authorities was regulated by the Constitutional Laws of February 1875.¹ These laws distributed the powers of foreign policy making exclusively between the executive and the legislative branches of government. However, it will be contended in this Chapter that these two constitutional foreign policy making institutions had, in practice, very little initiation and control of French disarmament policy making during the period under study. It will be illustrated that this area of policy was mainly dominated by the military aided by the experts to the point of subordination of elected governments and almost total exclusion of parliament. It will also be demonstrated that such dominance by the military and experts stemmed fundamentally from their perception of disarmament as a matter of national defence.

The proposition will be argued in two Sections. Section 1 will describe the institutional set up of the disarmament policy process. Specifically it will look at the role of Le Conseil Supérieur de La Defense Nationale (CSDN); the French Service of the League of Nations; the government; parliament; and how they interacted over disarmament policy making. The backgrounds of some individuals, military as well as civilian experts involved in the disarmament policy making process, will be included. This will provide some information on each individual relating mainly to their career, their views on disarmament and their individual role within the institutional set up of the disarmament policy process.

Section 2 will look at France's view of the Permanent Consultative Commission and the Temporary Mixed Commission of the League of Nations. The aim of this exercise will be to illustrate that the prominence of experts in the process of disarmament was dictated by the military's view

that disarmament, as a matter of national defence, was too serious a business to be left to amateurs.

1. The Institutional Set Up of the Disarmament Policy Making Process

The aim of this Section is to describe and analyse the disarmament policy making process by looking at the roles of the Conseil Supérieur de La Defense Nationale, the French Service of the League of Nations, and the government and parliament. It will be demonstrated how this process was dominated by the military and the experts.

1.1 The Conseil Supérieur de La Defense Nationale (The Supreme Council of National Defence)

The Conseil Supérieur de La Defense Nationale (CSDN) created originally to coordinate the country's defence capabilities, was the most predominant disarmament policy making institution in France throughout the 1920s. It acquired this role for two reasons. One was the emergence of disarmament as an important aspect in international relations. The other was the perception of disarmament by the French leaders, particularly military leaders, as a matter primarily of national defence. This perception was spelt out by Marshal Petain, a prominent French military leader, who in 1922 stated that:

"Studies undertaken by the League of Nations, notably on the two connected consecutive problems of treaties of mutual assistance and arms reduction, could lead to undertakings the importance of which it is superfluous to underline. They are both, anyway, directly linked to all the questions which concern national defence as a whole."²

The CSDN was an inter-ministerial body involving the military and various governmental representatives including the Prime Minister who presided over it. Within this structure the military aided by experts were the key formulators and controllers of disarmament policy. This will be illustrated by giving an historical account of the CSDN, its internal structure, and the backgrounds of some of the individuals who occupied key positions in its disarmament policy making process.

1.1.1 The CSDN: 1906-1932

The CSDN, an inter-ministerial body, was first established by Decree of 3 April 1906. The government aim behind this was to create a high body, under the authority of the Prime Minister or the President of the Republic and military and diplomatic ministerial departments, to study and coordinate modern war.³ It was composed of two types of membership. One had the power of deliberation, ie decision, and included the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, War, and Navy & Colonies. The other had a consultative status and included the heads of the General Staff of War (les Chefs d'Etat-Major General de la Guerre), the navy, and the General President of the Consultative Committee for the Defence of the Colonies. Two additional memberships with consultative status were later made: two Commanders-in-Chief in War Time added by Decree of 29 July 1911, and the Minister of the Interior added by Decree of 14 June 1913. The CSDN's administrative duties were assigned to its Secretariat.

Between the date of its establishment and up to 1921 the CSDN met only 15 times. During this period it was characteristically predominated by the military, both in composition and function. Its activities were

"...confined to questions which concerned the combined employment of sea and land forces and the defence of coastal regions and colonies".⁴

1.1.2 The CSDN'S Reorganisation in 1921

After World War I the CSDN underwent some modification as part of an overall defence reorganisation process undertaken in the light of the country's war experience.⁵ Its composition and task as established in 1906 was judged to be too narrow to satisfactorily meet the challenges of modern war. By Decree issued on 17 November 1921 the government decided the reorganisation of the CSDN. The Decree spelt out the new challenges which necessitated such reorganisation. It argued that the last war had shown the considerable repercussions which an international conflict could have on all aspects of a nation's activities and that no public or private body could escape the disturbances of a war. It added that the realities of the experience had demonstrated that the preparation of the

nation for war required a high authority to be responsible for pulling together the nation's energies in order to enable it to face that eventuality. Such authority had to deal specifically with four organisational issues: war management, general organisation of the nation for war time, all manufacturing, and general supply and transport.⁶ The reorganisation constituted a step in the process of military preparation of the nation in arms based on the understanding that preparation for war could no longer be handled by a single ministry alone but required a collective effort.⁷

On the basis of this analysis the Council's composition was enlarged with more civilian participation. Its new organisation included as members with power of deliberation, the Prime Minister as President, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of the Interior, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of War, the Minister of the Navy, the Minister of Public Works, and the Minister of Colonies. It also included as members but with consultative status only, the Deputy President of the Supreme War Council (Conseil Supérieur de La Guerre)⁸ and the Deputy President of the Supreme Navy Council (Conseil Supérieur de La Marine).⁹

The reorganisation also modified the working methods of the Council. It was legislated that the CSDN meet at least twice a year, principally in April and October or as its President deemed necessary.¹⁰

The CSDN had a consultative status with regard to the government. Its views, on the basis of which the government took its decisions, were coordinated and studied by its two subsidiaries: the Permanent Secretariat and the Study Commission.

1.1.3 The Permanent Secretariat

The Secretariat was established by Decree of 3 April 1906. Prior to the reorganisation of the CSDN in 1921, it was headed by an Army Under-Chief of Staff (Un sous Chef d'Etat Major General de L'Armee) and composed exclusively of military personnel. However in 1921 its composition was expanded to include civilians from various ministries.¹¹

Following this reorganisation it was made into General and Permanent Secretariat.¹² Its role embraced three tasks:¹³

- collecting data and preparing subject matters presented to the Study Commission, and reporting the studies of the Commission to the CSDN;
- collecting and providing for the Study Commission necessary documentation, and supporting the Commission's reporters in the drafting of their reports for the CSDN;
- informing ministerial departments, and other concerned services of decisions taken by the government on the basis of the CSDN's views, and following up the implementation of the decisions on behalf of the cabinet.

The Secretariat was structured in four sections divided along the lines of the Study Commission (see below) each with its own post of section head. Although the Secretariat contained civilian representatives, section head posts were filled exclusively with officers from either the army or navy.¹⁴

1.1.4 The Study Commission

The idea of the Study Commission (La Commission d'Etude du Conseil Supérieur de La Defense Nationale) was initiated by General Serrigny,¹⁵ and established by Article 4 of the Decree dated 17 November 1921 which reorganised the CSDN. This Article defined its functions to be that of studying any questions within the CSDN's jurisdiction and then submitting its findings for deliberation. Its membership consisted of representatives of various ministries.¹⁶ It was structured into four sections or Sub-commissions, each specialising in the study of a specific aspect of national defence.¹⁷

Individual staff of the Commission were appointed by the Prime Minister following recommendation from their respective ministers.¹⁸ The first appointments to the Commission were made in December 1921. The

Decision¹⁹ (arrêté) making the appointments stated in its Article 1, that the War Minister was to be the Vice-chairman of the Commission, but if that was not possible another minister could assume that responsibility. In practice however, the position of Vice-Chairman was in fact filled by individuals who were not ministers: Jean Fabry and then Paul-Boncour whose backgrounds are highlighted in pages 62-66 below. The remaining appointed staff consisted of two categories: outright members and ministerial representatives. All outright members except one were military personnel from the highest ranks, the other member being the Director of National Police from the Ministry of the Interior.²⁰

After a short operational period the Commission was subjected to reappraisal. Its composition was found to be in need of enhanced expertise in some areas. A Decree issued to remedy these shortcomings stated that the previous composition of the Commission did not entirely respond to its needs in terms of required expertise and that:

"it was absolutely necessary to complete it in such a way that would give it all the personnel necessary to clarify, without any gap, the whole of its work".²¹

The additional expertise introduced by this Decree comprised mainly of reinforcement to existing representation as opposed to adding wider representation to the Commission.²²

Within the structure of the Commission the question of disarmament was primarily allocated to the First Sub-commission. This Sub-commission's members included well known French figures such as Jean Fabry, Joseph Paul-Boncour and General Debeney, whose backgrounds and attitudes to disarmament are detailed below.

1.1.5 The Three Stages of the CSDN's Functioning

The functioning of the CSDN and its two subsidiaries (the Permanent General Secretariat and the Study Commission) in relation to each other was regulated by instructions issued by the Permanent General Secretariat on 6 March 1922.²³ These instructions defined three stages governing the

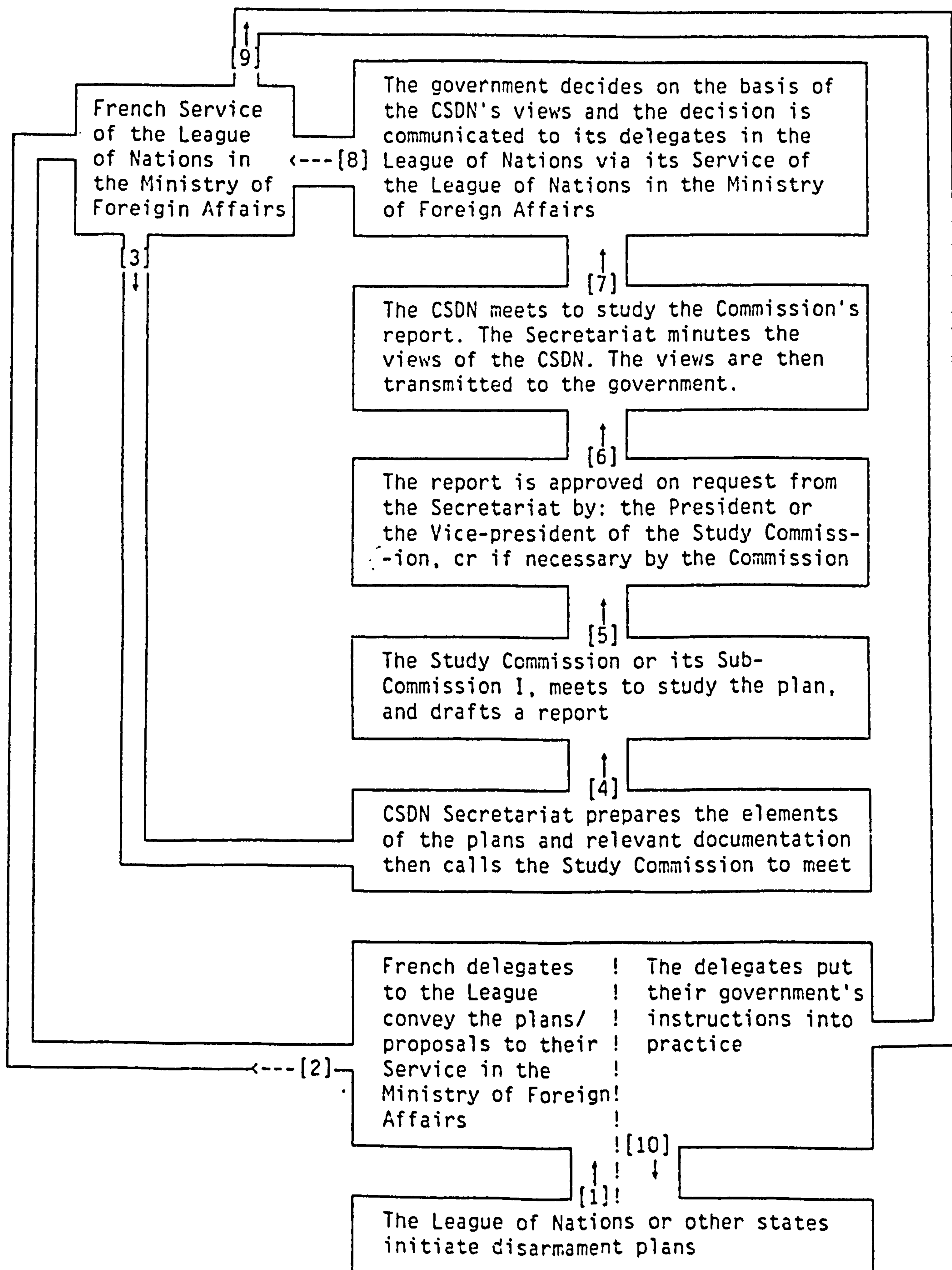
functioning of the CSDN and its interaction with its subsidiaries. The three stages were elaboration, decision, and execution.

The role of each of the three bodies varied according to these three stages. At the stage of elaboration the Secretariat would assume an organisational role. It had the role of calling the the Study Commission or its Sub-commission I to meet and study disarmament plans. Once the latter had met it would have to produce a report of its findings. Such report would then be passed on to the CSDN to study and give its views on. These views would then be passed to the government for decision, ie decision stages. Execution would occur when government decisions had been transmitted to its representatives in disarmament negotiations or study forums (see Diagram 1 on page 69 below).

While the historical evolution of the CSDN tended to show that it became more inter-ministerial with more civilian participation in fact its control remained within the hands of the military. Its Secretariat, held the key to the functioning of the whole machinery. It had the responsibility for organisation, planning, and oversight of the execution of CSDN decisions. It was staffed mainly by military men. For example a presidential Decree issued in 1926 set at 20 the maximum number of high-ranking officers which the Secretariat could employ from the War Ministry alone.²⁴

The post of Secretary-General headed the Secretariat, and until 1932, was filled by General Bernard Serrigny. His ascendancy to the post was proposed by Marshal Petain who considered him to be the man most able to run this new organisation.²⁵ He was widely respected and had maintained a good relationship with the French delegation to the League of Nations. Paul-Boncour described him as "...a General of value and open mind".²⁶ Serrigny attached great importance to taking account of the economic potential of each country in all disarmament questions. One of the pieces of advice which he always gave to colleagues approaching disarmament issues about which they were uncertain was to talk principles but not enter into details, full stop.

DIAGRAM 1 Theoretical flow-diagram of French disarmament making process
between 1920 and 1930



Serrigny was assisted by a Deputy-General. This post was assigned to General Louis Colson,²⁷ another well respected man²⁸ and a relative of Marshal Petain. Colson later succeeded Serrigny as Secretary-General.

Similarly, the Study Commission was largely staffed by the military, although its influential post of Vice-president was successively held by two civilian authorities, Jean Fabry and Paul-Boucour. In reality, however, the views of these two did not dissent from those of the military. Both Fabry and Paul-Boncour were patriots with first hand experience of their country's invasion by Germany. To illustrate this it is important to look at their backgrounds in some detail.

1.1.5.1 Jean Fabry

Jean Fabry, a graduate of the Saint-Cyr Military School, was born in 1876 and died in 1968. Due to an injury in 1915 during the war, he had his left leg amputated.²⁹

In 1909, he was elected by the Paris tenth constituency (arrondissement) to the Chamber of Deputies of the National Assembly. He was at the same time Editor in Chief of L'Intransigent. Shortly after his accession to the National Assembly he became the military spokesman of the Chamber of Deputies as Rapporteur of its Army Commission.

A nationalist and conservative,³⁰ Fabry, like all other French leaders, had no trust in Germany which in his opinion possessed two powerful factors: a large population and a strong industrial base. In 1922 he warned his fellow deputies that:

"The victory (of 1918) tipped the (pre-war) balance in our favour. On the day you should allow this balance to be re-established, and if by chance you gave Germany the impression that the new balance was once again tipped against us, you would have fulfilled the most cherished wish of a large part of German opinion. For Germany, owing to its population, which is much larger than ours, and its extraordinarily developed productive capacity, would once more...escape all control".³¹

The aim of French Security, Fabry argued in the Chamber, was:

"simply to maintain France in the precise position where the Treaty (of Versailles) placed her, with her superiority clear, visible, and complete with regard to Germany".³²

He was a prominent role-player within the French military reorganisation, particularly with regard to the reduction of military service for conscripts. His approach was based on the principle that military organisation must guarantee that the French nation would not:

"lose a square metre of its soil...a cubic metre of coal, nor a hectare of a grain, not a single man in a single village".³³

He also desired a military organisation which would not leave any of the country's resources unproductive.

Further, he wanted an army which if war broke out would guarantee that:

"it would no longer be the Cathedral of Reims but the Cathedral of Cologne which would be in the frontline".³⁴

On the basis of his aims, Fabry established three principles upon which the new military reorganisation had in his view to be based: absolute equality must be observed in all conscription practices; the inviolability of the frontiers must be guaranteed; and the need for industrial mobilisation must be taken into account.³⁵

Fabry was directly involved in the formulation of the principles and methods of the French disarmament approach. In 1922 he was appointed Vice-president (or director) of the Study Commission of the Conseil Supérieur de La Defense Nationale. He played a prominent role in negotiations over the Treaty of Mutual Assistance.

A good friend of Edouard Requin,³⁶ Fabry became War Minister in 1934 and is said to have accepted this post because

"he was obsessed by the danger to French security occasioned by the disarmament negotiations at Geneva".³⁷

Edouard Requin wrote of Fabry's "clarity of views and implacable logic".³⁸

1.1.5.2 Joseph Paul-Boncour

Joseph Paul-Boncour's life spanned almost a century extending from 1873 to 1972. After the First World War he became one of France's top international statesmen. He began his career as a lawyer and then in 1909 was elected deputy of Loirs-et-Cher. In 1911 he became Minister of Labour, and later, served as an officer during the war. After the war he was elected deputy of Paris as candidate for La Section Française de L'Internationale Ouvrière (SFIO) and became its spokesman on military and foreign affairs issues in the Chambers of the Military and Foreign Affairs Commissions, affirming his character as a social patriot.³⁹

In 1924 he succeeded Jean Fabry as President of the CSDN Study Commission.⁴⁰ He showed much appreciation for this Commission. In his view:

"It put in contact representatives of different interested ministries with those of the War, Navy and Air Ministries. We forced ourselves to make our defence organisation consistent with our foreign policy."⁴¹

During 1924 he was also appointed deputy to the head of the French delegation to the League of Nations, and later was included in France's most prestigious⁴² team to the Fifth Assembly of the League which comprised, among others, Briand, Leon Bourgeois and Louis Loucheur. The main item on the agenda of that Assembly was the famous "Geneva Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes".

His work as deputy head of the French delegation to the League continued until 1928 when he was offered the post of permanent delegate. This appointment was met with objection from his party, the SFIO which gave him an ultimatum to choose between his socialist affiliation to the party and his official duties in Geneva. He chose his party and resigned from the post on 16 November 1928.⁴³ However in 1931 when the SFIO adopted an anti-military policy he disagreed with it and left the

party.⁴⁴ A year later he was appointed French delegate to the First World Disarmament Conference of 1932.

Paul-Boncour's own account of his country's foreign policy during the 1920s was that it was uniform and consistent. Such uniformity and consistency were achieved as a result of people like him who shared similar views concerning the interests of their country and who also endured in their posts. In this respect he stated:

"...Briand, Herriot and I...practiced the same foreign policy, based on the League of Nations and the organisation of peace by collective security...It can be said that for ten years, from 1924 to 1934, an effort was made during the same period, by different governments,...which affirmed the presence of Briand and I as permanent delegates of France to the League of Nations".⁴⁵

Amongst those policies to which Paul-Boncour was naturally referring was the question of disarmament. In his book, "Entre Deux Guerres", he wrote on how France was harrassed on this issue, explaining her position which he put in this way:

- "-- "Disarm!", tell us a number of neutral states which became members of the League and which were preoccupied with not seeing a military hegemony reconstituted in Europe or not to be subject to the burden of armaments.
- "Disarm!" tell us England, which itself was under pressure from a strong current of public opinion to disarm.
- "Disarm!", claimed the states disarmament by treaties, which invoked Article 8 of the Versailles Treaty which in fact linked the disarmament of the vanquished states in the general reduction of armaments."

In Paul-Boncour's own words, the French reply to such demands was:

"Not before the organisation of mutual assistance. Not before collective security is assured. Not before the League disposes of a force capable to make its decisions respected".⁴⁶

The French position as defended by Paul-Boncour in the League of Nations was closely worked out and coordinated between the French delegation to the League of Nations and the Study Commission of the CSDN

in order to avoid support of League policies which could be disadvantageous for France and thereby not supportable by its government. To avoid this Paul-Boncour said:

"We worked in the Commission d'Etudes du Conseil Supérieur de la Défense Nationale, without ever losing sight of that objective: not to support propositions which our government could not ratify, were they to be accepted by the Assembly (of the League). As the government would not decide on such questions without having the view of the military chiefs, we decided on a good method of consulting with these first. The great advantage of this Commission (the Study Commission of the CSDN), which continued to meet while disarmament work went on in Geneva, was to permit the exchange and reconciliation of views, instead of the bureaucratic exchange of notes where each one remains more and more confined to their own opinion".⁴⁷

Paul-Boncour never testified to any dissent from the Study Commission's adopted policies throughout the 1920s and his own views on disarmament were identical to those of the Commission. For him disarmament was conditional upon security and he saw this not only to be in the interest of France but also in the interest of Europe. In this context he proudly wrote

"It was with total conviction that I battled for them for ten years".

In specific terms, he battled for the perfection of the mechanisms of arbitration and mutual assistance. His advice in this regard was delivered in the style of a motto:

"determine in advance, coordinate in advance, a true international force capable of maintaining European order and opposing aggression".⁴⁸

In his view without such an arrangement France had every right to modernise and prepare its military capabilities in order to stand ready for every eventuality.⁴⁹

In his work as French delegate to the League of Nations he was assisted by four officers, Lt Colonel Requin, Le Commandant Lucien, Le Capitaine de Corvett Deleuze and Colonel Mouchard.⁴⁹ These officers

represented all three forces (land, air and naval). Their tasks were to provide him with the necessary technical military expertise and advice as the front-man of the delegation. He thought very highly of them. As far as he was concerned they provided the delegation with a sense of objectivity, understanding and consciousness about its work. He testifies that he had a good rapport with them. His appreciation of them did not only stem from the service which they provided for the delegation, but was also based on his sympathy for the military in general as an experienced war officer himself. This is how he expressed his sympathy for them:

"During the four years of the war I lived in...military circles and witnessed their daily work, appreciating their sense of duty."⁵⁰

His appreciation of the military was also expressed in practical actions. As a parliamentarian he always stood by and supported the budgetary demands made by the High Command.⁵¹ This overt appreciation for the military, both in words and deeds led to his being described by the Communists as the spokesman of the General Staff (L'Etat Major).

To conclude, therefore, the fact that both Fabry and Paul-Boncour were civilians made no difference to the Commission being militarily dominated in terms of expertise and orientation. Both men were war veterans, jealous about the security of their country, and shared the same values as those held by the military concerning which policies were good for the country.

1.2 French Service of the League of Nations

This section was the first disarmament institution established in France after the First World War. It was created by Decree issued in December 1919 before the CSDN gained the jurisdiction of disarmament following its reorganisation in 1921. However, it will be shown in the following analysis, that while predating the CSDN after its reorganisation the section became totally dependent upon it and had no initiative as it was mainly manned by military officers.

The Decree establishing this section defined its objectives as being:

- (1) The study of issues related to the League of Nations concerning France, and the preparation of instructions for French representatives at the League of Nations in Geneva;
- (2) The coordination of actions taken by the different French administrations and associations regarding the League of Nations.

The Service was organized in a quite systematic manner. It was composed of a head and four sections: Political; Economic; Financial; Legal; and Army, Navy & Airforce. However, in 1925 it underwent reorganisation into two sections: one Political and the other Legal & Economic, with a Secretariat and three Liaison Officer Assistants to support French delegates at the Permanent Advisory Commission of the League of Nations in Geneva. The Service was integrated into the Political Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as one of its Specialised Services.

The question of disarmament was assigned to the Military Section of the service. This section consisted of a number of high-ranking military personnel who dealt with military, naval and aerial aspects of disarmament in the League of Nations and its relevant Commission.

After the reorganization of the Service as a whole in 1925 the Military Section was re-named Military Office (Bureau Militaire). This office was manned by military officers including General Edouard Requin, Chardon du Ranquet and Captain Deleuze. These three officers were particular contributors to the formulation and implementation of French disarmament policies as military experts. As such it is useful to provide some detailed background material on each of them.

1.2.1 General Edouard Requin

General Edouard Requin was born in 1879, shortly after the birth of the Third Republic, and died in 1953, a few years after the collapse of

this Republic. He participated in World War I and was a member of Marshal Foch's General Staff (L'Etat Major). He also participated in the Paris Peace Conference as military expert in the French negotiating team under the leadership of Marshal Foch and Georges Clemenceau.

On 1 January 1920 Requin was appointed head of the naval, air, and army Military Section of the French Service of the League of Nations in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁵² He was subsequently appointed as Deputy to General Fayolle, head of France's representative delegation to the League's Permanent Consultative Commission until 1922.

Lt Colonel Requin's selection as General Fayolle's deputy had nothing to do with his military rank but was rather on account of his diplomatic skill and personal attributes. He was equipped with the relevant philosophical and political tools to make him an able candidate in the defence and preservation of his country's security. These qualities led him to become the longest-serving French disarmament expert in the forums and mechanisms of the League of Nations as well as a very active participant in the Study Commission of the CSDN and a prominent member of the Military Office of the Foreign Ministry.

The contribution he made during his long service was not without a price or reward. He missed out on furthering his personal military career, but at the same time he earned commendable respect from those who knew or worked with him, almost without exception, whether in their capacity as his superiors or simply as colleagues.

When his superior, General Fayole, resigned from the Permanent Consultative Commission in 1922, Requin was praisefully and unanimously recommended for the post by various top echelon leaders. The Marshal of France, Petain, referred to him in a letter addressed to the War Minister as a man who

"...by his competence and activity, to which tribute must be rendered, had acquired in the Commission, a very happy and sometimes preponderant personal influence".⁵³

A letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, requesting the official appointment of Requin to the post previously held by Fayolle, and addressed to the War Minister mentioned that French delegates in the League of Nations such as Lebrun, Leon Bourgeois, Henry de Jouvenel, and Jean Fabry had been impressed by the competence of Requin, adding that

"Outside the Permanent Consultative Commission...Requin had never...stopped promoting French interests..."⁵⁴

Aristide Briand, Foreign Minister, described him as having commended "a great personal authority" in the League of Nations organs.⁵⁵ General Maxime Weygand in his memoirs recalled the contribution that Requin made in the field of French security and disarmament politics when he wrote:

"General Requin had during ten years contributed to maintaining the unity of French military policy in the studies and discussions of the Conseil Supérieur de La Défense Nationale as well as in a number of attempts, in which he participated, to organise a peace system based on disarmament".⁵⁶

1.2.2 Chardon du Ranquet

Chardon du Ranquet, an army captain, was appointed as Assistant Liaison Officer to Requin in 1925 and held this post until 1931. His long period of service alongside Requin cannot be interpreted in any way other than as having been in complete harmony with his superior.

1.2.3 Captain Deleuze

Captain Deleuze was Liaison Officer of the Naval Ministry in the Service from 1920 until 1939. He also served on the Permanent Consultative Commission of the League of Nations as France's Naval representative.

These three officers, Requin, Ranquet and Deleuze had all enjoyed continuity in their posts but were not the only people who manned the Military Office. Indeed there were other officers who were involved too, although only for varying short periods. These included people like

General Fayolle, Vice-Admiral Lacaze, Vice-Admiral Jehenne, and General Dumesnil.

As members of the Military Office which was entrusted with issues relating to armaments questions, particularly in relation to the country's security, and as military or naval representatives for France in the League of Nations, Requin and Deleuze would in theory receive their government's instructions through the intermediary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The instructions themselves would be formulated and adopted on the basis of the CSDN's views. As was mentioned before, the function of these experts was twofold: they were involved in the disarmament work of the League of Nations and also in the formulation of disarmament policies, plans, and proposals by the Study Commission of the CSDN.

Although the Service was located in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the appointed officers remained part of the military hierarchy directly accountable to the General Staff of the Ministries of War and Marine.⁵⁷ In addition to this hierarchical accountability to the General Staff, many of the influential figures of the Military Office enjoyed a close personal, rapport with their military chiefs. This was typified by the relationship between General E Debeney and Edouard Requin. In this respect the latter wrote that:

"From 1923 to 1930,...the army General, Debeney, extended me his trust and friendship. He thought my work was precious...he entertained me; sometimes shared my anxieties about the future; and agreed with my criticism of the present and gave me his instructions in the most complete unity of views which could exist between a chief and his subordinate."⁵⁸

In addition to the dependency of these experts upon the General Staff the Military Office had a free hand to a large extent, in the management of disarmament within the hierarchy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁵⁹ Philippe Berthelot (see his background below), Secretary-General and the real holder of power at the Ministry, was only marginally interested in the question of disarmament⁶⁰ leaving it to the Military Office to sort out. His own role in this respect was mainly

limited to the level of public relations in international forums. In this capacity he relied on the information and advice of the experts and the military. Such independance of the experts and the Military Office was acknowledged by Lt. Colonel Requin who testified:

"I have contributed to the unity of French politics for ten years, serving my country irrespective of governments."⁶¹

In the end and while the CSDN and the French Service were in theory two separate administrative entities linked only thematically, in practice they amounted to a single entity. The military experts manning the Military Office of the Service of the League of Nations in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs remained hierarchically dependant upon the General Staff and enjoyed good personal rapport with their military chiefs in charge of the CSDN. The service appeared to have been only loosely controlled within the hierarchy of the Foreign Ministry. Furthermore, the two entities were mainly dominated by military and expert personnel who shared the same values regarding their country's security, which was another factor of their unity as a single entity. Such an entity dominated the institutional set up of the disarmament policy making process as shown in Diagram 1 on page 69 above. Within this process the military aided by the experts had total control of disarmament policy formulation and implementation.

1.3 The Role of the Government

While the institutional set up of the disarmament policy making process shows the government sitting at the top, this was so only in theory. In reality, as has already been illustrated in the previous Section, the role of the government was mainly limited to rubber-stamping the views of the military and experts of the Study Commission and the Secretariat of the CSDN in conjunction with the Military Office of the French Service of the League of Nations in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The symptoms of government weakness in this respect can be related to the fact that while governments changed fifteen times between 1920 and 1930, disarmament policies adopted and defended during this same period had consistent continuity. It will be argued that such continuity was primarily due to the permanency of the military and of the experts in their influential posts within the institutional set of disarmament policy making. In addition the dominance of the military and experts in this area represents an inherent weakness of the government in the control of foreign policy under the Third Republic, which requires analysing in detail.

The Executive branch, as an institution of the Republic, was composed primarily of three layers of actors: the President, ministers, and high-ranking civil servants. With regard to foreign affairs, the three layers comprised the President, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and various specialised technocrats. The role of each of these will be explored as follows.

1.3.1 The President

Articles 3 & 6 of the Constitutional Law of 25 February 1875 specifically invested in the President as head of the Executive branch of government, power to select the membership of the cabinet, and full nominal power over foreign policy⁶² In practice, however, the President had no direct involvement in the groundwork of foreign policy conduct - in this regard he was only a state figurehead subordinated to his Minister of Foreign Affairs. It was the President's duty to act on the advice of his ministers even when he personally disapproved of their policy.⁶³ An illustrative example of such presidential subordination was the signing of the Versailles Peace Treaty by Raymond Poincaré following its approval by his cabinet and the parliamentary Chambers, despite his personal dislike for its terms over which he had threatened to resign.⁶⁴

The President's undermined position was a natural consequence of his distance from the day to day running of the Foreign Ministry's affairs. He relied solely on receiving ministerial briefings about matters upon which the ministers would have already made decisions. This situation

almost allowed ministers a monopoly over information and discretionary powers as to what the President should or should not be told.

Withholding information from the President by his ministers was a common occurrence prior to 1914 when secret diplomacy was the governing rule of foreign policy conduct. In some instances the President was kept totally in the dark or faced with *fait accompli* situations.⁶⁶

Some of those who held the office of President were unhappy about its weak position in the overseeing of foreign affairs and wished to play a greater role in initiation and control over this area of policy. For instance, in 1920 President Millerand, expressed his opinion in this direction when he suggested to the Chambers of parliament that a revision be made to the Constitution so as to provide the presidency with greater power over external affairs.⁶⁶ This was regarded as incompatible with the presidential role which was perceived of as being primarily the guarantor of the continuity of the state's internal and external policies.⁶⁷ For example, M Herriot, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, welcomed President Doumergue to Lyons in 1926 by addressing him as:

"The head of state and representative of the permanent national interest through political variations".⁶⁸

The President's limits were that he could not insist on any particular course of action against the formal advice of his ministers or the will of parliament because:

"If he tries to force acceptance of his views, he oversteps the constitutional limitations of his office and his position may be endangered".⁶⁹

The only opportunity when the President could exercise influence was over the appointment of the Prime Minister, but that prerogative was by no means a mechanism to enable him to influence policy thereafter.

1.3.2 The Civil Servants and the Minister of Foreign Affairs

While the role of the President in foreign policy initiation and control was subordinated to that of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the latter in turn was subordinated to the civil servants, known otherwise as the Corps Diplomatique. The Foreign Minister's weak role stemmed from a number of factors which can be explored by examining the nature and characteristics of the civil service institution.

The Corps Diplomatique consisted of staff numbering in their hundreds from the ministry and embassies. It was organized hierarchically and divided into classes and grades. According to the Decree regulating their profession, diplomats were in theory to be recruited mainly from the organized Corps Diplomatique, ie from within the profession. Although the door for recruitment from outside the profession was somewhat open⁷⁰ in reality it was only ajar.⁷¹

Experts in the Corps were mainly graduates of L'Ecole Libre des Science Politiques, which seemed to have a quasi monopoly in this respect,⁷² recruited by method of examination and training. Final appointments were based upon a period of training and assessment by a special commission relating to the character and aptitude of the candidates. A candidate's aptitude to fit in was apparently decisive in terms of appointment, irrespective of the fact of whether or not he had performed well in the exam.⁷³

As a rule recruitment to higher grade appointments - up to the post of minister plenipotentiary - was carried out by filling posts exclusively with staff promoted from within the Corps. If for instance a minister plenipotentiary was to be appointed, the Minister of Foreign Affairs generally had no choice but to statutorily appoint the candidate with the longest period of service in the Corps. This situation led some to an automatic conclusion that it was not the Minister who made appointments but the Corps Diplomatique itself.⁷⁴

The Corps was also well protected from any eventual governmental sanction. For instance, a contemplated dismissal had to be preceded by

the confirmation from the Committee of External and Administrative Services of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁷⁵ This meant that members of the Corps were only dismissable by their colleagues - rather as was the practice in the officers corps.

Prior to 1939, the hierarchical organisation of the Corps was structured as follows,

- the General Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with its Secretariat and the Minister's Cabinet at the head of the Service;
- the Department of Political & Commercial Affairs, with its special services which included that of the League of Nations;
- five other services, or sub-departments: Administration; Accounts; Protocol; Chancery; and Archives.⁷⁶

The role of the elite in the Foreign Ministry's policy making was more advantageous than that of the Minister. Members of the Corps Diplomatique were in a position more conducive to the shaping of France's foreign policy than were elected ministers. They had two visible advantages in this regard. Firstly, while ministers came and went reasonably quickly, particularly during the era of the Third Republic after World War I, top civil servants who were in direct control of the elite of the Qai d'Orsey enjoyed a reasonable professional stability in their posts. Secondly, the structure regulating recruitment and promotion within the Corps made it into a body operating almost autonomously from elected representatives, including the minister. To illustrate the subordination of the minister's position some influential civil service posts and the individuals who held them need to be identified and analysed.

Of the key influential posts at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs two were of particular value. These were the posts of General-Secretary and Director General of the Department of Political Affairs. Established at the beginning of 1914, the General Secretariat of the Ministry constituted a step towards the strengthening of the Corps Diplomatique's autonomy with regard to the government. The General-Secretary was in a position to achieve this as head of the Corps with the opportunity of having a

long period of service.⁷⁷ Similarly the head of the Department of Political Affairs was also in an influential position because he knew the personnel, closely followed all diplomatic negotiations, and served as a point of reference for the Minister. He was:

"the immediate instrument, often autonomous, of the tradition, and of continuity and unity of diplomacy. He must be the right hand of the Minister".⁷⁸

During the period under study, from 1920 to 1932 apart from the years between 1922 and 1925, the post of Secretary-General at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was held by Philippe Berthelot. He came to this post through a career spent as a member of the Corps Diplomatiques during which he had been assisted by his father, Marcelin Bertholet, who was Foreign Minister in 1895 and 1896. The personal skills of Philippe Berthelot as a diplomat, and the role he played in French foreign policy during this era, are recognised by both his friends and foes.

Assessment by others indicates that he possessed an extraordinary capacity for work and a sharp judgement:

"His grasp of details and his encyclopaedic memory made him an exceptionally able negotiator".⁷⁹

Aristide Briand, who as Foreign Minister had worked closely with Berthelot, described him as "irreplaceable" adding that:

"He saved me time. In ten minutes he would sum up for me situations which would take others three hours".⁸⁰

He is said to have:

"...once surprised Lord Curzon by conducting an entire meeting without either notes or aids while the British Foreign Secretary, no mean diplomat himself, had felt it necessary to come well supplied with both documents and assistants".⁸¹

Berthelot's ability to assimilate was described by George Suarez in the following terms "other peoples' ideas come out of his head filtered".⁸²

His judgemental ability was reflected in a categorisation which he made of ministers with whom he had worked. He said of one: "It is amazing: he listens and does not understand"; of another, who must be Aristide Briand: "It is astonishing: he does not listen, (but) he understands all the same"; and of a third: "It is disturbing: he does not listen and does not understand".⁸³

Like his personal skills, Berthelot's role and influence in the French Ministry is universally recognised. In the words of his biographer August Breal he was "the soul, centre, and engine of the services of the Quai d'Orsay".⁸⁴ The newspaper *Le Temps* described him as the "real animator of French diplomacy".⁸⁵ Such influence materialised in two practical forms: within the bureaucratic organisation of the Quai d'Orsay and through his influence over policies.

The organisational impact which he had on the Quai d'Orsay began a long time before his promotion to the post of Secretary-General. In 1907, when he was only a deputy head in the office of the Foreign Minister's cabinet, he proposed the reorganisation of the Quai d'Orsay and his proposal was accepted. Since then, says his biographer August Breal, he:

"...had full running of all the departments of the ministry although his official title was far from matching the real influence which he exercised".⁸⁶

The reorganisation process was accompanied by his climb up the Ministry's ladder to its highest civil service post, Secretary-General, created for the first time in October 1915. As a result some referred to the Quai d'Orsay as his own creation.⁸⁷ He had full control of this machine and knew everything, no decision big or small would escape him.

On the level of policy influence he is said to have:

"...directed the ins and outs of French foreign policy for twenty years, and worked alongside ministers belonging often to the most opposed parties not in order to abide by their ideas but in order to convert them to his own way of seeing things..."⁸⁸

According to Andre Ferat:

"by his tenacity and skillfulness he (Berthelot) always arrived at correcting "mistakes" of ministers and in the end making his proper policy prevail".⁸⁹

Aristide Briand was a friend of Berthelot who in turn was his right hand during the former's service as Foreign Minister in the 1920s. Briand's close relationship with Berthelot exposed him to ironic comment from his opponents who referred to him as the "memorable puppet" of Berthelot, whilst referring to Berthelot as "Briand's dictionary. They also made full use of a quote from an English paper which described Berthelot as the "real Foreign Minister of France".⁹⁰

With regard to political convictions and values, Philippe Berthelot was no different from the governing generation of France between 1920 and 1930. According to George Souarez, he had very warm sentiments towards the historic traditions of his country and placed these well above politics which to him represented no more than a chance game between passing and careless partners, vain glorious manners which carry war and peace in the pleats of their dress.⁹¹ He was a political realist who saw French security interests to be better served by military alliance rather than collective security, and to this end he engineered France's eastern alliance.

Berthelot was organisationally and personally linked with French disarmament activities during the 1920s. Organisationally, the French section of the League of Nations was part of his empire, at the Foreign Ministry of which not only was he the master but also the engine. Personally, he was a member of the CSDN Study Commission in 1921 representing the Foreign Ministry.⁹² He was also involved as advisor to Aristide Briand at the Washington Naval Disarmament Conference, where the French team fought tooth and nail against the inclusion of land disarmament on the conference agenda. Yet despite this, as was mentioned earlier, he was not actively interested in this area specifically leaving it to the military and the experts. According to E Requin, Berthelot was a natural sceptic and barely interested in the League of Nations and disarmament.⁹³

While it has been shown that those who were in real control of the Foreign Ministry did not have much interest in disarmament, leaving it to the military, the latter also had other areas of strength of their own which are looked at next.

1.3.3 The Government's Lack of Financial Control Over the Military

The weakness of the Executive vis-a-vis the military can also be illustrated by inability of the former to impose financial control over the latter's budget of the Ministry of War. Specifically, this weakness related to the two factors of inefficacy in the control of the system itself and the use by the military of evasive budgetary methods.

In 1923 the Ministry of Finance introduced a system known as "administrative control" to oversee the spending of the Ministry of War.⁹⁴ The system consisted of civilian finance controllers, appointed by the Minister of Finance to monitor and report back on the Ministry of War's spending. This job was limited to ensuring that spending did not exceed grant limits but had nothing to do with the substance or the goal of the expenditure as such. Authority over spending was the domain of the Ministry of War's own general military controllers who were described as "...very distinct officials recruited with very great care...", and who were accountable to no one but "...the Minister of War and L'Etat-Major".⁹⁵ Furthermore, to ensure that civilian control should not interfere where it mattered, as reserved spending was excluded from its jurisdiction the "major part of the military budget was transferred into reserve spending".⁹⁶

The other factor considered to be accountable for weakness in civilian control of military spending related to the methods of payments used by the Ministry of War. At that time two methods of payment were in practice throughout the ministries. One was carried out by direct payment order in the name of the creditor, and the other by delegated order of payment to a secondary creditor.⁹⁷ The latter method was apparently frequently used by the Ministry of War because the controllers

had no right to "...countersign payment orders established by means of open credits to secondary creditors",²⁸ thereby escaping control.

What emerges from this analysis is that the Corps Diplomatique was in a much stronger position to influence and control foreign policy under the Third Republic than were the elected President and his Minister of Foreign Affairs. With regard to disarmament and the role of the Foreign Ministry this was mainly left to the Military Office (Bureau Militaire) and its officers to handle because Berthelot, the engine of the Ministry, was not really interested in it. While the military seem to gain influence by default in this area, they in fact had their own way of standing up to the Executive as illustrated by the latter's weakness in the area of financial control.

1.4.1 Parliament

Parliament as an institution was not directly involved in the disarmament policy-making process. Its exclusion may be explained by two general weaknesses: its weak role over the control of foreign policy, and its inability to carry out successful parliamentary control over the military. Both of these points will be analysed in this section.

In theory parliament exercised its control over foreign affairs through the mechanisms of the Chambers and their Foreign Affairs Committees. Each of the Chambers - the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate - had one of these Committees. The Committee of the Chamber of Deputies was first introduced in 1902 and was known as the "Committee of Foreign Affairs, the Colonies and Protectorates" until 1920 when it was renamed the Committee of Foreign Affairs.²⁹ As to the Senate Committee of Foreign Affairs, this was set up in 1915. The main duty of the Committees was the preparation of bills for the Chambers before these were to be passed as laws. In constitutional terms their role in the enactment of foreign policy was next to none as this was a domaine reservé of the Executive.

1.4.2 Parliament and the Executive

Constitutionally the involvement of the two Chambers and their two subsidiaries, the two Committees, in foreign policy initiation was non-existent. Their role was mainly limited to control, and even this was not total. Specifically there were two areas where the Chambers had some sort of constitutional control over the Executive's conduct of foreign policy: one related to the general constitutional principle that the cabinet was responsible before the Chambers for the general policy of the government and each minister responsible for his individual act,¹⁰⁰ and the other area was that the Executive was obliged to bring to the attention of the Chambers immediately all the treaties concluded provided that this would not jeopardise the nation's safety".¹⁰¹ Clearly the constitutional supremacy of the Executive was based on the security of the nation.

In practice the exercise by the Chambers of their constitutional control over foreign policy matters generally varied according to two historical periods: pre-1914 and post-1918.

During the pre-1914 period the Executive had total monopoly of foreign policy formulation, implementation and control. Throughout this period, which was characterised as the era of secret diplomacy in Europe's political and diplomatic history, the executive of the Third Republic showed very little consideration for the two Chambers in its conduct of foreign policy as this was based on secrecy. This state of affairs was commonly demonstrated by the functioning of French colonial policy which was apparently carried out "without the knowledge of parliament or the people"; and by treaties such as that of 15 December 1900 between France and Italy allocating Morocco to the former and Libya to the latter; the Algersiras Treaty of 16 June 1906; and the Franco-German Congo Treaty.¹⁰²

It should be added, however, that parliament was not completely passive towards the Executive's secret conduct of foreign affairs. Indeed, there were some specific instances when either one or both Chambers of the parliament expressed dissatisfaction with the Executive in this respect. The secret conclusion of the Franco-German Congo Treaty

in 1912 led the Senate Committee of Foreign Affairs to question the Executive's freedom to conclude secret treaties. In this regard it observed that the Committee was of the belief that "during the last few years there was an abuse of secret treaties".¹⁰³ This protest by the Committee was accompanied by a proposal to introduce appropriate changes to correct the situation. In 1912 about fifty parliamentarians suggested that Article 8 of the Constitutional Laws of 16 July 1875 be amended so as to banish secret treaties. The Executive's reaction to that proposal was that the secret methods and treaties were borne out by practical necessity:

"implying that the degree of control exercised by the chambers depended upon the extent to which they themselves insisted upon making their influence felt".¹⁰⁴

The proposed amendment to Article 8 was defeated and constitutionally the Executive remained the sole master of foreign policy initiation, and implementation and control.

However, after the First World War the prospects for better parliamentary control over foreign policy seemed a real possibility. Specifically such a possibility arose due to two main changes which were brought about as a result of the War experience. One of these changes was the newly emerged international order and the other was the blurring of boundaries between French domestic and foreign policy. Because of these two changes foreign policy conduct as 'domaine réservé' for the Executive faced more parliamentary challenges than was the case before 1914.

To begin with the new international order itself, as established by the Versailles settlement, produced wide-reaching challenges to the Executive's monopoly of the conduct of foreign policy on an international scale. Firstly, it condemned secret diplomacy as one of the main causes of state conflict, and resolved to put an end to this by calling for the abolition of secret treaties between governments. In practice such abolition took the form of a provision in Article 18 of the League of Nations which stipulated that for international treaties to be legal and binding these had to be registered with the Secretariat of the League of

Nations.¹⁰⁵ In addition, the settlement introduced partial restriction on states' right to declare war, which did not previously exist in the French constitution.¹⁰⁶ These changes were an innovation towards further democratisation of world politics, thereby opening the door to parliaments and peoples generally to claim more participation in the conduct and control of their countries' foreign policy.

The blurring of boundaries of French domestic and foreign policy following the Versailles settlement manifested itself in a number of aspects. Firstly, the question of war and peace was generally no longer confined to the care of the Executive. The fear of another German invasion became a daily life concern for French people as a whole. Secondly, French citizens' welfare became, to some extent, interdependant with other nations' welfare. Such interdependence was visible to everyone in the Versailles settlement of the war debt of Germany to France, on the one hand, and the French debt to Britain and the United States on the other.

Due to these changes the legislators felt that they had compelling reasons to challenge the Executive's supremacy in the conduct of foreign affairs which it enjoyed in the pre-1914 period of the Third Republic. Involvement of the Chambers and their Committees of Foreign Affairs in the control of the Executive's conduct was to some extent more successful than before. There were fewer secret treaties concluded and ratified without prior consultation with the Chambers than was the case before 1914.¹⁰⁷ The two Chambers assumed a more active role. They often asked searching questions and initiated advice to the Executive. Furthermore, sometimes their advice took the form of a warning. For instance in 1922 when Aristide Briand then Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, was negotiating with Britain at the Cannes Conference he received a telegram from the Senate Committee of Foreign Affairs warning him not to make any new sacrifices nor consent to any new international agreements without prior consultation of the Chamber. Next day he returned to Paris and resigned.¹⁰⁸

However, despite the advance by parliament in asserting its role in the control of foreign affairs conduct by the Executive this amounted

only to a modest and ad-hoc based progress. No constitutional change took place and therefore the Executive continued to be under obligation to involve parliament only as and when the nation's safety permitted. The Executive's privileged position of monopoly of information in foreign affairs matters was not altered in any major which would permit parliament to challenge it convincingly.

In the end, the struggle which emerged after 1918 between the Executive and parliament may be described as an unequal contest and can be summed up in the following quotes representing each side:

the executive: "Does the Chamber wish to impose solutions and directions on the government in the very delicate and grave questions which are going to be discussed at the conference and which require long preparations?...No government worthy of the name could admit such a position. Those who hold the responsibility should also have freedom. To accept such dependence would be to abdicate...Every government in my place would uphold this view and none could abandon it without rendering all international negotiations impossible."¹⁰⁹

parliament: "We shall have to assume responsibility for all that shall have been done, and when the time comes to give our approval our hands will be forced for we cannot repudiate the agreements reached by the governments...We are asked to give confidence without explanation, confidence in the right. We refuse it."¹¹⁰

1.4.3 Parliament and the Military

Among the factors behind the dominance of the military over disarmament policy making was the lack of any parliamentary institutional control over this area of policy. The absence of parliament as an institution from the disarmament policy making process, which was described earlier, represented a symptom of an overall military strength over parliament in this area of policy. This general situation will be illustrated by two examples - military legislation and military budget control. In theory parliament had control over the military in these two areas. However, as will be shown, in practice the military had their own ways and means to overcome that control.

1.4.4 Military Legislation

In terms of legislation parliament had the ultimate power over any military bills the government brought before it. Bills in this category which were brought before the Commissions and the Chambers included the the Military Organisation Law introduced in 1920 by the War Minister Andre Lefevre and adopted in 1923, the Law of 13 July 1927 concerning general army organisation, and the Law of 28 March 1928 which reduced the period of military conscription to one year.¹¹¹

These laws aroused tense debates in parliament about the conceptual issues of defence strategy and military organisation. The debates often reflected divisions along ideological lines, but at the end of the day the military always had their way. The only one noticeable issue which divided the parliament and the military was the reduction of the conscription period. While parliament was under public pressure to reduce the period to one year the military were reluctant to go down that road. The Law of 1923 reduced the conscription period from three years to eighteen months and was more or less accepted by the military. But this first reduction was to parliament only the beginning of further reduction of the period to one year.

When the Law of 1923 was passed the General Staff (L'Etat Major) was requested to make preparations for the further reduction. However, resistant to the idea of a one year conscription period, the General Staff did nothing towards putting that request into practice. This stalling by the General Staff was testified to by Raymond Poincaré in 1928 when he disclosed that:

"...When we voted in the service of eighteen months, I had some difficulty, being the council president, in getting L'Etat Major to envisage the passage from this period to that of one year service...We had to impose on them our sentiments."¹¹²

Poincaré's testimony was apparently an allusion to the inefficacy of his orders to the military leaders.¹¹³ It took five years, from 1923 to 1928, for the reduction to become Law. Even then it was only accepted by the General Staff on certain preconditions which were to be carried out by 1 November 1930, before the reduction was to be implemented. The

military's preconditions were, as was mentioned in Chapter Two, to recruit 106,000 carrier soldiers, 15,000 military agents, 30,000 civilian employees, and to increase by 15,000 men the Mobile Gardes Republicans Force - whose function was the preservation of internal security and order.¹¹⁴

According to J Monteilhet, once parliament had secured the legislation of one year military service it turned a blind eye upon the General Staff, giving them full freedom to form the army of their choice.¹¹⁵

1.4.5 Military Budget Control

With regard to budgetary control, parliament pressed for the constitutional right to scrutinize, amend, and finally approve or reject the whole or part of the nation's budget including that of the Ministry of War. The latter was subject at times to challenge from political groups or individuals on the grounds of economics or military implication but still, it was very rare for "L'Etat Major to come out non-victorious".¹¹⁶

There were two main factors accounting for the weakness of parliamentary control over the military. These were lack of information and scarecrow politics by the military.

Firstly, with regard to lack of information, parliament had no access to the exact data and relevant documentation upon which military spending was based. As such it had no hard facts which would enable its members to put forward pertinent criticism and its challenges in this respect were often seen as polemical. This may be best illustrated by the 1929 parliamentary debate on military expenditure. When the budget came before the Chamber, some deputies challenged it as constituting a war rather than peace oriented budget since its estimate was noticeably higher than in the immediate preceding years. One deputy suggested that the budget be referred to the Finance Commission of the Chamber to bring it down to the 1928 level, and that an extra-parliamentary commission be instituted to study the reduction of military spending. The rapporteur of

the War Ministry budget opposed the suggestion on the grounds that the expenditure had been necessary to put into practice the Military Organisation Laws which were passed by parliament previously. The Minister of Finance argued against the budget's referral on the grounds of confidence in the government and comfortably won this vote thereby enabling the budget to be accepted.¹¹⁷

Secondly, the military was an expert at what might be termed 'scarecrow politics'. Generally, its interaction, particularly with parliament, in terms of the armed forces was justified with reference to Germany: the bogey-man for most French people. This potent taboo was recurrently employed in connection with French security and 'sûreté' to obtain for the military whatever it rightly or wrongly desired. For example in the budget debate of 1929 referred to earlier, Colonel Jean Fabry justified the expenditure increase on the basis of a scenario in which Germany was able to mobilise a much more superior fighting force to that of France in the event of a war. In this regard he stated that:

"...Germany could have 100,000 men of the Reichswehr, all doing twelve years (military) service, and 110,000 men of the Schutzpolizei, which makes a total of 210,000 professional soldiers. Such a total could be doubled by the recall of the first group once it completed its 12 years service. Against such massive force, France could not put more than 240,000 soldiers who are in active service".¹¹⁸

Thus the yearly parliamentary vote on the budget as a means of parliamentary control over the military was:

"an inefficacious arm against the military experts who knew how to be intangible by draping themselves in the folds of the flag".¹¹⁹

It has been shown in this Section that disarmament for France between 1920 and 1930 was a matter of national defence and that its policy making process was dominated by the military and the experts. This dominance was partly due to the inherent weakness of the Executive and parliament dictated by the system of government itself, and partly due to the permanency of the military and experts in their influential posts together with the ability to justify their behaviour by using

'scarecrow politics' and evasive methods to escape control by the Executive and parliament.

2. The French View of the Permanent Consultative Commission and the Temporary Mixed Commission

The prominent role of the experts in the formulation of disarmament policies was a deliberate choice by the military. It derived from their view that disarmament as a matter of national defence was too serious a business to be left to amateurs. This proposition will be demonstrated by looking at the French role in the League of Nations debate of 1923-1924 concerning the reorganisation of the Temporary Mixed Commission and the Permanent Advisory Commission.

2.1 League of Nations Disarmament Mechanisms

The League of Nations mechanisms which were directly concerned with the question of disarmament consisted of two sets of institutions. The first set involved institutions empowered by the League Covenant to take decisions and included the Assembly and Council of the League. The second set comprised specialised or ad-hoc Commissions or Committees, which carried out all the groundwork of disarmament approaches and plans for the Assembly and the Council.

The Commissions or Committees were, by virtue of their function, in a better position to influence the disarmament course than the Assembly or the Council.

Among such specialised bodies two were of particular value. These were the Temporary Mixed Commission and the Permanent Consultative Commission. Because of their influential position in the course of disarmament in 1923 these two Commissions were the subject of a tense debate within the League of Nations regarding their composition and task assignment.

France's view of these two Commissions was asymmetrical for, while it was directly involved in the setting up and defence of the Permanent

Consultative Commission, one of its delegates called for the abolition of the Temporary Mixed Commission. It will be argued that this asymmetry in the French approach was consistent with the French military's conception of disarmament as a matter of national defence not to be handled by anyone except the military and experts. This point will be developed by looking in detail at the historical evolution of each of the said Commissions.

2.2 The Permanent Advisory Commission

The establishment of the Permanent Advisory Commission (or Permanent Consultative Commission) was stipulated by Article IX of the Covenant of the League of Nations which states:

"A permanent commission shall be constituted to advise the Council on the execution of the provisions of Article I and VIII, and on military naval and air questions generally".¹²⁰

This Article was the product of a compromise between, on the one hand, France which had called for the League of Nations be equipped with military powers to punish states who breached their obligations under the Versailles Treaty and the Covenant, and on the other, Britain and America who both rejected the French proposition.¹²¹ The Commission itself was set up by the Council of the League during its meeting held in Rome on 17 May 1920 following a proposal made to this effect by Leon Bourgeois, the French delegate who presided over that meeting of the Council.

The fundamentals underlining the Commission's statute were elaborated by French military experts. Lieutenant Colonel Requin,¹²² in consultation with Marshal Foch, Marshal Petain and the Naval Chief of Staff, was the mastermind of this statute before it was adopted by the Council of the League. Requin's design was based on a detailed study carried out by him on the different aspects of the Commission, including its role and character. In addition to the task defined in Article IX of the Covenant, he attributed to the Commission as a statutory role involvement in the formulation of security guarantees as promised to

France by the League of Nations, the Versailles Treaty, and the military conventions of security guarantees concluded between France, on the one hand, and Britain and America on the other. In this context Requin's study stated that:

"...the commission will have views to formulate, projects to establish, or reports to provide for the League Council. Its work will be work for the functioning of the League to inspire confidence in all of its members".¹²³

The role of the Commission was also seen as being the continuation of work undertaken by the Allies and Associates in the field of military collaboration. As such, in order for it to carry out this duty successfully, Requin's study recommended that the Commission:

"...adopt the work methods established by the allies' experience...and use men familiar with these methods".¹²⁴

As to the nature of its composition, Requin deliberately gave the Commission a national character - ie its members were representatives of their governments as opposed to independent personalities. In this respect he wrote:

"The duties of the Permanent Consultative Commission show clearly that it should be composed of national representatives with the full trust of their governments and General Chiefs of Staff.

There is too much national interest at play for governments to confide the study of military, naval and air questions to an organism purely international whose members will not be their direct representatives."¹²⁵

Furthermore, representatives were not to be appointed on a random basis but according to a precise set up of criteria suggested in Requin's study. These criteria related mainly to the compatibility of representatives with the function of the Commission, namely the execution of the Treaty of Versailles and other military, naval and air questions.¹²⁶ In other words they should be military experts.

Hence when established, the Commission was composed of military, naval and airforce experts. The French representatives were General

Fayolle (later Marshal) who headed the delegation; Admiral Lacaze, former Minister of Marine during the War; Admiral Jehenne, General Dumersnil;¹²⁷ and Requin himself whose participation was particularly prominent and lasting.

The Commission was slow in its work and as such was criticised as dragging its feet on the question of disarmament. Specifically, the criticism was that:

"The...Commission, composed of representatives of the General Staffs, adopted a purely negative attitude to all suggestions of limitation and reduction. It was hardly likely that they would take the initiative for the reduction of their own forces...".¹²⁸

This criticism was followed by calls for the establishment of another Commission on a different basis to that of the Permanent Consultative Commission.

2.3 The Temporary Mixed Commission (TMC)

The criticism levelled against the Permanent Consultative Commission and its accompanying call for another Commission was answered by the establishment of the Temporary Mixed Commission in 1921. Unlike the Permanent Consultative Commission, it was composed of military and civilian individuals in order to give it the impetus to advance disarmament work. As its name indicates, the Commission had a temporary function and when its mandate was due for renewal one French delegate called for its abolition. French opposition to this Commission was mainly motivated by a dislike of its composition and some of its disarmament initiatives.

2.3.1 Composition of the Temporary Mixed Commission

The composition of the Temporary Mixed Commission (TMC) and certain initiatives taken by it in this area of disarmament, were in direct conflict with the French view that disarmament was the business of officials and particularly the military. This point will be

demonstrated by looking at how the Commission was composed and by analysing some of its disarmament initiatives.

The TMC was introduced during the First Assembly of the League of Nations which had requested the Council to appoint a new Commission composed of persons "with the requisite competence for the study of the political economic, social, historical and geographical aspects" of disarmament, which could prepare for the Council "a report and proposals for the reduction of armaments under Article 8 of the Covenant".¹²⁹ The originator of this proposition was Lord Cecil, a British delegate, who was backed by representatives of the Scandinavian powers.¹³⁰ Accordingly, on 25 February 1921 the TMC was set up comprising of the following categories of membership:

- six recognized authorities on political, social and economic subjects;
- six technical experts who were members of the Permanent Advisory Commission;
- four members of the League Economic and Financial Committee;
- six members, three employers' representatives and three workers'
- representatives from the Governing Body of the International Labour Office.

Further members, specialists in disarmament, were subsequently added.¹³¹ Upon its establishment, the Commission was presided over by the brilliant Rene Vivani, a former Prime Minister of France.¹³² Unlike the Permanent Advisory Commission the TMC included many civilian members.

The first major disarmament initiative taken by the TMC was in 1922. This was the well known scheme by Lord Esher which focused mainly on the reduction in armed forces of European countries.¹³³ This proposal clashed head on with the French understanding of disarmament. Specifically, while Esher's scheme appeared optimistic the French view of disarmament was pessimistic. The latter view was drawn by Requin who in August 1921 wrote that the Permanent Advisory Commission:

"...does not think...arms reduction could usefully be envisaged and assured effectively under the present state of the world and the current composition of the League of Nations..."¹³⁴

In Requin's view, if reduction was to be achieved it depended upon the execution of the Treaty of Versailles, the investigation of such an execution, and the practical organisation of a common defence by members of the League of Nations.¹³⁵ Requin further concluded, with reference to the establishment of the TMC, that:

"We can predict now that the (TMC) will not advance the question (of disarmament) one step further than the Permanent Advisory Commission. Besides, problems are not solved simply by creating new commissions. The situation depends essentially on necessary preconditions recognized by the Geneva General Assembly".¹³⁶

Lord Esher's scheme, therefore, annoyed the French delegation not only because it ran counter to their opinion but because it originated from a non-governmental representative who was an independent British member of the TMC. The French delegation's reaction to Lord Esher's plan was given by Requin in the following terms:-

"Confidential information emanating from a reliable British source confirms that:

1. Lord Esher has elaborated his arms reduction project with the former General, Maurice (who has published an article on the said project).
2. The War Office has had nothing to do with it and that it is said in official military circles no value or even attention is given to the said project. The War Office, on the contrary, intends to conserve an "increased capacity of up to 20 divisions for the British Army" and for this reason it is opposed to a new reduction in land forces.
3. The reason which appears to have incited Lord Esher to deposit his project is to play a role. Rightly or wrongly it is thought that governments will be led to adopt an arms reduction plan and some minds want to get the merits...of being the promoters of such a plan. The Temporary Mixed Commission, in which members can act in their individual capacity has given them such an opportunity".¹³⁷

2.3.2 The French Attempt to Abolish the Temporary Mixed Commission

In 1923, Lebrun, a French delegate to the Third Assembly of the League of Nations, proposed a resolution calling for the abolition of the TMC within a year. Paragraph 2 of this resolution read:

"The Assembly believes that it is incumbent upon the Council to...collaborate direct with governments with the aim of preparing a general plan for reduction or limitation of armaments..."¹³⁸

According to Requin¹³⁹ Lebrun seems to have acted upon his own initiative, however, the resolution led to a debate which involved both the TMC and the Permanent Consultative Commission and the French delegation had a major input into the discussion.

The Permanent Advisory Commission's reaction was defensive. In its reply to the Council the PAC stated that:

"The Permanent Advisory Commission is of the view that it must conserve its present composition and functioning whatever may be the future composition of the Temporary Mixed Commission or any other body which might be designated to replace that commission."¹⁴⁰

The TMC's view was formulated in two stages by Mr Branting, a Swedish delegate. In February 1924 Branting had initially proposed that the TMC be replaced by a permanent commission whose members would be political personalities independent of their respective national governments. His second proposal, put forward in July 1924, constituted the main view of the Commission and consisted of the following points:

"The Commission envisaged in Article 9 of the Covenant shall be composed of two independent parties as follows, a Civilian Committee and a Military Committee...

The Civilian Committee provides the Council with views on matters concerning the reduction of armaments

The Military Committee provides the Council with views on all military naval and aerial questions from a technical point of view, including the aspect of political problems of reduction of armaments

The Military Committee...will be composed in exactly the same way as the existent Permanent Advisory Commission...

The Civilian Committee could be composed of 14 members appointed as follows:

- one representative for each government represented on the Council
- two representatives from the Council of the workers group of the International Labour Organisation
- two representatives from the Council of the employers group of the International Labour Organisation."¹⁴¹

In January 1924, prior to the TMC resolution, French delegates in Geneva, both in the TMC and the Permanent Consultative Commission, received their government's guidelines as to how they were to proceed in the debate over the replacement of the TMC.¹⁴² These guidelines were:

- "1. Maintain without change the Permanent Military, Naval and Aerial Advisory Commission with its exclusively technical character as it has been functioning for four years.
2. Replace the Temporary Mixed Commission with the choice of the Council, whenever it judged it necessary, and on a case by case procedure, to appoint a committee of experts to be designated by the governments represented on the Council to examine particular political problems relating to the reduction of armaments."¹⁴³

The guidelines concluded that by such an arrangement, governments would not be asked to collaborate with private personalities on studies of questionable value.¹⁴⁴

Clearly the Branting resolution conflicted with these guidelines. The resolution was studied by the French delegation in Geneva and by the Conseil Supérieur de la Défense Nationale in Paris. Their central concern was the idea of a Permanent Civilian Committee. They could not see any logic to a Civilian Committee dealing with the issue of disarmament since, they argued, it could only do its work by calling for help from experts,¹⁴⁵ and since the League performed this role anyway, there was no reason for a Civilian Committee. Such a Civilian Committee in their opinion would represent no more than a duplication of the existing Council of the League.

To French disarmament makers, the Branting project appeared to be a conspiracy against the Permanent Consultative Commission. By proposing the idea of two committees, the fear that one would be suffocated by the other was a real possibility. But what the French feared most was that Branting's aim was to suffocate the Military Committee.¹⁴⁶ In this sense they stated that:

"The permanency of the Civilian Committee, with badly defined functions could favour certain manoeuvres aiming to suffocate the technical committee...In fact we know how, certain private individuals without mandate from their governments and even some political personalities in Geneva, are suspicious of the Military, Naval, and Air Technical Commission whose views sometimes bring out the fragility of (some of their) projects".¹⁴⁷

All in all, the Branting proposition was not acceptable to French disarmament makers who set out to defeat the idea of two independent committees and succeeded. In 1924, the Assembly of the League replaced the Temporary Mixed Commission with the Committee of Coordination¹⁴⁸ whilst the Permanent Consultative Commission remained unchanged. The French view that disarmament was primarily the business of the military and their experts was pushed beyond Paris to prevail in Geneva.

In conclusion, by describing the French disarmament processes and policy actors, this Chapter has demonstrated how these were dominated by the military aided by the experts. It has also been demonstrated that the nature of the expertise reflected in the process was a result of a deliberate policy based on the military's perception of disarmament as a matter of national defence: in their view it was too serious an issue to be left prey to the subjectivity of amateurs. The underlying reason for the military dominance of the process was the result of a number of factors, some intrinsic to the process itself, and others related to the military's interaction with parliament and the government.

With regard to those factors intrinsic to the process itself, these were reflected in the overwhelming presence of the military and experts in the CSDN and its subsidiaries, the Secretariat and the Study Commission, and the exclusive military composition of the Bureau Militaire in the French Service of the League of Nations based at the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition, top influential posts were occupied by military leaders on a reasonably continuous basis. These leaders, as the analysis of the backgrounds of some of them indicated, were all First World War veterans who held common views based on personal experience with regard to the security of their country. For them, Germany was a slumbering military might which dare not be awakened. This bond of veteran experience served to knit together not just the military but also civilians such as Paul-Boncour and Jean Fabry, thereby rendering the various disarmament institution and individual actor components into a single and cohesive entity impenetrable by subjective amateurs and polemics.

The factors concerning the relationship between the military on the one hand, and the government and parliament on the other, varied in each instance. The government was only formally engaged in the disarmament process for two reasons. Firstly, none of the military and experts dominating the Study Commission, Military Office or Secretariat, were cabinet members. These actors were mainly officers, civil servants or independent parliamentarians with primary allegiance to military leaders rather than to the government. The military office at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was only physically attached to the government. Its members remained directly dependant upon their military bosses and were in essence more integrated into the CSDN than the Foreign Ministry. It was at this level that disarmament policies were formulated and the role of the government was merely to approve the final views of the CSDN.

Secondly, as Paul-Boncour and Requin testified, the military bypassed the government by engaging in direct contact with their disarmament delegates to the League of Nations. This bypassing of the government was in fact a breach of the constitution which stipulated that foreign policy be the domaine réservé of the Executive. The subordination of government was in general symptomatic of the bureaucratic strength of the civil servants over elected members of the Executive, and the government's inability to exercise effective control of the military.

Parliament as an institution was excluded from the disarmament process. Although Paul-Boncour and Jean Fabry were both parliamentarians, they participated in the Study Commission in their own individual capacities as experts and not as representatives of parliament. The position of parliament in this respect was explained by its inherent general weakness to control foreign policy and its inability to exercise effective budgetary control over the military.

Finally, as was argued in Chapter Two above, French leaders of the interwar period across the political spectrum were wrapped up in the dogma of security. This preoccupation enabled the military to achieve its aims and build its strength through the manipulative use of scarecrow politics.

CHAPTER THREE

Disarmament Making Process: The Predominance of the Military and of the Experts

R E F E R E N C E S

1. See Maurice Duverger "Constitutions et Documents Politiques", Presses Universitaires de France, 1957.
2. Marshal Petain, in a letter dated 28 December 1922 addressed to the Minister of War & Pensions. SHA, Carton 7N 3529, Dossier No.1.
3. A historical account of the CSDN's evolution is to be found in SHA, Cote 2N3 Dossier I. See also commandant A L "Le Conseil Supérieur de La Defense Nationale et la Guerre Totale", Revue Politique et Parlementaire, CXX, 10 August 1924, pp199-218; commandant vial "La Defense Nationale, son organisation entre les deux Guerres", Revue d'Histoire de La Deuxieme Guerre Mondiale, Avril 1955.
4. See Richard D Challener, op cit, p191.
5. See for example J M Hughes, op cit; Richard D Challener, op cit.
6. See Decree of 17 November 1921 in Journal Officiel de La Republique Française of 18 November 1921, p12734.
7. For analysis of the nation in arms concept see Richard D Challener, op cit.
8. The CSG was composed of the Marshals of France and a maximum of twelve Generals. Its functions were to advise the Minister on army matters such as army organisation, weapons procurements etc. But in practice it was always presented with ready-made plans. See J Hughes, op cit, p103.
9. See Article 3 of Decree dated 17 November 1921, in Journal Officiel de La Republique Français, op cit.
10. Ibid, Article 2.

11. See Article 1 of Cabinet Decision of 28 December 1921. In Journal Officiel de La Republique Francaise, 5 January 1922, p337. The new composition consisted of the following:
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs: represented by an Embassy Secretary;
 - Ministry of Finance: represented by a Finance Inspector;
 - Ministry of Justice: represented by a member of the Conseil d'Etat or a Judge;
 - the War Ministry: represented by six high-ranking officers with two supply corps;
 - Navy Ministry: represented by four high-ranking military officers and one naval engineer;
 - Ministry of Public Works: represented by two engineers of bridges and roadwork, and one mine engineer;
 - Ministry of Labour: represented by an employee from the Statistical Service;
 - the Under-Secretariat of State for Docks, Merchant Navy & Fishery: represented by an employee or administrator of maritime inscription;
 - Ministries of the Interior, Commerce, Industry, Agriculture, and Colonies: each represented by an employee;
 - the Under-Secretary of State for Aeronautics & Aerial Transport: represented by an officer.
- In addition the Secretariat was allowed to call other members temporarily to collaborate in studies of their specialism.
12. See Article 7 of Decree of 17 November 1921 in Journal Officiel de La Republique Francaise, op cit.
13. Ibid.
14. Article 2 in ibid.
15. See J Paul-Boncour, op cit, p145:
16. See Decree of 17 November 1921, in Journal Officiel, op cit, gave the composition of the Commission as follows:
- a representative of the Council of Ministers;
 - a representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
 - the National Police Director (Le Directeur de La Surete National);
 - a representative from the Ministry of Finance;
 - the Army Chief of Staff;
 - the Navy Chief of Staff;
 - a representative from the Ministry of Public Works;
 - a representative from the Ministry of Trade;
 - a representative from the Ministry of Agriculture;

- a representative from the Ministry of Labour;
- the General Officer, Chairman of the Colonies Consultative Committee;
- a representative from the State Under-Secretariat of the Merchant Navy;
- a representative from the State Under-Secretariat of Aeronautics;
- the General, First Under-Chief of Staff of the Army;
- the Admiral, First Under-Chief of Staff of the Navy.

17. Ibid, Article 5; see also Arrêté of 25 March 1922, Journal Officiel de La République Française of 26 March 1922, p3303. The four Sub-commissions were composed as follows:

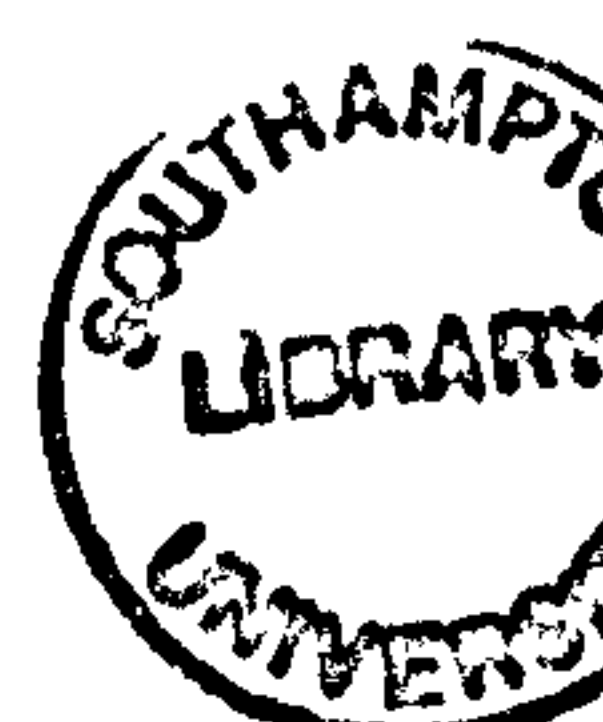
Sub-Commission I General organisation of the nation in arms	
Membership	Function
- State Under-Secretary to the Prime Minister's Office	President
- the General Chief of Staff of the Army	Vice-president
- the Vice-Admiral Chief of Staff of the Navy	Vice-president
- the General, President of the Colonies Consultative Committee	member
- representatives of Foreign Affairs and Finance Ministries	member

Sub-Commission II War Management Section

Membership	Function
- State Under-Secretary to the Prime Minister's Office	President
- representative of the Ministry of the Interior	Vice-president
- representative of the Minister of Finance	Vice-president
- the General Chief of Staff of the Army	member
- the Vice-Admiral Chief of Staff of the Navy	member
- the General, President of the Colonies Consultative Committee	member
- the General, First Under-Chief of Staff of the Army	member
- the Rear-Admiral, First-Under-Chief of Staff of the Navy	member
- representative of the Ministry of Labour	member

Sub-Commission III General supply and all transport

Membership	Function
- State Under-Secretary to the Prime Minister's Office	Chairman
- the representative of the Ministry of Public Works	Vice-chairman
- the General, First Under-Chief of Staff of the Army	Vice-chairman
- the Rear-Admiral, First Under-Chief of the Navy	member
- representative of the Ministry of the Interior	member
- representative of the Ministry of Trade	member
- representative of the Ministry of Agriculture	member
- representative of the Department of Aeronautics	member
- representative of the Merchant Navy	member



Sub-Commission IV Manufacturing

Membership	Function
- Under-Secretary of State to the Prime Minister's Office	Chairman
- representative of the Minister of Trade	Vice-chairman
- representative of the Minister of Agriculture	Vice-chairman
- the General, First Under-Chief of Staff of the Army	member
- the Rear-Admiral, First Under-Chief of Staff of the Navy	member
- representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs	member
- representative of the Ministry of Finance	member
- representative of the Ministry of Public Works	member
- representative of the Department of Aeronautics	member
- representative of the Merchant Navy	member

18. See Article 4 of the Decree of 17 November 1921 and Article 1 of Arrete of 13 December 1921, Journal Officiel de La Republique Francaise of 14 December 1921, p13614.

19. See Arrete of 13 December 1921. Ibid, p13614.

20. The full representation on the Commission was as follows:

Members

- Emile Daraud, Directeur de la Surete General in the Ministry of the Interior
- General Buat, Army Chief of Staff
- Vice-Admiral Grasset, Naval Chief of Staff
- General Ragnenan, First Army Chief of Staff
- General Mangin, Chairman of Colonies Consultative Committee
- Rear-Admiral de Marguerie, First-Under-Chief of Staff of the Navy

Representatives

- Theodore Tissier, Under-Secretary of State to the Prime Minister's Office
- Philippe Berthelot, General Secretary of the Minister of Foreign Affairs

- Denoix, Director of Budget & Financial Control in the Ministry of Finance
- Mahien, General Secretary of the Ministry of Public Works
- Fighiera, Director of Trade & Industrial Affairs in the Ministry of Trade and Industry
- Lesage, Director of Agriculture in the Ministry of Agriculture
- Fontaine, former Director in the Ministry of Labour
- Dasse, General Administrator of Seaboard Conscription for the Navy in the Under-Secretariat of State for Ports of the Merchant Navy & Fishery
- Lieutenant-Colonel Seguin, Director of Manufacturing Service in the Under-Secretariat of State for Aeronautics.

Ibid, p13614.

21. Decree of 13 May 1922, Journal Officiel de La Republique Francaise, dated 17 May 1922, p5078.
22. See ibid, p5078. The additional representation consisted of the following:
 - a representative from the Conseil d'Etat whose function was to clarify legal and administrative matters
 - the Director of Algerian Affairs in the Ministry of the Interior
 - a representative from the Ministry of Colonies, specialist in economic questions relating to the colonies
 - a representative from each of the Ministries of Public Education, Hygiene and Social Providence
 - a representative from the Under-Secretariat of State of Post Offices and Telegraph
 - the General, officer Director of the Services of the Permanent General Secretariat (CSDN).
23. CSDN: Secretariat General "Procédure de Collaboration Entre Le Conseil Supérieur de La Défense Nationale La Commission D'Etudes et Le Secretariat General Permanent", dated 6 March 1922, in SHA, Cote: 2N3, Dossier: I.
24. Presidential Decree of December 1926, Journal Officiel de La République Française, dated 13 May 1926.
25. See Maurice Vaisse, op cit, p38.
26. Paul-Boncour, op cit, p145.
27. Judith Hughes, op cit, p106.

28. Ibid, p106.
29. See Maurice Vaisse, op cit, p37.
30. Richard D Challener, op cit, p141. See also Judith Hughes, op cit, p29.
31. Journal Officiel, Debats Parlementaire, 28 February 1922, p559. Quoted in Judith Hughes, op cit, p134.
32. Journal Officiel, Debats Parlementaire, 28 February 1922, p594.
33. Quoted in Richard D Challener, op cit, p155-156.
34. Ibid, p172.
35. Ibid, p155.
36. See Claude Paillat "Dossiers Secrets de La France Contemporaine, Tome 1, 1919: Les Illusions de La Gloire", Editions Robert Laffont, Paris, 1979, p57.
37. See Philip Charles Farwell Bankwitz "Maxime Weygand and Civil Military Relations in Modern France", Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 1967, p174.
38. See E Requin, op cit, p147.
39. See Maurice Vaisse, op cit, p37.
40. Joseph Paul-Boncour, op cit, pp145-146.
41. Ibid, p146.
42. See Bernard Oudin "Aristide Briand La Paix: Une idee neuve en Europe", Editions Robert Laffont, Paris, 1987, p447.
43. See Paul-Boncour, op cit, p238.
44. Ibid, p264.

45. Ibid, p122.
46. Ibid, p146.
47. Ibid, p147.
48. See Maurice Vaisse, op cit, p38.
49. Paul-Boncour, op cit, p195.
50. Ibid, p194.
51. J Minart, op cit, pp194-195.
52. E Requin, op cit, p23.
53. See letter dated 28 December 1922, in SHA Carton 7N 3529 Dossier, No.1, from Le Maréchal de France, Inspecteur Général de L'Armée, Vice Président du Conseil Supérieur de La Guerre, à Monsieur le Ministre de La Guerre et des Pensions".
54. See letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the war ministers, in SHA Carton 7N 3529, Dossier No.1 entitled Le Président du Conseil, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, à Monsieur Le Ministre de La Guerre: "Représentation Militaire Française à La Société des Nations".
55. See letter from Aristide Briand to Paul Painleve dated 12 October 1925, in SHA Carton 7N 3529, Dossier No.1, entitled "Aristide Briand, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères à M. Paul Painleve, Président du Conseil, Ministre de La Guerre: Designation d'un Officier de Liaison pour Suppléer le Colonel Requin".
56. Maxime Weygand, op cit, p375. See also J Paul-Boncour, op cit, p146.
57. See Maurice Vaisse, op cit, p41.
58. E Requin, op cit, p xii.
59. Maurice Vaisse, op cit, p43.

60. E Requin, op cit, p61.
61. Ibid, p xi.
62. Article 3 states "Le Président de la République a l'initiative des lois, concurremment avec les membres des deux Chambres. Il promulgue les lois lorsqu'elles ont été voées par les deux Chambres; il en surveille et en assure l'exécution. Il a le droit de faire grâce; les aministies ne peuvent être accordées que par une loi. Il dispose de la force armée. Il nomme à tous les emplois civils et militaires. Il préside aux solennités nationales; les envoyés et les ambassadeurs des puissances étrangères sont accrédités auprès de lui. Chacun des actes du Président de la République doit être contresigné par un ministre."

Article 6 states: "Les ministres sont solidairement responsables devant les Chambres de la politique générale du Gouvernement, et individuellement de leurs actes personnels. Le Président de la République n'est responsable que dans le cas de haute trahison.". For the complete Constitutional Law of 25 February 1875 see Maurice Duverger "Constitutions et Documents Politiques", Press Universitaire de France, 1957, pp162-164.
63. See J E Howard "Parliament and Foreign Policy in France: A Study of the Origins, Nature & Methods of the Parliamentary Control of Foreign Policy in France During the Third Republic with Special Reference to the Period from 1919-1939", The Cresset Press, London, 1948, p42.
64. Ibid, p.42.
65. Andre Ferrat "La République à Refaire", Librairie Gallimard, 10th edition, France, 1945, pp125-132.
66. See Le Temps, 26 September 1920.
67. J Barthelemy "La Conduite de La Politique Extérieure dans Les Democraties", p38.
68. Le Temps, 8 March 1926.
69. See J E Howard, ibid, p45. "The action of the Chambers in 1924 forced the resignation of Miliraud as a result of the only recent attempt to establish a personal presidential policy".

70. See R Genet "Traité de Diplomatie et de Droit Diplomatique", Tome I, p204.
71. See Andre Ferrat, op cit, p117.
72. See Andre Ferrat, op cit, pp143-145, for L'Ecole's monopoly see pp116-117.
73. Ibid, p116.
74. Ibid, p118.
75. Ibid, p118.
76. Ibid, p121.
77. Ibid, p122.
78. J Barthelemy, op cit.
79. Craig & Gilbert "The Diplomats 1919-1933", Princeton Press, Atheneum, New York, 1963, p79.
80. Bernard Oudin, op cit, p454.
81. Craig & Gilbert, op cit, p80.
82. George Suarez said of him that "De son cerveau, les idées des autres sortaient comme filtrée". See George Suarez, "Briand, 1918-1923 - Sa vie. Son Oeuvre Avec son journal", p127.
83. Ibid, p128.
84. Auguste Breal, "Philippe Berthelot", p71.
85. Quoted in André Ferrat, op cit, p133.
86. August Breal, op cit, p78.

87. "En fait a l'origine, le Qua d'Orsay est un simple ministère de rattachement pour l'organe crée par Philippe Berthelot", Maurice Vaisse, op cit, p41.
88. Berliner Borsen Courier of 9 March 1933, quoted in August Breal, op cit, p133.
89. Andre Ferrat, op cit, p133.
90. Bernard Oudin, op cit, p427.
91. George Suarez, op cit, p127.
92. See Arrete of 13 December 1921, in Journal Officiel de La République Française of 14 December 1921, p13614.
93. E Requin, op cit, p61.
94. See Pierre Cot "Le Controle de Dépenses Militaires", Les Cahiers Des Droits de L'Homme, No.1, 10 January 1931, p83.
95. Ibid, p83.
96. Ibid, p84.
97. Ibid, p84.
98. Ibid, p84.
99. The renaming happened as a result of the creation of a new committee for "Algeria & the colonies & protectorates" in 1920. See Journal Officiel de La Chambres des Deputés, 28 January 1920.
100. Article 6 of Constitutional Laws of 25 February 1875.
101. Article 8 of the Law of 16 July 1875: "Le Président de la République négocie et ratifie les traités. Il en donne connaissance aux Chambres aussitôt que l'intérêt et la sûreté de l'état le permettent. Les traités de paix, de commerce, les traités qui engagent les finances de l'état, ceux qui sont relatifs à l'état des personnes et au droit de propriété des

Français à l'étranger, ne sont définitifs qu'après avoir été votés par les deux Chambres. Nulle cession, nul échange, nulle adjonction de territoire ne peut avoir lieu qu'en vertu d'une loi."

102. For full history and analysis of the secret diplomacy of the IIIrd Republic see Schumann F L "War & Diplomacy in the French Republic", Chicago III, 1931; Andre Ferrat, op cit, particularly pp123-132.
103. Journal Officiel du Senat, 26 January 1912, quoted in J E Howard, op cit, p36.
104. Ibid, p37.
105. Article 18 of the Covenant of the League of Nations states:
"Every Treaty or international engagement entered into hereafter by any Member of the League shall be forthwith registered with the Secretariat and shall as soon as possible be published by it. No such treaty or international engagement shall be binding until so registered."
106. The restriction is contained in Article 12 of the Covenant of the League of Nations which states:
 - "1. The Members of the League agree that if there should arise between them any dispute likely to lead to a rupture, they will submit the matter either to arbitration *or judicial settlement* or to inquiry by the Council, and they agree in no case to resort to war until three months after the award by the arbitrators *or the judicial decision* or the report by the Council.
 2. In any case under this Article the award of the arbitrators *or the judicial decision* shall be made within a reasonable time, and the report of the Council shall be made within six months after the submission of the dispute."
107. Well known examples of secret treaties concluded after 1918 were those concluded with Poland and the Little Entente. The terms of these treaties were registered and published but were not submitted to parliament before ratification. For more details and analysis of the Chambers control over government treaties see J E Howard, op cit, pp118-129.
108. Ibid, p104.

109. Ibid, p67.
110. Ibid, p67.
111. For the Laws of 1927 and 1928 see Jacques Chastenet, op cit, p338. For the Law of 1923 see Edouard Bonnefous "Histoire Politique de La Troisième République: Tome 3:", op cit, pp309-314 and p427. For a general analysis of these Laws see Richard D Challener, op cit, and J Monteilhet, op cit, pp405-411.
112. Quoted in J Monteilhet, op cit, p406.
113. Ibid, p406.
114. Ibid, p407
115. Ibid, p408.
116. See Pierre Cot "Le Controle des Dépenses Militaires", op cit, p83.
117. See Edouard Bonnefous, "Histoire Politique de la Troisième République: Tome 4: Cartel Des Gauches et Union Nationale (1924-"1929)", Presses Universitaires de France, 1960, pp300-304.
118. Ibid, p302.
119. See J Monteilhet, op cit, p409.
120. League of Nations Covenant, Article IX.
121. For details of this divergence between France on the one hand and Britain and America on the other see for example George W Egerton "Great Britain & the Creation of the League of Nations, Strategy, Politics and International Organisation, 1914-1919", Scholar Press, London, 1979, pp.134-140; C K Webster & Sydney Herbert, op cit, p.185.
122. See Etat-Major "Note: Sur La Constitution de La Commission Permanente Militaire, Navale, Aerienne Prevue par l'Art. IX du Pacte de La Societe des Nations", in SHA, 7N3529, Dossier No.3.

The introduction of the note read:

"La présente note rédigé après avoir pris l'avis des Maréchaux Foch et Pétain et du Chef d'Etat Major de La Marine a pour objet:

- I*) de préciser les attributions de cette commission;
- II*) d'en définir le caractère fundamental;
- III) d'en déduire La composition et le fonctionnement:
- IV) de soumettre en consequence des propositions au Gouvernement français".

See also E Requin, op cit, p27.

- 123. See Etat-Major "Note: Sur La Constitution de La Commission Permanente Militaire..." in SHA, 7N3529, Dossier No.3, op cit, p3.
- 124. Ibid, p4.
- 125. Ibid, p4. Also E Requin, op cit, p27, where he says the same thing: "Les Statut que j'avais préparés à Paris et qui furent adoptés à Rome, faisaient de délégués des représentants nationaux, relevant exclusivement de leurs gouvernement respectifs et ne recevant ni traitement ni indemnité de La Societé des Nations. Leurs independance vis-a-vis d'elle etait complete: elle devait a mes yeux, s'accorder avec l'independance de leurs opinions".
- 126. "Note: sur La Constitution de La Commission Permante Militaire", op cit, p6.
- 127. E Requin, op cit, p27.
- 128. See C K Webster & Sydney Herbert, op cit, p185.
- 129. See League of Nations "Ten Years of Cooperation", p54.
- 130. See C K Webster & Sydney Herbert, op cit, p185.
- 131. See League of Nations "Ten Years of Cooperation", op cit, p55.
- 132. Ibid, p55.

133. This scheme dealt with limitation of effectives. See detailed analysis of this section in Profesor P J Noel-Baker, op cit, pp74-96.
134. "Un rapport sur la situation des reduction des armaments au SDN Adresse par Requin a Monsieur le Directeur" dated 6 August 1921 in Archives Diplomatiques, Serie Y, Internationale, Dossier No.499, p.39 & 48.
135. Ibid, p41.
136. Ibid, p48.
137. "Compte-Rendu du Lt. Colonel Requin" dated 5 April 1922. In Archives Diplomatique, Serie Y International, Dossier no.499, op.cit., p.126.
138. See "Note du Colonel Requin: Reorganisation ou suppression de la Commission Temporaire Mixte pour la reduction des Armaments, (examen du projet Branting)", in SHA, Carton 7N3529, Dossier No.1, Doc.44, p2.
139. Ibid, p1.
140. Instruction approved by the CSDN: Note, "au sujet d'un projet de Branting pour organiser sur de nouvelles bases la commission prévue a L'article 9 du pacte", dated 26 Juin 1924, in SHA, Carton 7N3529, Dossier No.1, Doc.49.
141. Ibid, Annex I.
142. See "Note du Colonel Requin: Reorganisation ou Suppression de La Commission Temporaire Mixte pour la réduction des armament", op cit, p3.
143. Ibid, p3.
144. Ibid, p4.
145. A document from the CSDN gave this example "En fait, par exemple, La Commission Temporaire Mixte se serait montré impuissante à mettre sur pied son projet de traité d'assistance si elle n'avait pas compris des membres militaires apportant le concours de leur compétence particuliere. On peut même dire que

les serieuse imperfections du projet auraient sans doute été critiqués si les members militaires de la Commission avaient été plus nombreux et si elle avait compris d'autres "techniciens" également indisposable à savoir des juriste connaissant bien l'Histoire et le droit international ainsi que des economistes et des financiers qualifiés pour preciser les conditions d'assistance sous les forms économiques, et financières, les seules pouvant avoir le cas échéant une efficacité assez rapide en ce qui concerne le traité dit "general". See "Au sujet du projet de M Branting relatif a la transformation des commissions de La Société des Nations pour les questions militaires, navale et aériennes en deux comités civil et militaire" in SHA, Carton 7N3529, Dossier No.1, Document 47, p2.

146 . Ibid, p1; the CSDN also commented:

"The...common point, and it is particularly important, between the two propositions of Mr Branting...is that of 'permanency' which he intends to see given to the Civilian Commission...Such permanency which seems to be the essential objective of Mr Branting's propositions is without doubt considered by him as being the sole means of arriving, in process of time, to weakening the influence, of the military and technical commission although purely consultative as well as the Council, which some appear to dread".

See "Note: au sujet d'un projet de M Branting pour organiser sur de nouvelles base La Commission prévue a l'article 9 du Pacte", in SHA, Carton 7N3529, Dossier 1, Doc No.49. This note contains instructions approved by the President of the CSDN.

147. "Note Du Colonel Requin: Reorganisation ou Suppression de La Commission temporaire Mixte pour la Reduction de Armements. (Examen du projet Branting)" in SHA, Carton 7N3529, Dossier 1, Document 44, p5.

148. See J W Wheeler-Bennett "The Reduction of Armaments", Allen & Unwin, London, 1925, p163.

CHAPTER FOUR

Principles into Practice

This Chapter synthesizes the fundamental principles and methods of France's disarmament approach as formulated and defended by her experts in Paris and Geneva. It will be argued here that these principles and methods were primarily based on the weaknesses of France's military capabilities, as perceived by military leaders, in order to shield herself from disarmament. This argument will be developed in the following two Sections: Principles, and Methods.

1. Principles

French disarmament makers based their country's approach to disarmament on three main principles. They argued that disarmament was a function of security, that it applied to all three military forces as a whole (ie interdependence of forces), and that war potential was a necessary element to take into consideration in any comparison, reduction or limitation of armaments. The analysis of these principles demonstrates that they were primarily designed in such a way as to cater for French security needs as well as to act as a shield against any disarmament of France's military capabilities.

1.1 Disarmament: A Function of Security

The principle of disarmament as a function of security constituted the cornerstone of the French disarmament thesis during the 1920s. It was raised at almost every single disarmament forum which aimed at limiting or reducing armaments. In 1926 the Conseil Supérieur de La Defense Nationale (CSDN) stated that:

"The problem of arms reduction has...been during the last few years the subject of many deliberations by the Study Commission of the CSDN and the CSDN whether with regard to Resolution XIV of the Third Assembly of the League of Nations; or the Treaty of Mutual Assistance; the Fourth Assembly (of the League); or the Geneva protocol...

These deliberations have lead to a clear French doctrine on the subject, (and it would be sufficient to recall...(that) arms reduction...must be linked to security guarantees in two ways,...the organisation of security must precede arms reductions on the one hand, and on the other, these reductions must be studied constantly in function with the nature, value, precision, and speed by which the security guarantees are obtained."¹

Two levels of justification were used in insisting upon security before disarmament: one legal and the other practical. The legal argument derived from Article 8 of the Covenant and the Third League Assembly Resolution XIV, both of which linked disarmament to security. Paragraph 1 of Article 8 states:

"The Members of the League recognise that the maintenance of peace requires the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety, and the enforcement by common action of international obligations."²

In the words of General Debeney:

"This paragraph established from the outset of the debates, the necessary relationship between security and arms limitation".³

While this link was explicitly established the question of which should precede the other, disarmament or security, was not necessarily clear cut. For France, however, there was no such difficulty. As early as 1921 E Requin concluded:

"It is important first of all to remind that the obligations contained in Article 8 of the Covenant are considered with the view to the maintenance of peace. That is to say Article 8 can only be applied once peace has been established, meaning that the maintenance of peace implies its re-establishment first. Now, if the League of Nations was created to maintain peace it is not it which could re-establish it (peace). This consideration has its importance, because it dominates the whole debate and is easily lost by orators who discuss the reduction of armaments aimed at by the Covenant."⁴

In 1922 the priority of security over disarmament gained recognition by the League of Nations. Resolution XIV, referred to earlier, stated in its paragraphs 2 & 3:

- "2. In the present state of the world many Governments would be unable to accept the responsibility for a serious reduction of armaments unless they received in exchange a satisfactory guarantee of the safety of their country.
3. Such a guarantee can be found in 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, provided that the obligation to render assistance to a country attacked shall be limited in principle to those countries situated in the same part of the globe. In cases, however, where, for historical, geographical, or other reasons, a country is in special danger of attack, detailed arrangements should be made for its defence in accordance with the above mentioned plan".⁵

The French delegates to the League of Nations were the driving force behind this Resolution which explicitly legitimised the priority of security over disarmament. According to General Debeney the Resolution had:

"...put the problem in its true political and technical context".⁶

A note by the French Service of the League of Nations dated 9 November 1925 stated that:

"Due to the persistent action of our delegations in Geneva, the French thesis: security must precede arms reduction, appears to have triumphed".⁷

French disarmament makers never failed to use both Article 8 and Resolution XIV as international obligations of prior importance and primary condition for the implementation of the disarmament obligation.

The practical justification for the subordination of disarmament to security was common sense based. Its thesis ran from the premise that disarmament could not be realised in abstract. It had to relate to a point of reference or a scale.⁸ In 1924 Herriot, whilst addressing the League of Nations, spelt out what such a scale of measurements for disarmament were. He reportedly said:

"The government of the Republic...wishes to make certain points clear, that is...It is right to subordinate every project of arms reduction to the establishment of an effective and immediate mutual assistance. As any scale for arms reduction based on a more or less arbitrary basis is to be rejected absolutely."⁹

The scale to which Herriot was referring related to concerned "precise guarantees"¹⁰ for French security.

Further, in 1926, the Conseil Supérieur de La Defense Nationale issued the following guidelines elaborating on security guarantees as a scale against which any arms reduction was to be measured:

"The limits for fixing 'the armaments of different countries 'to the minimum compatible with national security', must be a function of the nature and speed of the implementation of security guarantees. Every precision given in this regard will evidently facilitate the establishment of these limits and the calculation of possible arms reduction. If members of the League of Nations intend to be content with the application of the general obligation contained in Article 16 of the Covenant, they should equally keep to the general obligations contained in Article 8 of the Covenant with regard to armaments."¹¹

The guidelines concluded with a pessimistic reference to guarantees generated by agreements such as the Geneva protocol and Locarno by saying that:

"Despite the great hopes brought by the accords concluded recently, the security guarantees currently at the disposal of France are not yet precise, nor quite complete and extended, or confirmed by the passing of time for her to tie her hands with regard to her armaments by a contract practically irrevocable..."¹²

The underlying current of this principle was clearly not to seek disarmament but security. This was explicitly the conclusion of the CSDN when it drew up the guidelines for its delegates to the Preparatory Commission in 1926. Point No.24 of these guidelines stated:

"The principal aim which France should seek under the wing of armaments discussions is to obtain supplementary security guarantees".¹³

1.2 Interdependence of Forces

The principle of interdependence of forces was also permanently invoked as a fundamental element in considering any arms reduction. Its basic justification was that "It is impossible to study separately the limitation of land, naval, and air armaments..."¹⁴ and that they must be considered as one constituent and indivisible whole.¹⁵ This principle was borne by some fundamental strategic and tactical French calculations affecting both defence and disarmament.

The strategic considerations related to the defence role assigned to each of the three military forces. The army's role was mainly to protect the frontiers of the country and its colonies while the navy's main task was to guard the sea routes between France and her African colonies for the supply and reinforcement of the army in case of war.¹⁶ The part of the air force was mainly subordinated to the other two.¹⁷ A note from French delegates to the League of Nations in summarising the strategic role of these three forces as a basis upon which to for argue the principle of interdependence of forces stated that France:

"...could not accept the dissociation, for example, of the naval armaments problem from that of land armaments, its navy being an essential element of its military power...because it is the only...force...capable of ensuring...regular arrival in the metropolitain...theatre of its...colonial contingents and supplies of all kinds which it must seek overseas".¹⁸

But on the whole, the two forces along with the air force were conceived of as one, and regarded as an indivisible force for the defence of the country.

More important than strategic considerations were the tactical benefits expected from the interdependence of forces principle. Historically the principle was originally constructed to counteract piecemeal disarmament approaches directed against a particular force or weapon without taking into consideration the overall picture of each country's security situation with reference to all of its military forces. The threat of such a partial approach came from Britain which was

concerned about the French army, (the largest army in the world after the Soviet Union), French air power, and the submarine weapon.

Britain which adopted a piecemeal approach, ie arms limitation per each military force, was an opponent of the principle of the interdependence of forces. French delegates had to do all they could to get the principle adopted in Geneva. Colonel Requin, the most permanent French delegate in Geneva, testified in this respect:

"From the start I had to defeat serious resistances to the principle of the interdependence of all armaments.

They came from our British friends, whose intentions appeared, if not to deduct naval armaments from the general reduction envisaged by the Covenant on certain conditions, to at least reserve for them a separate treatment. We had the proof in 1922, in the Washington Conference, where our government, because it did not know what it wanted, had imposed upon it what it did not want."¹⁹

The principle was not in fact accepted until the work of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference began, and until then, French disarmament makers remained vigilant against any manoeuvres against such a principle. For example in 1925 they were scared that Britain was manoeuvring to dissociate naval armaments reduction from land disarmament. French delegates immediately warned each other that:

"It is probable..., according to certain information from a very good source, that the English having not been able to drag us along in Washington, will demand that Geneva examines only the questions of Land armaments, by using the pretext...that naval armaments could not be handled without the Americans who the British think do not want to come to Geneva. It is up to us to manoeuvre...so that they will come..."²⁰

1.3 War Potential

The concept of war potential was derived from French military leaders' definition of armaments in modern war. According to Lt Colonel Requin war potential:

"...should not be confused with the military power (of a country) at a particular moment in time".²¹

So what was meant by war potential? The CSDN's definition issued in 1926 to its delegates in the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference contained the following elements:

"Among the diverse elements on which a country's power depends in war time are particularly:

- a) its human resources be it the workforce of all ages and sex, or trained or non-trained effectives, etc
- b) all its material resources
- c) its financial resources
- d) (its) geographic conditions
- e) its intellectual resources, emanating from its organisation; traditions and mentality of its population; and the organisation of its education and instruction of its youth...etc"²²

The natural reaction to such a definition would be how limitable were these elements to French disarmament makers? The CSDN's answer to this was a mixed one. Certain elements such as population, natural resources and industrial developments were evidently not limitable.²³ But there were two categories which the CSDN argued were limitable. These related to peace time aeronautical and chemical industries which were seen to be easily convertible into weapons within a short time and as such were a dangerous potential. One measure to stop this happening, according to the CSDN, was to prevent their monopoly by any one particular state. To achieve this aim they suggested improvising some kind of an international watchdog over such industries.²⁴ The country with such capabilities and for which this control measure was contemplated, was Germany.

There were two fundamental security and disarmament calculations behind the principle of war potential. Firstly, by calculating disarmament on this basis all the elements of the German threat, such as its industrial capacity and population superiority over France which had haunted French leaders, would be brought out into the open. The intention was to show Germany under a different light to that of the disarmed and weak nation which many believed her to be. By the same token it was an attempt to rationalise France's huge military capability, for which it was often accused of militarism, as nothing when compared to Germany's war

potential might. This is how the French compared themselves with Germany in 1925:

"If we consider in effect the situation of France in relation to its eventual adversary: Germany, we notice a big superiority of the latter from the point of view of armaments...Its population too is superior to ours; its industry in general and principally its steel and chemical industries are considerably larger than their French counterparts. The reduction of 'visible' armaments would...as a result put our country in a certain state of inferiority..."²⁵

The second fundamental motive behind the principle of war potential was to hammer home France's need for security assistance. The CSDN saw this principle as part of an overall measure of the reorganisation of peace intended to make war difficult and rare rather than being purely and simply a reduction in peacetime weapons.²⁶ In line with this it argued that while most elements of war potential were difficult to limit, in practice some measure of organised assistance under Article 16 of the Covenant could be established to help victims of aggression against potential aggressors.²⁷

Each of these three principles, while all different, sprang from the same source into which they seemed to flow back, that is security. By making disarmament a function of security France could turn disarmament discussions into security discussions as was admitted by the CSDN. Interdependence of forces was engineered to thwart any disarmament offensives against any single French force or a particular weapon. War potential was designed to show that Germany was more powerful than France and because most of the elements of this potential were difficult to limit this could be compensated for by some guarantee of assistance to victims of aggression like France herself.

2. Methods

This Section analyses French attitudes towards the three main methods of disarmament extensively discussed by the League of Nations throughout the 1920s, namely: limitation of effectives, limitation of military expenditure, and limitation of material. It will be argued that the French stance was determined by the advantages of each method

vis-a-vis the protection of its military capabilities from any disarmament measures.

2.1 Limitation of Effectives

The limitation of effectives was a very serious question for French disarmament makers. It raised issues which were related to defence matters central to France's security. In fear of the consequences which this method of limitation might have upon their effectives, France adopted a highly technical approach in order to ensure that her effectives were untouchable. This point will be argued by looking at the limitation of effectives after World War I, before exploring the French approach.

2.1.1 Limitation of Effectives after World War I

The first limitation of effectives after World War I was applied under the peace treaties imposed on the vanquished states of Germany, Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria.²⁹ In this case the limitation of effectives was based on a simple but selective numerical system. That is to say, basic ceilings for each category of effectives were imposed and were not to be exceeded by the states concerned. Further, the method was comprehensive in the sense that it took account of all segments of effectives: maximum number of soldiers under colours; regulation of resources; prohibition of training by state employees likely to be easily mobilised for war; prohibition of militia and territorial forces; prohibition of naval and air forces; and the regulation of army conscription.

A similar simple numerical limitation of effectives was adopted by the Central American Disarmament Convention of 1923. The five countries involved agreed that the following ceiling was not to be exceeded by their armed forces:³⁰

Guatemala	5,200 men
Honduras	2,500 men
El-Salvador	4,300 men
Nicaragua	2,500 men
Costa Rica	2,000 men

However, this direct and simple method of reducing effectives was not universally acceptable when attempts were made to incorporate it into the League of Nations disarmament mechanisms. The first such attempt was made in the famous Lord Esher's disarmament scheme. Lord Esher's Plan suggested that the:

"...size of standing armies in time of peace should be restricted on a numerical basis".³¹

When the Plan was discussed in the Temporary Mixed Commission of the League of Nations, the application of a simple numerical method for reduction of effectives was not easily agreeable. Specifically there was a divergence of views regarding the division of effectives into categories.³²

However, despite the uncertainties and difficulties faced by the Esher Plan, the Third Assembly of the League of Nations approved the reduction of effectives on numerical basis as one of the principal methods for general disarmament worth exploring further. It should be noted also that at the same time the Third Assembly passed the famous Resolution XIV establishing a direct link between security and disarmament and giving primacy to the former over the latter. This Resolution led to the postponement of the disarmament question and consequently the question of effectives.

When the disarmament question was again taken up by the Sixth Assembly of the League³³ and assigned to the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference, the issue of limitation of effectives was considered as one of the principal methods of disarmament. It was raised under I(b)³⁴ of the Questionnaire adopted by the Council to guide the Commission's work. While there was general agreement within the Commission that reduction or limitation of effectives was, as the Third Assembly recommended, a necessary method of proceeding with land

disarmament, a number of uncertainties were expressed regarding its practicalities.

Some of the difficulties were fundamental. To begin with the definition was a problem, raising questions such as: does it include all military forces (land, sea and air), or should it only apply to one or two of these? Secondly, should it apply to soldiers with the colours or should it include reserves and if so, which reserves: those which were already trained, or even those whose civil professions would enable their deployment in war without much mobilisation effort or time-consuming training? Thirdly, what method of limitation should be used: a direct method restricting the period of service; or an indirect method of limitation by either the reduction of material or the conscripted contingents, or both; or by a combination of direct and indirect methods? These were the factors which the French disarmament makers had to consider in determining their approach.

2.1.2 The French Approach

France's approach to the method of effectives limitation was based on the principle of the interdependence of forces, and consisted of three fundamental arguments: the limitation of permanent peacetime forces only, the distinction between home and colonial forces, and the adoption of limitation of the period of service for effectives available for war. All these ideas were contained in the French Draft Convention for the Disarmament Conference which was debated at length in the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference.

2.1.2.1 The Limitation of Permanent Peacetime Forces

Permanent peacetime effectives were defined by the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference as being:

"...Effectives on service...shall be understood to mean effectives with the colours or in formations organised on a military basis which may be immediately employed without need for mobilisation".³⁵

The term "on service...with the colours" referred to military peacetime forces. As to formations organised on a military basis, this meant:

"...police forces of all kinds, gendarmarie, customs officials, forest guards, and generally speaking any organisation which, whatever its legal purpose, is capable, by reason of its cadres, effectives, training, armament and equipment, of being employed without measures of mobilisation".³⁶

The definition excluded trained reserves, which may be described as the number of people in a nation state who do their military service for a short period and then return to civilian life. In Europe during the 1920s there were a considerable number of effectives in this category due to post-war demobilisation and also for some countries because of the conscription system. The exclusion of trained reserves from the definition was initiated by the French delegates and legitimised by the Anglo-French Naval Compromise of 1928. By this compromise Britain agreed to exclude trained reserves from limitation and in return France accepted the limitation of certain naval categories as opposed to global tonnage.³⁷

Prior to the Anglo-French Compromise, the French initiative to exclude trained reserves as unlimitable was strongly criticised in the Preparatory Commission. In response to that criticism the French delegates offered a number of justifications for their initiatives, which included the arguments that trained reserves were a transient issue; that it was difficult to control their limitation; and that trained reserves would be subject to limitation by limiting material anyway.

The aforementioned points were presented and defended by Paul-Boncour.³⁸ Firstly, with regard to the transient nature of reserves, he argued that this was a direct consequence of the transient circumstances of the war, and as such reserves were themselves transient:

"...the belligerent countries employed almost the whole of their classes that were capable of mobilisation. In all the countries which took part in the war there exists a reserve supply of men consisting of from fifteen to seventeen classes, and this reserve will gradually be reduced during the course of a period which might, I think, be estimated at from fifteen to seventeen years".

Secondly, because of their transient character, numbers of 'trained reserves' were difficult to control and as the French method of limitation of effectives was:

"confined...to limitation (of) what is visible and what demands...limitation and supervision, that is to forces existing in time of peace, forces which can be employed without measures of mobilisation...(they were excluded)".

Thirdly, Paul-Boncour argued that, while:

"it is impossible to limit trained reserves directly...it is quite possible to limit their striking power very considerably by limiting the material available".

That is to say while effectives were not directly subjected to limitation a reduction in their capabilities could occur as a side effect of limitation of material.

These three justifications did not carry much credibility. The transient nature of the issue was questionable, since trained reserves were not only a product of war mobilisation but also a product of permanent conscription. Thus for countries with a conscription system in force it would be inevitable that there would always be trained reserves available, and France figured prominently in this category of countries. With regard to the difficulties of control, this was a rather weak argument. Control of peacetime forces could also apply to trained reserves by direct limitation of the numbers incorporated or conscripted each year, but this method (as will be shown later) was rejected by France. As to the indirect limitation of reserves by limitation of material, it made little sense to argue on the one hand that it was easy to limit and control material, whilst maintaining on the other that it was difficult to limit and control reserves.

The fact that the French arguments were inconsistent is not surprising because these were not the real reasons for the exclusion of trained reserves. France's real motives in this regard related to the importance of reserves as a defence capability. To strike at trained reserves was to strike at the very heart of France's defence. Such a

truth was spelt out by one French delegate to the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference who stated that:

"My country, as you know, has always held, and still holds, that the safeguarding of the vital principles underlying its national defence does not allow it to make any concession in regard to trained reserves. The French delegation adopted that attitude notwithstanding the desire of its head to make all concessions necessary to hasten the completion of your work...my country's representative (a reference to Paul-Boncour) maintained that attitude because he was firmly convinced that France did not, and could not, cherish any aggressive intention in maintaining her point of view".³⁹

Specifically, the idea of limiting trained reserves constituted an infringement of two of the main principles upon which French defence was organised: the concept of the nation in arms, and the conscription system which gave France five million people militarily trained and mobilisable.⁴⁰

With regard to the nation in arms, this referred to the organisational preparation of the whole nation for war eventualities. In 1927, as the question of trained reserves was being discussed in the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference, the French parliament was debating a bill on the reorganisation of the nation in time of war. The initiator of this bill was the very man who fought in Geneva for the exclusion of the limitation of trained reserves, Paul-Boncour. Article 25 bis of the bill stipulated that:

"In time of war, all the French and French nationals, without distinction of age or sex...are to participate in the defence of the country or the preservation of its material and moral life."⁴¹

Further, the bill went so far as to give the deputies themselves a role to play in the war, consisting of "special missions" and the "permanent control" of the war front.⁴²

As to military service, it constituted the backbone of the concept of the nation in arms. It was a permanent mechanism for the supply of trained reserves. As such when, in 1929, the Chinese delegation to the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference suggested that

conscription be abolished, this was met by a contemptuous comment from a French General who said:

"We see with astonishment the representative of China (from which China? one may ask) allows himself to raise such grave questions as that of the suppression of conscription, a traditional base of military organisation for so many nations".⁴³

Therefore the method of control or limitation of trained reserves was completely incompatible with the principles of the nation in arms and the conscription system. Both of these principles derived their *raison d'être* from creating a sufficient number of trained reserves on a permanent basis for the defence of the country. French delegates therefore could not afford to compromise on the issue. Even a proposition to supply information to the League of Nations on these forces was seen by the CSDN as "unacceptable".⁴⁴

2.1.2.2 Home and Overseas Effectives

While France was uncompromising over the limitation of trained reserves, it accepted the principle of limiting home and overseas forces. The rationale behind the distinction between the two forces was not clear to a number of delegates to the Preparatory Commission. In trying to explain this, French delegates gave three main reasons: clarity, general acceptance of the principle, and limitation of the power of aggression.

With regard to clarity, Paul-Boncour argued that the question of home and overseas forces was complicated and by breaking these forces into two they become clearer and consistent with the view:

"which I am continually emphasising...that you can only limit what is capable of being supervised".⁴⁵

He added that:

"in order to judge the limitation which each nation will propose to the Conference, we must discriminate as far as possible between the various kinds of limitable effectives".⁴⁶

Paul-Boncour substantiated his views in this regard by quoting the French philosopher Descartes, who said that the best way to solve a difficulty is to break it down to its component parts.

As to the general acceptance of the principle, Paul-Boncour argued that it was widely accepted that the effectives necessary to ensure the security of a country were a junction of many factors which included overseas possessions. Further, since the principle of colonial possessions was accepted regarding the level of naval armaments required for their metropolises to provide for the security of communications with them, the same should be accepted with regard to the effectives of the military forces required to protect them.⁴⁷ The conclusion towards which Paul-Boncour was driving was that by recognising overseas forces and home forces as two separate entities, any limitation of effectives must apply to them separately. Therefore, any limitation must take into consideration the security situation of each entity, ie geographical situation, industrial power, historical responsibilities, and length of military communication. All these factors underlined the French concept of security explored in Chapter Two above.

Finally, the limitation of the force of aggression referred to home forces. These were seen to be the main source with which a country could initiate an aggression. While colonial forces were not totally ruled out as a possible source of aggression, Paul-Boncour argued that they could not be considered as such, by virtue of their distance and the long sea journey which they would have to make,. He further argued that since the aim of the limitation of effectives was mainly to lessen the power of aggression, the distinction between the two forces was necessary.⁴⁸ These justifications given by the French delegation in the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference were based on a clear instruction by the CSDN which had ordered that:

"effectives reserved for the protection of overseas possessions must be separated".⁴⁹

The reasons for making the distinction between home forces and overseas forces were more fundamental than those which the French

delegation presented to the Preparatory Commission. They included, in addition to the defence policy based on a massive trained reserve army, the strategic role perceived for colonial forces in the defence of the metropole, and the anticipated advantages of the distinction for the French disarmament stance vis-a-vis other countries.

The role of colonial forces in the defence of the metropole was not a new idea. Indeed such a force had played an important part in World War I and had impressed many French leaders as the:

"superb loyal brutes without a shadow of an idea in their heads".⁵⁰.

Because of this conception of the soldier from the colonies and the population inferiority complex vis-a-vis Germany which haunted every French leader, colonial forces were seen as essential for the defence of France and the protection of the peace in Europe.

From the inception of the French military reorganisation during the post-war period, the strategic role of colonial forces in the defence of France was accounted for. At that time these forces were already involved in direct French control of German occupied territories. In addition, a recruitment drive was embarked upon to increase the number of effectives in these forces. In 1920 General Mangin estimated that France's security required 300,000 overseas soldiers in addition to its own forces.⁵¹ In 1911 the number of colonial subjects in the French forces did not "exceed 25,000 men, and were not allowed in Europe".⁵² By around 1930 all that had changed. The total number of soldiers from the colonies had increased by about 176,000, distributed as follows: 52,000 stationed in France's homeland, 84,000 in North Africa, and 40,000 spread around various colonial barracks.⁵³ The introduction of colonial soldiers to French territory resulted from the implementation of the Military Reorganisation Law of 1927.⁵⁴ But the total number classified as colonial forces was not simply limited to soldiers from the colonies but included French nationals too. Available data on these forces shows that its evolution between 1914 and 1930 was as illustrated in Graph 5 on page 35 above.⁵⁵

The total of the minimum overseas forces judged necessary for the security of the colonies, as determined by France's disarmament makers and argued in Geneva, was set at 270,000,⁵⁶ which included forces stationed in France itself.

By adopting the distinction between home and overseas forces French disarmament makers had at their disposal at least two useful disarmament bargaining advantages related to presentation of the home forces and the other general and related to allegations of French militarism.

The advantage regarding home forces was that when calculating or estimating the size or total number required for French home security the effect of the distinction would be to exclude overseas forces from that calculation. The result of this would be that the size of the home forces would appear very small. This case can be illustrated by looking at the evolution of France's peacetime total of effectives in comparison with those of other major powers not employing a distinction between home and overseas forces, and the comparison made by French disarmament makers between their peacetime home forces and Germany's.

The evolution of France's total peacetime effectives in comparison with other major powers is shown in Table 6 on page 142 below. On the basis of this evolution, if the total French overseas forces, 270,000 estimated by France for the security of its colonies, are deducted from the totals of its overall force for 1924 and 1931, then the home forces for those two years would appear like this: 404,000 for 1924 and 338,000 for 1931.

However, in 1926 French disarmament makers gave the total of their home forces as 384,000.⁵⁷ Taking this total as a base they worked out the level of effectives needed for their country's security by comparison with German forces. The latter's forces were calculated at 211,000 career soldiers, composed as follows:

Reichswehr	100,000
Gendarmarie	17,000
Schutpolizei (Schupo)	94,000

TABLE 6 *Evolution of major powers' armed forces (in thousands)*

	1913	1921	1924	1931
France	873,531	747,000	674,000	608,000
USA	97,800	175,704	126,000	145,000
UK	247,000	210,000	200,000	137,000
Italy	175,000	208,000	200,000	350,000
USSR	1,200,000	4,000,000	1,100,000	900,000

Source: Maurice Vaisse op.cit p.74 and G D H Cole, "The Intelligent Man's Review of Europe Today" p.707. English effectives exclude 170,000 men of the Indian Army and other forces stationed abroad.

The French deducted 1/20th from the total for the number of soldiers involved in training which left a figure of 202,000 trained career soldiers available for war at any time.

The conclusion French disarmament makers drew from their analysis of German effectives was that the:

"...most elementary prudence requests that France too must have a permanent and disposable minimum force of 202,000 men in the homeland (France)...".⁵⁸

However, this figure was only deemed possible by having 327,000 soldiers permanently stationed in France. The calculation was based on long term French military planning relating in particular to a reduction of military service to twelve months. At the time, 1926, the length of military service was set at eighteen months with each class of conscripts yielding 250,000 trained soldiers ready to defend the country. But, with a service of twelve months, each class would only turn out 125,000 trained effectives per year since the other 125,000 would be in training for six more months. Thus under a twelve month military service France's need in this area would fall short by 77,000 trained soldiers out of the required minimum of 202,000. Hence the argument that for France to ensure the

required minimum of effectives, in addition to 250,000 trained and permanent soldiers it needed another 77,000, ie 327,000 trained permanent effectives in the homeland.

Two further arguments were added to this calculation. One was that a conscript army of short military service was inferior to an army of career soldiers and therefore:

"327,000 men put (France) in a manifest state of inferiority to Germany".⁵⁹

The second argument was that part of the base total on which the calculation had been made, the 384,000 men who were stationed in France, could become engaged in colonial operations as was the case with Morocco and Syria when 90,000 soldiers of that force were sent in as reinforcements. On the basis of the preceeding arguments French disarmament makers concluded that:

"...it is fair to say that 384,000 men stationed in the metropole territories...constitute a minimum compatible with the safety of the country".⁶⁰

It should be noted that this minimum number of effectives, unlike in the German case which constituted the base of their calculations, did not include trained reserves, French Gendarmerie, or any other forces not directly under military colours.

In short the distinction between the two forces - metropolitan and overseas - and the calculations put forward by France's disarmament makers, were geared to confront a situation which General Debeney had summed up like this:

"They want to pick a quarrel with us in Geneva...by putting the (colonial) army and the military army together in such a way as to obtain an impressive total of effectives".⁶¹

The other advantage of the distinction between home forces and overseas forces was that it was a convenient means to counteract the allegations of French militarism often made by other countries. The

target of such allegations was the considerably large army and trained reserves maintained in France's homeland, while her colonial forces were not subjected to any such criticism. General Debeney stated in this respect that:

"In order to clarify once and for all France's military position, the government has decided from now on to present the war budget in two distinct parts: one concerns the metropolitan army and the other concerns the overseas army...it is in fact remarkable that of all the criticisms against the present institutions, none, absolutely none, is directed against the overseas army, while they all converge with passionate ardour on the metropolitan army".⁶²

2.1.2.3 The Period of Service

The method of limiting peacetime forces advanced by France concerned the limitation of the duration of service, as opposed to the limitation of incorporated contingents. However the application of this method was stringently restricted by the condition that any comparison of effectives subject to limitation had to be made between armies having the same period of service and the same period of elementary training, and had to be between states' total effectives with the colours. This restriction was based on the calculation referred to earlier in comparing French effectives with those of Germany. On the basis of that calculation, the French delegates in the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference, put forward the following illustration, arguing that any basis for comparison of effectives other than the one they proposed would be unfair:

"Take an army, A of 100,000 men, performing ten years' service, and an army, B, also of 100,000 men, performing one year's service.

Assuming that about six months are required - this is the general rule - for the elementary training of a recruit, during which he cannot be used for military operations, it is seen that:

- (1) In army A with ten years' service, only one-twentieth of the effectives, viz., 5,000 men, on an average is under training, and consequently 95,000 men are constantly available;
- (2) In army B, on the contrary, which does only one year's service, half the effectives are always under training,

and consequently there are only 50,000 men constantly available.

Of these two armies, which apparently have the same effectives, 100,000 men, one thus actually has an available strength which is almost double that of the other. This disproportion is further increased by the fact that the more numerous effectives are precisely those which have had the longer training (between six months' and ten years' service), while the less numerous have at most had one year's service.

The soundness of this argument cannot be disputed on the ground that the period of elementary training varies in different countries and that it may be less than six months.

By applying the above-mentioned example to a period of training of three months, which is the irreducible minimum and takes for granted a very thorough pre-regimental training, the situation would be as follows:

1. For Army A (100,000 men doing ten years' service) there would be on an average 10,000 men in their first year of service, and of these 10,000 men, on an average 2,500 in their first three months of service. The number of men available would thus be $100,000 - 2,500 = 97,500$

2. For Army B (100,000 men doing one year's service) there would be

$$\frac{100,000 \times 3}{12} = 25,000$$

men having done less than three months' service, and, consequently, the number of men available would be 75,000.

The disproportion would remain very marked and to the prejudice of Army B, which has the less trained effectives.

A comparison based upon total effectives with the colours is thus absolutely inadmissible, *unless it is made between armies having the same period of service and the same period of elementary training.*⁶³

The preference was plainly to France's advantage. The limitation of the contingent hinged directly upon the issue of trained reserves. By reducing the number of contingents the number of trained reserves would be limited automatically, when as far as France was concerned, these were neither to be discussed nor to be limited. By discarding this method France was left free with regard to the number of contingents it desired to incorporate and consequently unaffected by disarmament in this respect. The Swedish delegates to the Preparatory Commission summarised such advantages for France as follows:

"The French proposals...are based on the methods of limiting the period of service and that, by adopting this method, they expect to obtain the limitation of effectives with the colours. This method...does not reduce the power of a country for defence and it does not reduce the period of service below the minimum necessary for the efficient training of the troops...it leaves intact, or almost intact, the power of aggression of a country and it is,...too limited in its effects, for, if certain countries have already reduced the period of service to the minimum which is essential to enable them to train their troops efficiently, there is no further possibility of limitation under this system".⁶⁴

Further, the adoption of the limitation of the period of service was opportunistically convenient. France had already brought down the period of its military conscription from three years to eighteen months, and was about to reduce it further to twelve months. In this sense the method of limiting the period of service provided a good foundation for not accepting any further reduction which, indeed, was consistently pleaded by the French disarmament makers.

In short, disarmament by limitation of effectives was an extremely serious issue when related to a very sensitive defence area such as trained reserves, conscription, and the organisation of the nation in arms generally. All these items were central to France's security and were sacrosanct. To ensure that these issues remained sacrosanct, French experts engineered the infeasibility of trained reserves limitation, the distinction between home and overseas forces, and the reduction by limitation of the period of service (this division is represented in the sample tables of Figure 1 page 147 below). While the advantages of the exclusion of trained reserves are axiomatic, those of the distinction between home and overseas forces are quite settled. By splitting her forces that way the statistics of her effectives were almost halved, enabling her to substantiate her pleas of weakness and insecurity and thereby discard any measures of limitation of her effectives. The reduction of effectives by the limitation of the period of service was in harmony with the reduction in the conscription period which had already been implemented, although not for the same reasons, and provided a platform for arguing that France had already limited her effectives. Logically, it was therefore up to other nations to follow in France's

Table I.

LIMITATION OR STATEMENT OF THE AVERAGE DAILY EFFECTIVES OF THE HOME FORCES ¹.

H.C.P.	Total Effectives of the Land, Sea and Air Forces.	Army Effectives ² .			Naval Effectives ³ .			Air Force Effectives ⁴ .		
		Cadres ⁵ .		Other Ranks ⁶ .	Cadres ⁵ .		Other Ranks ⁶ .	Cadres ⁵ .		Other Ranks ⁶ .
		Officers.	Warrant Officers & Sergeants.		Officers.	Warrant Officers & Sergeants.		Officers.	Warrant Officers & Sergeants.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11

¹ The effectives allocated to *home* service are maintained and permanently stationed in the home territory. They are intended for the immediate protection of frontiers.

² The effectives of the *Army* are those shown on the statement, which determines grants of every kind for these effectives, other than effectives on service in any capacity with the air formations*.

³ The effectives of the *Navy* are those shown on the statement, which determines grants of every kind for these effectives, except effectives on service in any capacity with the air formations*.

⁴ The effectives of the *Air Force* are those shown either on the special statement for the Air Force determining grants of all kinds taken for these effectives or on the corresponding statements of the Army or Navy, and which are allocated exclusively to the service of the air formations*.

⁵ The *Cadres* consist of all officers, warrant officers and sergeants on the strength of the Army, Navy and Air Forces.

⁶ *Other Ranks* consist of men whose rank or employment is below that of a warrant officer or sergeant.

* The air formations comprise the staff, various units and formations of the forces using aircraft.

Table II.

LIMITATION OR STATEMENT OF AVERAGE DAILY EFFECTIVES OF THE OVERSEAS FORCES AND THEIR REINFORCEMENTS ¹.

H.C.P.	Total Effectives of the Land, Sea and Air Forces.	Army Effectives ² .			Naval Effectives ³ .			Air Force Effectives ⁴ .		
		Cadres ⁵ .		Other Ranks ⁶ .	Cadres ⁵ .		Other Ranks ⁶ .	Cadres ⁵ .		Other Ranks ⁶ .
		Officers.	Warrant Officers & Sergeants.		Officers.	Warrant Officers & Sergeants.		Officers.	Warrant Officers & Sergeants.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11

¹ The effectives of the *overseas* forces are permanently stationed in the dominions and overseas territories. The overseas forces may, however, have in the same territory certain reserves intended to relieve them or, in the event of serious disturbances, to reinforce parts of the overseas dominions or distant territories.

² The effectives of the *Army* are those shown on the statement, which determines grants of every kind for these effectives, other than effectives on service in any capacity with the air formations*.

³ The effectives of the *Navy* are those shown on the statement, which determines grants of every kind for these effectives, except effectives on service in any capacity with the air formations*.

⁴ The effectives of the *Air Force* are those shown either on the special statement determining grants of every kind for these effectives or on the corresponding statements of the Army or Navy, and which are allocated exclusively to the service of the air formations*.

⁵ The *Cadres* consist of all officers, warrant officers and sergeants on the strength of the Army, Navy and Air Forces.

⁶ *Other Ranks* consist of men whose rank or employment is below that of a warrant officer or sergeant.

* The air formations comprise the staff, various units and formations of the forces using aircraft.

footsteps and limit their period of service. As such France would have everything to gain and nothing to lose from limitation of effectives.

Finally, France's exclusion of trained reserves from any limitation seemed to be inconsistent with her much insisted upon principle of interdependence of all three military forces (land, air and sea). Although its advocacy was mainly for the forces as a whole, logically it should equally apply equitably to all the components of each force and consequently trained reserves should not be excluded.

2.2 Limitation of Military Expenditure

The second method of disarmament considered by the League of Nations was the limitation of military expenditure. French attitudes towards disarmament by this method between 1920 and 1930 went full circle. From 1920 to 1926 France opposed any arms limitation by such method. However by the time the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference had begun its work the French delegates in that Commission became the main advocates of disarmament by military expenditure.

It will be argued that the French change of attitude towards this method was due to two factors. One was that by 1925 the League had decided to tackle disarmament directly, while previously this had been suspended pending a solution to the problem of security. This change closed the door on France's practice of hiding behind the argument of security first in order to push aside disarmament, and she found herself compelled to make a choice between methods of carrying out disarmament. Secondly, the method of military expenditure contained relevant protective ingredients for France to use against any disarmament measures with negative implications for her defence capabilities.

These two points will be illustrated by looking at France's initial opposition to disarmament by military expenditure limitation; the adoption of this method by the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference; and France's change of attitude.

2.2.1 France's Initial Opposition towards the Method of Military Expenditure Limitation

Military expenditure limitation as a method of disarmament was not new when the League of Nations was established. As was mentioned in Chapter One, this method was known before 1914 and was one of the methods considered at the Hague Conferences. However, for the League of Nations, this method was a prelude to its work on the issue of disarmament.

In December 1920, the First Assembly of the League of Nations adopted the following resolution:

"Pending the full execution of the measures for the reduction of armaments recommended by Article 8 of the Covenant, the Assembly recommends to the Council to submit for the consideration of the Governments the acceptance of an undertaking not to exceed, for the first two financial years following the next financial year, the sum total of expenditure on the military, naval, and air services provided for in the latter budget, subject, however, to account being taken of the following reservations:

1. Any contribution of troops, war material, and money recommended by the League of Nations, with a view to the fulfilment of obligations imposed by Article 16 of the Covenant or by treaties registered by the League;
2. Exceptional conditions notified as such to the Council of the League of Nations in accordance with the spirit of paragraphs 2 and 6 of Article 8 of the Covenant."⁶⁵

The French delegation did not vote for this Resolution on the basis of instructions received from their Army Chief of Staff (L'Etat Major de L'Armée) dated 11 December 1920, which observed that the Resolution contained "...extremely serious considerations...".⁶⁶ The instructions based France's opposition to the League's initiative on four technical difficulties inherent in arms reduction by military expenditure limitation. Specifically, L'Etat Major argued that:

1. Budgets of states are not conceived of in the same way and could not provide a basis which would permit equitable appreciation of the respective importance of their armaments;
2. Without the increase of effectives or its war material a state may introduce modifications or considerable improvement to its material thereby making hidden supplementary expenditure;

3. The price of manufacturing and maintenance are subject to variation from year to year leading to apparent budget increases without any real increase in armaments;
4. The air, naval and military power of a state does not depend on its combat material only, but on its industrial power and its social and military attitudes to it.⁶⁷

As is clear from point 4 above, the problems with this method were more than technical, they also raised the issue of war potential. The French did not believe that a country's military capabilities could be assessed simply by analysing the budgets of its army, navy and air force.⁶⁸ They also argued that France had already reduced its military expenditure and its military service anyway.⁶⁹

Behind this combined technical and dismissive argument lies the question of some of the principles discussed under Section 1 of this Chapter. To begin with the French view that one could not assess a country's military capabilities simply by assessing their military budget was a technical argument fundamentally derived from the principle of war potential. Such potential as defined earlier comprised unquantifiable elements such as education, ideology, etc, which were beyond the control of budgetary techniques. Secondly, up until 1925 French concerns with regard to arms reduction were to establish and consolidate the primacy of security over disarmament and therefore the technical arguments were subservient to the principles of security first disarmament after.

2.2.2 The Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference and the French Change of Attitude

While the League of Nations initially postponed the work on disarmament until the question of security was solved, in 1925 it found itself under pressure to take direct measures to tackle the disarmament issue. Its Sixth Assembly, held that year, called for the preparation of a disarmament conference. It also called for the establishment of a preparatory commission to carry out the ground work for such a conference. Hence disarmament in 1925 became an urgent matter.

With the establishment of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference France's attitudes towards military expenditure limitation as a method of disarmament made a complete U-turn. This change will be illustrated by looking at the adoption of this method by the Preparatory Commission in which France was an active member, and more importantly its adoption in the French Draft Convention presented to the Commission in 1927.

2.2.3 Adoption of the Method by the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference

The Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference started its task with a questionnaire communicated to governments for consideration before it began its work in earnest. Disarmament by military expenditure limitation was raised under Question II(b) of the said questionnaire relating to methods of arms limitation.⁷⁰ The CSDN which studied the questionnaire and defined the views to be taken by France in Geneva on each question, concluded that military expenditure limitation was more practical than any other method.⁷¹ It recommended to its delegates to propose this method suggesting that it should be expressed in percentage terms of budgets and that it should include expenditure on forces organised on a military basis.⁷²

In the Preparatory Commission the French and other delegations which supported the limitation of military expenditure defined this method as follows:

"Limitation by each country of its total annual expenditure on national defence and, in particular, of its annual expenditure for certain of the main items which after a technical study of budgets, it may be found desirable to limit separately, such as purchase, manufacture and new construction, maintenance of effectives, upkeep of material. It is desirable in this limitation to denote separately the expenditure relating to each category of armaments. This is particularly essential for expenditure on air armaments.

At the same time, as regards purchases of material, manufacture and new construction, a rigid annual limitation of expenditure under these heads cannot be contemplated when this expenditure necessarily corresponds to a programme the execution of which will be spread over a number of years and will depend upon the financial

capabilities of each country and the potential output of its national defence industries.

A limit must therefore be set to the total sum allotted by each country to purchases, manufacture and new construction during the validity of the Convention, and it must be granted that, while in principle the annual expenditure may not exceed the total expenditure divided by the number of years during which the Convention remains operative, each country will retain the right, on production of supporting evidence, to carry forward unexpended funds in respect of any financial year or years to the years following.

In order that the execution of this method may be verified, it would entail the production of extracts from budgets.

The extracts, which must be furnished in a standard form, will show the relation between the figures it contains and those contained in the official documents of the state concerned.

They must refer to the whole of the expenditure actually incurred and to each of the main items of expenditure which it has been found desirable to limit separately."⁷³

In the Commission's view this method yielded two particular advantages:

- "1. The limitation of expenditure on national defence constituted one of the most tangible signs of the limitation of armaments, and was the most likely method understood by public opinion;
2. It was likely to elevate the financial situation of numerous states which were then going through a period of financial and economic crisis."⁷⁴

2.2.4 France's New Attitudes

The French delegates' new attitudes were based on the stated understanding that:

"...a limitation of expenditure will be the most thorough and tangible method of preventing competition in armaments".⁷⁵

As such they included in their Draft Convention for the Disarmament Conference which they brought before the Preparatory Commission in 1927, a detailed and highly technical scheme on how the method was to be carried out. Articles 19, 20 & 21 of the Draft, contained details which

can be divided into two categories: limitation, and exchange of information.

The limitation called for in the Draft Convention was divided into expenditure on effectives and expenditure on material. With regard to effectives Article 19 called for: "The total annual expenditure, counted per budgetary year:- not (to) exceed the figures approved by the several contracting states in the...convention...". It was envisaged that the total not to be exceeded would be presented in two tables, one for home forces and formations of the home country organised on a military basis, the other for overseas forces and their reinforcements and overseas formations organised on a military basis. Each would be formatted along the lines suggested in sample tables shown in Figure 1 on page 147 above.⁷⁶

As to expenditure on material Article 20 stipulated that the contracting states were to be obliged to keep to the sums fixed in each column of Table 7 below for the duration of the Convention. The sums for each column were to be divided by the number of years for which the convention was to be applied and each yearly fixed sum was not to be exceeded.

TABLE 7 *Example of the table suggested by the French delegation for details on each of the home and overseas forces*

years	L A N D			A I R			N A V Y		
	upkeep	pur- chase	manu- facture	upkeep	pur- chase	manu- facture	upkeep	pur- chase	manu- facture
1									
2									
3									

This stipulation, however, contained one qualification, which was that:

"sums not expended during one year may be carried forward to the following year and added to the sums fixed for that year".⁷⁷

This qualification, as will be shown later, was consistent with French budgetary techniques and carried important implications for France's support for the military expenditure limitation method.

With regard to the exchange of information Article 20 requested that each party to the convention would communicate a yearly statement to the Secretary General of the League of Nations:

"on the amount...expended on its land, naval and air armaments during the preceding year and of the expenditure contemplated for the current year".⁷⁸

The statement was to be submitted:

"...not later than three months after the entry into force of the legal provisions authorising the expenditure...".⁷⁹

A statement on expenditure actually incurred was also requested to be communicated to the Secretary General of the League within a period to be determined in the months following the end of the budgetary year and the full budgetary period.⁸⁰ The stipulated method of reporting to the Secretary-General consisted of about ten highly detailed tables which include Table 7 on page 153 above and those reproduced in Figure 1 on page 147 above.

This method was opposed by other delegates on the Preparatory Commission and its Sub-commissions. The points raised in this respect related to the principle as well as the inherent technical difficulties of the method. With regard to the principle it was argued that the method was indirect and ineffective and could only be of secondary importance to other direct methods.⁸¹

As to inherent technical difficulties, these related to the very criticism used by France prior to its change of mind on this method, which was referred to earlier. However further technical difficulties were raised relating specifically to three aspects of the method as elaborated in the French Draft Convention. Firstly, it was argued that the yearly statement to be communicated by states to the League was too detailed and would be impossible for states to implement as the total number of items was estimated to run into hundreds.⁸² Such detailed statements, it was feared, could be used to compare states' military capabilities while it was accepted in principle that any comparison of this kind was bound to be misleading because a state's military expenditure did not necessarily reflect its true military capability.⁸³ In reply to this criticism Paul-Boncour asserted that:

"It is desirable that we should establish an accurate exchange of budgetary information which would make it possible to justify the undoubted inequalities which exist in budgetary expenditure as in other fields".⁸⁴

Secondly, the fixing of a time-limit for the submission of military budget estimates and the expenditure incurred after the end of the budgetary year to the League was seen to be unnecessary.⁸⁵ Paul-Boncour's reaction to this was that:

"It would surely be better to decide upon a certain number of months "...rather than any odd date in the year..."⁸⁶

He further argued that:

"...it is essential that too long a time should not elapse between the expenditure and the notification. There is obviously less risk of this period being too long if we fix a certain number of months after the expenditure...Expenditure incurred must be described exactly as it is intended by the convention".⁸⁷

Finally, the limitation proposed for the total figures of expenditure on land, sea and air armaments which included expenditure on personnel, was opposed on the grounds that a close examination of budgets would reveal that in fact only a small amount would be spent on weapons and the rest on personnel. Since effectives were being limited by a direct

method, there would by implication be room for adjustment to shift more of the expenditure on personnel to weapons and machinery and as such:

"...mere limitation of the total figure, particularly if it is extended not only to land but to land, sea and air as a total global figure, would really have next to no effect in limiting the total weapons of the country".⁸⁸

Further the Draft Convention allowance for budget surpluses to be carried forward from one year to the next appeared to have cumulative consequences:- a dangerous provision and an open door for arms build up rather than having a limiting effect.⁸⁹

Faced with this criticism Paul-Boncour tried to rationalise the need for this military expenditure method by linking it to the issue of trained reserves which France was adamantly opposed to. He argued that there were three ways of achieving the limitation of trained reserves. One was direct limitation of the contingent to be incorporated annually, which, he argued, was not acceptable to continental states. A second method was the limitation of material in reserve. This he argued although desirable was applicable only if:

"...a permanent system of inspection should be instituted, because it would be necessary to ascertain the exact quantities of material kept in warehouses, stores, barracks, etc, for the arming of reserves. That day may come..., but...it will not come until the League of Nations has so increased in power - a state of things by no means existing as yet,...".⁹⁰

The third way, in fact the only practicable alternative argued Paul-Boncour, was the limitation of military expenditure. This method had the following objectives:

"The maintenance of permanent forces in peace-time and the purchase, maintenance and renewal of material. Part of this material is known as material in reserve, that is to say, material that will be available for the government in case of mobilisation to equip men who are not now with the colours, ie trained reserves".⁹¹

He further argued that:

"...material which is intended for the use of reserve forces which are a matter of concern to so many people cannot be directly limited...but it can be purchased with dollars, pounds or even francs...so let us limit this expenditure...".⁹²

Finally, Paul-Boncour tried to sweep away the fears and reservations expressed by other delegations as to whether such a method was practical by saying that:

"It is every bit as possible as the limitation of effectives, it is just as tangible as are effectives, and it is much easier to check, because it would be a question of examining budgets and would be less likely to offend national susceptibilities than would sometimes be the fixing or exceeding of the effective establishment".⁹³

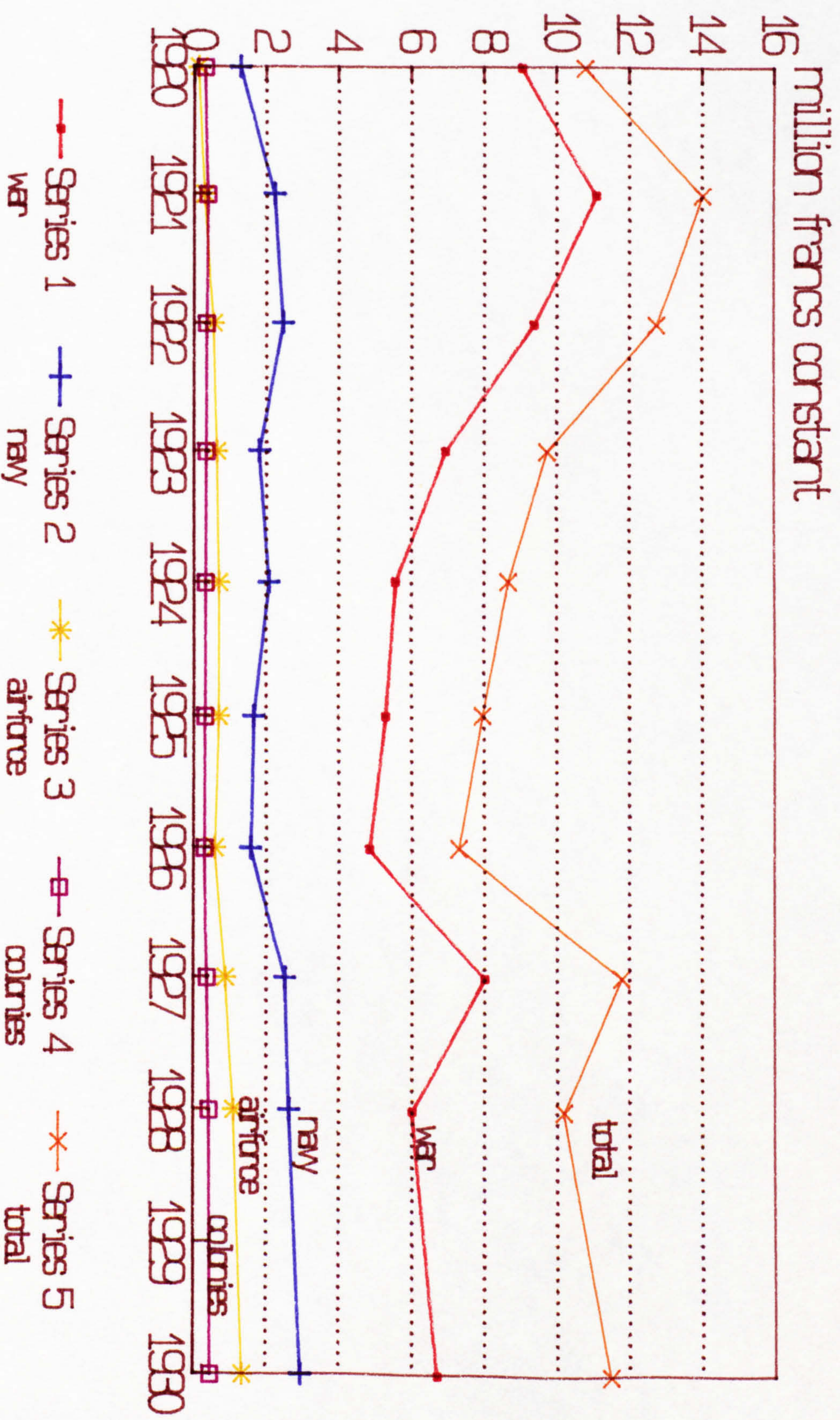
Clearly French disarmament makers had made a U-turn with regard to their position on this method of disarmament. In order to explore the reasons for such a change of attitude it would be necessary to first look at how French military expenditure had developed during the period under study, 1920-1930. The purpose of this would be to see whether there was any correlation between the evolution of the military expenditure during that period and the change of attitude vis-a-vis the method.

As is clear from Graph 7 on page 158 below, there did not seem to be any correlation between France's military expenditure and her attitudes towards disarmament by methods of budgetary limitation. For while one would have expected her to support this method when her expenditure was generally decreasing, ie between 1920 and 1926, she opposed it and to oppose it when her expenditure began to rise, ie after 1926, she adopted it. This situation suggests that France's motives for adopting this method lay elsewhere.

In fact, the real reasons which prompted France's attitude to change with regard to the military expenditure limitation as a method of disarmament consisted of a fundamental historical factor, and a number of characteristics peculiar to the method itself.

The fundamental historical factor was the emergence of disarmament in 1925 as an urgent matter for the League. While prior to this date

Graph 7: French military Expenditure 1920-1930



France was able to discard any disarmament method on the ground of security first disarmament after, this was no longer a valid excuse after 1925 as it became imperative that the issue be tackled directly. Having lost this option, French disarmament makers focused their attention upon choosing the methods which served their interest best, and expenditure limitation topped their list.

The military expenditure limitation method was seen by French disarmament makers to have a number of characteristics advantageous to their country. These characteristics related to the indirect nature of the method; its budgetary conveniences; and its manipulability.

Firstly, the indirect nature of the military expenditure limitation method was fundamental for France because it presented an alternative to direct methods and a base for counteracting arguments in favour of such methods. While Paul-Boncour, in his defence of such a method in the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference, never spelt out the real motive behind his country's position this was explicitly put in a report by his delegation, dated 28 July 1928, and addressed to the CSDN. The report stated:

"In order to avoid the inconvenience of a direct limitation of material in service, the French delegation had proposed an indirect limitation of corresponding expenditure, and in general annual budgetary limitation of national defence expenditure."⁹⁴

In order to ensure that military expenditure limitation was adopted in Geneva and in such a way as not to work against French interests, French leaders took care to use the best experts available to them. One of these was Robert Jacomet who testified:

"...French military leaders and the government put me on an urgent mission to make the limitation of military expenditure prevail and to organise in its favour an active propaganda".⁹⁵

France's problems with direct methods were that these appeared to work against her in two ways. Firstly, direct limitation of material did not apply to war potential and therefore Germany would not be affected by any disarmament carried out in this way, because some of its stock of

material had been destroyed under the Versailles Treaty and what was left of it was difficult to control. Secondly France, which had inherited a large stock of material would be dramatically affected. Thus direct methods clashed head on with the principle of war potential.

Secondly, the budgetary conveniences related to France's method of budgeting which was reflected in the way military expenditure limitation was proposed in the French Draft Conventions for the Disarmament Conference. For example Article 19 provided for the annual budgetary expenditure to be broken down, as shown in the sample tables of Figure 1 on page 147 above, into:

1. Home forces and formations of the home country organised on a military basis;
2. Overseas forces and their reinforcements and overseas formations organised on a military basis;

This was consistent with the military reorganisation⁹⁶ introduced in July 1927 which categorised French forces into home and overseas forces with a third for reinforcement. As was mentioned before, such change was undertaken to dissipate allegations of militarism against France which had the biggest army in Europe after the Soviet Union. By breaking the expenditure down into three forces, each with its own independent tasks, France presented herself with the justification for maintaining a large army.⁹⁷ In fact it was the French delegation to the Preparatory Commission which suggested that its government adopt the budgetary categorisation introduced in 1927 so as to make it consistent with theirs which they presented in their Draft Convention to the Preparatory Commission in Geneva. The aim of their suggestion was to make their task easier in explaining why they adopted the categorisation of expenditure included in the Draft Convention to the Commission.⁹⁸

In addition, the clause contained in Article 20 providing for sums of military expenditure not spent during one budgetary year to be carried over to another year was another measure of safeguard reflecting a French budgetary practice. During the period under consideration financial allocation to the army for the procurement of material was often subject

to cancellation and postponement hence it was natural to carry over budgets of postponed projects. Also the navy reconstruction which began after the conclusion of the Washington Naval Treaty was carried out not through ordinary budgeting but by a method known as "loi de tranche". Each year parliament voted a portion ("tranche") defining the number of naval units to be built. This practice enabled the Minister of the Navy to carry over any sums not spent during one year to the next.⁹⁹

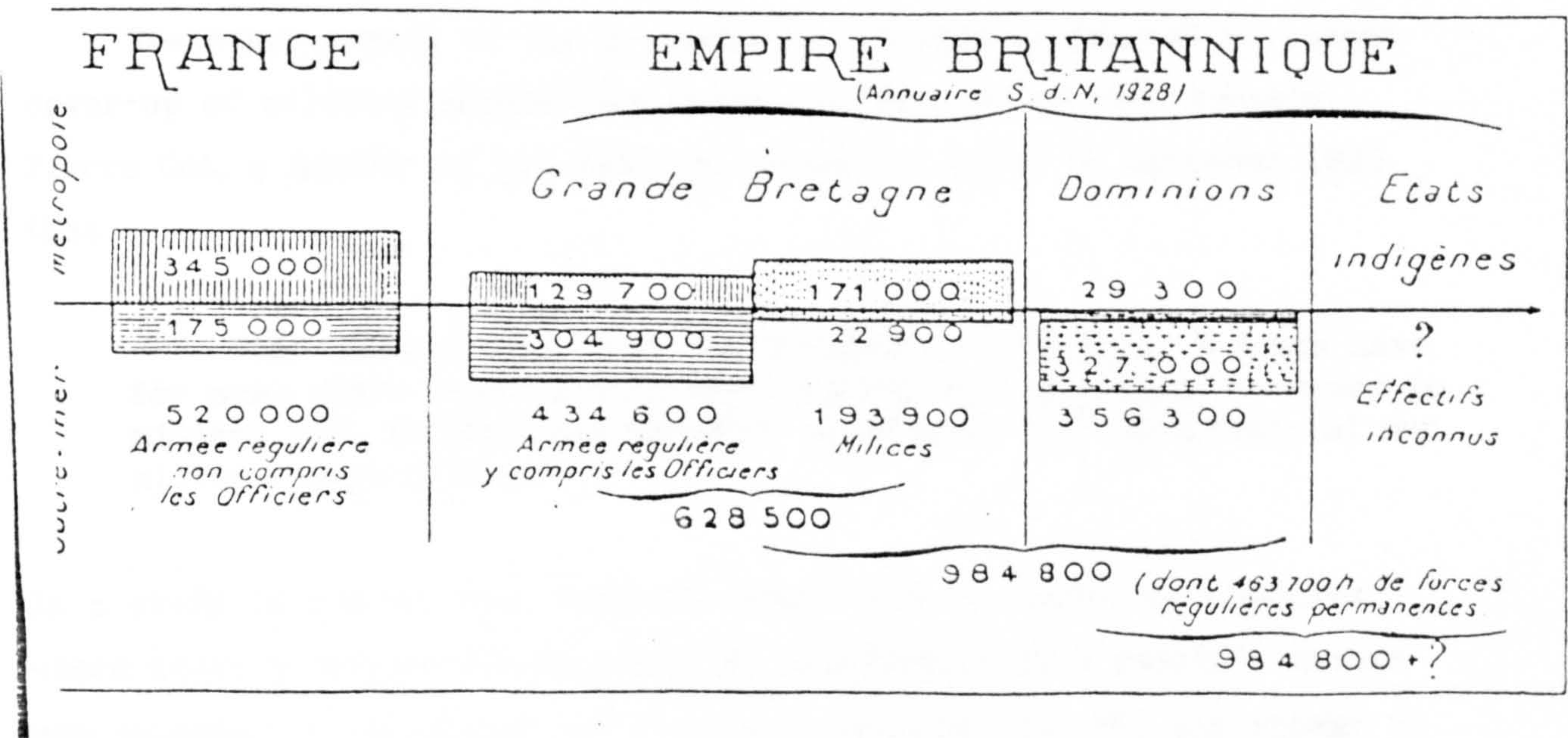
Thirdly, the manipulability of budgeting meant that limitation of military expenditure was an opportune method to use figures to one's interest. France practiced such manipulation in at least two ways. One was to use 1913, the eve of the First World War, as a base year for the analysis and comparison of military expenditure trends in the inter-war period. It was on the basis of this comparison that French delegates were able to consistently claim that France had already disarmed to the minimum compatible with its security requirements. Maurice Vaisse stated in this respect that:

"The French military, in particular, have become masters in the art of telling figures what one wants them to say".

His remark was made in reference to a comparative analysis by the French High Command on France's effectives in 1914 and 1930. The High Command stated that the period of military service had been reduced from three years in 1914 to twelve months in 1928, ie by 66%; the global effectives from 979,000 men to 603,000 in 1932, ie by 38%; and the home forces from 754,000 in 1914 to 358,000 in July 1932. The study concluded that the French army had been reduced by half, which was a clear indication of disarmament.³⁶ Evidently the point made here refers to the unrealistic choice of base year, a year at the beginning of a war, ending with 1930, a year of peace. (For a similar use of figures see the comparison of British and French effectives by General Debeney in Figure 2 on page 162 below.)

The League of Nations also used this base year at the initiative of Albert Lebrun, a French delegate who in 1922 proposed a Resolution calling for the calculation of states' military expenditure between 1913

Figure 2: Comparison of British and French effectives made by General E Debeney in his book "Sur La Sécurité Militaire de La France", Payot, 1930.



NOTES

- Note how he omits French trained reserves and officers in the French column, whilst including officers and militia forces in the English column.
- The author, E Debeney, was General Chief of Staff from 1924 to 1929, and participated in the CSDN and the Study Commission of the CSDN and was actively involved in its disarmament studies.

and 1922. The result of the calculation showed a drop in French military expenditure of 7.9% whilst that of Britain and Japan showed considerable increases. Edouard Requin, hailed this outcome by saying that:

"This resolution...has completely shattered the legend of exaggerated French arms expenditure".¹⁰⁰

The other aspect of the manipulation of figures related to budget cover-up of military expenditure under civilian ministries' budgets. Pierre Cot, a member of the National Assembly, wrote in December 1930 that:

"The General-Staff and the Ministers of National Defence have for some years been voluntarily covering up the budget, in order to mislead both foreign and domestic opinion on the importance of our military expenditures".¹⁰¹

In a study by him on this issue he referred to a number of examples where about 4 billion francs worth of expenditure of a military nature was included in the budget of civilian ministries but did not appear in the budget of the War Ministry. One of these examples concerned the budgets of the Gendarmerie and Republican Guard forces. In 1914 these two forces were included under the War Ministry's budget, but after the war they were gradually shifted to the Ministry of the Interior as shown in Table 8 on page 164 below.¹⁰²

TABLE 8 Movement between Ministry of War and Ministry of Interior of budget relating to gendarmerie and republican guard forces

year	War Ministry	Interior Ministry	Portion Supported by War Ministry %
1923	188	-	100
1926	133	100	51
1927	159	142	53
1928	133	296	31
1929	182	366	33
1930	50	542	8.4

This argument was also supported by another study by LOCARNAV¹⁰³ which concluded:

"by an organised cover up we witness the transfer of various credits from the War Department to other departments, the Interior, Agriculture, Public Works,...".

Finally, the method of military expenditure limitation was harmonious with the principle of interdependence of forces and had clear advantages for France. Because the method was universal it meant no specific force or weapon could be singled out for disarmament, thus shielding France from disarmament offensives against its land armament emanating in particular from Britain. It also gave governments freedom to decide as to where in their armed forces limitation should be carried out, were disarmament to be agreed.

In conclusion, the change of attitude by French disarmament makers in favour of military expenditure limitation as a method of disarmament, was dictated by the fact that after 1925 they could no longer delay the issue of disarmament on the grounds of security first since this had

become a matter of urgency within the League to be tackled directly. As such the options open to them shifted from disarmament or security to become disarmament by military expenditure limitation or by other methods. The military expenditure limitation method was more advantageous for them than other methods, because it was indirect; convenient in military budgeting techniques; and manipulable. All these characteristics provided a shield behind which France could legitimise hiding its military capabilities from any disarmament measures. However, it should be added that for France to extract the benefits of such a method she had to use it selectively (see the case study on aerial disarmament in Chapter Five below).

2.3 Material

While France had favoured disarmament by military expenditure limitation and opposed any direct reduction or limitation of material it adopted additional rules and approaches as to what material was negotiable and what wasn't and how this was to be handled. Such rules and approaches may be illustrated by looking at naval material and land material.

2.3.1 Naval Material

France's approach to limitation of naval material will be examined in the light of her experience at the Washington Conference which resulted in the Treaty of Washington - the only major arms control treaty concluded in the 1920 - and by looking at her attitude towards this method in the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference.

2.3.1.1 France's Disarmament Experience at the Washington Naval Conference

The experience undergone by France at the Washington Naval Conference in 1922 was a very important factor in determining both the country's attitude towards naval disarmament as well as its naval policy throughout the 1920s. Her participation in this Conference was motivated

by misperceived hopes and objectives. She saw in the Conference an opportunity to win back America's alliance and security guarantees which had fallen through as a consequence of the American Senate's failure to ratify the Treaty of Mutual Assistance signed between the two countries during the Versailles Settlement. Also, the Conference was seen to have been triggered by American-Japanese rivalry in the Pacific which as far as France was concerned constituted only a distant interest. These hopes were strengthened by reassurance from the Americans that the Conference would not accept anything detrimental to French security. This French perception of the Conference was summed up by an editorial of L'Europe Novell magazine as follows:

"...it quite clearly appears that one question will dominate all the others. It is not that of disarmament or Euro-American relations...It is first of all, and maybe solely, the problem of Americano-Japanese relations in the Pacific."¹⁰⁴

In the event, however, France found herself at the centre of an argument against the limitation of armaments and armed forces which affected her directly, and particularly her army and navy. While she firmly resisted any limitation of the army and the submarines, maintaining that these were not available for bargaining, she had to accept some limitative measures which were imposed upon capital ships and aircraft carriers as is illustrated by Table 9 on page 167 below.¹⁰⁵

In reality this limitation did not, per se, contain any immediate or serious constraints on the French navy. The Capital Ship had already become a thing of the past in the eyes of French naval strategists. As H C Bywater observed:

"The restriction of her battle fleet was of minor consequence to a State that had previously denounced the capital ship as an anachronism. Five huge dreadnoughts left unfinished at the end of the war were voluntarily scrapped in 1920, not because they were of obsolete design, but because French naval opinion regarded them as superfluous".¹⁰⁶

However, despite the superficiality of the Washington Treaty with regard to limitation of France's naval war material, French leaders felt that their country had been ill-treated and its status degraded. They

looked on the equal status with Italy accorded by the treaty as an insult to them. Their unhappiness was expressly and publicly voiced by George

TABLE 9 *Limitations introduced by the Washington Naval Treaty*

Capital Ship Tonnage

Country	Units	Tonnage	Ratio
British Empire	15	525,000	5
United States of America	15	525,000	5
Japan	9	315,000	3
France	-	175,000	1.67
Italy	-	175,000	1.67

Aircraft Carriers

Country	Tonnage	Ratio
British Empire	135,000	5
United States of America	135,000	5
Japan	81,000	3
France	60,000	2.22
Italy	60,000	2.22

Leygues, one of the Ministers of Marine, who has been described as the 'father' of the French navy.¹⁰⁷ In this respect he stated that:

"We refuse to accept naval equality with Italy, because France faces two seas, and has a vast empire only eighteen hours from Marseilles, with which we must amply protect our communications. We protest vehemently against taking a post-war instead of a pre-war formula of strength for establishing a naval ratio for the next ten years. This would penalise France for its enormous military efforts during the war at the expense of normal naval construction. The present weakness of our navy is abnormal. It may be impossible for France to add considerably to her navy for some years, but French national pride has been deeply wounded."¹⁰⁸

The Washington experience had a weighty influence on French naval policy with respect to its future development, and towards subsequent naval disarmament initiatives. Within weeks of the Washington Conference the French parliament approved a naval reconstruction programme consisting of an annual portion system (tranche navale) averaging 33.750 tons per year, spread for implementation over a period of twelve years, from 1922 to 1934.¹⁰⁹ The yearly naval portions for the years 1922 to 1930 were distributed as shown in Table 10 below.¹¹⁰

TABLE 10 *French naval expenditure under portion system for the years 1922-1930*

year	Global total of portions	Aircraft Carriers	Heavy Cruisers	Light Cruisers	Counter Torpedos	Torpedos	Submarines
1922	81,097			3	6	12	11
1923	6,274						9
1924	31,036		2			6	2
1925	48,584	1	1	1	3	4	9
1926	42,032		1	1	3	4	11
1927	33,109		1		6		9
1928	2,258						4
1929	35,861		1		6		11
1930	42,631		1	1	6		11
Total	292,872	1	7	6	30	26	77

By 1930 the naval fleet was composed of about 681.807 tons divided into 328.057 tons in service, 314.157 tons of new ships and authorised constructions, and 39.953 tons of special constructions.

2.3.1.2 France and Naval Material in the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference

France's position on limitation of naval material in the Preparatory Commission was formulated on the basis of her experience at the Washington Conference and the subsequent evolution of her naval fleet. This included the following principles and guidelines.¹¹¹

Firstly, naval disarmament was conceivable only on the basis of the principle of the interdependence of forces.¹¹² This meant that any naval disarmament had to take into account the overall strengths and weaknesses of a country's armament capability, thereby avoiding specific targeting as was the case with the submarine or France's armed forces in the Washington Conference.

Secondly, any comparison of naval material had to be based on the following factors:

- a) the tasks of each national navy, measured on the basis of the country's geographic situation, its colonies, lines of communication, and the length of its coastal frontiers;
- b) war potential of each country;
- c) the military value of each country's merchant navy.

Thirdly, the method of limitation had to be based on global tonnage, as opposed to limitation by category, applied in the following manner:

- a) the global tonnage judged necessary for the defence of each nation's security had to be estimated on the defence tasks faced by its navy, its war potential, and the military value of its merchant navy;
- b) on the basis of that calculation each nation must indicate the global tonnage expected to be realised during the period of a disarmament convention;
- c) having defined the global tonnage for each navy, each nation remains free to distribute into four categories the global tonnage to be realised during the period of the disarmament convention;
- d) such distribution could be modified under certain measures and on the basis of a one year warning;
- e) in order to avoid any surprises during the disarmament convention, any war ships which were constructed would not enter service until expiry of the convention.

In elaborating these guidelines Le Conseil Supérieur de La Defense Nationale concluded that:

"This thesis proceeds from the notion of security. It opposes the generalization of the system of Washington which tends to perpetuate the relative inferiority of different navies. It reserves the future and allows our navy to be modelled on the basis of political necessity and technical progress.

The application of this notion of security which apportions the navies to naval interests of each country, ensures for us a large naval superiority over Italy, a superiority which for us is a vital question. Italy contests this and requests naval equality with us...

The limitation by global tonnage reserves for us the freedom to build a submarine fleet adequate to our needs."¹³

As far as the limitation of naval material was concerned, France adopted a straightforward method: limitation by tonnage and not by category. This approach reflected her concerns over the Washington Conference. By opposing limitation of material by category, France's much condemned submarine force would not be targeted by the British as was the case at the Washington Conference. Global tonnage in practice implied that any naval reduction would be looked at on the calculation of each country's overall naval strength. Also, implementation of reduction as a total tonnage would imply that it would be up to governments to choose how such reduction be carried out.

Any inter-naval powers global tonnage comparison would render credibility to her plea for a strong naval force adequate for the security of her huge empire. Alternatively she could argue that it had already disarmed by using her naval past, and that it would be up to the other naval powers to follow suit. Either course was credible and sensible using the global tonnage method.

2.3.2 Land material

Unlike in the case of naval material, France's approach with regard to the limitation of land material was selective and less straightforward. According to guidelines drawn up by the CSDN in 1926 for its delegates to the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference:

"The comparison, reduction and limitation of land armaments with regard to material can, in principle, apply only to material in service with peace time units, to the exclusion of those which are

war reserves. They cannot lead to suppression and restriction of any type of material. Limitation of war reserves could only be envisaged progressively and in function with the efficient and effective international control guarantees, and it seems more practical to look at arms limitation by method of military expenditure".¹¹⁴

The rationale for the exclusion of the limitation of war reserve material is almost identical to that already used against the limitation of effectives. It reflects both the land armaments situation of post-war France and the strategic defence choice of the military leadership.

With regard to the post-war situation, France had inherited a large stock of arms¹¹⁵ and was in a strong position compared to disarmed Germany. Its inherited land material consisted of a variety of types, including very large numbers of rifles and guns; about 6.000 cannons of 75mm calibre with an enormous amount of ammunition; about 2.500 Renault FT tanks and about 100 heavy tanks.¹¹⁶ As the army was not only the strongest of the three French forces but also the largest in Europe save for the Soviet Union, it was natural that the French military leadership was not prepared to let such superiority of material decline.

As to the strategic defence calculation, this was constantly based on Germany's population superiority over France. As such one of the fundamental principles of its doctrine was the economy of human life on the firing line by making as much use as possible of war material at the nation's disposal.¹¹⁷ On these grounds France was not prepared to accept direct limitation of its material, particularly reserve material. Hence the advocacy of disarmament by limitation of military expenditure which, as was shown earlier, in reality amounted to no disarmament.

The restriction of the limitation of material to peacetime units, in reality amounted to no more than saying no to arms reduction by other means. For once the material in reserve was ruled out of any disarmament negotiations France would be free to decide what did and did not comprise reserve material and no-one else would be able to challenge her. This had the significant implication that the door was left open to bias and manipulation of figures as was illustrated in the case of military expenditure limitation and limitation of effectives. Further, the

exclusion of reserve material would facilitate France's frequently invoked claim that she had already disarmed to minimum levels compatible with her security¹¹⁸ as her army was mainly a reserve army of which peace time units were a very small part.

Finally, as with the exclusion of trained reserves, the exclusion of reserve material points to some methodological inconsistencies in the French approach. If the principle of interdependence of forces was to be taken to its logical conclusion it should equally apply to all branches of each force, including the reserve material and trained reserves. Similarly, if the principle of war potential was to stand up, both trained reserves and reserve material should not be excluded from any disarmament limitation. If such quantifiable issues were excluded then what rationale would be left to include war potential, many elements of which were unquantifiable?

3. Conclusion

It has been demonstrated in this Chapter that the principles and methods of France's disarmament policy were primarily developed to shield her military capabilities from any disarmament measures. Each of the three principles was based on a policy area of major preoccupation for French leaders. By making disarmament a function of security France could thwart disarmament offensives whilst at the same time make disarmament talks a platform on which to plead further security guarantees. Likewise, the principle of interdependence of forces was for France a sophisticated defence against the singling out of any of her particular military force or weapon such as her huge army or her submarines. However, because of its inherent subjectivity this principle was never carried to its logical conclusion as was illustrated by the exclusion of reserve material and trained reserve effectives. The main purpose of the principle of war potential was to shake up the belief that Germany was a disarmed and weak nation in favour of highlighting its strength in comparison with France's weakness. By doing so this was clearly to apply disarmament to Germany on the one hand, and render credibility to her security pleas and legitimise her hostile attitudes towards disarmament on the other. This principle too was subjective as

such it was never carried to its logical conclusion for, while insisting on some disarmament considerations for unquantifiable elements of war material, France excluded other visible and quantifiable items such as her trained reserves and reserve material.

The three main methods analysed were clearly designed to put these principles into practice. Military expenditure limitation was adopted and defended mainly because it was an indirect and manipulable method. Being indirect it provided an alternative to direct limitation of material, of which France had inherited huge stocks from the War years. Its quality of being manipulable gave French military leaders the opportunity to make figures say what they wanted them to say. However, it will be shown that for the benefits of this method to materialise French disarmament makers had to use it selectively (see Chapter Five and the case of aerial disarmament). The limitation of effectives without trained reserves and with the consequences of the distinction between home and overseas forces robbed the whole exercise of disarmament of its purpose with regard to the limitation of France's effectives. Finally, the interaction between these principles and methods constituted a well-designed shield behind which French military capabilities were hidden from any disarmament measures.

CHAPTER FOUR

Principles into Practice

R E F E R E N C E S

1. Secretariat General du CSDN "Etudes des questions a examiner par La commission preparatoire de la Reduction des Armements", in Archives Diplomatiques, Series SDN, Dossier No 833, (Janvier-Fevrier 1926), p86.
2. See Article 8 of the League of Nations Covenant.
3. See General Debeney "Sur La Sécurité Militaire de La France", op cit, p106.
4. See "Un rapport sur la Situation de reduction des armements au SDN" by E Requin entitled: "Le probleme de la reduction des armements devant La SDN: Historique et etat de La Question", dated 6 August 1921 in Archives Diplomatiques, Serie Y, Dossier No.499, pp39-40.
5. Resolution XIV passed during the Third Assembly of the League of Nations in 1922. See J W Wheeler-Bennett "Information on the Problem of Security (1917-1926)", op cit, pp92-93.
6. See General Debeney, op cit, p113.
7. See "Note: Le point de vue Français et Le point de vue Anglais devant Le probleme de La reduction des armements", dated 9 Novembre 1925, in Archives Diplomatiques, Serie SDN, Dossier No.832, Novembre-Decembre 1925, p1.
8. Presidence du Conseil Superieur de La Défense Nationale, Secretariat General "Etudes des questions à examiner par La Commission préparatoire de La Reduction des Armements Convoquee a Geneve le 15 Fevrier 1926", in Archives Diplomatiques, Serie SDN, Dossier No.833, dated Janvier-Fevrier 1926.
9. See "Note: Le Point de vue Français et le Point de Vue Anglais devant Le problem de la reduction des armements", dated

9 November 1925, in Archives Diplomatiques, Serie SDN, Dossier No.832, November-December 1925, p4.

10. Ibid, p5.
11. See "Avis émis par le Conseil Supérieur de La Défense Nationale dans Sa Séance du 22 Avril 1926, au Sujet des questions à examiner par la Commission Convoquée à Genève le 18 Mai 1926, en Vue de la préparation d'une Conférence du Désarmement", SHA, Carton 7N 3535, Dossier No.2, Doc.7, p1.
12. Ibid, p1.
13. Présidence du Conseil, Conseil Supérieur de La Défense Nationale, Secrétariat Général "Etudes des Questions à examiner par La Commission préparatoire de La réduction des armements, convoquée à Genève le 15 Février 1926", in Archives Diplomatiques, Serie SDN, Dossier No.833, Janvier-Février, 1926, p162.
14. General Debeney, op cit, p17.
15. See note from Aristide Briand to French Ambassadors in various countries, entitled "Problème du désarmement", dated 8 January 1926, in Archives Diplomatiques, Serie SDN, Dossier No.833, Janvier-Février 1926.
16. See Maurice Vaisse, op cit, p69.
17. Ibid, p69.
18. See "Note: Le point de Vue Français et Le point de Vue Anglais devant Le problème de la réduction des armements", op cit, p2.
19. See E Requin, op cit, p37.
20. See "Note: Le point de vue Français et le point de Vue Anglais Devant le problème de la réduction des armements", op cit, p3 (footnote).
21. See E Requin, op cit, p37.

22. Presidence du Conseil, Conseil de La Defense Nationale, Secretariat General "Etudes des Questions a examiner par La Commission preparatoire de La Reduction des Armements Convoquee a Geneve Le 15 Fevrier 1926", op cit, pp92-93.
23. Ibid, p98.
24. Ibid, p98.
25. See "Note: Le point de vue Français et le point de Vue Anglais Devant Le probleme de La Reduction des Armements", op cit, pp1-2.
26. Presidence du Conseil, Conseil de la Defense Nationale, Secretariat Generale "Etudes des Questions à examiner par la commission preparatoire de la reduction des armements, convoquée à Geneve le 15 Fevrier 1926", op cit, p91.
27. See "Avis Emis par le Conseil Superieur de La Defense Nationale dans sa Seance Du 22 Avril 1926, au sujet Des Question a examiner par La Commission convoquée à Geneve le 18 Mai 1926, en vue de La preparation d'Une Conference du Desarmement", op cit, p1.
28. For more details on the definition see League of Nations Docs. of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference, Series IV, IX Disarmament, 1927.IX.5., particularly Annex 4.
29. See Part V of the Versailles Peace Treaty.
30. See Central American Convention of 1923. See also Professor P J Noel Baker, op cit, p105.
31. See Professor P J Noel Baker, ibid.
32. For detailed analysis of the Esher Plan see ibid, p74-96.
33. See the League of Nations Resolution passed by the Sixth Assembly.
34. This question dealt with land armaments.

35. See League of Nations "Documents of the Preparatory Commissions for the Disarmament Conference", Series IV, 15 June 1927, p40.
36. See Article 2 of the French Draft Convention presented to the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference. Quoted in League of Nations "Documents of the Preparatory Commission", Series IV, 15 June 1927, p361.
37. See for example John W Wheeler-Bennett "Disarmament and Security Since Lorcano", op cit, pp127-138; also Giovanni Engely, op cit, pp48-58.
38. See Giovanni Engely, ibid, p53.
39. See League of Nations "Docs of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference", League of Nations Publication C 195.M.74,1929.IX, p115.
40. See J Monteilhet, op cit, p441.
41. The project was approved by the deputies but the Senate modified it and was not passed. Paul-Boncour was infuriated by the failure of his project. See Edouard Bonnefous "Histoire Politique de La Troisième République: Tome 4:", op cit, pp208-212 and 244-245.
42. See ibid, p210.
43. For the Chinese proposal made before the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference in 1929, see League of Nations "Documents of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference", Series VIII, 25 May 1929, p206. For the quote see General A Niessel "L'Armée Française et Le Désarmement", in Revue De France, Vol.12, January 1932, p363.
44. This was a reaction to a proposal made by the German delegation to the Preparatory Commission requesting the establishment of a system of tables containing information on reserves and effectives. See CSDN Report, dated 13 July 1928, in SHA 7N.3535, Dossier No.3, p14.
45. League of Nations "Documents of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference", Series IV, 15 June 1927, p72.

46. Ibid, p72.
47. Ibid, p72.
48. Ibid, pp72-73.
49. See "Point de Vue Du General Debeney", dated 20 April 1926, in SHA Carton 7N3535, Dossier No 2, Doc 16, p2.
50. See Monteilhet, "Les Institutions Militaires de La France", op cit, p408.
51. Ibid, p445.
52. Ibid, p445.
53. See J Monteilhet "L'Europe En Armes Devant La Conference du Désarmement", Cahiers des Droits de L'Homme, 30 May 1931, p343.
54. J Monteilhet "Les Institutions Militaires de La France", op cit, p.415.
55. See Colonel A Grasset, op cit, p8.
56. See "Note pour Monsieur Le Chef D'Etat Major General" and "Observations sur le memoirs ci-joint du service Français de la Societe des Nations" in SHA Carton 7N3535 Dossier No.2, Doc.10.
57. Ibid, Annexe I, p2.
58. Ibid, p2.
59. Ibid, p2-3.
60. Ibid, p2.
61. General Debeney "Sur La Sécurité de La France", op cit, p27.
62. Ibid, p27.

- 63 . See League of Nations "Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference, Report of Sub-Commission A, Military, Naval & Air", C739.M.278 1926IX, p53.
64. See League of Nations "Documents of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference", Series IV, 25 June 1927, p61.
65. Professor P J Noel Baker, op cit, p73; see A M Gunji Hosono, op cit, p266.
66. See letter from "Le President du Conseil, Ministre des Affaires Etrangeres, A Monsieur Le Ministre de La Guerre (Etat Major General), dated 3 April 1921, in Archives Diplomatiques, Serie Y International, Dossier No. 499, p9.
67. Ibid, p9.
68. See Service Français de La SDN "Note pour Monsieur Le Chef d'Etat Major General" dated 20.4.1926, Annexe IV, in SHA Carton 7N 3535 Document 10.
69. See for example letter from "Le President du Conseil, Minister des Affaires Etrangeres, A Monsieur Le Ministre de La Guerre (Etat Major General), dated 3 April 1921, Archives Diplomatiques, Serie Y Internationale, Dossier No 499, p9.
70. Question II(b)

 (b) What is to be understood by the expression "reduction and limitation of armaments"?

 The various forms which reduction of 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 defence, etc."
- 71 . With regard to disarmament limitation"...il parait plus pratique de La rechercher dans La voie de La Limitation des Depense d'armements". See "Avis Emis par le Conseil Superieur de La Defense Nationale dans sa Seance du 22 Avril 1926, au sujet des questions à examiner par La Commission Convoquee a Geneve Le 18 Mai 1926, en vue de La preparation d'une Conference du

desarmement", SHA, Carton 7N 3535, Dossier No.2, Document 17, p10.

- 72. See "Analyse Succinte Des Avis Emis par le Conseil Superieur de La Defense Nationale le 22 Avril 1926 au sujet des Questions a examiner par La Commission preparatoire", SHA, Carton 7N 3535, Doc. 17.
- 73. See League of Nations "Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference, Report of Sub-Commission A (Military, Naval & Air)", C.739.M.278.1926.IX.p123.
- 74. Ibid, p223.
- 75. Ibid, p138.
- 76. Articles 19 & 20 of the French Draft Convention, in League of Nations "Documents of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference", Series IV, 1927, p364.
- 77. Article 20, ibid, p364.
- 78. Article 21, ibid, p364.
- 79. Article 21, ibid, p364.
- 80. Article 21, ibid, p364.
- 81. See for example the argument put by the German delegate in the 21st public meeting of the Preparatory Commission on 6 April 1927, in League of Nations, "Documents of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference", Series IV, 15 June 1927, pp176-177.
- 82. See for example this argument as put forward by the Italian delegate. Ibid, p184.
- 83. Ibid, p183.
- 84. Ibid, pp186-187.

85. See the views of the Japanese and British representatives in the Preparatory Commission. Ibid, pp90-191.
86. Ibid, p190.
87. Ibid, p191.
88. See this criticism made by the British representative in the Preparatory Commission, ibid, p196.
89. Ibid, p196.
90. Ibid, p199.
91. Ibid, p199.
92. Ibid, p199.
93. Ibid, p199.
94. See "Rapport au Conseil Supérieur de La Défense Nationale Le projet de convention de Limitation des Armements adopté à Genève en première lecture", dated July 1928, SHA, 7N 3535, Dossier No.3, p9.
95. See Robert Jacomet, op cit, p97, quoted in Maurice Vaisse, op cit, p30.
96. See the French Draft Convention. When the French delegates began to prepare for the work of the Preparatory Commission one of their guidelines was to make sure that their preparation took account of all their ongoing military reorganisation: "Cette préparation doit surtout marcher au pair avec nos propres projets de reorganisation militaires, et il faut éviter de recommencer la faute commise au moment de La réduction du service de trois ans à dix huit mois dont nous n'avons tiré aucun bénéfice international." See "5^{ème} Assemblée de la Société des Nations: Situation le 20 Septembre 1924" in SHA Carton 3529, Dossier I, Doc 54, p5.
97. See "Note du délégué de La France à La 6^{ème} session de La Commission Préparatoire du Désarmement", dated 3 July 1929, in Archive Diplomatique, SDN Dossier No.1065. It analyses the reasons for the unpopularity of France for keeping a large

army and blames it on the country having always presented its total as one force instead of breaking them down into a number of forces which did not happen until 1927.

98. Ibid, p2.
99. See Robert Frankenstein, op cit, p43 and 45. Also Maurice Vaisse, op cit, p66.
100. Maurice Vaisse, op cit, p73. "Rapport du Lt Colonel Requin du Service Français de La Société des Nations...", 10 October 1922 in SHA, 7N3529, Dossier 3, Doc 21, p3 and 4.
101. See Pierre Cot "Les Depenses Militaires de La France en 1931 et Avant La Guerre", in Les Cahiers Des Droits de L'Homme, No.32, 20 December 1920, p752.
102. Ibid, p753.
103. Etudes par LOCARNAV" Pour La Limitation des Armements: Le Chiffre de Nos Defenses Militaires" in Archives Diplomatiques, SDN Dossier No.1065, p68.
104. See the editorial of Europe Nouvelle No.41, 8 October 1921, p1291-1992. See also exchanged telegrams between A Briand and French Ambassador in Washington.
105. See Giovanni Engely, op cit, p10.
106. See Hector C Bywater "French Naval Policy & its Reactions", Atlantic Monthly, May 1925, p691.
107. See Jacques Raphael-Leygues, op cit.
108. Quoted in Hector C Bywater, op cit, p691.
109. For more details see Robert Jacomet, op cit, p74.
110. See Maurice Vaisse, op cit, p67.

111. See projet de Rapport du Conseil Supérieur de La Defense Nationale, dated 13 July 1928, SHA, 7N 3535, Dossier No.3, Doc.3, pp17-26.
112. Ibid, p19. See also the French government's reply to the League of Nations on the Naval Conference held in February 1924 in Rome in which it was stated that:
- "The Government of the Republic instructed its representative on the Naval Sub-Commission at Rome to support the view that the requirements of national security should be taken into account.
- In conformity with his instructions, Admiral Jehenne urged the adoption of a system by which the present requirements of the national security of any state could be estimated by means of comparison with the naval situation of that state at a given period - namely, the period at which the naval forces of the state in question might be taken as corresponding to the true requirements of its security."
- In League of Nations "Reduction of Armaments, Limitation of Naval Armaments: Replies from Governments", L N C 286.M90.1924 IX, p7.
113. Ibid, p21.
114. See "Avis Emis par Le Conseil Supérieur de La Defense Nationale dans Sa Seance du 22 Avril 1926. Au sujet des Questions a Examiner par La Commission convoquee a Geneve le 18 Mai 1926, en vue de La Preparation d'une Conference du Disarmement", SHA, Carton 7N 3535, Dossier No.2, Document 17, p10.
115. For more details see Robert Jacomet, op cit, p86.
116. See Maurice Vaisse, op cit, p.65.
117. See ibid, p.72.
118. See for example General Debeney "Sur La Sécurité Militaire de La France", op cit, p107, where he says "Les reductions spontanees, La France les a deja faite progressivement depuis La signature du Pacte...".

CHAPTER FIVE

Case Studies: Aerial Disarmament and the Arms Trade Draft Convention of 1924

Aerial disarmament, and the Draft Convention on Arms Trade and War Material prepared in 1924 for the 1925 International Conference on that subject, constitute two of very few practical arms control and disarmament cases in which France was directly involved. The aim of selecting these cases is to study France's policy behaviour, and to illustrate how her disarmament machinery and the principles and methods underlying her disarmament approach were put into practice in regard to these two subjects. This case study will be carried out in two sections: Aerial Disarmament, and the Draft Convention on Arms Trade & War Material.

1. France and Aerial Disarmament

As we have seen in Chapter One above, the advance in aerial navigation and concern over its possible consequential use as a method of war was one of the topics on the agenda of both the First and Second Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907. The two Conferences attempted to control the offensive nature of aerial warfare, and in particular aerial of innocent populations and towns. However, measures taken in this respect were not sufficient to prevent the technological advance in the domain of aeronautics, or their adoption and use in warfare. The First World War was a testing ground for such technological advances demonstrating that aerial bombardment, which the Hague Peace Conferences attempted to control and regulate, had become a decisive warfare method of horrific consequence.¹ With this experience aerial disarmament became one of the pressing concerns of world politics beginning with the Versailles Settlement.

France was one of the main actors in aerial disarmament on a multilateral as well as a bilateral basis. Her approach in this respect will be explored by examining her attitude the Versailles Settlement; the

Washington Naval Conference; British air defence and France's aerial disarmament dilemma; and finally, the method which she adopted in the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference.

1.1 The French Position on Aerial Disarmament at the Versailles Settlement and the Washington Naval Conference

Before looking at France's position on aerial disarmament at the Versailles Settlement and during the Washington Naval Conference it will be useful first to analyse briefly the technical evolution of French aeronautical power. As was already mentioned in Chapter Two above, at the end of the First World War France enjoyed an envious air power capability. The country's technological innovation in aeronautics had begun before the War but the latter accelerated its military application. This process was succinctly described by Claude Paillat:

"We entered the war with 160 planes of a dozen different makes, our aeronautical industry employed less than 10,000 persons. At the end of the hostilities, we could supply 30,000 fighting machines. In four years we manufactured more than 50,000 with 92,594 engines. This material had served to help or equip the Russians, the Italians and particularly the Americans who used our planes...

In 1913...the industry employed about 200,000 workers."²

With this increased productivity France managed to catch up with Germany which:

"...in 1914 had twice as many planes as France had, 300, and 6 dirigibles...(and) between 1914 and 1918 Germany manufactured (only) 48,000 machines".³

The overall production by the belligerent countries between 1914 and 1918 was estimated at 177,000 planes.⁴ At the time of the Armistice France's air power compared to that of Britain and Germany in terms of serviceable machines and trained flying personnel was estimated as indicated in Table 11 on page 186 below.⁵

Table 11 *Serviceable machines and trained flying personnel for France, Britain and Germany at the time of the Armistice*

	France	Germany	Britain
Serviceable Machines	12,000	11,000	14,000
Personnel	16,000	12,000	24,000

At the time of the Armistice France, therefore, was the second air power in the world after Britain, and it was with this status that she participated in the disarmament of Germany under the Versailles Peace Treaty.

The military terms of the Treaty disarming Germany were drawn up by a Committee presided over by Marshal Foch. The latter proposed the aerial disarmament of Germany, but when this proposal was considered by the Council of Ten it raised a serious technical question, the differentiation between military and commercial aeroplanes and whether the latter category should be prohibited too. However, Marshal Foch asked the Council to agree immediately to German aerial disarmament and leave question of differentiation between military and commercial aeroplanes for future discussions.⁶ In the end the Council agreed to the aerial disarmament of Germany as suggested by Foch.⁷ At the same time it agreed to suspend all German manufacturing of aeroplane parts until the final acceptance of the Peace Treaty.⁸

In the meantime, the issue of the differentiation between military and commercial aeroplanes was referred to a Commission, the Aeronautical Commission, for further examination. When reporting to the Allied Supreme Council on March 17 1919, this Commission found that civil aeroplanes and airships were easily convertible into weapons and carriers.⁹ Further, in September that year, heads of the delegates to the Peace Conference were informed that Germany's internal civil aviation:

"...was being developed on an immense scale and German companies were buying up old aeroplanes. The German government was heavily subsidising civil aviation. German aircraft industry had already obtained a footing in neutral markets, and it was certain that the foundation of German air power was the development of the aircraft industry".¹⁰

On the basis of these findings France suggested that all German aeronautical manufacturing be prohibited for a period of twenty to thirty years so as to ensure the destruction of all existing flying material and the dispersion of trained flying personnel.¹¹ However, this suggestion did not receive the backing of other delegates. Instead it was agreed to extend the prohibition of German aircraft manufacture until October 1922, after which:

"...the manufacture and importation of aircraft was subjected to nine rules regulating construction, speed, and carrying powers, in order to ensure that civil aviation would be as different as possible from military aviation".¹²

In addition, France and other allies adopted a provision giving them freedom of passage through Germany's air space as well as the freedom of transit and landing without reciprocity. They wanted this provision to last until the evacuation of German territory by the Allied and Associated troops was complete. However, because of opposition from America the period of this provision was set to last until January 1923 only.¹³

German aerial disarmament was accompanied by a cut-back in the British airforce due to caused by financial difficulties. One comparison between the air power status of Britain and France suggested that:

"In December 1922 the strength of the Royal Air Force in Europe was 1,158 trained pilots, 75 observers, 19,421 other ranks with 15 squadrons of 12 planes each. France, the nearest continental power, had in Europe 3,039 flying personnel and 30,477 ground duties personnel with 100 squadrons of 8 to 10 planes each."¹⁴

By virtue of the two factors of German disarmament and Royal Air Force cut-back, in terms of air material France became the first air power in the world.

Yet despite this France was not totally satisfied with German aerial disarmament, since it was limited to military aeroplanes to the exclusion of commercial aircraft. She remained haunted by the German civilian aviation and aeronautical industry which represented the lingering potential for the resurgence of the German air force.

This fear was one of the principal factors underpinning France's position in the Washington Naval Disarmament Conference, for which failure she was blamed:

"...the whole French policy at Washington injured the success of the Conference and unmistakably harmed the standing of France throughout the world. Ungenerous from the beginning to end, this policy prevented any action in the matter of land armaments:...and consequently of antisubmarine aircraft".¹⁶

Because of French opposition to land disarmament, aerial disarmament at the Washington Naval Conference was only approached in two indirect ways. Firstly, the limitation of aircraft was discussed by a Sub-Committee of experts which took up the question of differentiation between military and commercial aircraft, left over from the Versailles Peace Conference. Its conclusion was that the two categories of aircraft were mutually beneficial and inseparable for any nation, and further, it was impracticable to impose any effective limitation on the number or characteristics of aircraft be they commercial or military. Instead of limitation the Sub-Committee suggested that the issue of aircraft in war be generally governed by the rules of warfare. Such rules were studied by a Commission of Jurists, set up for that purpose, between 1922 and 1923. The study produced a code of rules regulating aerial bombardment and making it only legitimate when solely directed against military objectives, to the exclusion of the civilian population. This code was never considered by governments in the 1920s.¹⁶

Secondly, while limitation of aircraft was excluded aircraft carriers were not. The limitation agreed in this respect consisted of a total tonnage for each power as was described in Chapter Four, Table 9 on page 167 above, coupled with the restriction of each carrier to a maximum of 27,000 tons. Also, the guns allowed for each carrier were limited in calibre to a maximum of 8 inches.¹⁷

France's success in excluding the question of land armament and consequently aerial disarmament from the agenda of the Washington Naval Conference was only a short-lived attempt to protect the superiority of her air force. Such superiority had already begun to attract the attention of Britain which was in the process of reorganising the Royal Air Force.

2. British Air Defence Policy and the French Aerial Disarmament Dilemma

The superiority of France's air force was one of the main thorny questions in Anglo-French relations during the early part of the 1920s. Britain's concern in this respect had begun in the Autumn of 1921 when:

"...high level diplomatic tension with France coincided with the general review and reordering of defence priorities occasioned by preparations for the Washington Naval Conference".¹⁸

This assessment by British decision makers made it clear to them that:

"...the victory of 1918 did not necessarily foreclose jeopardy to the British Isles from a continental source. A great superior air force existed within striking distance of British cities and industrial centres; problems of air defence could not be treated as hypothetical".¹⁹

This perceived threat of French air power culminated in the adoption in 1923 of an expansion programme for the British air force. This programme was based on French air power itself and consisted of 52 squadrons to be completed with as little delay as possible.²⁰ At the

same time as adopting this programme the British government expressed interest in aerial disarmament in a statement delivered by Mr Baldwin:

"In conformity with our obligation under the Covenant of the League of Nations, His Majesty's Government would gladly cooperate with other Governments in limiting the strength of air armaments on lines similar to the Treaty of Washington in the case of the Navy, and any such arrangement, it is needless to say, would govern the policy of air expansion set out in this statement."²¹

France followed closely the discussion of the British air force expansion programme with some surprise that an ally such as Britain felt threatened by her air force. The strategic role of French air power consisted of two tasks which did not envisage any calculations of direct attack against any of the British forces. These two tasks were summed up in a document produced by L'Etat Major-General which stated that France's aerial armaments were commended:²²

"On land, by the necessity to furnish our army with the aeronautical elements which are essential auxiliary, and to ensure our territorial security against aerial attacks by continental enemies.

On sea, by the case of increasing the security of our Mediterranean lines of communication, defending our very large coasts and our ports which must play a big role in...our national security".

The French neither made any direct strategic aerial calculation against Britain, nor did they appear to have taken the British air force expansion as a serious threat against their own security. Further, in February 1924, Raymond Poincaré the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, assured the British government that there was no cause for alarm for Britain over French armaments.²³ As such the Royal Air Force expansion programme did not matter to the French.

What mattered to them, and a great deal too, was the idea of disarmament. The question of whether or not to accept an aerial disarmament conference along the lines of the Washington Naval Conference threw them into a mild dilemma. Consultation initiated by the government on this matter showed a slight divergence of opinion between the Prime

Minister on the one hand, and the Ministries of War, the Navy, the General Staff and the CSDN on the other.

In January 1924, Raymond Poincaré sought the views of the War and Marine Ministries, but did not consult directly with the CSDN on the British aerial disarmament idea. He informed the said Ministries that Britain was trying to push for an aerial disarmament conference although it had not yet made any official declaration to that effect. In explaining his view on this matter to the War and Marine Ministers, he referred to a point made by the French Air Attaché in London that the British manoeuvre might lead to world wide pressure in favour of an international conference on aerial disarmament.²⁴ His analysis of the likely result of such a conference, should it proceed, was based on France's experience at the Washington Naval Conference. As such he envisaged the outcome to be one of two scenarios.

The first scenario was that an immediate international conference on aerial disarmament, if held under the same conditions as the Washington Naval Conference, was bound to result in the preservation and consolidation of the existing air power capabilities of the signatories to any eventual agreement. As an example of this he referred to Britain's success at the Washington Naval Conference consisting of the inclusion in the calculation of her existing naval power of naval units still at the project stage when the Treaty was signed.²⁵

The second scenario was that if the initiative for an aerial disarmament conference was left to Britain it was not likely that this would be mooted before her programme had reached the construction stage or had received her parliament's approval for construction. In that situation, he argued, Britain would propose that her programme be taken into consideration when fixing each country's portion of air power capabilities.²⁶

Clearly Poincaré was in favour of France taking the initiative to gather an immediate international aerial disarmament conference in order to achieve the results of the first scenario and forestall those of the second. He argued further that by initiating such a conference:

"We would publicly and loudly give the lie to all those who accuse France of pursuing an imperialist and militarist policy."²⁷

In his letter, Poincaré asked the Ministries of Marine and War what they thought of his opinion. He received no reply from either Ministry and on 28 February 1924 he wrote to them again referring to his earlier letter and adding that the time was even more ripe than before for France to take the initiative in this respect.²⁸ Subsequently, the Prime Minister received responses to his suggestion from the Ministry of War, the Ministry of Marine, the General Staff and even the CSDN which was not directly consulted by him. Each pointed to the illusionary aspect of the conference, reminded him of the real threat to France's air power, and invoked France's principles and methods of disarmament.

Firstly, the illusionary aspect of an international aerial disarmament conference was illustrated by Britain's determination to acquire "one-power standard" for her air force, and her desired methods of achieving that. With regard to her determination, the Minister of Marine pointed to the air force expansion programme of 1923 which was supported by parliament and the press. He added that it would be difficult for Britain to maintain the "one-power standard" for both her navy and air forces, given her current financial difficulties. In his view such an aim was achievable only if America did not maintain her naval power at its existing level and France did not maintain her existing air power.²⁹

As to Britain's desired methods of achieving "one-power standard" for her air force, both the Minister of Marine³⁰ and the General Staff pointed to the experience of the Washington Naval Treaty. In the General Staff's View, while officially the United States had taken the initiative to gather the Conference, it had been at least in part triggered by British propaganda which had skillfully exploited the American situation. As a result, by the Washington Naval Treaty, America was denied inter alia, 13 warships (including battle cruisers under construction) while in return Britain had only given up old units.³¹ Their conclusion was that Britain had achieved her naval "one-power standard" by a conference and now wanted to do the same with her air power. If France, therefore,

initiated an international aerial disarmament she would be providing Britain with the same opportunity as America had by initiating the Washington Naval Conference.

Secondly, the real threat against France's air power was primarily related to the German and Italian air powers rather than the British. With regard to Germany, the General Staff argued that although she had been banned from keeping an air force by the Treaty of Versailles, and despite having had her commercial aircraft subjected to restrictions of power and speed, she had made recognisable progress in both of these areas. On the commercial aircraft front they pointed out that Germany occupied a preponderant position in Europe not only in her own territory but also in Spain, Italy, Turkey, Holland and Russia. They added that her research on the aerodynamic production of machines, light metal, and combustibles capable of replacing petrol, had put her in an independent position from the external world. Furthermore:

"She disposes, on her territory as well as abroad, of a total number of engineers higher than that of other countries and an increasing number of factories. She could almost instantly resume the construction of war machines in series."³²

It was this threat, argued the Ministry of Marine, which "should determine our air power",³³ and by inference not the British air force expansion programme. On this basis the General Staff concluded that any aerial disarmament by France could not be regarded as anything but agreeable to Germany.³⁴

As to Italy, the General Staff argued that this country was making every effort to catch up with the French air force and therefore achieve equality with France as it already had done in the naval field. In substantiating this Italian intention, they referred to the Italian naval programme of 1924-1925. According to their estimates that programme envisaged a huge expansion of the Italian air force as shown in Table 12 on page 194 below.

Table 12: *The General Staff's comparison of Italian air force material in June 1924 and in the light of the naval programme for 1924-1925*

Material	June 1924	1924-1925 Programme
Squadrons	60	115
Machines in service	700	1200
Machines in reserve	700	1200

Furthermore, the General Staff argued that the Italian Naval Commissariat had set itself the target of constructing 4,500 machines.³⁵ Such an increase in Italian air power constituted a threat to French lines of communication with her colonies.

To illustrate further the Italian threat, the General Staff produced a comparison between existing French air force material in 1924 and its estimated need in peacetime based on a programme presented to parliament a year earlier but which was not examined by the latter. This comparison looked as detailed in Table 13 below.³⁶

Table 13: *L'Etat-Major's comparison between the existing and estimated requirements for air material by the French Army and Navy in 1924*

	Army Material		Navy Material	Total
	Metropolitan	Overseas		
Material in 1924	99	28	9	136
Estimated need	186	22	25	233

This comparison, which shows how far France was from the target of air material estimated necessary for her security, coupled with a growing German air power and the fast-ascending trend of the Italian air force, rendered the idea of aerial disarmament with Britain a serious misplaced calculation.

Finally, on the basis of the aforementioned analysis, Poincaré's idea of an international aerial disarmament conference did not make tally with France's disarmament principles and methods as defined by the CSDN. Firstly, the authorities which responded to Poincaré's consultation could not see what France would talk about in an aerial disarmament conference with Britain. As far as they were concerned although Britain felt threatened by their air force, she was neither a target nor a threat to them. As growing German potential was their main target, they saw any aerial disarmament talks with Britain inevitably resulting in the following scenario:

"...in such negotiations, Britain would have her sight on the French Air Force, while we, on the contrary, would only see in front of us the German aviation. It could therefore be very possible that we would not speak the same language".³⁷

Secondly, the principle of disarmament as a function of security did not seem to make sense either. Britain's sole aim was the reduction of French air power, and the General Staff could not see how the point of French security against secretly-arming Germany and ascending Italian air power, could be maintained to secure for France the necessary air power. Britain was not interested and the French security argument would make no sense to her in such talks.³⁸ Furthermore, it was seen to be fundamentally wrong for France on the one hand, to publicly invoke the principle of security under Article 8 of the Covenant, and on the other, to deny Britain the same right:

"...to bring up the level of her air force to match that of the strongest continental power".³⁹

With the principle of security thrown out of the window, the alternative basis on which to talk aerial disarmament was that of the

'status quo'. But this principle as was shown in Chapter Four above, had no place in the French disarmament approach. As far as France was concerned this principle was the main cause of her disastrous naval relegation to the Italian rank at the Washington Conference. As far as the General Staff was concerned if the envisaged aerial disarmament talk was to be

"...based on...the 'status quo', France would find itself in a bad posture (as she was in Washington with regard to Capital Ships), notably vis-a-vis Italy which has decided by the programme of 1924-1925 to raise...her air force to 115 squadrons".⁴⁰

Thirdly, the idea of aerial disarmament discussions with Britain ran contrary to the principle of the independence of forces. In this regard the General Staff argued that:

"At present we are talking foremost about aerial disarmament, while in fact this particular point cannot be treated in isolation, it is linked to the problem of all the forces of the military power."⁴¹

In conclusion, the reaction from all those consulted on Poincaré's idea of an aerial disarmament with Britain was that this could not be anything but detrimental to French security and should not be initiated by France.⁴² Furthermore, the CSDN which was not directly consulted by Poincaré warned the latter that:

"The problem of armaments which necessarily includes aerial armaments is put before the League of Nations. France has managed, with pain, to link the question of arms reduction and limitation to the guarantees of security. To dissociate air armaments would undermine our solid position in this regard."⁴³

However, by 1925 the British idea had died down and the issue of aerial disarmament moved to the forum of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference, where the French attitude in this regard will be looked at next.

3. French Attitudes Towards Aerial Disarmament in the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference

This Commission considered the question of aerial armaments from various angles which could be summed up under two main themes, the subject matter of control or reduction of air forces, and the methods of achieving it. The Commission's work in this respect was greatly influenced by the French delegation.

The subject matter agreed upon for disarmament consisted of the reduction or limitation of air personnel, and aeroplanes and dirigibles capable of use in war employed in commission in the land, sea and air forces, or in the formations organised on a military basis.⁴⁴ The method of limitation of material adopted by the Commission was by total horse-power combined with the total number of machines in regard to aeroplanes and total volume expressed in cubic metres for dirigibles. All these ideas, except for the total number added to the horse-power as a method of limitation, originated from the French delegation's Draft Convention, which was proposed to the Commission in 1927.⁴⁵ This Convention also contained other French proposals which were either dropped or amended during discussions of the Draft Convention by the Commission.

These two sets of ideas by the French delegation to the Commission were designed on the basis of instructions emanating from the CSDN and its Study Commission. The central theme of these instructions were aimed not at the realisation of aerial disarmament but instead at the prevention of a situation where aeronautics could become monopolised by one country. The main country in mind was Germany, whose aeronautical industry was regarded by French military leaders as making fast progress.⁴⁶ How such aims were argued will be illustrated by looking at both sets of ideas contained in the French Draft Convention.

The set of ideas adopted by the Commission consisted, as was mentioned earlier, of limitation or control of air personnel, and air material. The limitation or control of personnel was elaborated along the general lines of the French approach to disarmament by limitation of effectives, the technical advantages of which were detailed in Chapter

Four above. However, this method was challenged on two technical grounds. Firstly, a number of delegates argued that the definition of limitable personnel was impossible because military and civil aviation were too closely associated and interdependent.⁴⁷ The French delegates, while agreeing with this argument, responded by referring to the impossibility of limiting civil aviation, thereby facing the rest of the delegates with a Hobson's choice of either limiting personnel or having no limitation at all.⁴⁸ The French view prevailed. The target of this method of limitation was not French air personnel, as will be shown next, but air personnel organised on a military basis or in formation on a military basis such as

"...gendarmarie, customs officials, forest guards which whatever their legal purpose can be used without mobilisation, by reason of their staff of officers, established training, armaments, or equipment, as well as any organisation complying with the above condition".⁴⁹

Lord Cecil, British delegate, pondering on a practical example for such a definition almost prompted Paul-Boncour to spell out the country to which he intended it to apply, when he stated that:

"Lord Cecil's question is rather difficult to answer. It is always a delicate matter to mention the name of a given country. I can, however, tell him that there certainly do exist countries where the police forces dispose of aircraft...I think it necessary that nothing should be allowed to escape."⁵⁰

The country in mind was Germany.

Secondly, the distinction between home and overseas forces was criticised by many delegates. They argued that while such a distinction was valid for naval and armed forces, in the case of the air force it did not have any grounds. This argument was based on the fact that aeroplanes were mobile and because of their speed could join the 'home' force within a very short time, thereby making the distinction redundant. The French delegates conceded to this line of argument but insisted, and won, that the option be given to countries to retain the distinction when presenting data on their air forces to the League.⁵¹ This provision, even if optional, according to Paul-Boncour was a good measure of calculating

states' need for armaments.⁵² In other words, France could protect its air personnel from any measures of limitation by presenting its forces as two separate entities matching its colonial security and home security.

The limitation or control of air material and its methods were also guided by the same objectives. With regard to material, whether aircraft or derigibles, limitation was suggested along the same lines as personnel, and there is no need therefore to repeat the same arguments again. The methods by which the French delegation envisaged the limitation or control of aeroplanes and derigibles were quite revealing about France's objectives. The choice of total horse-power for aeroplanes made Lord Cecil question the need for such a complicated method as opposed to the simple numerical method proposed by the British delegation. The latter, he argued, was verifiable while the former was not.⁵³ In reply, Paul-Boncour advanced the argument that the horse-power method would be measured according to the rules established by the International Air Navigation Commission which made it easy to verify once a supervision procedure had been set up. However he agreed with Lord Cecil that the two methods could be combined on condition that no ratio correlation was established between them,⁵⁴ and this was adopted by the Commission.

In fact the French choice of total horse-power and volume for the control of aeroplanes and derigibles as opposed to the simple numerical method was borne out of a motivation to apply the brakes to German air power development. The numerical approach did not provide such a brake since under it states could always increase the engine capacity of their aircraft. Under the total horse-power method on the contrary, states could only expand downwards, ie the more aircraft they have the smaller the capacity of each engine. In this regard, Paul-Boncour stated that small states could:

"...distribute the total horse-power allotted to them over as many small machines as possible...small machines are more adaptable for defensive purposes than offensive...".⁵⁵

Thus Germany could produce small military aircraft and derigibles but not high-powered bombing aircraft. The same argument goes for the use of volume in the case of derigibles.

As to those French ideas which were proposed but not adopted, the issue of civil aviation was the most important. Article 11 of the French delegation's Draft Convention stipulated that any agreement on aerial disarmament had to take into account the development of civil aviation for each country in regard to other countries.⁵⁶ This proposition was opposed by many delegates who argued that civil aviation should not be brought into agreements of a military character. They added that if the provision meant taking account only of other countries' civil aviation, there was no need to include it since states would do so as a matter of course. In response, the French defended the inclusion of the provision on the ground that:

"When we come to discuss Article 8 of the Covenant, it will be essential for us to establish in what manner a country may adduce the undue development of civil aviation in another country as a ground for claiming for itself an increase in the figures allowed it by the Convention."⁵⁷

In other words, what the French delegation desired was to ensure that it legitimised the use of German air power potential when it calculated its security needs.

To conclude, this case has illustrated how the French approach to disarmament was put to work and demonstrates its domination by the military. With regard to the approach, French attitudes towards aerial disarmament since the Versailles Settlement were shaped mainly by the fear of a resurgence in German air power. The components of such a fear comprised Germany's aeronautical industry and the large number of engineers which she had both inside and outside her country. As such the French were not interested in talking aerial disarmament at the Washington Conference, nor were they interested in the apparent British disarmament approach of stick and carrot in 1923-1924.

Such a concern of an almost lopsided nature is reflected in the variation in emphasis upon the principles and methods underlying France's position on this issue during the Washington Naval Conference and in the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference. At the Washington Conference her delegates used the principle of security and

the interdependence of forces to rid the Conference agenda of the issue of land armaments and thereby the question of air armaments. In Geneva, however, the emphasis was primarily placed on the principle of war potential. The choice of this principle was combined with the selection of the method of effectives and material to the exclusion of military expenditure. This was so because while the first two were historically designed to cope with war potential the second method was primarily designed for the defence of France's military capabilities and therefore had a protective role. As such it was an adequate arm to use against Germany's war potential.

As to the policy actors, it has been shown that the CSDN was the dominant force of aerial disarmament in the wake of the Washington Conference. While the Prime Minister's lack of consultation with the it over whether or not to initiate an international aerial disarmament conference might seem to have been a bypass attempt, in reality this did not appear to have been the case for a number of reasons. Firstly, there was no evidence to support this hypothesis. Secondly, the Prime Minister's consultative initiative concerned whether or not to have a conference and was not about the substance of France's aerial disarmament policy, a domaine réservé of the CSDN.

Three further considerations demonstrated the CSDN's dominance of disarmament. Firstly, by its warning to the Prime Minister that were aerial disarmament talks to be held France's position must be scrutinised by the Study Commission, the CSDN showed that disarmament was its domaine. Secondly, the reactions of the Ministries of Marine and War along with the General Staff unanimously invoked the principles and methods of the French disarmament approach as elaborated by the CSDN. Lastly, French policy on aerial disarmament within the League of Nations Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference was wholly masterminded by the CSDN and its subsidiaries.

2. The Draft Convention on the Arms Trade and Manufacturing of War Material of 1924

The control of arms sales and the private manufacturing of war material was a disarmament topic which attracted special attention from the League of Nations. Articles 8 and 23 of the Covenant made it a priority.⁵⁸ As a result it was studied by the Temporary Mixed Commission and the Permanent Advisory Commission, and the work of these two Commissions culminated in the Draft Convention of 1924, and the organisation of the International Conference in 1925, which produced the Geneva Convention on the arms trade. Further, after 1925, the League set up a special committee to look at the manufacturing of war material which had not been covered by the said Geneva Convention. In 1929, the work of this Committee resulted in a Draft Convention which was not supported by the majority of members of the League.⁵⁹

France was a full participant in the League's work upon this topic, and her attitude towards it will be explored by examining her reactions to the Draft Convention of 1924. The analysis of her position on the arms trade in this context constitutes a useful test field for the principles and methods underlining her overall approach to disarmament during the 1920s. There are two justifications for this. Firstly, the Draft Convention was the first major step taken to control the arms trade since the Versailles Settlement when Germany was disarmed and prohibited from trading in arms. Secondly, and consequently, in terms of disarmament, the Draft Convention was the first practical multilateral disarmament event since the Washington Naval Conference which had so disappointed and humiliated French leaders.

The Draft Convention intended to tackle the regulation of the trade in arms and war material in three ways. Firstly, it proposed the prohibition of the transfer of certain weapons without a government licence which should be made public. This category included arms exclusively designed and intended for land, sea and air warfare. Secondly, it required publicity of those arms capable of being used for both military and other purposes, war vessels and their normal armaments, and aircraft - be they assembled or dismantled - and aircraft engines. Thirdly, it proposed the prohibition of arms exports to certain

geographical zones - the Draft Convention contained a provision to the effect that this regulation was not to apply to states at war with each other.

To explore France's attitude with regard to the Draft Convention on Arms Trade it is necessary to provide a brief background on the internal regulation of French arms sales and manufacturing.

Before the Revolution of 1789, there was no state control over the manufacture and trade of arms except for gun-powder which had been a state monopoly in France since the 14th Century.⁶⁰ Private firms freely regulated the manufacture and trading of arms. However, after 1815 the industry experienced a slump in the market and manufacturers began to shift their capital investment to other sectors, particularly towards the production of locomotives and rolling stock. This shift necessitated the introduction of some measures of control by the government. A law issued on 24 May 1834 forbade the manufacturing of prohibited arms, and subjected the production and sales of other war material to a legal authorisation. Further legal regulations were introduced in 1860. A Law issued on 14 July 1860, made it obligatory for every arms manufacturer to keep an initialled and numbered register ratified by the Mayor. By this same Law arms imports were forbidden save by a special authorisation from the War Minister, while arms exportation remained free of any control.⁶¹

The shift of arms manufacturers to the railway industry and the government regulations being imposed were accompanied by the growth of the state sector in the field of arms manufacturing. As a consequence of this expansion almost the whole of this industry became "...concentrated in state enterprises".⁶²

However, when the war of 1870 broke out state arms manufacturing enterprises were unable to meet the country's defence needs in arms and ammunition, and the government had to resort to imports from abroad: in particular from England, Belgium and Switzerland.⁶³ This experience led to the issuing of a governmental Decree 4 September 1870 which re-established total freedom for private manufacture and trading of arms,

thereby abolishing state control measures introduced in 1860. This Decree was however abolished about a year later when the National Assembly issued the law of 19 June 1871, re-establishing the control measures of 1860.⁶⁴

By the end of the war a campaign had emerged in favour of free private arms manufacture and trading. The campaign blamed the 1860 control measures for the industry's inability to meet the necessary procurement for the national defence when the war of 1870 broke out.⁶⁵ It culminated in the enactment of the Law of 14 August 1885 which again proclaimed total freedom for manufacturing and trading of legal war material, whilst maintaining government authorisation for prohibited material.⁶⁶ This statute continued to govern the armament industry even after the First World War.

When the League of Nations began to look at ways of implementing Articles 8 and 23 of the Covenant concerning control of the arms trade and private manufacturing of such arms, French governments seemed already satisfied with their arms industry as regulated by the Law of 1885. French disarmament makers' attitudes towards the subject were conditioned more by external factors bearing directly or indirectly upon their foreign and defence policy calculations than by domestic politics. There were three specific external factors which shaped their attitudes: the country's security, the implication of the control of trading and manufacturing of war material on the country's allies, and the fear of possible German gain from any arrangement reached by the League in this regard. All three factors will be illustrated by looking at their reaction to the Draft Convention which was prepared for the International Conference of 1925.

With regard to security, the League of Nations Draft Convention on the trade in arms and war material was regarded by French disarmament makers as having both global and specific implications. On the global level, the League's attempt was judged to be going the wrong way about solving the problem of disarmament. French disarmament makers argued that instead of looking at disarmament as a function of security and all armaments as interdependent, the League - by tackling the arms trade and

its private manufacturing as a separate subject - had adopted a single-issue approach.

Commenting on the said Draft Convention, General Serrigny was of the view that France should subordinate adhesion to the future Convention to the aim of first obtaining security guarantees such as mutual assistance, and that its approach to this issue should be guided by the view of the Study Commission of the CSDN delivered in July 1923 which stated that:

"The question of armaments must constantly be considered in its entirety and in connection with the security guarantees."⁶⁷

An analysis of the Draft Convention carried out in April 1925 by the Permanent General Secretariat of the CSDN gave full details about what in its view were the security implications involved for France.⁶⁸ The analysis began by expressing regret that the League of Nations was approaching secondary issues without having solved the problem of security upon which the solution to those issues depended in the first place. The Secretariat argued that it would have been more logical if the League had taken the following approach to:⁶⁹

1. resolve the problem of security first;
2. then establish a programme for the general reduction and limitation of armaments;
3. finally and consequently, conclude agreements on the control and implementation of the programme, which would naturally include the control of arms traffic and the private manufacturing of war material.

In terms of the specific security fears for France's disarmament makers emanating from the Draft Convention, in addition to the possible detrimental effects upon France's allies and the possible advantages for Germany which will be detailed later, there were two others. One related to a fear expressed by General Serrigny in 1924 that the control carried the risk of harming the country's freedom of action in the preparation of armaments necessary for its defence.⁷⁰ The other concerned the suspension of the Convention's obligations in time of war. In this

respect the Permanent General Secretariat noted in its analysis of April 1925, that:

"Article 25 of the Draft (Convention) effectively suspends the application of the Convention in time of war and practically renders free...the supply...of war material to the belligerents without distinction.

This absence of distinction is unacceptable; it should be, on the contrary, admitted by all civilised states that the prohibition of export must be absolute with regard to an aggressor state which carries out arms aggression in violation of international obligations.

Also, all facilities of the supply of war material to the attacked state or the various states assisting it must be made obligatory." ⁷¹

This clause was, obviously, a reference to France's much sought after desire for mutual assistance in the face of possible German aggression against her territory, which was enshrined in Article 16 of the Covenant of the League of Nations and constituted one of the principal themes of the Geneva Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes. In suggesting the amendment the Secretariat of the CSDN admitted that the Draft Convention explicitly stated that it did not abrogate any of the obligations under the Covenant. But it still saw two reasons for making the amendment. Firstly, it argued that while Article 16 of the Covenant provided for the blockade of the aggressor and the provision of assistance to the attacked state, it had been subject to controversial interpretation. Secondly, Article 25 of the Draft Convention was too vague and the would-be Convention included parties who were not members of the League of Nations ⁷² and who by inference were not bound by Article 16 of the Covenant. Hence the clause would extend that obligation to them under the future convention on the trade in arms and ammunition.

The second factor determining France's attitudes towards the control of arms traffic was the security of her eastern allies, and in particular Poland and Czechoslovakia which were anxious about such control. ⁷³ French disarmament makers were worried that the control of such traffic could create an obstacle which would hamper France from supplying such countries with the arms necessary for their defence. Such an obstacle was seen to reside in Article 2 of the Draft Convention which stipulated that arms traffic be carried out under licence and that such licences be

publicly known.⁷⁴ This was seen to constitute an infringement upon the sovereignty of state and to lay France's arms traffic with her allies open to antagonistic publicity campaigns.⁷⁵ It was also seen as providing the grounds for the Germans and Anglo-saxons to continue their propaganda about the so-called 'French militarism'.⁷⁶

France was not prepared to let her allies run the risk of being deprived of an arms supply since her own security depended on theirs. In this respect the Permanent General Secretariat of the CSDN stated uncompromisingly that:

"...France cannot accept any restrictive measures against its freedom of action to organise...(the) defence of her allies upon whose help she could count immediately".⁷⁷

The third factor determining France's attitudes towards the control of traffic in arms related to the containment of the German threat to her security. This principally concerned two issues: the implication of the arms traffic convention on the restrictive obligations imposed in this respect upon Germany and other vanquished states, and the categorisation of war material in relation to Germany's war potential.

With regard to the vanquished states, French disarmament makers were surprised that these were invited to take part in the debate on arms traffic. They stated that it was:

"...Germany, Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria for which, by virtue of Article 170 of the Treaty of Versailles and corresponding Articles of other peace treaties, the trade of "arms, ammunition and war material of any nature" is strictly prohibited, were invited to take part in a conference to regulate such trade and, worse still, to control it." ⁷⁸

Germany's obligation under the Versailles Treaty - in particular Article 170 - and other peace treaties was seen as one of the essential elements of French security⁷⁹ not to be ignored by any arms traffic regulation particularly when in practice the prohibition of German arms

imports and exports were being evaded. As shown in Chart 1 on page 209 below, German arms import and export activities were, on aggregate, much higher than those of their French counterparts.⁸⁰

While, as was mentioned earlier, the Draft Convention on the arms traffic stipulated in its Article 27 that the clauses of the Convention would not affect any of the obligations enacted by the Covenant or by the peace treaties,⁸¹ French disarmament makers saw two weaknesses in this clause.⁸² One was that it was too imprecise and therefore inefficient. In real terms they meant that since it did not carry the explicit prohibition of arms traffic for Germany as had Article 170 of the Versailles Treaty it could have an undermining effect upon the latter. The other was that the Convention was to include parties or participants which were not parties to the peace treaties. Such parties were therefore under no obligation not to carry out arms traffic with Germany. The only way to close this gap would therefore be to include certain prohibitions under the Convention itself.

Two alternative methods were considered for overcoming these uncertainties. One was to include ex-enemy states in the zones to which arms traffic was to be strictly prohibited since under the Draft Convention, only:

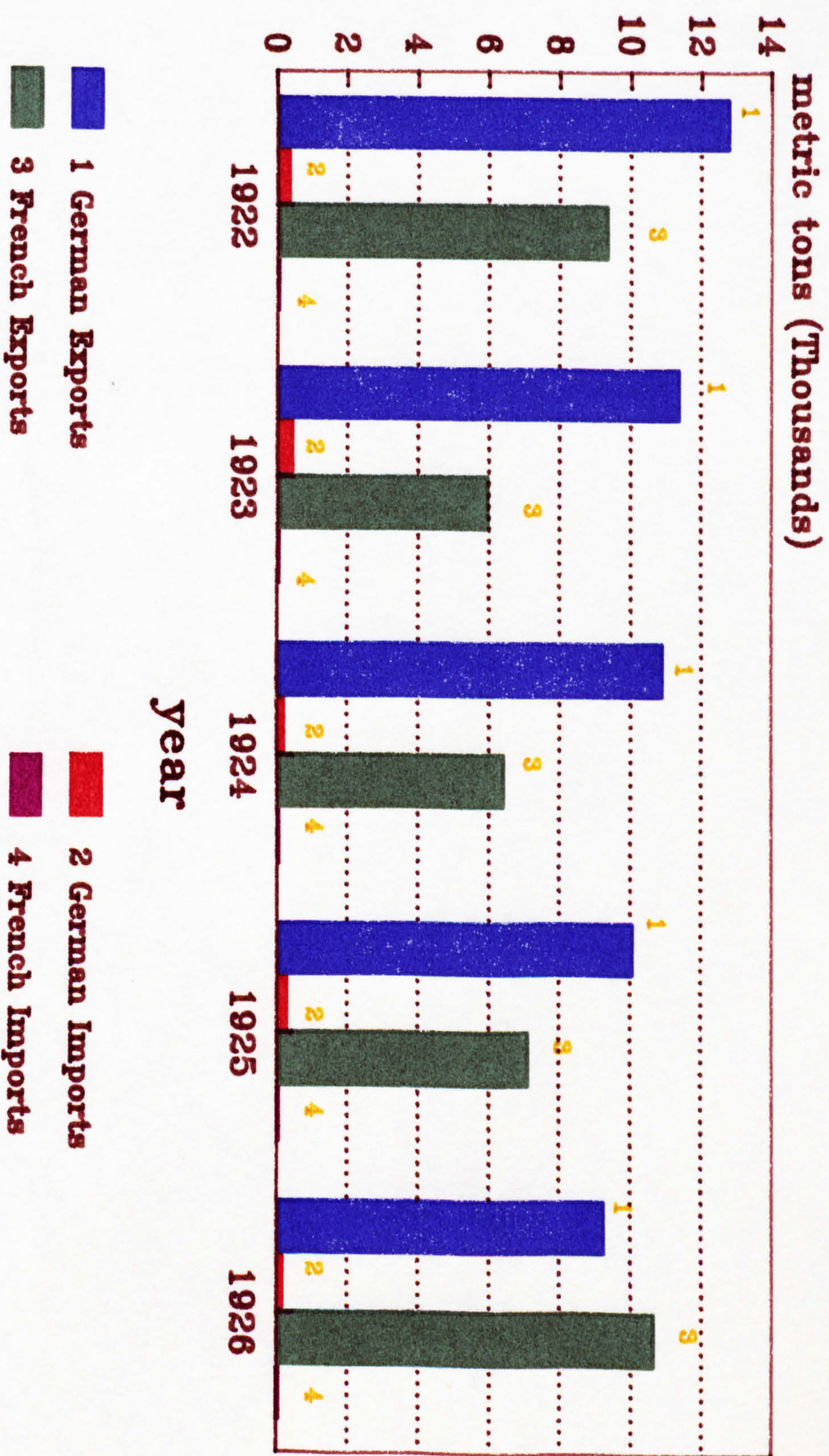
"...these zones are subject to real control of arms traffic to and from them".⁸³

The other method, suggested by Colonel Requin, consisted of introducing a restrictive clause in the Draft Convention. Specifically, he proposed, to:

"...introduce in the first paragraph of Article 3, which allows the traffic of war material only by a licence delivered by the government of the exporter country, a clause subordinating the deliverance of such licence to the condition that the expedition should not be destined to a country for which imports of war material is prohibited by an existing treaty registered with the League of Nations".⁸⁴

However, this method was less preferable because it did not provide for control⁸⁵ allowing France to ascertain the non-breach of the clause.

Chart 1: French / German Arms Import / Export 1922-1926



Another factor which was of concern to French disarmament makers in this respect related to the separation of the regulation of arms traffic from the control of the private manufacturing of war material. The Draft Convention intended to regulate only the former, the latter having been opposed by many countries was excluded. However, it was hoped that by regulating arms traffic private manufacturing of war material would be automatically regulated. For France this was not sufficient to keep Germany under observation as the Secretariat of the CSDN stated:

"It is particularly illusionary to hope that the prohibition of importing war material to Germany could have a real effectiveness if factories situated on foreign territory near the German frontiers could freely manufacture and stock for the Reich war material which would be passed on to Germany at time of mobilisation."⁷⁶

The Secretariat saw no easy way out of this uncertainty except to throw the responsibility back on individual governments themselves. It argued that:

"In these circumstances, we must consider as a minimum the principle raised by the Coordination Committee of the League of Nations, on request from the French representative, that each government assumes the full responsibility of the manufacturing of war material on its territory, which implies the obligation not to tolerate...disguised arms preparations by our enemies or for their benefit."⁷⁷

As to war potential, the French wanted explicit clauses included in the Draft Convention to take account of this. Their concern centred on Article 1 which categorised war material subject to regulation. To this effect the Secretariat of the CSDN stated:

"The definitions given in Article 1, regarding arms, ammunition and war material, present a grave gap. A great industrial power like Germany will be capable to manufacture quickly a large quantity of war material if allowed to import...specialised machinery in advance.

The list in Article 1 should therefore be completed by assimilating to war material in category 1(a) specialised machinery, verification instruments, etc, used for manufacturing of war material."⁷⁸

Other aspects which preoccupied French disarmament makers regarding the Draft Convention were two amendments, one proposed by Brazil and the other by Britain.

The Brazilian amendment reflected some uneasiness on the part of the war material importing countries which saw injustice in the Draft Convention as it envisaged the issuing of licences to be carried out unilaterally by the exporting countries to the exclusion of their importers.⁸⁹ The amendment proposed that all governments be allowed, under their own responsibility, to purchase war material from producer countries and transport it freely with a simple certificate from the importer government and without a specific licence from the producer government.⁹⁰

The Secretariat of the CSDN, while appreciating the Brazilian viewpoint, found it unacceptable since it carried no restrictions on Germany. This is how it spelt out its uneasiness:

"Without failing to appreciate the value of the Brazilian arguments it does not seem possible to accept the proposed amendment without making the Convention totally ineffective, especially from the French point of view, the precise preoccupation of which is to prevent Germany from being able to buy war material from a foreign government without the engagement of such government's responsibility."⁹¹

Caught between France's interest and the popularity of the Brazilian amendment among the many non-producing countries, the Secretariat of the CSDN argued that:

"The only modification which is in our interest is to authorise the (arms) transfer without a licence nor control only in the case of government to government deals."⁹²

The British amendment to the Draft Convention was aimed at making the rules governing the transfer of war material to the prohibited zones very strict. It requested that no licences be issued by the government of the arms exporting country without making sure in advance that:

"...the arms and ammunition for which the licence was demanded are destined for legal use".⁹³

Predictably enough France's position on this amendment was determined by the question of which countries were included in the prohibited zones, and the general state of Anglo-French relations. The Secretariat of the CSDN argued that:

"It is clear that the French point of view with regard to this amendment must depend on the definition of the prohibited zones. If this included the territories of enemy states, the British proposition which engage fully the responsibility of exporter states will coincide exactly with the French interests. If not it would be the British interests which would be served and for France to support it (the amendment) with nothing in return would be a matter of general politics."⁹⁴

Finally, the proposition made by the International Congress of Private Arms Manufacturers held in February 1925, related to four points which were of concern to the Secretariat of the CSDN.⁹⁵

Firstly, they proposed that some arms be included in those categories of material not requiring practical supervision. These included low grade pistols and revolvers; guns, even if rifled and superior to 6mm calibre, provided they were not automatic and did not have magazines; and second-hand arms even if they still militarily functional.

Secondly, they proposed a change to right of control by the government of the territory through which war material would be transited, rendering such control very difficult for that government to apply.

Thirdly, they suggested that war material listed under paragraphs (b) and (c) of Article 1 of the Draft Convention, be free of all restrictions for its transfer.

Fourthly, they proposed that the Convention should not come into force before all war material producing countries had become parties to it.

The Secretariat of the CSDN regarded these propositions from the arms industrialists as having the effect of weakening the Convention and therefore suggested that they were not acceptable.¹⁶

On the basis of its aforementioned analysis of the issue of the arms transfer regulation, the Secretariat set out a number of guidelines for its delegation to the League of Nations before the International Conference of May 1925. These consisted of the following:

1. The inclusion of special machines and instruments of verification under category I of war material not allowed for supply without government authorisation;
2. The exclusion of government to government deals from the general prohibition that all transfer of war material be only carried by publicised licences so long as the problem of security remained unresolved;
3. The inclusion of former enemy states' territories in the prohibited zones;
4. The stipulation that arms supply to an aggressor be strictly prohibited and for the victim state these be free and even protected;
5. The backing of the British amendment on condition that former enemy states be included in the prohibited zones.

To conclude, this case has illustrated how the French disarmament machinery and approach were put into practice confirming the conclusions drawn in Chapters Three and Four above. With regard to the machinery, the study of the Draft Convention and the guidelines issued for the French delegation to the League were masterminded by the CSDN and its experts such as General Debeney, General Serrigny, and Colonel Requin.

As to approach, French disarmament makers were mainly guided by three principles. Their fear of possible German gain from arms trade regulations made them argue that such regulations should be a function of security and be based on the interdependence of forces. Both of these principles are reflected in their criticism of the League for having adopted a single issue approach in this regard instead of following the order of priority by solving the security problem first and establishing a general disarmament programme before concluding any agreements or

imposing regulations. Similarly, the use of the war potential principle reflected in the proposition to modify the Draft Convention's categorisation of arms and war material subjected to export licence, and also in the proposition to include Germany in the prohibited zones. Both propositions were meant to prevent the supply to Germany of arms or specialised machinery which would otherwise help rebuild her military power.

This Chapter has analysed how the machinery of the CSDN and the French disarmament approach were employed in the cases of the Draft Convention on the Trade in Arms and War Material, and aerial disarmament. It supports the conclusions drawn in the previous two Chapters, and confirms that the French disarmament approach was masterminded by the CSDN and used to shield France from any disarmament measures.

In the case of the Draft Convention on the Trade in Arms and War Material, the CSDN's machinery masterminded the whole process, first by studying the issue and then by working out the position to be adopted by France's delegates to the International Conference organised by the League. In the case of aerial disarmament however, the functioning of the machinery seems to suggest that it was forestalled by the intervention of the Prime Minister although in reality this was not the case. The consultation was about whether to have a conference or not, and not about the substance of France's aerial disarmament policy. The latter remained firmly in the hands of the CSDN machinery, which subsequently masterminded the policy guiding France's role in the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference.

The use of the methods and principles involved varied between the two cases. While the principles were involved in the Draft Convention case the methods were not. This is because they were not relevant. The Draft Convention was in essence a mere regulation against illicit traffic in arms and war material and not a disarmament measure involving reduction or limitation of military capabilities as such. However in the case of aerial disarmament both the principles and methods were used in a selective manner according to the aims and objectives which the French had set for themselves in each situation. At the Washington Naval

Conference, the French delegation had used the principles of security and interdependence of forces in order to exclude the discussion of land armaments from the Conference agenda. However, in the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference, emphasis was given mainly to the principle of war potential combined with the method of limitation of material, using horse-power and metric volume as a standard with which to thwart the possibility of German air power revival.

CHAPTER FIVE

R E F E R E N C E S

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3. Ibid, p80.
4. Ibid, p80.
5. See Rolland Chaput "Disarmament in British Foreign Policy", George Allen & Unwin, London, 1935, p326.
6. Ibid, pp321.
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9. See Rolland Chaput, op cit, p322.
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32. Ibid, p22.
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45. For the full French Draft Convention see League of Nations "Documents of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference...", Series IV, 15 June 1927, pp361-369.
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68. See "Note Au Sujet de La Conference Internationale pour le Controle du Commerce International des Armes, Munitions et Materiel de Guerre", dated 2 Avril 1925 in SHA Carton 7N.
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 77. See "Note au Sujet de La Conference Internationale pour Le Controle du Commerce Internationale des Armes, Munitions et Materiel de Guerre", ibid, p7.
 78. Ibid, p3. For more details on the vanquished states' prohibition of arms imports and exports see P J Noel Baker "Disarmament" op cit, particularly p118.
 79. Ibid, p3.

80. The data for Chart 1 is extracted from League of Nations
"Statistical Information on the Trade in Arms, Ammunition and
Implements of War", Geneva, 1926 and 1928.
- 81 "La presente convention ne porte en rien atteinte aux droits et
obligations resultant, soit du Pacte de La Societé des Nations,
soit des traités de paix signés en 1919-1920", see Ibid, p3.
82. See ibid, p3.
83. Ibid, p3.
84. Ibid, p4. See also "Fabrication privée des Armes et materiel
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89. Ibid, p8.
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95. Ibid, pp9-10.

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CONCLUSION

It has been argued throughout this thesis that France's approach to disarmament between 1920 and 1930 was based entirely on the country's security considerations and as such its central objective was to shield its military capabilities from any disarmament measures. This approach was carefully formulated through a policy decision making process dominated by the military and the experts, who managed to subordinate the government's role to that of being their rubber-stamp and mouthpiece and, keep parliament in the dark. The fundamental elements composing this approach were a set of principles and methods architected in a stringently skillful manner so as to take account of every aspect of France's security situation and leave nothing to chance.

The concept of security which French leaders defined for themselves and upon which their disarmament approach was founded consisted of three dimensions: security against Germany, security of the colonies "Sécurité Imperiale", and to generally preserve the status quo of the world order as established by the Versailles Settlement of 1919. The concept reflected a conservative France that had gained considerably from the experience of the First World War, having defeated and disarmed Germany, regained L'Alsace-Lorraine, and assumed control of the Rhineland under the terms of the Versailles Treaty. The expansion of her empire combined with the Versailles Settlement generally, had put her side by side with the elite states in control of world politics.

But if these gains were to last they had to be protected, and the main source of threat against them was Germany. Despite the fact that France had in its possession a huge amount of military hardware inherited from the War and an army that was the biggest in the world after that of the Soviet Union, French political and military leaders still regarded defeated Germany as stronger than victorious France. They believed Germany's real strength lay in its larger population and superior industrial infrastructure. Furthermore, German strength was measured in socio-cultural and racial terms. French leaders often argued that losing the war had not weakened Germany a bit: her socio-cultural

and racial bonds remained intact holding her together as one united and cohesive nation. If given the opportunity, such a nation could yet find its feet and repeat its invasion of France.

To compensate for the inferiority of her own population in numbers vis-a-vis Germany, France had to resort to military incorporation from her colonial population. This led to the coupling of security on the Rhineland with that of the French empire, for in order that the colonies did not dry up as a source of human supply for military use they themselves needed protection. Hence the second dimension of the security concept.

The stability and peace of these two dimensions: security against Germany and 'Sécurité Imperiale', depended upon permanence in the status quo of the world order as created at Versailles and France was not prepared to accept any changes which might upset that arrangement. To this end France declared her army as protector not only of her own frontiers but of the frontiers of all the peoples. This was the third dimension of the French concept of security.

In defense of this three-dimensional security France counted on three means: alliance, collective security, and her own military capabilities. The former two means were based upon hopes raised by the Versailles Settlement, whilst major reorganisation plans of mobilisation and weapons procurement were introduced in respect of her own military capabilities. Yet materialisation of these means proved to be problematic for a number of reasons.

Firstly, the much-desired construction of an alliance system performed poorly from the beginning. Security guarantees signed respectively with Britain and America were stillborn. The American Senate refused to ratify the Treaty of American guarantees to France, which had been signed by President Wilson as part of the Versailles Settlement. The setback had a knock-on effect with regard to the British Treaty, which was conditional upon ratification of the American Treaty. The double loss sent shock waves throughout the French leadership which felt betrayed and deserted, but neither deterred nor cynical, they

continued to press for the recovery of the lost guarantees. Negotiation after negotiation was conducted with Britain, particularly during the years from 1919 to 1923. Every opportunity was taken to convince America, which had not only abandoned France but also the League of Nations, to revive its guarantees. However, neither Britain nor America were forthcoming.

As an alternative to Anglo-American alliance France had established the 'Little Entente', an alliance with Central European countries to the east of Germany in an attempt to encircle the latter. But this was never seen as a real substitute for Anglo-American guarantees. There was a good deal of rivalry between the countries of the Little Entente and in addition their value to French defence was negligible. As small states they were more of a burden on France than a guarantor: she had to organise their defence and give them both military and financial assistance.

The search for Anglo-American alliance continued at the same time, and throughout the 1920s but without success. Although the Briand-Kellogg Pact was secured with America it was not the sound, steadfast and reliable guarantee sought by France. Briand's motive for signing the Pact had been mainly to appease American public opinion.

The other means by which France sought to protect her security was the organisation of collective security under the aegis of the League of Nations. From the start she had regarded the League of Nations' role as being the policeman of the world: a League with its own army to keep the peace and maintain the stability of the new world order. This concept was rejected by America and Britain. The Treaty of Mutual Assistance, negotiated within the framework of the League, was the first collective security attempt followed later by the Geneva Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes, but both fell through due to British reluctance to sign them. On the heels of this frustrating period came Locarno which marked the beginning of a reconciliatory approach from France towards Germany, yet even with this change France's need for alliance and collective security never ceased to be a major preoccupation for her leaders.

Alliance and collective security having failed France, military capabilities were the only means left to defend not only her frontiers but the frontiers of all the people. But her army, which had come out of the war victorious and full of prestige, was itself facing difficulties. Pressure for a reduction in the length of military conscription began to mount soon after the War. France had been bled white, and those of her male population who had fought in the War had lived through four years of absolute misery and hardship. The need for relaxation of conscription was urgent and understood throughout the political spectrum including by many army chiefs.

The temptation was irresistible. Conscription was reduced by buying off the opposition in the hardcore of the military command with the promise of further recruitment to abate the drop in total effectives which it was feared a reduction in length of military service might bring. Pressure for further reduction in the period of conscription continued and between 1920 and 1930 it was brought down from three years to twelve months.

Coupled with this was the army 'malaise' caused by economic difficulties leading to a fall in the army's standard of living and related social hardship. In addition, French colonies in various corners of the empire were beset with unrest and required heavy military intervention as was the case, for example, with Syria and Morocco. On the hardware front, with the exception of the navy which had undergone consistent renovation, there was very little modernisation. Stocks of equipment although huge in quantity had been inherited from the war. Against this trend Germany with her superior population and industrial infrastructure was cutting through the chains of the Versailles Settlement before the eyes of French leaders.

All in all the security target which French leaders defined and the means they set themselves to achieve it were out of pace with each other. This disequilibrium explains France's ongoing search for security and its pivotal significance around which every other foreign policy matter - and particularly the question of disarmament - revolved.

After the war the issue of disarmament came to occupy a position of major importance in French foreign policy. It was regarded as a matter of national defence for which French leaders started to think up new schemes relating to reorganisation and planning. It was also regarded and accepted as an established objective of the League of Nations for the organisation of European and world peace. As such, disarmament making machinery began to be put in place immediately after the setting up of the League of Nations. A French Service of the League of Nations was created in 1920 which was located in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and consisted of experts - military and civilian - from various Ministries whose duties were to oversee the disarmament issue. A year later, in 1921, the Supreme National Defence Council (Le Conseil Supérieur de La Défense Nationale (CSDN)), an inter-ministerial body created in 1906, underwent major reorganisation and its membership was extended to include more civilians than before. Its main function was to organise the nation's resources in time of war and consisted of two subsidiaries: a Permanent General Secretariat and a Study Commission. The former was established in 1906 at the same time as the CSDN while the latter was created in 1921 following the reorganisation.

Disarmament policy formulation was assigned to the fourth section of the Study Commission where military experts from the French Service of the League of Nations participated regularly in the analysis and elaboration of disarmament plans. The General Secretariat ensured that the Commission's proposals were transferred to the CSDN for finalisation. When accomplished, the plans would be passed on to the Prime Minister for his approval. This was the theory.

In practice, however, the military and experts had the upper hand. The military were dominant in number and occupied the most influential posts within the disarmament policy making process on a reasonably permanent basis. Along with the experts which aided them, the military formed what might be described as a closed-circuit disarmament making process. In addition to this bureaucratic and institutional bond between them, the military and the experts were mostly war veterans sharing the same values about the security of their country and, as was testified by a number of them, enjoyed good personal relationships with one another.

They viewed disarmament as a matter of national defence which had to be handled with care since France could not afford any mistakes to be made in this regard.

This bureaucratic, institutional, and personal set up of disarmament policy making led to a subordination of the role of the Executive and the almost total exclusion of parliament as an institution. While in theory the Prime Minister had the final word on policy, in practice he acted as no more than a rubber-stamp. As was shown in the aerial disarmament case for example, when in 1924 Poincaré expressed an interest in convening an international aerial disarmament conference his idea was described as emotional and quashed by the overwhelmingly negative reaction of the War and Marine Ministries, including the General Staff. Further, he was warned by the CSDN that the place for disarmament policy formulation was within its Study Commission. As a result he did not pursue the idea any further.

In addition to their domination of the internal disarmament process, the military and the experts had a direct link with French disarmament delegates in Geneva, thereby bypassing the Foreign Ministry and the Government. This was attested to by French delegates to the League of Nations and members of the Study Commission. For example in his book, Lt Colonel Requin wrote praisefully about his relationship in this respect with General Debeney, Chief of General Staff and member of the CSDN. Parliament was completely excluded from the disarmament policy making process and was kept in the dark.

The dominance of the military and experts over both the Executive and parliament has been illustrated by a number of factors. While governments and parliaments came and went the military and the experts remained in their influential posts. For example both Lt Colonel Requin and General Serrigny remained in their posts for many years.

In their individual ways both the Executive and parliament suffered from weakness in the control of foreign policy which was inherent in the Third Republic's system of government. With regard to the Executive, it was illustrated that the Foreign Minister's control over foreign policy

matters depended very much on the cooperation of the highest technocrats in the Ministry. In the case of the period under study it was Philippe Berthelot who was master of the Ministry. He was not interested in disarmament and therefore left the French Service of the League of Nations to deal direct with the CSDN over this question, the two bodies forming in practice a single entity in their handling of this issue. Parliament although having constitutional control over foreign policy, this was restricted to matters where the nation's safety permitted. In practice, however, it never took any initiative to question for example the military bypassing of the Executive in terms of its link with the disarmament delegates in Geneva.

The military, by virtue of their status as protectors of the nation, were able to escape control from both the government and parliament. This was illustrated by the cases of budgeting and financial control in which they resorted to use of certain techniques and methods in order to hide their military expenditure. Coupled with this was the fact that the entire French leadership was wrapped up in the issue of security. This psychological state provided the military with a superb platform upon which to argue and win almost anything, using scarecrow politics.

For all these reasons the military aided by the experts had a free hand in disarmament policy formulation and implementation.

In addition it was demonstrated that the disarmament policies produced by the military and the experts during the 1920s consisted of an approach based upon a set of principles and methods, each drawn up on the basis of either a weakness or a strength in French defence capabilities with the final aim of shielding the country's military capability from any disarmament measures. In this respect each principle and method employed encapsulated a function of either a general or specific nature.

With regard to principles, that of disarmament as a function of security was used as a general weapon against any undesirable disarmament initiative. It was used to the maximum by French delegates to the League of Nations who invoked Article 8 of the Covenant in almost

every disarmament forum. The principle of the interdependence of forces was useful to thwart any disarmament offensive against a particular weapon valued highly for the defence of France or against a particular force in which France had superiority such as in land armaments and effectives. The principle of war potential was a double-edged weapon. On the one hand it provided French disarmament makers with a rationale for their huge army and military hardware, and on the other it portrayed Germany as a slumbering military might which dare not be awakened as opposed to the defeated and weak nation which many believed it to be.

The methods by which these principles were operated mainly comprised the limitation of material, military expenditure limitation, and limitation of effectives. Each had been designed to meet a specific purpose.

France was generally against the limitation of material since it constituted a threat to her huge stock of military hardware. However to mitigate this threat she argued that such limitation did not apply to material in reserve, in order to restrict its application to material in service. In this way she could argue that most of her material was reserve material. Yet, as was demonstrated in the case of aerial disarmament, French delegates to the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference argued for, and won, the application of this method to war potential, ie material organised on a military basis or in a military formation.

Similarly the manner in which French disarmament makers intended to apply the method of disarmament by limitation of effectives was geared towards protecting their own effectives whilst including those of Germany. It was to this end that effectives were divided into home and overseas forces and reserves were excluded from any limitation, whilst forces organised in a military formation or organised on a military basis - in direct reference to Germany - were included. The latter category consisted mainly of police, customs and any other organisations with militarily trained personnel.

Of all three methods French disarmament makers had a preference for disarmament by military expenditure limitation. This method presented them with great advantages. Firstly, it was indirect, ie unlike limitation of material, it only affected budgets. As such it gave them the freedom to choose which force or weapon to scrap if any measure of disarmament were ever to be carried out. Second and more importantly, this method was manipulable and since French military leaders were already known to be able to make figures say what they wanted to hear, it suited them perfectly. This was exemplified by the change of their method of budgeting in order to render it consistent with the method which they proposed in the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference and so as to give credibility to their argument in that Commission. In regard to aerial disarmament, the advantages of this method served to preclude it from the French Draft Convention for the Preparatory Commission to the Disarmament Conference, since here the French mainly had German war potential in mind and to suggest its control by this method would be playing straight into Germany's hands.

All in all the French disarmament approach between 1920 and 1930 consisted of a set of principles and methods designed by the military and the experts to cater for their country's security by shielding its military capabilities from any disarmament consequences. However, while this approach appears complete and consistent it is only so because it was designed to cater for specific needs - those of France, not the cause of disarmament. Because of its subjective nature, this approach suffers from a number of inconsistencies which emerge as the principles are put into practice. The exclusion of the quantifiable elements of material and effectives from limitation, defeats the rationale for including the mostly unquantifiable elements of war potential in disarmament considerations. The same can be said about interdependence of forces. If this principle had been taken to its logical conclusion it should have been applied not only to the forces but also to their various components.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

A R C H I V E S

The archive material used in writing this thesis was collected from Archives Diplomatiques based in the Quai d'Orsay (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), and the Service Historique de L'Armee based in Vincennes.

ARCHIVES DIPLOMATIQUES

I. SERIE Y INTERNATIONAL

1. Dossier No.499

- "Note de Monsieur Blancket: La question de la reduction des armements devant L'Assemblee de La SDN", dated 8 Janvier 1921, pp15-16. (States that France can only take up disarmament once security has been organised.)
- "De M. Le Marechal Fayolle, representant Militaire Français à La Commission Permanente Consultative à La Societé des Nations, à M. Le President du Conseil. Objet: Travaux de La Commission Temporaire Mixte des Armements", dated 4 Octobre 1921.
- "Le president du Conseil, Ministre des Affairs Etrangeres, A Monsieur Le Ministre de La guerre (Etat Major General) objet: La Societe des Nations et les Limitation des Depenses Militaires", dated 3 Avril 1921. (The document rejects military expenditure as a viable method of disarmament on technical problems presented by budgetary methods.)
- "Note de Requin: Pour La Direction Politique", dated 27 Juillet 1922. "The document gives the list of the special committee set up by the Temporary Mixte Commission to study the practical consequences of the plans of Lord R Cecil & Lord Esher. It also contains a detailed analysis by Requin of the two plans".
- E Requin "Un rapport sur la Situation de reduction des armaments au SDN, Le probleme de la reduction des armaments devant La SDN: Historique et etat de La Question", dated 6 August 1921.
- "Le Ministre de La Guerre à M Le President du Conseil. Ministre des Affairs Etrangeres (Service Français de La SDN): objet, Renseignements demandes par La SDN", dated 12 Septembre 1921. (Contains responses to requests by the League of Nations regarding

military expenditure for years 1913 and 1921; effectives and number of military units; and military hardware in service.)

- "Compte-rendu du Lt. Colonel Requin", dated 5 Avril 1922. (Gives information on Lord Esher's plan that it was not sanctioned by the British Government but he was acting out of his own initiative.)
- Lettre d L'Ambassadeur de La Republique Francaise aux Etat-Unis, a M Le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères: "Plan de development Naval Americain, Relaitons entre La France, Les Etats-Unis et L'Angleterre, envoie du rapoort du Secretaire de La Marine", dated 4 Janvier 1920.

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- Lettre de M Le President du Conseil, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, A M Le Ministre de La Guerre et M Le Ministre de La Marine (Etat-Major General): "Reunion éventuelle d'une Conference pour La Limitation des Armements Aériens", dated 28 Fevrier 1924.
- Lettre du Ministre de La Marine, A M Le President du Conseil, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères: "Eventualite de La Reunion d'une Conference pour La Limitation des Armements Aériens", dated 28 Fevrier 1924.
- Lettre du Ministre de La Guerre, A M Le President du Conseil, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères (in reply to the President of the Council's letters of 9 January and 28 February 1924), dated 9 Mars 1924.
- L'Ambassadeur de France à Londres, A Monsieur Le President du Conseil, Ministre des Affairs Etrangères: "L'aviation et le Gouvernement Britanique, rapport de notre attaché de L'air", undated, pp166-168.
- Lettre du Secretariat du CSDN, a M Le Directeur: "Desarmement aérien", dated 4 Juin 1924.

- Etat-Major General, 2^{ème} Bureau: Instruction pour La Delegation Français à La CPC", dated 29 Janvier 1924. "This document relates to the extension of the Washington Naval agreement to include other powers. It contains the instructions given to the French delegates in the Permanent Consultative Commission, which in particular included the guideline that the extension be based on 'national security' and not the 'status quo'".
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- Mr Jusseraud, Ambassadeur de France aux Etats Unis, a Mr Le President du Conseil, Ministre des Affaires Etrangeres: "Opposition de Mr Hughes à une nouvelle conference pour la limitation des armements", dated 19 Fevrier 1924. "The Ambassador informs the President that the American Secretary of State, Hughes, had not opposed a Congress resolution calling for a new arms limitation conference particularly with regard to poison gas and arms sales".

3. Dossier No.501

- "La Delegation Français à La SDN, Note: pour Mr Le Directeur des Affaires politiques et Commerciales, objet: Limitation des depenses d'armements", dated 17 Juin 1924. "The note informs that the League Council meetings Great Britain opposed the recommendation by the Second Assembly of the League calling for the limitation of military budgets. It also informs that French delegates to the said Council stated that France has already realised the aims of the recommendation".
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4. Dossier No.502

- Note apportée par Mr Luis Aubert (Envoyé à Mr Fromageot): "La France et le projet d'une Nouvelle Conférence Du Désarmement Naval à Washington", dated 21 Février 1925.

5. Dossier No.503

- "Telegramme dated 12 Juillet 1921: From A Briand to French Ambassadors in Washington, London and Rome informing them of USA invitation to France to participate in the Washington Conference".
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II. SERIE SDN

No.1 Dossier No.225

- "Admission de L'Allemagne dans la SDN", dated 24 Janvier 1923.

2. Dossier No.724

- "...Seance du Conseil Supérieur de La Défense Nationale du 3 Novembre 1930: Avis Adoptés". (The document contains the views adopted by the CSDN, which include general principles and methods of limitation of effectives.)

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4. Dossier No.833

- JUMOL à Monsieur L'Ambassadeur: "Attitude du Gouvernement Anglais", dated 14 Janvier 1926.
- "Le Président du Conseil Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, à Mr Le Général Serrigny, Directeur des Services du Secrétariat Général du Conseil Supérieur de La Défense Nationale", dated 8 Janvier 1926. (This document contains the views of the Department of Political and Commercial Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding disarmament and French security".

- Monsieur Aristide Briand, President du Conseil, Ministere des Affaires Etrangeres à Londres, Rome, Berlin, Moscow, Washington, Tokio, Madrid, Prague, Varsovie, Belgrade, Boucares, and Sofia, dated 8 Janvier 1926. "A note addressed by Briand to French embassies in the cited countries informing them that the French disarmament thesis based on the inter-dependence of armaments was finally accepted by the British delegates to the League".
- Presidence du Conseil Supérieur de La Defense Nationale, Secretariat General "Etudes des questions à examiner par la Commission Preparatoire de La Reduction des Armements Convoquee à Genève le 15 Fevrier 1926", dated 14 January 1926. "This document contains the CSDN's views on the questionnaire relating to the study of the disarmament problem by the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference".
- Note from Aristide Briand to French Ambassadors in various countries, entitled "Probleme du desarmement", dated 8 January 1926.
- "Attitude du gouvernement Anglais" dated 14 Janvier 1926. (The note instructs that the British government should not be allowed to decouple the question of naval armaments from land armaments.)
- "Conseil Supérieur de La Defense Nationale, objet: La premiere section de La Commission D'Etudes du CSDN se reunira Le Vendredi 12 Fevrier 1926 a Quinze heures au Secretariat General audit Conseil Supérieure", dated 12 Fevrier 1926.

5. Dossier No.1065

- Le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, à Monsieur Henry Cherom, Ministre des Finance: "Depenses Militaires de La France", dated 28 Mars 1929.
- "Note du delegue de La France a La 6^{eme} session de La Commission Preparatoire du Disarmement La presentation des budgets militaires, Ministre de La Guerre et de L'air", dated 3 July 1929.
- "de Messigli à Mr Colban Chef de la Section des Armements Secretariat General de la SDN: Faute des calculs de l'Annuaire, l'evolution generale des budgets de defense Nationale", dated 11 Juillet 1929. (Messigli complains that the League's yearbook contained a mistake showing that French military expenditure had increased by 50% over four years and by 59% over three years. He argued that that happened because the base year used was 1925, while if instead 1924 is used the increase would be 20% only.)

- "Lettre adresse à M. le Commandant Raquet, Service Français, SDN, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères", dated 15 Octobre 1929.
- "Pour la Limitation des Armements: Le Chiffre de nos dépenses Militaires, Etudes par LOCARNAU".
- "Lettre de Paul-Boncour à Aristide Briand", dated Geneva 27 Mars 1927. Papiers Massigli, Carton: Desarmement. (Paul-Boncour explains how he prepared the French Draft Convention which he presented to the Preparatory Commission for Disarmament.)
- Lettre de L'Ambassadeur de La Republique Française aux Etats-Unis, à Mr Le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères: "Plan de développement Naval Americain, Relations entre La France les Etats-Unis de L'Angleterre. Envoi du Rapport du Secrétaire de La Marine", dated Washington 4 Janvier 1920.

SERVICE HISTORIQUE DE L'ARMÉE

I. CARTON 7N3529

1. Dossier No.1

- Secrétariat Général du Ministère de La Guerre: "Comparison des Budgets de 1913 et 1929", undated.
- Ministère des Harbours, Service Militaire: "Budget des Coloures, Dépense Militaires", dated 22 Mai 1926.
- Ministère de La Marine "Chiffre Global des Dépenses de La Marine en 1912, 1913 et 1920 à 1925 (Y compris le dépenses, de constructions neuves, sur ressources de Trésorerie)", undated, Annexe No.1.
- Ministère de La Marine: "Repartition des Dépenses des années 1912 et 1913 et 1920 à 1925 entre: Soldes, Frais généraux, entretien, salaires, constructions neuves, dépenses pur la liquidatio de la guerre", Annexe 2, undated.
- "Budget total en millions de Franc-or", Annexe 4, undated.
- "Pour cert des budgets par rapport au budget general des Etats Suivants: Etats-Unis, Grande-Bretagne, Italie, Japon, ALlemagne, France, Russie en 1925", Annexe 6, undated.

- Budget des constructions neuves en millions de Franc-or", undated.
- Note: Relative a La Preparation de La Conference du Desarmement". (Detailing French preparation for the Disarmament Conference of 1932.)
- "Le President du Conseil, Ministre des Affaires Etrangeres a Monsieur le Ministre de La Guerre (Cabinet Militaire). Representation Francaise a la Societe des Nations.
- "5^e Assemblee de La Societe des Nations, Situation le 20 Septembre 1924", undated. (Summarises the work done by the League regarding security and suggests that France begin to prepare its approach seriously regarding the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference.)
- "Le Marechal de France, Inspecteur General de L'Armee Vice President du Conseil Superieur de la Guerre a Monsieur le Ministre de la Guerre et des pensions", dated 28 Decembre 1922. (Proposing appointment of General Serrigny as French delegate to Permanent Consultative Commission of the League of Nations and suggesting the French head of the delegation in this Commission remains the Vice-Admiral Jehenne to dissipate military hegemony often raised against France which could not be made in his case because he was a naval officer.)
- See "Note du Colonel Requin: Reorganisation ou suppression de la Commission Temporaire Mixte pour la reduction des Armements, (examen du projet Branting), dated 23 Juin 1924.
- "Note au sujet du Projet de M Branting relatif a la transformation des Commissions de La Societe des Nations pour les Questions Militaires, Naval et Aeriennes en deux Comites Civil et Militaire", dated 25 Juin 1924.
- "M.Aristide Briand, Ministre des Affaires Etrangeres a M. Paul Painleve, President du Conseil, Ministre de La Guerre." Etat-Major de L'armee - 3^{eme} Bureau. Dated 12 October 1925. Objet: Designation d'un Officer de Liaison pour Suppleer le Colonel Requin.
- "Organisation du Service Francais de La Societe Des Nations", dated 9 November 1928.
- "Note: au sujet d'un projet de M. Branting pour organiser sur de nouvelles base La Commission privue a l'article ix du Pacte".

"Le Ministre de La Guerre a M. Le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères", dated 10 Janvier 1931. (Reports on the state of the project convention for the Disarmement Conference and informing the Minister that Capitaine Vantiv was appointed to coordinate the work of France in this respect. The lettre originated from Maxime Weygand.)

2. Dossier No.3

- "Mon Général" dated 11 Septembre 1922.

- "Declaration Faite par Le Lt Col. E Requin à La 2^{ème} Sous-Commission de La Commission Temporaire des Armements". (The declaration relates to statistical comparison of military forces and population of different countries produced by Britain. Requin argues that such comparison was never requested by the Assembly of the League and that the numbers given on French military forces were inexact.)

- Etat-Major "Note: Sur La Constitution de La Commission Permanente Militaire, Navale, Aerienne Prevue par l'Art. IX du Pacte de La Societe des Nations", (details, nature and functioning of the Commission from a French viewpoint.)

- "Le President du Conseil, Ministere des Affaires Etrangères, à Monsieur Le Ministre de La Guerre (Chef d'Etat Major General), dated 4 Octobre 1920. (The French Military, Naval and Air sections of the League of Nations request the Minister to clarify the method by which to communicate information on military expenditure to the Permanent Consultative Commission of the League of Nations.)

- "Rapport de La Commission Permanente Consultative pour les questions militaires, Navals et Aeriennes au Conseil de La Societé des Nations", Annexe I, dated Bruxelles le 22 Octobre 1920.

- "Rapport du Vice-Admiral Lacaze, à Monsieur le President du Conseil, Ministere des Affaires Etrangères", dated 28 Octobre 1920. (Gives account of the meeting of the Permanent Consultative Commission during its meeting held from 18 to 24 October 1920 in Brussels.)

- "Le President du Conseil, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, à Monsieur Le Ministre de La Guerre (Chef d'Etat-Major General)", dated 29 October 1920. (The President requests the Minister to explain what is meant by national security in military terms so as to take a position on disarmament as stated in Article 8 of the League of Nations Covenant.)

- "Le Lieutenant-Colonel E Requin, Representant Militaire adjoint à La Commission Permanente Consultative de La Societé des Nations, à

Monsieur le Directeur du Service Français de la Société des Nations. Ministère des Affaires Etrangères", dated Geneva Le 11 Septembre 1922. (The document claims that the British made a mistake in presenting the total of French armed forces and gives the correct total as 630,000 men excluding 54,800 men included in the budget of the colonies.)

- "Rapport du Lt Colonel Requin, du Service Français de La Société des Nations, représentant Militaire Adjoint à La Commission Permanente Consultative et Membre de La Commission Temporaire des Armements, à Monsieur le President du Conseil, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères", dated 10 Octobre 1922.
- "Rapport du Lt Colonel Requin, President de la Commission Permanente Consultative de la SDN sur La session tenue a Geneve du 16 au 23 Avril 1923 par ladite Commission", dated 25 Avril 1923.

II. CARTON 7N3535

1. Dossier No. 2

- Service Français de La SDN "Note pour Monsieur Le Chef d'Etat Major General" dated 20 Avril 1926, Annexe IV.
- "Note pour Monsieur Le Chef D'Etat Major General" and "Observations sur le memoirs ci-joint du service Français de la Société des Nations", dated 20 Avril 1926.
- "Ministere des Affaires Etrangères, Direction des Affaires politiques et Commerciales, Service Français de La Société Des nations: Note, Pour Monsieur le Chef D'Etat-Major General", dated 20 Avril 1920, Document No.10. (Requests the CSDN to finalise the minimum time for arms reduction beyond which French negotiators cannot make any concessions.)
- "Etat-Major de L'Armée: Observations sur le Memoires ci-jointe du Service Français de La Société des Nations" dated Avril 1926, Document 10. (Sets out the distinction between forces such as home and overseas forces and calculates the number of effectives and units necessary for French Security.)
- "Point de Vue du General Debeney: Extrait du PV de La Commission d'Etudes des 20 Janvier, 1^{er} et 12 Fevrier 1926", dated 20 Avril 1926. (The document contains views on two specific points: one is that disarmament is the function of security and the other is that limitation of effectives should be confined to forces immediately

mobilisable against a European power and exclude all forces devoted to the protection of colonies.)

- "Avis emis par le Conseil Superieur de La Defense Nationale dans Sa Seance du 22 Avril 1926, au Sujet des questions a examiner par la Commission Convoquee a Geneve le 18 Mai 1926, en Vue de la preparation d'une Conference du Disarmement", dated 30 Avril 1926.

2. Dossier No. 3

- "Analyse Succinte Des Avis Emis par le Conseil Superieur de La Defense Nationale le 22 Avril 1926 au sujet des Questions a examiner par La Commission Preparatoire", undated.
- Rapport au Conseil Superieur de La Defense Nationale sur Le projet de convention de Limitation des Armements adopte a Geneve en premiere lecture", dated Juillet 1928..

III. COTE: 2N3

1. Dossier No.1

- "Le Conseil Superieur de La Defense Nationale:
I. phase d'Etudes specifiquement militaires (1906-1921)
II. phase d'Etudes generales 1921-1939.
- "Pieces de base relatives au Conseil Superieur de La Defense Nationale".
- "Organisation et fonctionnement du CSDN et de La Commission d'Etudes: 1922-1939, Extrait du Journal Officiel du 14 Decembre 1921".
- "Presidence du Conseil, Conseil Superieur de La Defense Nationale, Secretariat General: Deliberation de La Commission d'Etudes dans sa Seance du 13 Mars 1922".
- CSDN: Secretariat General "Procedure de Collaboration Entre Le Conseil Superieur de La Defense Nationale La Commission D'Etudes et Le Secretariat General Permanent", dated 6 March 1922.

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