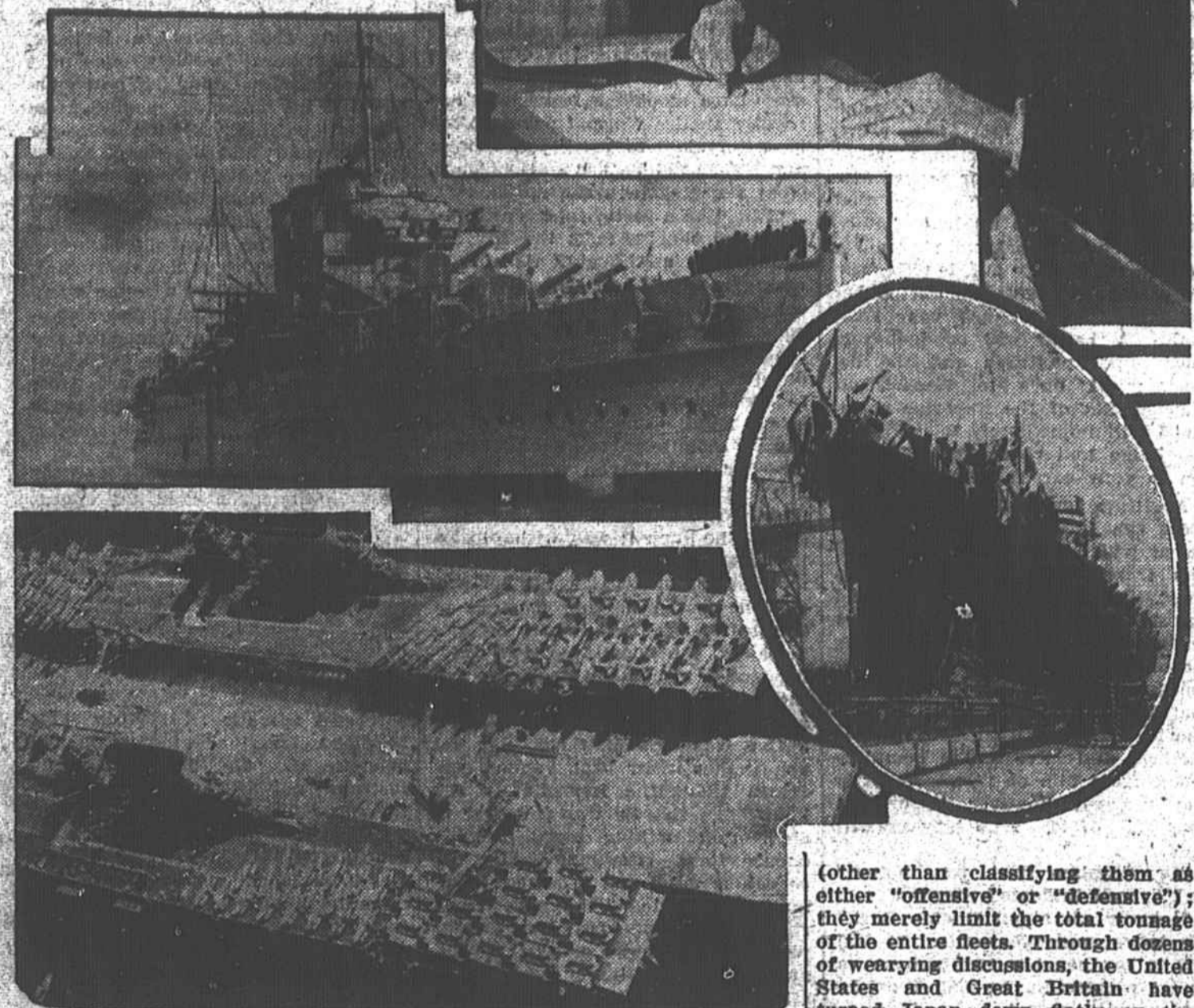


THE FARMVILLE ENTERPRISE

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Predict Failure of Naval Conference

Experts Say Japan's Demands for Naval Equality Make National Agreement Impossible.



Upper Left: British Cruiser Norfolk. Right: Secretary of the Navy Swanson. Below: U. S. Airplane Carrier. Inset: Japan's Latest Warship.

By WILLIAM C. UTLEY
JAPAN, speaking through its ambassador to the United States, Mr. Hiroshi Salto, on November 23, announced formally that it intended to ask abrogation of the Washington naval armaments treaty of 1922, denouncing it as inadequate to present-day needs. The move, while not unexpected in circles of state, emphasized more clearly than ever the problems of the naval armaments conference to be conducted in London next spring.

The Washington treaty was made under vastly different conditions from those which face the parley of 1935. Nations, tired of war and economically pressed by the enormous expenditures and subsequent back-breaking burdens of taxation, were in more of a mood to have things done with, and that in a hurry. Now they seem to have switched to the opinion that national defense at any cost takes precedence over economy.

Japan, she claims today, submitted to a limitation of armaments which are now, she says they probably were then, inadequate and humiliating. Later, in the London treaty of 1930, Great Britain claims to have been the "patsy," although admitting it was her own fault.

Socialist party then in power making reckless and over-generous concessions in an attempt to gain notoriety and popularity through what it hoped would appear as a powerful stroke of state.

Under present conditions, Japan is the hold-out of the three great naval powers of the world. The three are now met in a preliminary conference necessary to iron out the details of the presentations of the nations to the naval conference itself later.

It was the Washington treaty which was the author of the existing 5-5-3 ratio of naval armaments. This permits the United States and Great Britain, the two most powerful navies, equality in strength, with Japan's navy 60 per cent equal to either. This is the principle Japan denounces as unfair and unsafe to its national defense and, secondarily, to the protection of the Far East and the maintenance of the "open door" policy in Asia.

Now Japan insists on "equality in principle" in all naval armaments. Ton for ton, she wants her navy to be on a par with the other two powers. Her proposals at the London preliminary conference describe no categories for vessels

(other than classifying them as either "offensive" or "defensive"); they merely limit the total tonnage of the entire fleets. Through dozens of wearying discussions, the United States and Great Britain have turned Japan down flatly on the proposition, and have waited for the Japanese ambassador to Great Britain, Mr. Tsuneo Matsudaira, to return with a compromising plan.

Chief spokesman of the United States is Norman H. Davis, ambassador-at-large in London, and principal representative for the British is Sir John Simon, British foreign secretary. All through the preliminary conference they have seemed to sit back and wait for Japan to make the moves; she has only returned to each new meeting with strengthened demands for equality.

Japan Demands Equality.

Backed by a tremendous flame of public opinion at home, which has been kindled for a decade or more with intense propaganda, the Japanese embassy makes it plain that the Land of the Rising Sun no longer considers it safe merely to improve international relations simply by entering into a disarmament pact. Setting herself up as the great protector of the Orient, she insists that everything depends upon the acquisition of the right to build ship for ship with her rivals—or scrap ship for ship.

For the equality that Japan wants need not necessarily be secured through building. Tokyo has made it plain. She is willing to scrap

ship for ship—provided that the other powers will start first, bringing themselves down to her level of equipment.

Nippon, whose chief objection is the 5-5-3 ratio, insists that the very word "ratio" be left out of all future treaties, and will not subscribe to one that contains the word. This condition is considered absolutely impossible by the other powers.

Great Britain, with a vast colonial empire that depends entirely upon sea power for the protection of its very structure, contends that so-called "equality" means actually a vast superiority for Japan in the Pacific, since there is hardly an imaginable circumstance in which it would be possible for Britain to concentrate her entire navy in one area for battle purposes. The area Japan must protect is comparatively small. In a war with Japan, Great Britain would have to conduct a naval campaign 10,000 miles from her home bases.

Why a large navy is necessary for the well-being of the British empire has been explained by the first lord of the admiralty recently: "Every day 110,000 tons of merchandise and 50,000 tons of food reach the shores of Great Britain from overseas. They come over 80,000 miles of sea routes, and unless we secure their safe arrival we starve. The protection of our sea routes, for the safe arrival of our merchandise, and food, is the business of the navy." Britain occupies a position unique among nations in that respect. A powerful navy or even a smaller navy more capable of quick concentration could cut off her food supply in almost no time. During the war, when the German submarine campaign threatened most, the entire nation was left with only six weeks' supply of food.

Impossible, Says U. S.

To the United States the Japanese proposal of equality is equally impossible. Japan, like Britain, with many island possessions, depends upon small, swift ships for defense. America must have large dreadnaughts for the defense of her long coast lines, dreadnaughts whose individual tonnage must be much greater than that of the Japanese ships. Obviously a treaty, which limits shipbuilding to equality of tonnage alone, without naming any categories for the ships, must be all in favor of Japan, whose favored monitor of the sea lanes is the submarine.

The preliminary conference so far has produced nothing but a deadlock. Rear Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, head of the Japanese naval air corps and a delegate to the conference, says that Japan will openly ask cuts in armaments, scrapping battleships and aircraft carriers as offensive weapons, with, of course, the Japanese scrapping done on a much smaller scale. In reply to the charge recently flung by the fiery American Brig. Gen. William D. Mitchell that our most dangerous enemy is Japan and the United States air force must be built up with that in view, Ambassador Yamamoto said that the naval plans of Japan have never included the possibility of a war with the United States. "We have never considered the United States a potential enemy," he insisted.

Anglo-American delegates have lain in waiting for Japan to bring forth some compromise in her equality plan, but little has been forthcoming. The Japanese ambassador insists that the Japanese demands were made simply for the

purpose of international prestige, and that if Japan is granted theoretical equality, she will not build up to it. "A contract is a contract, and a treaty is a treaty," is the other's answer to that.

At least, Japan's attitude in the dealings leaves no one in doubt as to just what the country wants. The other powers have not been so specific; at least, they have not made such definite proposals.

Japan Fears Airplanes.

Japan more than anything else dreads the airplane carrier. She knows full well the dispatch with which her island empire might be seriously crippled, if not destroyed, by enemy planes with a floating base in her home waters. It is said by those well informed that she might even accept further cuts in her submarine craft in exchange for restrictions in airplane carriers of the other powers.

Great Britain favors the further reduction of all sorts of fighting craft, but will undoubtedly insist that all these restrictions be made applicable to France, Italy and Germany as well. These three powers, while figuring little in the preliminary conferences, have of late entered into what appears to be a building race all their own. Germany, who made the U-boat famous in past conflicts, is prepared to begin construction of submarines on a large scale at almost any time. France, in rebuttal to this condition, has already laid down two 28,500-ton battleships at a cost of \$30,000,000 each. Because of this Italy has also ordered two battleships, each of 35,000 tons.

Students of international affairs, in consideration of these conditions, predict that no agreement will be reached in 1935 and that another great building race will result. Whether such a prospect will cause Japan to modify its "quality" proposal is a matter of conjecture; at least she cannot afford to enter into a splintered race against the two richest and best equipped nations of the world.

Vinson's Building Program.

The most recent building program that has been suggested to our government is that of Carl Vinson, chairman of the naval affairs committee, whose proposals to congress include, among other things, two new airships, one to replace the Akron and one to replace the Los Angeles; a new 15,000-ton aircraft carrier to replace the Langley; the construction of a cruiser with a deck for airplanes to land and take off, to determine whether this new type of craft is practicable; the expansion of all naval shore stations; the relegation to the navy of the complete responsibility for aerial sea defense of coast lines; modernization and expansion of the naval training centers at Pensacola, Fla., and an increase in the allotment of United States naval academy appointees.

Of great interest to the other powers has been President Roosevelt's act of summoning former Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson to discuss the forthcoming conference. The diplomat of the Hoover administration has advised the President that the nation must stand by the "open door" policy in Japan firmly, refusing to recognize any gains made through force in contravention of treaty obligation. He advises firm American resistance to the Japanese proposals at London.

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