



PROJECT MUSE®

Diplomacy's Value

Rathbun, Brian C.

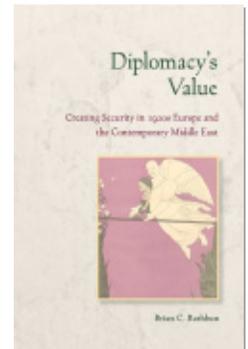
Published by Cornell University Press

Rathbun, C..

Diplomacy's Value: Creating Security in 1920s Europe and the Contemporary Middle East.

Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014.

Project MUSE., <https://muse.jhu.edu/>.



➔ For additional information about this book

<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/43565>

[3]

Tabling the Issue

TWO FRANCO-BRITISH NEGOTIATIONS

European foreign relations in the wake of World War I were preoccupied with the question of French security. This was to great degree the product of structural circumstances. Germany was France's immediate neighbor, and France could not take the same wait-and-see approach as Britain. In addition, France had suffered losses in the Great War that were disproportionately larger than those of Germany or Britain. Demographically it was estimated that the German population would in a few decades outnumber that of France by 20–30 million, giving Germany a decisive advantage, particularly in the number of men of fighting age. Nevertheless, French insecurity was also undoubtedly psychological, a consequence of their wartime experience. Arnold Wolfers, whose *Britain and France between Two Wars* is still, more than seventy years later, the most trenchant analysis of the foreign policy of the two countries, writes, "France was obsessed by the fear of a new war with Germany," even though it was "not normal for the policy of a great power, especially a victorious power, to be based so openly on the fear of future attack by its vanquished opponent" (1940: 11). The French saw the Germans as naturally aggressive and bent on revenge.

This fear was invariant across the political spectrum. Although politicians were deeply divided on matters of domestic politics during the 1920s, there was great unity as regards the threat posed by Germany (Wolfers 1940: 29). The French left and right had identical foreign policy goals and beliefs.

France wanted most a firm commitment by Britain to protect it in case of renewed conflict with Germany (Wolfers 1940: 76).¹ France simply

1. Wolfers writes, "If there was one conviction which all Frenchmen shared, it was the belief that outside of their own military preparedness an *entente* with Britain must become the

could not do it alone. It had made significant concessions on security to the allies in the postwar settlement, forgoing the annexation of the Rhineland to gain a formal security guarantee from the United States and Britain. When the Versailles Treaty was not ratified by the United States in 1919, however, this guarantee fell by the wayside.

Members of the British government, composed of a conservative coalition under David Lloyd George, privately expressed a willingness to provide a security guarantee even without the Americans. The British felt a commitment to the sanctity of the French western borders to be in their interest given the changing nature of military technology that made the Rhine, rather than the Channel, the new strategic border of Britain. In December 1921, they agreed to negotiations with the French, putting the issue formally on the table. This should have been an easy case for diplomacy given the overlap in interests.

Yet a deal was never consummated. How can we explain this unlikely failure? The inability to conclude an agreement had major consequences. It left Britain without a potential means of restraining France in the latter's coercion of Germany to make good on its reparations payments. In 1923, against British wishes and without British participation, the French military invaded and occupied the German Ruhr, seizing industrial assets as compensation for the failure of Germany to pay.

In 1924, the issue was put on the table again under much less favorable conditions. Anglo-Franco relations were still tense given French behavior vis-à-vis Germany, and the new left-wing Labour government in Britain had very different foreign policy goals than its predecessor. The Labour government under Ramsay MacDonald was generally opposed to exclusive alliances, favoring instead more universalist efforts at disarmament and arbitration through the League of Nations. The new government of France, a coalition of the left, still badly wanted an alliance, but Britain refused to renew negotiations along the lines considered a few years earlier because of the change in British interests.

Nevertheless, the two sides negotiated a new protocol to the League of Nations that was mutually beneficial to both sides. By making peaceful conflict resolution through means of third-party mediation a requirement, the Geneva Protocol institutionalized the peaceful conflict resolution that the British left so desired. By providing for League sanctions in the case of noncompliance, it met to some degree the French need for security. The French also committed to the convocation of a general

cornerstone of France's system of security. . . . Her entire post-war foreign policy might therefore be characterized not only as an effort to keep Germany in her place but also as a continuous struggle to get Britain to pledge her support against Germany" (1940: 76).

disarmament conference that the British valued so highly, the successful conclusion of which was a condition for the protocol to come into force.

The Geneva Protocol episode ultimately ended in failure due to domestic differences over foreign policy. The British Conservatives, who returned to power in December 1924, had little interest in a universalist scheme that increased British obligations under the League of Nations. The security issue was tabled for the time being. But diplomacy had brought the two countries to the precipice of agreement before the change in government. How was it that the two countries had been better able to negotiate a deal when their interests were further apart than when they were more closely aligned?

Both the successes and failures of bilateral negotiation between the two powers can be explained through a focus on diplomatic style. In 1922, both governments pursued coercive bargaining that we expect from conservative parties lower in social and epistemic motivation. Although a simple guarantee was in Britain's interest, Lord Curzon, the very conservative foreign minister, sought to exploit the greater French interest in a pact. He insisted that France make concessions on a host of outstanding bilateral issues between the two countries before Britain would even begin negotiations on the content of a security pact. By rationalist logic, the behavior of Britain might not be surprising given its greater leverage. But France, even in its much weaker bargaining position, embraced a similar style of diplomacy when rationalists would, instead, expect significant concessions. Governed by a conservative coalition, the French also bid high, asking the British for a full-scale alliance in which they would coordinate their positions on all major issues and make commitments of specific forces to be placed at the service of the French in case of aggression. Diplomatic style was not endogenous to structure. The conservative premier, Raymond Poincaré, denigrated the British offer of a mere security guarantee and pretended not to be interested in the conclusion of the pact. The combination led to value claiming negotiation, which left a potentially more beneficial outcome for both sides on the table.

When in 1924 the French government again reached out to its wartime ally, both France and Britain were governed by parties with a prosocial motivation. Just as in psychological experiments in which prosocial dyads are better able than proself pairs to reach joint gains through value creating negotiation, the French and British left did what their rightist counterparts could not do. French and British representatives both made significant concessions, indicated their interests honestly and without overstatement, and commented on the atmosphere of goodwill and good faith. Diplomacy was not epiphenomenal. Despite the now greater disparity in foreign policy preferences, the prosocial character of both

governments and their liberal diplomacy facilitated integrative negotiation. Diplomatic style prevailed over foreign policy substance.

THE FAILURE: CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENTS AND
THE BILATERAL TREATY NEGOTIATIONS OF 1922

Negotiating with a Big Club: The *Coup de Cannes*

Given the different structural circumstances of France and Britain, it is not surprising from the point of view of formal and rationalist bargaining theory that France first placed the idea of a security treaty on the table. The French alternative to no agreement was the exposed position France currently occupied vis-à-vis Germany. Even if France overstated the threat posed by Germany, Britain was more isolated and therefore less concerned about a German *revanche*. Premier Aristide Briand, who was also serving as foreign minister, explained the French position. France had "suffered so much from the proximity of Germany." It "cannot contemplate without horror the possibility that such havoc may be experienced again. France cannot forget that the German population exceeds her own by 20 millions; that democracy is still for the great majority of Germans no more than an empty phrase, and this people, highly disciplined, industrious, gifted with a fertile genius for organization, but dominated by an active political and intellectual propaganda . . . which encourages a spirit of aggression and inflates the desire for revenge, may someday render vain the disarmament provisions of the Treaty of Versailles." For this reason, "the best guarantee against any such eventuality would be the certainty on the part of Germany that France would not be found isolated in the face of a German attack" (Cmd. 2169, No. 35). Briand instructed his ambassador to Britain in early December 1921 to bring up the topic of a bilateral alliance informally with the British foreign secretary, Lord Curzon, in a "purely private, unofficial and confidential capacity" (Cmd. 2169, No. 23). The foreign secretary consented to an exchange of views that quickly led to formal negotiations in Cannes in January 1922.

France's greater need for security should have made it adopt a conciliatory and concessionary diplomacy. Yet, even though France was in the role of *demandeur*, its initial offer was almost outrageously high. Rather than the simple guarantee that had fallen through in 1919, in which Britain unilaterally pledged to guarantee France against unprovoked aggression, the ambassador proposed at Briand's instruction "something much more definite and precise, nothing less than a defensive alliance" (Cmd. 2169, No. 23). In a private meeting, Briand suggested a "very broad alliance in which the Two Powers would guarantee each other's interests in

all parts of the world, act closely together in all things and go to each other's assistance whenever these things were threatened" (Cmd. 2169, No. 33). And Britain was asked to do this without U.S. help.

The French government was pursuing a coercive bargaining style. Briand was historically a center-left politician, a former socialist who had left the party when he accepted a ministerial post before the war, something that was anathema to the socialists at the time (Unger 2005: 78, 98; 101–2, 181–84; Oudin 2004: 98–99, 120–26, 144–46). After departing from his political base he was beholden to a coalition of rightist parties called the Bloc National. The moderating force of the French center-left Radicals had left the cabinet in November 1919, leaving Briand as the only non-conservative politician in the cabinet. He established an "uneasy alliance with a coterie of conservative ministers" (Hall 1978: 1126).

The somewhat audacious nature of the French demands became more evident in a draft treaty presented in Cannes. France asked Britain to intervene with all its military forces not only in the case of a direct invasion of French soil but also in the event of any German violation of its treaty obligations to remain disarmed and to keep the Rhineland demilitarized. Great Britain and France were also to collectively agree on the strength of their respective military, naval, and air forces. France wanted a military convention, a specific commitment of particular British assets to its defense in advance. France also called for a constant collaboration between the general staffs of the two countries. Even the language betrayed the bold opening offer of the French. Briand wrote that there was "no more effective guarantee of a durable peace than a *vast* international arrangement of this nature based on the close union of France and Great Britain" (Cmd. 2169, No. 35, emphasis added). France was particularly interested in a British guarantee of the security of French allies in Eastern Europe. Its proposals made allusions to an agreement of "two stages," one for direct attack on France and the other for indirect attack on French allies. The French mentioned Poland specifically (Cmd. 2169, No. 23).

Briand did moderate his coercive diplomacy with aspects of liberal diplomacy. He tried to persuade the British of the advantages of a global alliance for Britain. It would allow for France to reduce its land armaments, which was a major British goal (Cmd. 2169, No. 33). It would deter the Germans, which was in the interests of Britain as well as France (Cmd. 2169, Nos. 23, 33). Briand expressed a willingness to consider side payments to the British, calling them an "indispensable part" of an agreement. Briand understood there was "no passion in the hearts of the British" for an alliance, an expression of empathy that took the edge off France's coercive diplomacy (Cmd. 2169, No. 23).

For their part, the British were genuinely desirous of a security pact of the kind they had been prepared to make in 1919, a unilateral guarantee

of French security. It “did not throw heavy obligations upon us” but “would be of great value to France,” the cabinet concluded privately (CC 1 (22)). It would also be in the interests of Britain, as Lloyd George recognized. This kind of guarantee would serve to deter Germany in a way that it had not been when Britain had remained noncommittal in the run up to the Great War (Cmd. 2169, No. 34). The British cabinet even concluded that it had a “moral obligation” to defend French soil because the 1919 guarantee had fallen through (CC 1 (22)). The pact was more attractive if Germany were to subsequently be brought into the arrangement through a nonaggression pact with the other Western European powers, as Briand thought possible (Cmd. 2169, No. 33). The cabinet believed this “would make for a general easement in Europe” (CC 1 (22)).

Lord Curzon told Briand that there was “general concurrence” in the cabinet that Britain might give France a “complete guarantee against invasion” on its western frontier (Cmd. 2169, No. 33). Nevertheless, as Curzon stated, “opinion in Great Britain was hardly prepared for so broad an understanding as that” envisioned by France. The British cabinet rejected any kind of close military cooperation such as institutionalized staff talks or a military convention. It concluded in January that an “Anglo-French alliance of a bi-lateral character was open to serious objections as it would leave us no longer free. France would endeavor to induce us to increase our Army so that we should be able to send large military forces to the Continent or wherever they were required by France” (CC 1 (22)). The British also refused any type of indirect guarantee through a commitment to use force in the event of German violations of its Versailles Treaty obligations. The British draft treaty simply stated, “In the event of a direct and unprovoked aggression against the soil of France by Germany, Great Britain will immediately place herself at the side of France with her naval, military and air forces.” Otherwise, it offered only to “concert together” if any treaty provisions were breached or consult if there was confusion as to its interpretation (Cmd. 2169, No. 38). The cabinet also limited the geographic scope of the treaty, concluding it was “beyond our resources to deal with certain military problems such as the defence of Poland” (CC 1 (22)). Curzon stated that Britain was “not very much interested in what happened on the eastern frontier” and even less interested in being drawn into military operations “in any eventuality” in other parts of the world (Cmd. 2169, No. 33; see also No. 34). He spoke of “enormous undefined responsibilities” in the French scheme (Cmd. 2169, No. 23).

Yet, indicative of a coercive bargaining style, the British also decided to use the pact to extract other benefits. Even though they valued a bilateral (or trilateral if, which was possible, Belgium was to be associated) security guarantee in its own right, they held it hostage. From the beginning,

they linked the successful conclusion of a security agreement with France to the resolution of a number of outstanding issues between the two countries in the favor of Britain, such as differences over the nationalist uprising in Turkey (Hall 1978). At the exploratory meeting with the French ambassador, Curzon made this linkage diplomatically but unmistakably:

I said in conclusion, there was one further question upon which he had not touched. Did he contemplate, in his outlook, that the consideration of a treaty of alliance between France and ourselves should or should not be accompanied by a general clearing up of all the questions upon which we disagreed, and which were a source of a good deal of unpleasant bickering and quarrel in so many parts of the world? What was the good of an alliance—and indeed, could an alliance be entered into which allowed such questions as Morocco and Egypt, to mention two subjects only where the French view appeared to be sharply opposed to our own, to remain unsettled? If the French Government therefore wished us to examine the question of an alliance, they ought to tell us very plainly whether the discussion ancillary thereto should not embrace the whole field of agreement or disagreement between the two Powers. (Cmd. 2169, No. 23)

In his formal memorandum to Briand outlining the position to be taken by his government at Cannes, the Prime Minister Lloyd George stated that the British opposed “any piecemeal treatment of the questions by which the conference is faced. On the contrary, they consider it absolutely necessary that the problem should be treated as a whole.” Lloyd George stressed the necessity for Britain, given its heavy reliance on trade, of global economic recovery following the destruction of the war. He made a security pact contingent on the convocation of a conference to deal with this question. “Great Britain fully recognizes France’s ground for anxiety, and desires to do all in her power to allay it, but she cannot agree to postponing the question of the reconstruction of Europe, while meeting France’s desires in regard to her reparations and her security.” But this was not all. The prime minister called for a “complete entente” that also included a French limitation on submarine construction and concessions in the direction of Britain on the Near East problem of Turkey (Cmd. 2169, No. 34).

As Sally Marks writes, “Clearly, Britain intended to extract a stiff price for the limited guarantee of French soil she offered” (1982: 538). Britain was governed by Conservatives and a rump Liberal Party that had been devastated by splits over policy toward the war. It was effectively a conservative coalition, with the Tories supplying the vast majority of the ministers. The few Liberals in cabinet came from the right wing of their

party that had not decamped to the opposition. Still, given the strength of the British bargaining position, the British adoption of a coercive diplomatic style is less surprising than similar behavior by the French.

Coercive Bargaining before the Ruhr Crisis: Poincaré's Diplomacy

Briand was punished by the French right for his diplomatic style at Cannes. When aspects of the British proposals became public, showing that the British were driving a hard bargain, pressure on Briand not to concede grew rather than softened. He narrowly escaped a parliamentary recall, but the right-wing French cabinet summoned the premier back to Paris. In what was known as the "coup de Cannes," Briand was sacked and replaced by the much more conservative Raymond Poincaré, who cabinet members thought would more stubbornly defend French interests through coercive bargaining. The phrase played on the triple meaning of *Cannes*—as a place but also as the French word for a "caning" and a "golf club." Briand had been photographed receiving a golf lesson from Lloyd George, which was taken as a metaphor for French subservience and weakness, drawing nationalist ire. His punishment by the conservative cabinet was likened to his being beaten by a wooden stick (Hall 1978: 4; Keiger 1997: 276). The rightist French government, despite its lack of negotiating strength, was not going to simply concede. Because no pact had been concluded, Briand was fired for his diplomatic style rather than his foreign policy substance.

Poincaré expected a value claiming process in which both sides held firm, conceding only gradually and out of necessity. He predicted that it would not be easy to find common ground (DD, No. 32). He would wait for a formal response from Britain "so that we can ourselves measure the limit of our concessions" (DD, No. 32). John Keiger writes that Poincaré exhibited a "lack of ability to concede points in a spirit of negotiation [that] was worsened by a complete lack of tact in expressing his own point of view" (1997: 287). He demonstrated a "withering stubbornness" (Keiger 1997: 294). The British had anticipated such a shift in diplomacy, earlier recognizing that they had an interest in maintaining Briand in power. According to Jules Laroche, French bureaucrat, at the now infamous golf outing Briand had gotten in the way of a drive by a member of the British delegation. Lloyd George had pulled him quickly back and gesticulated at his forehead, saying in broken French: "Watch out, if the ball hits here, Briand zap! And then . . . Poincaré!" (in Keiger 1997: 276).

The conservative premier had a thoroughly prosself motivation in diplomacy, writing, "The best way to love mankind is first of all to love that portion of humanity which is near to us, which surrounds us and which we know best. Instead of scattering our affections and wasting our

energies let us concentrate and use them productively in that corner of soil where nature rooted us." This was a moral commitment based on the foundation of loyalty. "*La patrie* is therefore the material heritage which our ancestors have bequeathed to us and which we must, in turn, pass on to our descendants. It is not simply our land, it is also our national soul . . . evoked in us by the name of France" (in Keiger 1997: 70).

Although it is tempting to reduce his negotiating behavior simply to his personality, the new premier's diplomatic style went part and parcel with the psychological motivations embedded in conservative ideology, common to the French right. "Poincaré's *not very original* bargaining technique was to begin by asking for more on the basis of carefully prepared evidence in the expectation of settling for less," writes Keiger (1997: 257, emphasis added). This was what his colleagues were expecting from his appointment.

With Briand gone, there was no longer any check on the conservatives' instincts to engage in coercive bargaining. Poincaré met with Lloyd George as the British delegation passed through Paris on its way back to London following the aborted Cannes conference. Still a few days away from formally taking office, he denigrated the British offer of a guarantee, saying it had "very little effective value in France without a military convention," according to the British minutes of the meeting. "He said that he would rather have a military convention without a treaty than a treaty without a military convention." Poincaré described a treaty without a convention as "useless" because the guarantee was "illusory." Rather than a simple promise to come to the aid of France, he wanted specific commitments from the British as to the military forces they would devote to French defense (CP 3612 (22)).

When Poincaré officially became premier, his government submitted to the British another draft treaty that differed little from its first (Cmd. 2169, No. 39). Britain would still be obliged to intervene militarily in cases of violations of the Versailles Treaty. Anything else was "altogether insufficient security" (Cmd. 2169, No. 40); it "would restrict to a dangerous extent . . . the circumstances in which the assistance of Great Britain is contemplated," requiring Germany to actually breach French borders (CP 3961 (22); see also Cmd. 2169, No. 41). The French even objected to the use of the word *soil* by Britain because an attack could come by air or sea as well (CP 3961 (22); see also Cmd. 2169, No. 41).

The French backed away from a demand for a full military convention but called for a formal "entente" between the general staffs in the treaty itself, in which the two countries would constantly coordinate military plans (Cmd. 2169, Nos. 39–41). The French also spoke of a "general entente," a pledge to confer together and find a common policy on every issue that might endanger the peace (CP 3961 (22); see also Cmd. 2169,

Nos. 40–41). This was an effort to extract more British help in the event of a German attack to its east (Cmd. 2169, No. 40). Poincaré's only concession was to express a willingness to remove the general entente and the staff talks from the treaty. They would still, however, be formalized through an exchange of letters accompanying the treaty, to be signed and published by the two governments (DD, No. 25).

Poincaré took all these actions in a security environment that should have made him more conciliatory rather than less. This indicates that diplomatic style was not endogenous to structure. As discussions with the British were taking place, Germany signed the Treaty of Rapallo with the Soviet Union, raising the specter of Russian-German cooperation against the West. This convinced the French premier that Germany was "destined" to disrupt the peace. Yet he believed that it reinforced his argument about the necessity of a stronger guarantee from Britain in Eastern Europe and in the Rhineland. He dug in his heels further (DD, No. 32). Poincaré even referred in private correspondence to the "price" that Britain would have to pay for consolidating and tightening the relationship between the countries (DD, No. 37).

We might conclude that Poincaré did not in fact, despite the obvious French security interest, value a guarantee from Britain or that he radically misconstrued the bargaining environment. Yet privately the leader said that "he would make any sacrifice" to gain a pact with Britain (Marks 1982: 541). He also understood the weakness of the French bargaining position. Marks writes that the conservative leader "wanted the treaty badly but was determined not to appear eager" (1982: 540–41).

The lack of fit between the conservative French government's style of diplomacy and the French structural position is exposed further by the efforts made by Charles de Saint-Aulaire, the French ambassador to Britain, to soften Poincaré's position. He cautioned the premier about how difficult it would be to pass an agreement of the type that he envisioned in the British Parliament. He advised that the French should conclude a pact as soon as possible, lest the political winds shift unfavorably. Shifting away from coercive diplomacy, St. Aulaire noted to Lord Curzon the "high moral value" of a treaty along the lines that Britain envisioned, "even if it does not have the precision we would like" (DD, No. 31). He tried to reassure the British that Poincaré was in fact eager to conclude a treaty and that it was only a matter of extending it for longer than the British envisioned (DD, No. 49). He objected to the accusation that the French scheme was a "refusal disguised as an offer" (DD, No. 36). Saint-Aulaire expressed to the British his confidence that the two sides could find a formula that both agreed on (Cmd. 2169, No. 42). His efforts, indicating a more pragmatic and realist style of diplomacy perhaps more typical of professional diplomat, were for naught. Poincaré resented the

ambassador's efforts to "make me a part of a conversation that you had on the pact" (DD, No. 32).

Value Claiming Subtracts Value: The Collapse of Negotiations

In the face of French intransigence, the British elected to stall so as to coerce the French to make concessions. After he returned home, Lloyd George told his cabinet that, given the latter's weaker bargaining position, the British would wait for the French to come to them: "In their present hostile attitude towards me it did not seem to be desirable that we should take the initiative. After some weeks have elapsed and the French began to feel themselves isolated in Europe and began to realize that we did not regard the pact as of supreme importance to ourselves, it was likely that they would approach us in a more reasonable frame of mind" (CC 2 (22)). Lord Curzon reported of the "extreme importance which the French Government attach to the conclusion of the Pact, upon which the existence of Monsieur Poincaré's Ministry may be said in fact to depend, and left me with the impression that while we hold it in suspense . . . we may find in it a powerful lever for securing a favourable settlement of the other issues" (CP 3664 (22)). He concluded, "It would be unwise on our part to abandon the very powerful form of pressure which its non-conclusion enables us to exercise" (CP 3760 (22)). This was a "policy of aloofness" typical of coercive bargaining (Cohrs 2004: 39).

In another act of coercive diplomacy, the British exploited the parallel but separate negotiations with the Belgians to coerce the French in their direction. They reasoned that if they could induce the Belgians to accept a treaty without a military convention, it would confer "certain tactical advantages" in negotiations with the French (CC 2 (22)). And although initially the British were inclined to sign a separate guarantee pact with the Belgians, who proved more docile in negotiations, they rethought their position to put further pressure on the French. British ministers realized that securing the Belgian frontier went a long way toward providing French security and would therefore undermine the value of a guarantee by Britain of France. A senior civil servant wrote to Curzon that "it might be wise to delay the signature of the Anglo-Belgian pact until agreement on the Anglo-French pact was further advanced, as otherwise we might find Poincaré more difficult to deal with in view of the fact that, as regards her Belgian frontier, France would be automatically secure. It seems to me that there is some force in this point." Curzon replied, "Your point about the Anglo-Belgian treaty is a new one and worth considering." Subsequently they put the Belgians on ice (in Marks 1982: 542).

Curzon also tightened the linkage (CP 3760 (22); Cmd. 2169, No. 44). He continued to make any deal with the French hinge on the resolution of other outstanding issues between the countries. Curzon, however, did not imagine a package deal in which the British gained what they valued most while simultaneously conceding what the French most valued. Rather, he took an even more coercive line, demanding that France make concessions on those items even before renewed discussions of a security treaty. Curzon instructed the ambassador: "His Excellency, I said, would remember that when the subject was first discussed with M. Briand at Cannes the British Prime Minister had clearly laid down that the ground must be cleared of certain matters still in dispute between the two Governments before the Pact could be concluded. . . . When the whole of these matters had been concluded then would be the time to resume the discussion . . . of the Pact" (Cmd. 2169, No. 45).

Here Lord Curzon seems to have been acting on his own authority and in line with his own more conservative ideology. His biographer, Harold Nicolson, who also worked with him in the Foreign Office, observes that Curzon embraced the moral foundations of loyalty, authority, and the ethics of community that drive a prosocial motivation in diplomacy (Nicolson 1937: 13). Curzon believed that "God had personally selected the British upper classes as an instrument of the Divine Will. It was interpreted in terms of unsparing self-sacrifice, of a religious ideal of duty" (1937: 16). He was a "nationalist and an imperialist to the depths of his soul" with little sympathy for prosocial sentiments that took others' interests into account (1937: 42–44). The foreign secretary was not pragmatic, Nicolson claims: "Curzon . . . was not by nature and adaptable man. . . . He never learnt the . . . lesson of contemporary politics, namely that elasticity is the supreme advantage" (1937: 13, 32). He once said, "There are two constituents of successful diplomacy. . . . One is knowing one's own mind, the other is letting other people know it" (in Nicolson 1937: 43).

Yet, even though British behavior was consistent with rationalist bargaining theory, it was ineffective against the French conservatives, given their simultaneous adoption of coercive diplomatic style. Even though he lacked the bargaining strength, Poincaré acted as indifferently as the British. So as not to appear too eager for the conclusion of a pact, thereby reducing French leverage, he cautioned his ambassador to remain patient and to not make any offers until there was a formal British response to the French proposal. It was "not for us to remind them" of the French interest in the pact (DD, No. 28; see also Marks 1982). When Poincaré met Lloyd George in Boulogne, the prime minister raised the security issue at the beginning of the meeting, according to minutes. But the French premier deferred the question and never brought it up again, except to

express feigned regret that they might have discussed it “had there been time” (Cmd. 2169, No. 45). As the pressure grew on the French government, the premier did ask his ambassador to seek a formal reply from the British to his draft treaty (DD, Nos. 30, 32) and instructed him to reveal to the British how much the French would value an alliance (DD, No. 33). He asked the British to restart conversations (DD, Nos. 35, 46) but never made any further concessions to sweeten the deal.

Coercive diplomacy by both sides meant that negotiations were marked by a spirit of value claiming, making agreement more difficult. The Poincaré government rejected any linkage between completion of the treaty and the side payments that the British were connecting to the security arrangement (DD, Nos. 24, 31; CP 3961 (22); see also Cmd. 2169, No. 41). The French ambassador to Britain cautioned against the appearance of *marchandage*—that is, haggling or wrangling. This association of independent issues could create an impression of “an exchange of money.” This was, of course, exactly the British intention. The side payments were not extremely costly to France. The exasperated French ambassador asked how the British could allow a problem such as Tangiers to be the cause of delay given that there was no comparison in terms of its importance. The treaty should not be subordinated to a “second rate question,” he argued (DD, No. 31). Yet it was precisely the triviality of those other issues that should have made conceding easy for France had French decision makers been using a different diplomatic style.

The interactions were colored by emotion, not pragmatism. The French warned that the British coercive linkage could lead them to reject a treaty simply out of principle (DD, No. 31). Indeed, the French conservatives felt that Britain owed France, given the sacrifices France had made at Versailles in return for a security guarantee that had never materialized in 1919 (DD, No. 31).² At one point Poincaré said, “It would be the worst blunder to seem to be begging for friendship and to forget who we are, what we value, and that which we can do” (in Wolfers 1940: 92). Poincaré also engaged in a petty quarrel with British representatives. He felt insulted that they had not formally replied, and he would not revisit his offer until they did (DD, Nos. 28, 32; Cmd. 2169, No. 37).

For their part, the British conservatives reacted sharply to Poincaré’s accusation that a British pledge to come to the aid of France was not sufficiently valuable. “It would be much better to trust to the honour of England,” Lloyd George advised the French premier. “The important thing was Britain’s pledge.” France should “take the word of the British

2. France had wanted to occupy more German territory, even annex part of the Rhineland either for France or to place it in the hands of an international authority. It had relented only in exchange for an Anglo-U.S. security guarantee.

Empire, the value of which, and the strength behind it, she knew. . . . If the word of the British people was not sufficient for France, he feared that the Draft Treaty must be withdrawn." Lloyd George threatened that "if France was not satisfied with the promise of England to put all her forces at France's side, there was really no possible basis for a genuine accord between the two countries. . . . It only remained for M. Poincaré to communicate those views [officially]" (CP 3612 (22)). This emotionalism undermined the pragmatic diplomacy that might have facilitated a mutually beneficial agreement.

The British concluded that the French were uninterested in an agreement. Lloyd George told his cabinet colleagues, based on his experience at Boulogne, that Poincaré did not "put much stress on the conclusion of the Pact. . . . He could easily have discussed the matter at Boulogne had he so chosen" (CC 29 (22)). Marks writes that the French premier had "overplayed his air of indifference and convinced British leaders that he did not want a pact" (1982: 540). With Poincaré remaining steadfast, Curzon informed the French in June that there would be no pact because it hinged on the prior resolution of other issues. "The prospect of an early settlement of these questions is, I regret to say, far from hopeful, largely owing to the attitude of the French Government; and in these circumstances no useful purpose would be served by pursuing further, at present, the conversations on the subject of the treaty of alliance," he wrote. "I should be glad if your Excellency would take an early opportunity of impressing on M. Poincaré the unaltered determination of His Majesty's Government to clear up the outstanding questions at issue between our two countries before entering upon a renewed discussion of the treaty" (Cmd. 2169, No. 47).

Although the door had been left just slightly open by the British, Poincaré slammed it shut. Referring to the "declared indifference of the French Government," the conservative leader maintained his course and dealt the final blow to any prospect of a security treaty (DD, No. 42). He expressed the same view that he had earlier, that "in the form presented to him . . . he attached no importance whatever" to a pact. "France was absolutely indifferent as to whether there was a Pact or not" (Cmd. 2169, No. 48). He denigrated the value of any British commitment, stating that everyone "well knew that Great Britain would be found at her side if she . . . were again attacked by Germany, since in the future, even more than in 1914, any attack against the French frontier would directly imperil the equilibrium of the world and the safety of Great Britain herself. Above all, the Pact would have a moral effect on Germany. That result, though admittedly important, would not be of a nature to justify France in making any sacrifice of her essential interests" (Cmd. 2169, No. 49 (appendix)). The British and French did not take up the issue again until Poincaré had left power.

They had missed an opportunity. British and French decision makers both subsequently expressed the opinion that had it not been for the “upheaval in France,” by which they meant the ideological shift in the French government, they would have successfully negotiated a treaty. Briand later referred to the “folly of the decision taken in Paris at that moment to render null the negotiations at Cannes” (CP 105 (25), minutes of the December 16, 1924, Committee of Imperial Defence (CID) meeting). Of course, the British were also partially responsible. Had they proposed to resolve the issues they linked to the security pact simultaneously at a conference such as the one in Cannes, reaching an agreement might have been easier. Value claiming made a win-win integrative deal impossible. Diplomacy had an effect on value, although in this case by subtraction, impeding what should have been a somewhat easy case for success.

THE NEAR SUCCESS: LEFTIST GOVERNMENTS AND THE GENEVA PROTOCOL OF 1924

The period immediately following the collapse of negotiations was perhaps the nadir of interwar French relations, culminating in the Bloc National government’s occupation of the Ruhr, over British objections, as a means of pressing Germany to pay its reparations. But by the time the pact issue was reopened, there had been significant changes in the governments of both countries, a shift from the right to the left in 1924. The Conservative government in Britain was defeated by the Labour Party, which formed a weak minority government relying on the parliamentary support of what was left of the Liberals. In France, a new electoral alliance composed of the center-left Radicals and the Socialists took over from the Bloc National. The two countries tried again to find common ground, this time with a very different diplomatic style.

The liberal diplomatic style of Labour was consistent with the overt prosocial motivation of the party in domestic and foreign affairs. Scholars of the Labour movement agree that the party advocated internationalism and nonviolence in foreign policy, the natural expression of its self-transcendence values and the moral foundations of avoiding harm and caring for others (Naylor 1969: chap. 1; Gordon 1969: chap. 1). Labour consciously sought to reform (indeed, create) international society in the same way and on the same principled basis as it was doing at home—through cooperation and justice (Gordon 1969: 6). Naylor writes of the party’s “belief in human brotherhood” (1969: 9).

In its wartime blueprint for a postwar order, *Labour and the Peace Treaty*, the party lamented the prevailing view of international relations before the war, in which the security and prosperity of one was thought to mean

the poverty and insecurity of the other (Labour Party 1919). The “Labour Party . . . took it for granted that national interests and international obligations coincided,” writes Michael Gordon (1969: 17). Party members had a prosocial motivation that sought to maximize joint benefits. They rejected a zero-sum framing of international relations, adopting instead a win-win heuristic conducive to integrative negotiating. Gordon writes, “[I]t is necessary to try to get at Labour’s understanding of discord and conflict in political life. . . . To put it simply, the party regarded conflict as unreal, illusory, mistaken.” The party believed in a “profound truth about life: namely, when two or more individuals (or nations for that matter) fell out with one another, the resulting discord was unnecessary. It was a mistake—the disputants didn’t really understand or appreciate each other’s objectives” (Gordon 1969: 17).

Gordon directly fingers the liberal origins of the diplomatic style: The “heart of Labour’s understanding—is that harmony (cooperation, accord) was alone natural. . . . The disputants had only to discover the common good which was at the same time their own highest good. . . . There was nothing new about this notion. Far from Labour inventing it, a doctrine postulating an ultimate harmony of interests was part and parcel of the whole Liberal metaphysic that sprang out of the . . . Enlightenment. . . . It is hardly surprising that Labour absorbed this doctrine, given its intellectual indebtedness to classical liberalism in so many areas of its thought” (1969: 40–41).

Labour also came into the government with very different foreign policy goals than the Conservatives. The party had long advocated the abolition of war as a means of resolving conflicts between states. Labour believed that the disarmament of Germany should be accompanied by universal disarmament (Labour Party 1919; Naylor 1969, chap. 1; Gordon 1969: 39–42; Winkler 1994: chap. 2). It called for the elimination of conscription and the private manufacture of arms. After the war, Labour also placed great stress on the League of Nations. Gordon writes, “Labour spokesmen continually referred to the League as the focus of an already existing ‘community of nations.’ Peace was indivisible, international cooperation was inevitable, world opinion was real and could be counted on” (1969: 16).³

3. Although the Labour Party had been cool to the League of Nations in the immediate aftermath of the war, seeing it as the continuation of the wartime alliance dedicated to preserving the status quo for the victors (Winkler 1994: 38; Naylor 1969: 7–8), it gradually warmed to the idea of making the League an “organ of international justice, inclusive of all free peoples” (Labour Party 1919; see also Winkler 1994: 55; Naylor 1969: 8; Gordon 1969: 16).

Just a few months after Labour came to power, the conservatives in France were also replaced, by a leftist coalition called the Cartel des Gauches.⁴ The Cartel was originally led by Edouard Herriot, who took on the posts of both premier and foreign minister. The Radicals supplied all the ministers, and the Socialist Party merely provided the votes necessary for a majority in the French parliament (Keeton 1987: 11; BDF, Part II, Series F, Vol. 17, No. 91: 381). Liberal republican values and socialist ideology were quite compatible, with differences mostly centering on whether change was best accomplished through participation within the normal political process (Unger 2005: 78, 98; 101–2, 181–84; Oudin 2004: 98–99, 120–26, 144–46).

France was more structurally constrained by material factors—the potential power of Germany and its proximity—than Britain. The left was just as terrified of a German *revanche* as the right was and therefore just as fixated on guaranteeing French security. All parties on the left but a small Socialist minority had supported the Ruhr invasion. Herriot told Ramsay MacDonald, who also held both the positions of prime minister and foreign minister, “My country has a dagger pointed at its breast, within an inch of its heart. . . . I think that I should not have done my duty towards my country if I did not place Germany in a condition to do no harm. . . . If there was a new war, France would be wiped off the map of the world. . . . One takes precautions against common criminals” (PRO 30/69/123, C 11976/70/18). Herriot continued at another meeting with the British:

What Germany lacked at the actual moment was leaders. . . . If a new Bismarck appeared, there would be a good reason to fear that a war-like policy would instantly make its reappearance. . . . In ten years’ time Germany would be faced with a terrible temptation. France would then be in a bad situation; firstly because the classes of military age would have few effectives—they would be the generation born during the war. . . . The danger was accordingly not one of the morrow. It was for ten years hence. That was what it was the duty of a French Government to think of. That was the peril against which it had to forearm itself. (DBFP I, Vol. 26, No. 508).

Briand said the same (Keeton 1987: 90); fear of Germany was hardly confined to the French right. British representatives reported back to London

4. It was composed of the Group du Parti radical et radical-socialiste (the Radical Socialists, sometimes simply known as the Radicals), the Groupe du Parti socialiste-unifié (the Socialists), and the much smaller Groupe du Parti républicain-socialiste (the Radical Republicans) (BDF, Part II, Series F, Vol. 17, No. 91: 381).

that "the security question would be as vital for the next French Government as for that of M. Poincaré. *Even the Socialists* made it a corner-stone of French foreign policy" (BDFA, Part II, Series F, Vol. 17, No. 91: 307, emphasis added).

The Cartel des Gauches had preferences identical to the Bloc National coalition. It insisted on strict German compliance with Versailles, including complete disarmament to the letter. There would be no early evacuation of the Rhineland. The French government hoped to secure the right to permanently monitor German compliance with its treaty obligations, particularly the demilitarization of the Rhineland, through League auspices after the withdrawal of the Interallied Military Control Commission (BDFA, Part II, Series F, Vol. 17, No. 91: 309). And, like the Bloc National, the Cartel des Gauches placed most value on an alliance with Britain. Herriot proclaimed after taking office, "It is necessary to choose between the reestablishment of the interallied entente and the maintenance of unilateral action" (in Wolfers 1940: 59). Briand said that a pact with Britain "ought to take precedence over all the other problems, because it is like the *sine qua non* of everything else" (in Keeton 1987: 108).

Herriot sought to obtain what Poincaré had not. Early on, he resuscitated the idea of a bilateral treaty, telling Prime Minister MacDonald that he aimed to "remain faithful to the ideas which the pact prepared at Cannes had endeavoured to crystallise" (DBFP I, Vol. 26, No. 508; see also PRO 30/69/123, C 11976/70/18; Stambrook 1968: 235). Given, however, the change in foreign policy goals that resulted from the ideological shift from right to left in Britain, the British were no longer interested in such an arrangement. British and French preferences were further apart than when the Tories and Bloc National governed. MacDonald would not countenance a traditional bilateral alliance or pact because it was inconsistent with the Labour program. The party had argued against an alliance with France since the end of the war as part of a general rejection of "partial" military arrangements that would perpetuate the pursuit of national armaments and the creation of hostile blocs. Labour had come out specifically against the Cannes proposals in 1922 (Winkler 1994: 86–87). MacDonald told Herriot that an alliance would provide only a "false security" (PRO 30/69/123, C 11976/70/18).

MacDonald instead suggested a more inclusive solution: "We wish to draw to our side the greatest possible number of friends," he explained. "When all that has been done, we shall be able to defy all the fomenters of trouble. This is, perhaps, a very vast conception of broad policy and continuous collaboration. . . . I am convinced that it is only in this way that we shall obtain the definite peace which we all desire" (PRO 30/69/123, C 11976/70/18). "Security for Great Britain did not mean

hastening to the side of France if she was attacked," MacDonald believed. "The problem was vaster" (DBFP I, Vol. 26, No. 508).

MacDonald proposed as an alternative an arrangement constructed within the League of Nations. Noting that the two countries had failed to agree at Cannes, he concluded, "It was therefore useless to continue along a way which led nowhere. . . . Other means must be found. In that connection there was perhaps an issue; it was the League of Nations which supplied it. . . . Through the channel of the League of Nations on the one hand, through that of disarmament on the other, the solution of the problem would be attained, but if [the French] confined themselves within the actual limits and went on talking about a Franco-British Pact of Guarantee, they would only meet with a check" (DBFP I, Vol. 26, No. 508). MacDonald's notion was vague at the time, but he proposed that he and Herriot, while attending the upcoming League Council meeting in September, announce their desire "to create a system which would not be limited to two countries but which would include the other nations; for in contributing to the solution of the general problem each country would contribute to solve the problem for its own benefit" (DBFP I, Vol. 26, No. 508).

Therefore, it was on the basis of a strengthening of the League of Nations that there was a possible agreement between a leftist British government and a leftist French government (DBFP I, Vol. 26, No. 508). Nevertheless, their interests were still far apart. The French, even the right, saw the League differently than the British did, as the nucleus of what they sometimes called a "general alliance" that could bring in more help in the event of German aggression, thereby preserving the favorable status quo. (Wolfers 1940: 25, 31, 153, 162; Gordon 1969: 52, 58; Keeton 1987: 103). In keeping with this conception, the French sought to increase the coercive powers of the League, that is, the automaticity and the force of its sanctions provisions (Wolfers 1940: 153–58; BDFA, Part II, Series F, Vol. 17, No. 91: 308). In addition, the French still envisioned a bilateral alliance that would serve as a stopgap during "an intermediary period to be traversed, during which France would be unprotected . . . before arriving at this ideal state of affairs" (DBFP I, Vol. 26, No. 508). If there was to be an agreement, it would depend on interaction of the diplomatic styles of the two governments and the spirit of negotiations that emerged. Whereas their interests diverged, their liberal diplomatic styles were now aligned.

Bridging the Gap: Integrative Negotiation at the League of Nations

At the beginning of the Fifth Assembly of the League of Nations, MacDonald gave a rousing speech calling for a revision of the Covenant to

require compulsory arbitration. As it then stood, members of the League were supposed to submit disputes that might lead to the outbreak of an armed conflict to some form of conflict resolution—judicial if they were matters of international law, arbitration through experts or the League Council consideration if they were solely political matters. Were the Council members⁵ to find themselves unable to form a unanimous judgment about how the conflict should be resolved, however, war was legal under the terms of the Covenant. And even after a determination had been made through one of these mechanisms, war was still allowed following a three-month “cooling off” period. League members simply agreed not to materially help the state that did not comply with the decision.

MacDonald proposed to plug what was called the “gap” in the Covenant by requiring states to arbitrate all of their disputes, even if the Council could not agree. The prime minister was essentially attempting to outlaw war by institutionalizing liberal diplomacy—the impartial, deliberative, and reasoned resolution of political conflicts. He spoke of dispute settlement “not of a military kind but of a *rational* and judicial kind” (Marquand 1977: 353). MacDonald highlighted how such an approach would be based on the open and reasoned exposition of competing arguments between two sides. “The test is, Are you willing to arbitrate? The test is, Are you willing to explain? The test is, Will you come before us and tell us what your propose to do?” (in Marquand 1977: 353). The prime minister argued that by removing grievances in this way, nations would feel the security that made global disarmament, the other major Labour goal, possible (Walters 1952: 269).

The French found MacDonald’s vision lacking. Herriot’s speech placed emphasis on the sanctions that would follow any violation of the terms of the Covenant. Consistent with the French focus on security, Herriot proclaimed that arbitration was not enough and that France would “regard these three terms—arbitration, security and disarmament—as inseparable.” If the League did not back its obligations with force, arbitration could become a “snare for peaceful nations” (in Marquand 1977: 353). The leftist coalition government was fine with compulsory dispute settlement, provided that League members also increased the sanctions in the Covenant for noncompliance (Walters 1952: 269).

Despite these very different positions, the two nations drafted a joint resolution embodying the points of both governments and calling for immediate negotiations to revise the Covenant in this direction. Two League committees, one dealing with sanctions and the other with

5. Under the Covenant, only those who were not party to the dispute were allowed to deliberate. The parties involved were forced to abstain.

arbitration, set to work at once to devise a new mechanism that would blend French and British interests. Indeed, these countries often took the lead in private meetings, and their common position was presented to the others. Britain was represented by Arthur Henderson and (Charles Cripps) Lord Parmoor, prominent Labour politicians; France was represented by Briand, the former premier, and Joseph Paul-Boncour, Socialist member of parliament. The delegates agreed to negotiate a voluntary supplement to the Covenant that could be signed, ratified, and applied by members of the League that consented. But they also would make a later effort to incorporate its provisions into the Covenant so that all members would eventually fall under its rules. The instrument became known as the Geneva Protocol.

The almost impromptu nature of the negotiations meant that the British and French representatives did not have approved negotiating platforms. The British delegation, for instance, was given almost complete discretion; it merely reported the minutes of the committee meetings. The Foreign Office and the prime minister's secretary limited their responses mostly to continual reminders that any draft agreement was subject to government review and eventually the approval of Parliament.⁶

The French and British delegations believed that negotiations in Geneva were marked by a value creating spirit based on joint liberal diplomacy. Paul-Boncour stated at the first meeting, "He desired to put before the committee the ideas of the French delegation, and he was not going to withhold any part of them. It was not part of the policy of the French delegation, as used to be the fashion in the old form of negotiations, to withhold something in order to have something to bargain with. The French delegation wanted to put all their cards on the table; their desire was to collaborate whole-heartedly in any modifications that the committee might wish to put forward and to see to arrive at some agreed text which would reconcile all views" (FO 371/10570, W8159/134/98). This

6. It was "premature to subject this draft to close criticism," wrote Foreign Office bureaucrats on September 24 (FO 371/10570/W8146). The Foreign Office "acted on the assumption that they were not required to offer any observations on the proceedings of the British delegation, and they have therefore taken no initiative." There was "nothing to be done until something complete and definite has emerged." "In the meantime, it has been made clear by the British delegates that anything they agree to is subject to the covering approval of His Majesty's Government" (FO 371/10570, W8281/134/98). Only when the navy objected to a pledge to submit to the compulsory jurisdiction of the Permanent Court on International Justice on questions of international law arising out of actions taken under League Covenant obligations did London intervene in the negotiations. The British delegation noted a reservation that would overcome this obstacle (FO 371/10570, W8281/134/98 and W8493/134/98).

might, of course, have been cheap talk, but it was seconded in private by Henderson, who paid tribute to the “spirit . . . amongst the members of this subcommittee” (FO 371/10570, W8146/134/98). Francis Walters, the foremost historian on the League and personal witness to many acrimonious sessions in Geneva, writes that “they worked with extraordinary concentration, with frankness, good temper, and a sincere desire to reach agreement. . . . They threw off the artificial courtesies of diplomatic usage: they were frequently to be seen in shirt-sleeves, and to be heard addressing one another by their surnames alone” (1952: 272). In short, reasoned dialogue prevailed.

One might argue that it was the alignment of the bargaining positions of the two sides that made negotiation easier, that diplomacy was epiphenomenal. But that had certainly not been enough two years before, and the French and British ideal points were now considerably further apart. MacDonald later recounted, “This was not a mere evolution of good will like the pentecostal peace that we read about in the Acts of the Apostles. Not at all. The greeting was cold and critical, but that changed” (*Hansard*, Series 5, Vol. 182: col. 345). He situated that description in a general understanding of relations with France that indicated a win-win heuristic characteristic of liberal diplomacy: “French interests are not always the same as ours. I have said so in public several times and in private very often. But France has got no interest so diverse from ours that France and ourselves, approaching the problem in a friendly spirit, cannot find agreement upon it. I am profoundly convinced of that. It may take us six months to find agreement. That does not matter. I am certain that agreement is there if the situation be properly handled on both sides” (*Hansard*, Series 5, Vol. 182: col. 345).

The two sides somewhat easily settled on a mechanism by which states were obligated to submit all disputes to some form of nonviolent resolution. Any issue not taken up by the Permanent Court of International Justice or through arbitration by independent experts was to be brought before the League Council. If the Council unanimously agreed on the measures to be taken, its decision was to be binding and no recourse to war would be allowed. And if the Council was divided, parties could not proceed to settle the question militarily, as was currently the case. Rather, they would be obligated to forward the question for arbitration. This ensured that all conflicts would be resolved rather than left open. And it provided a simple mechanism for establishing the aggressor in any situation, a problem that had vexed previous negotiations—it was the power that refused peaceful conflict resolution (Walters 1952: 268–75).

Differences between the two countries centered on the sanction for non-submission or noncompliance. For the French, a mere legal commitment

was “not enough by itself.” Rather, they wanted to “make it certain that those who refused arbitration would have to face the full consequences of their act. . . . Those nations must become convinced that they would find all the other nations of the world prepared to compel them to accept the arbitration which they had refused” (FO 371/10570/W8159). The French wanted both nonsubmission and noncompliance to automatically lead to a total severing of economic and financial ties with the aggressor of the kind identified by Article 16 of the Covenant. This was to be the case even if the state not living up to its commitments had not yet used force. The French also wanted to more precisely specify the exact obligations for League members to add to the organization’s deterrent effect. There was, the French explained, “danger in employing terms of a general nature. An aggressor State would be tempted to think that, if two great nations like France and Great Britain could not agree exactly on what action they were going to take against a breach of the peace, it was worth taking the risk of common action by the members of the League being prevented by disagreement on the actual mode of procedure. What the French Government wanted to do was to prevent the possibility of aggression” (FO 371/10570, W7877/134/98).

This was a common French position. The French left and right had very similar foreign policy goals. The Foreign Office noted that French views did not “differ in any important respect from those of previous French Governments which have been in power since the armistice” (FO 371/10571, W9571/134/98). British civil servant Alexander Cadogan wrote, “If anything emerged from the debate, it was only the rather familiar fact that the French require a measure of security satisfactory to themselves before they will consent to disarmament” (FO 371/10570, W7877/134/98).

The British, however, made significant concessions to the French on security in a way that the previous government under the Conservatives had not. Henderson admitted that “adequate sanctions should be provided for seeing that award or decision should be carried out.” Indeed, he argued, “It was advisable, where possible that sanctions should come into operation *ipso facto* without the necessity of further confirmation” (FO 371/10570, W8159/134/98). In other words, the Council would not have to meet and unanimously agree to institute economic sanctions. Henderson was actually the first to point out a contradiction in the text that unintentionally implied an authorization session would be necessary, for which the French were grateful (FO 371/10570, W7877/134/98). Henderson supported the French desire to make it clear that Article 16 entailed automatic obligations. The British delegate did maintain that states in noncompliance with their obligations, either to consent to dispute resolution or comply with its outcome, would have to first use force

before being branded an aggressor subject to sanctions (FO 371/10570, W8897/134/98). Nevertheless, the protocol was still a remarkable extension of British obligations for ensuring European and even global security in that it multiplied the potential number of infractions that would call Article 16 into play for Britain.

The extent of British concessions on sanctions might have just as much to do with Henderson's personal views and foreign policy goals as it did with the liberal diplomacy my theory expects of a leftist government official. He was known, in contrast to MacDonald, to believe that obligations undertaken under the Covenant must be backed by force to be effective (Winkler 1994: 4–5, 16, 90). In contrast, the prime minister, more of an antimilitarist, thought that the very practice of arbitration, if given a chance, would become a "new habit of mind" (Gordon 1969: 2). But archival research reveals that even the prime minister had telegraphed acceptance of the compromise formula on sanctions reached with the French during the negotiations, subject to the understanding that it would depend on parliamentary ratification and therefore "stand or fall with the rest of the draft" (FO 371/10570, W7877/134/93).

Henderson was also accommodating on the issue of the status of alliances in relation to the new protocol. Always eager for certainty, the French wanted explicit permission in the Geneva Protocol for states to devote specific forces to be placed at the discretion of the League Council in case the League decided to use military sanctions. Only then, they argued, would they feel the security necessary for them to disarm. They also offered an amendment allowing states that were victims of aggression to put into place prearranged military plans among smaller groups of countries (FO 371/10570, W7992/134/98). Essentially the French wanted to add a loophole in the protocol allowing military alliances.

Henderson initially objected, consistent with the long-standing opposition of his party to military alliances. He expressed his "regret that the members of the committee have not seen their way clear to make this instrument an instrument where the League will act as a whole, instead of dividing up into regional alliances. . . . I think we should have rather taken the line at which I hinted yesterday afternoon and this morning, of trying to get rid, once and for all, and as soon as possible, of all sectional alliances. The League ought to stand solidly as a whole. . . . I regret that we cannot see our way to the League acting as a whole and to putting our faces like flint against anything like the old balance of power" (FO 371/10570, W7992/134/98). Henderson suggested an amendment stating that, because members could devote forces to the League, "no agreement shall in the future be concluded between States members of the League providing for military action to be taken by them." This would have effectively made military alliances illegal for parties to the protocol

(FO 371/10570, W8067/134/98). He quickly relented, however, and acquiesced to the French position. "I accept it in order to show that I am anxious to conciliate in this committee," he stated (FO 371/10570, W7992/134/98). A spirit of value creating was prevailing.

The French, in turn, conceded on an issue important to the British. Henderson was not eager for his country to assume new obligations to enforce the Geneva Protocol without the guarantee that others would agree to disarm, the primary British security goal. Lord Parmoor stressed the linkage among the three items of "arbitration, sanctions and disarmament." The first two were "a step towards what is the real subject we are upon—namely disarmament. . . . We must have disarmament as an inseparable link with arbitration and sanctions before anything becomes operative for the work we are now doing. If disarmament is not carried out, all our work comes to nothing." The British would not agree to take on a greater role in providing security if there were no concessions in this regard. Parmoor explained, "The States who agreed to the proposal were giving up part of their sovereignty by accepting arbitration, and were incurring very heavy obligations in regard to sanctions. . . . It was very difficult to give sanctions such as those envisaged in an armed Europe" (FO 371/10570, W8063/134/98). The British took the line that the Geneva Protocol should come into force only provided that members of the League successfully concluded the general disarmament agreement foreseen in the Covenant itself but that had not come to fruition. The British were suggesting a package deal that created value.

The French, not surprisingly, wanted the additional security provided by the new treaty (and, more specifically, Britain) as soon as possible and did not want it made conditional on disarmament negotiations that were likely to be thorny, difficult, and protracted. Without disarmament, however, there would be no win-win, value creating aspect of the Geneva Protocol. Henderson suggested a compromise. Preparations for a disarmament conference would begin immediately, the parties would assemble in only a few months, and Britain would ratify the protocol in the interim, giving France greater assurance of British intentions. But Britain would only deposit the treaty, thereby making it operational, in the event of a successful disarmament agreement. This limited, to some degree, French concerns about the British commitment.

This was not an extractive linkage but, rather, an integrative one. The British were not withholding something from the French that was not of value to them. And had the Labour representatives used coercive bargaining, they would have refused to discuss enhanced sanctions until disarmament was complete. But, rather than hold the security issue hostage to coerce France in particular to disarm, Britain revealed its private position on security, allowed negotiations on sanctions to proceed, and

even made significant concessions before any disarmament program was in place. The French were appreciative and did not hold out for more. They accepted the British offer gracefully and even “rendered homage to the great effort of conciliation made by the British delegation.” In response, the British representative, Lord Parmoor, expressed his gratitude for the conciliatory way in which Paul-Boncour “had received the suggestion” (FO 371/10570, W8063/134/98).

The results of these concessions by both sides was, in David Marquand’s words, an “adroit, indeed a brilliant compromise between Herriot and MacDonald—between the French fear that they might be left alone with resurgent Germany, and the old U.D.C. [Union for Democratic Control]’ doctrine that military pacts led to war” (1977: 355). Walters calls it “highly ingenious” (1952: 272). “At a stroke, it hoped, in accord with socialist prescriptions, to satisfy the French yearning for security . . . and to boost internationalism by amending the Covenant and enhancing the League’s authority,” writes Gordon (1969: 49). In the terms of this book, the two sides created value through an integrative deal that had not been possible between the conservative Poincaré and Lloyd George governments. The two sides made significant concessions, trading issues of less importance for what they desired most. They had solved a puzzle through reasoned dialogue.

Special Agreements for Special Needs: The Tory Rejection of the Geneva Protocol

The fate of the Geneva Protocol was still very uncertain. Eager for greater security, the French signed the final draft of the protocol immediately. But given the unconventional way in which it had been negotiated, the British government had not subjected its provisions to a thorough dissection. Foreign Office bureaucrats indicated in their notes to one another in London during the conference that much of their understanding of its contents came from press reports (FO 371/10570, W8281/134/98). On the completion of the negotiations, the Foreign Office began to prepare for the review of the protocol, first by the Committee of Imperial Defence (CID) and then by Parliament (FO 371/10570, W8487/134/98).⁸

7. The Union for Democratic Control was an extraparliamentary pressure group advocating “liberal” positions on foreign policy, most notably democratic oversight of foreign policy. The organization was closely aligned with Labour after the war.

8. There were major objections on the part of the armed services, which feared greater international commitments to enforce the peace. Foreign Office bureaucrats opposed the radical departure of the protocol from traditional diplomacy. Nevertheless, MacDonald’s

As Henderson and Parmoor negotiated in Geneva, however, early elections were called in Britain. When the latter sent a memorandum to MacDonald rebutting the objections of the navy to the proposed protocol in late October, the Foreign Office prepared a curt response: "Reply saying that next week we may be defeated" (Marquand 1977: 356). The Foreign Office understood the consequence of that outcome for the fate of the protocol. "We must wait and see what government will be in office after the election," they wrote in internal correspondence (FO 371/10571, W9571/134/98). The election returned a majority Conservative government under the leadership of Stanley Baldwin, which then had to complete the government review.

For the Conservatives, a detailed examination was hardly necessary. The Tories rejected the Geneva Protocol because of their substantial foreign policy differences with Labour rather than variation in diplomatic style. The Conservative government had no interest in any universal arrangement such as the protocol. This was the position taken in private and in public. Lord Curzon complained that it "cuts a slashing gash into the root of national sovereignty, that it involves a very serious loss of national independence, and that it does convert the League into the very thing we have always been trying to avoid, namely, into a sort of super-State" (CP 105 (25), minutes of December 4, 1924, CID meeting). The Conservatives preferred traditional alliances. Foreign Secretary Austen Chamberlain said that "the way to promote the peace . . . is by proceeding from the particular to the general. . . . The reason why the Covenant fails is because we undertake equal obligations in respect of matters in which we have a vital concern and matters in which we have no concern whatsoever, except as one society of nations" (CP 105 (25), minutes of February 13, 1925, CID meeting). He complained specifically that the protocol obligated Britain to help Eastern Europe "when those who support it say that it is impossible that we should undertake a similar guarantee for the Eastern frontiers of the countries bordering on the Channel" (CP 105 (25), minutes of December 16, 1924, CID meeting; see also DBFP I, Vol. 27, Nos. 180, 300).

biographer concludes that he would have probably accepted it, provided it was altered to meet the objections of the armed services and the dominions (Marquand 1977: 356). Indeed, following the Tory dismissal, MacDonald planned a major campaign in support of the protocol (ADAP A12, No. 162). The National Executive of the party and the General Council of the closely related Trades Union Congress proclaimed that they "should do everything in its power to obtain the acceptance of the principles of the Protocol" and "strongly oppose any suggestion of substituting for the Protocol any form of limited military alliance or guarantee" (Henderson 1925).

The Geneva Protocol, however, created a profound diplomatic problem for the Conservative government, which agreed that it needed an alternative lest it be blamed for shattering the world's hopes for security and peace. The meetings of the Committee of Imperial Defence were preoccupied not with the merits of the protocol, which it soundly rejected, but with the question of whether Chamberlain's formal refusal at the March 1925 meeting of the League Council should be accompanied by some sort of compromise alternative (CP 105 (25), minutes of December 4, 1924, and February 19, 1925, CID meetings).

Here Austen Chamberlain, the center-right and pragmatic foreign secretary, left his first mark on British diplomacy. He said that "to turn down the Protocol . . . is quite the easiest of the decisions that we have to take, and that act by itself, unaccompanied by anything else, would, in my opinion, be an absolute disaster" (CP 105 (25), minutes of December 16, 1924, CID meeting; see also DBFP I, Vol. 27, No. 180). The cabinet agreed, concluding "that the Geneva Protocol is open to grave and objection and cannot be accepted" but also that "a reply to the League in the form of a simple rejection of the Protocol, without any attempt to pave the way to some alternative plan in regard to the vital question of national security, is to be deprecated as calculated to prolong the present state of insecurity and tension in Europe which it is the aim of His Majesty's Government to allay" (CC 12 (25)). The British needed a "constructive policy," wrote Chamberlain (DBFP I, Vol. 27, No. 180).

The Conservative government settled on a general formula, announced by Chamberlain at the League, to supplement the Covenant with "special arrangements in order to meet special needs" (CP 136 (25); see also DBFP I, Vol. 27, No. 349; *Hansard*, Series 5, Vol. 185: cols. 1560–62). Countries should not be asked to undertake universal obligations. Instead, he proposed "knitting together the nations most immediately concerned" (CP 136 (25)). More specifically, although the British "could not accept an extension to every frontier of obligations of the most serious kind, they could properly undertake such obligations in that sphere with which British interests are more closely bound up, namely, the frontier between Germany and her western neighbors" (DBFP I, Vol. 27, No. 349).

Even though both of these cases ended in failure, they demonstrate how value creating differs from value claiming and how variations in social motivation lead to distinct diplomatic styles between the left and right in the same country. These were pronounced enough even to overcome the effects of the distribution of interests. The two cases also lay the groundwork for the next chapter, providing the historical context for the

extremely domestically and diplomatically difficult position that the British found themselves in following the rejection of the protocol. The Conservative government needed an alternative to the Geneva Protocol consistent with its conception of British foreign policy interests. Help came from an unlikely place—the German government.