

BRITAIN, AMERICA AND ARMS CONTROL, 1921–37

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Christopher Hall

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Preface and Acknowledgements

This study is based on a doctoral thesis submitted at Oxford University in 1982, using research completed primarily in the years 1977 to 1980, but subsequently revised and extended. The idea of studying the naval diplomacy of this period, and the awareness of its central importance in the emergence of the United States as a modern superpower, emerged from a series of conversations with John Dunbabin, Fellow of St Edmund Hall, Oxford; and it was brought to fruition by Michael Howard, now Regius Professor of History at Oxford University, whose encouragement and guidance as supervisor of my doctoral studies, shaped this work over five years.

Nuffield College gave me a comfortable and inspiring home for three years as a Student, and later as a Visitor in college, which provided the necessary stimulus to historical writing while I was simultaneously pursuing interests in local government and, later, business. My debt to Nuffield's past and present Wardens, Sir Norman Chester and Michael Brock, are great. Many colleagues and friends, British and American, contributed time and valuable advice to me, and a full expression of thanks would take a chapter in itself. I must especially single out, however, Edward MacMahon of the US State Department and William Wechsler, then of the Carter Administration White House staff, for their generous hospitality and patient guidance through the complexities of Washington, DC; and in England, Dr Christopher Coker of the LSE, James Sherr of the Royal United Services Institute, and Oenone Wright.

The experience of historical research in public archives and libraries can range from delightful to excruciating according to the attitudes of staff and the design of facilities. In the United States, the staff of the National Archives in Washington, DC, were helpful, patient and efficient to a degree quite unknown in British official repositories, and were of invaluable assistance in leading me through their collections of State and Navy Department documents. The records of the General Board of the Navy were made available by the Operational Archives of the US Navy's Historical Branch, at the Washington Navy Yard. The Library of Congress, apart from its comprehensive resources of published material, is the repository of the manuscript collection of the Naval Historical Foundation, including the papers of Admirals William Benson and Hilary Jones, which provide great insight into the attitudes and relationships of senior American naval figures. Also in the Library of Congress' Manuscript Division is the magnificent collection of the

Norman H. Davis papers, which are perhaps the single most valuable and concentrated source for research on inter-war American naval diplomacy; the Coolidge papers; and microfilm copies of the Gibson, Hoover and Pratt papers. In the case of the Hoover and Gibson papers, the originals are held at the Hoover Institution Archives at Stanford, California, and in the case of the Pratt papers at the Naval War College at Newport, Rhode Island. A final debt of gratitude in the United States is due to the helpful staffs of the US Naval Institute at Annapolis, Md., and the Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, NY, in both of whose libraries it was a pleasure to work.

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