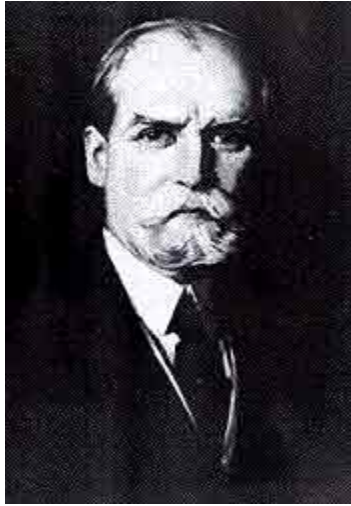


Washington Conference (1921-2)

First demanded by Congress – led by William E. Borah – who wanted to see disarmament. It led to a **treaty system** (series of treaties) agreed by nine powers at an international conference in Washington D.C. in 1921. The nine powers were invited to Washington by **Charles Evans Hughes**, US Secretary of State (the American equivalent of our Foreign Secretary) – *pictured below left*.



The aims of US diplomacy were threefold:

1. To oversee a measure of **multilateral** naval disarmament.
2. To limit Japanese power in Asia.
3. To maintain an '**Open Door**' in Asia, i.e. access to Asian markets, especially China, for US manufactured goods and capital (opportunities for US banks to invest).

Five-Power Treaty

Britain and the United States agreed a ceiling of 500,000 tons on large warships (capital ships) and Japan 300,000 tons (**5:5:3 ratio**). Italy and France agreed to a lower limit of 175,000 tons. There was no limit imposed on the number of smaller ships or submarines for any of the five powers. Japan attached tough conditions to its agreement to limit its number of capital ships: Britain was not to extend its fortifications in Hong Kong (a British colony until 1997) and the United States made a similar commitment in the Philippines, Guam and Alaska. Gave Japan an unintended advantage in the Pacific since US and UK had to divide their navies between the Pacific and the Atlantic oceans. Japan withdrew in 1936 when it was refused equal ratio with US and UK.

Four-Power Treaty (US, Japan, Britain and France)



1. This formally ended the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902. The US did not want Japan to be bolstered by an alliance with Britain. By this time Britain too regarded Japan as a rival rather than ally in Asia and as a potential threat to its colonies in the Far East.

2. The four powers would consult in the event of an international crisis in Asia.

Nine-Power Treaty

The signatories of the Four -Power Treaty and five other states established the '**Open Door**' principle in international law. Japan agreed subject to the other powers recognising Manchuria, a province in north east China which it had occupied since 1905, as a Japanese sphere of influence. Earlier in 1920 the US had used its financial muscle to pave the way to a treaty - the offer by large New York banks of substantial loans to finance Japanese military and economic development. This is **dollar diplomacy** – dollar aid and loans in exchange for political concessions.