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THE NECESSITY FOR A LEAGUE OF NATIONS TO ENFORCE PEACE*

A Disentangling Alliance of Nations

I shall never myself consent to an entangling alliance, but would gladly assent to a disentangling alliance, an alliance which

*Excerpts from addresses and state papers by Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States.
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would disentangle the peoples of the world from those combinations in which they seek their own separate and private interests, and unite the peoples of the world to preserve the peace of the world upon a basis of common right and justice. There is liberty there, not limitation. There is freedom, not entanglement. There is the achievement of the highest thing for which the United States has declared its principles.—(From the Memorial Day address: May 30, 1916.)

Nations Today are Neighbors

The world will never be again what it has been. The United States will never be again what it has been. The United States was once in enjoyment of what we used to call splendid isolation. The three thousand miles of the Atlantic seemed to hold all European affairs at arm’s length from us. The great spaces of the Pacific seemed to disclose no threat of influence upon our politics. Now from across the Atlantic and from across the Pacific we feel to the quick the influences which are affecting ourselves. . . . It does not suffice to look, as some gentlemen are looking, back over their shoulders, to suggest that we do again what we did when we were provincial and isolated and unconnected with the great forces of the world, for now we are in the great drift of humanity which is to determine the politics of every country in the world.—(From an address delivered at Lona Branch, N. J.: November 4, 1916.)

A Covenant of Co-operative Peace

In every discussion of the peace that must end this war it is taken for granted that that peace must be followed by some definite concert of power, which will make it virtually impossible that any such catastrophe should ever overwhelm us again. Every lover of mankind, every sane and thoughtful man, must take that for granted.

It is inconceivable that the people of the United States should play no part in that great enterprise. To take part in such a service will be the opportunity for which they have sought to prepare themselves by the very principles and purposes of their polity and
the approved practices of their government, ever since the days when they set up a new nation in the high and honorable hope that it might, in all that was and did, show mankind the way to liberty. They cannot, in honor, withhold the service to which they are now about to be challenged. They do not wish to withhold it. But they owe it to themselves and to the other nations of the world to state the conditions under which they will feel free to render it.

No covenant of co-operate peace that does not include the peoples of the New World can suffice to keep the future safe against war, and yet there is only one sort of peace that the peoples of America could join in guaranteeing. . . . Mere agreements may not make peace secure. It will be absolutely necessary that a force be created as a guarantor of the permanency of the settlement so much greater than the force of any nation now engaged, or any alliance hitherto formed or projected, that no nation, no probable combination of nations, could face or withstand it. If the peace presently to be made is to endure, it must be a peace made secure by the organized major force of mankind.

I am proposing government by the consent of the governed; that freedom of the seas which in international conference after conference representatives of the United States have urged with the eloquence of those who are the convinced disciples of liberty; and that moderation of armaments which makes of armies and navies a power for order merely, not an instrument of aggression or of selfish violence.

These are American principles, American policies. We can stand for no others. And they are also the principles and policies of forward-looking men and women everywhere, of every modern nation, of every enlightened community. They are the principles of mankind and must prevail.—(From the address to the Senate: January 22, 1917.)

It is a distressing and oppressive duty, gentlemen of the Congress, which I have performed in thus addressing you. There are, it may be, many months of fiery trial and sacrifice ahead of us. It is a fearful thing to lead this great, peaceful people into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself
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seeming to be in the balance. But the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free. To such a task we can dedicate our lives and our fortunes, everything that we are and everything that we have, with the pride of those who know that the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured. God helping her, she can do no other.—(From the War Message to Congress: April 2, 1917.)

The hope of the world is that when the European war is over, arrangements will have been made composing many of the questions which have hitherto seemed to require the arming of the nations, and that in some ordered and just way the peace of the world may be maintained by such co-operation of force among the great nations as may be necessary to maintain peace and freedom throughout the world. When these arrangements for a permanent peace are made, we can determine our military needs and adapt our course of military preparation to the genius of a world organized for justice and democracy.—(From the statement on the General Staff Bill, issued April 6, 1917.)

The Right Honorable David Lloyd George, Prime Minister of Great Britian.

The world will then be able, when this war is over, to attend to its business in peace. There will be no war or rumors of war to disturb and to distract. We can build up, we can reconstruct, we can till, we can cultivate and enrich, and the burden and terror and waste of war will have gone. The best security for peace will be that nations band themselves together to punish the peace-breaker. In the armories of Europe, every weapon will be a sword of justice. In the government of men, every army will be the constabulary of peace.—(From the address at Guildhall: January 11, 1917.)
The Right Honorable Herbert Asquith, Former Prime Minister of Great Britain

We are bound, and not only bound, but glad, to give respectful attention to such pronouncements as the recent speech of President Wilson. That speech was addressed to the American Senate, and through them to the people of the United States. It was, therefore, a declaration of American policy, or, to speak more precisely, of American ideals. The President held out to his hearers the prospect of an era when the civilization of mankind, banded together for the purpose, will make it their joint and several duty to repress by their united authority, and if need be by their combined naval and military forces, any wanton or aggressive invasion of the peace of the world. It is a fine ideal, which must arouse all our sympathies.—(From the speech in the House of Commons: February 1, 1917.)

The Right Honorable Arthur James Balfour, British Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

... If, in our time, any substantial effort is to be made toward securing the permanent triumph of the Anglo-Saxon ideal, the great communities which accept it must work together. And in working together they must remember that law is not enough. Behind law there must be power. It is good that arbitration should be encouraged. It is good that the accepted practices of warfare should become ever more humane. It is good that before peace is broken the would-be belligerents should be compelled to discuss their differences in some congress of the nations. It is good that the security of the smaller states should be fenced round with peculiar care. But all the precautions are mere scraps of paper unless they can be enforced.—(London Times: May 18, 1916.)

Viscount Grey of Fallodon, Former British Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

If the nations of the world after this war are to do something more effective than they were ever able to do before this war, to combine themselves for the common object of preserving peace,
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they must be prepared not to undertake more than they are able to uphold by force, and to see when the time of crisis comes that it is upheld by force. — (From an address before the Foreign Press Association of London: October 23, 1916.)

Earl Curzon, Lord President of the British War Council.

They would be surprised if when the war was over the better judgment of mankind did not rally in force and say that these abominations must not be again in the world. Mankind must be saved from the peril of its own passion. Machinery must be devised to prevent the reign of brute force in the world. — (From his statement as chairman of the Atlantic Union: May 16, 1916.)

The Right Honorable Arthur Henderson, Former Member of the British War Council, Former Secretary of the British Labor Party.

Such a peace can only be satisfactory if founded upon the defeat of unrestrained militarism, and accompanied by a League of Nations sufficiently strong to keep the existing armies in their proper places, prevent the inflation of armaments, and secure the enforcement of international law. It must be a peace which will serve to remove, or at least weaken, the causes of unrest between nations, and bring into universal disfavor acts of aggression. — (From a speech to Croydon North End Brotherhood: January 18, 1917.)


It is expedient in the interest of mankind that some machinery should be set up after the present war for the purpose of maintaining international right and general peace, and this meeting welcomes the suggestion put forward for this purpose by the President of the United States and other influential statesmen in America, and commends to the sympathetic consideration of the British people the idea of forming a union of free nations for the preservation of permanent peace. — (From a resolution introduced by General Smuts, seconded by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and unani-
mously adopted at the League of Nations mass meeting, Central Hall, Westminster: May 14, 1917.)

Lord Northcliffe, British Editor, Head of the American Mission.

A close federation of the nations now fighting the good fight will be the only insurance against the autocracy that made this war possible and the horrors that the armies of the autocrat perpetrated on innocent non-combatants. The world must be made free for democracy.—(From an address before the Players Club, New York City: June 28, 1917.)

M. Alexandre Ribot, Former Premier of France.

It is necessary that a League of Peace be founded in the same spirit of democracy that France has had the honor of introducing into the world. The nations now in arms will constitute the Society of Nations. This is the future of humanity, or one might well despair of the future. President Wilson upon this point is with us. All nations not predatory must unite to prevent others from disturbing the peace. They must unite in an armed league to make respected throughout the world, peace, justice and liberty.—(From an address to the French Senate: June 6, 1917.)


Your flag bears forty-eight stars representing forty-eight states. Each state has its own legislature, but all are subject to federal laws that were made for all. May we not hope for the day when all the nations of the earth will be united as are your states, under certain broad and general restrictions that will make it forever impossible for some mad autocrat to play havoc with the universe?—(From the speech at the Boston Public Library: May 13, 1917.)

His Holiness Pope Benedict

First of all, the fundamental point must be that the material force of arms be substituted by the moral force of right, from which shall arise a fair agreement by all for the simultaneous and reciprocal diminution of armaments, according to the rules and guar-
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The necessity to be established, in a measure necessary and sufficient for the maintenance of public order in each state.

Then in the substitution for armies of the institution of arbitration with its high pacifying function, according to the rules to be laid down and the penalties to be imposed on a state which would refuse either to submit a national question to arbitration or to accept its decision.—(From the message to the belligerent governments: August 1, 1917.)

GOVERNMENTS PLEDGE SUPPORT TO A LEAGUE OF NATIONS

(Official Correspondence and Resolutions)

The Government of the United States.

In the measures to be taken to secure the future peace of the world the people and government of the United States are as vitally and as directly interested as the governments now at war. Their interest, moreover, in the means to be adopted to relieve the smaller and weaker peoples of the world of the peril of wrong and violence is as quick and ardent as that of any other people or government. They stand ready, and even eager, to co-operate in the accomplishment of these ends when the war is over with every influence and resource at their command.—(From President Wilson's identic note to the warring nations; dated Washington, December 18, 1916.)

The Governments of the Entente Allies

In a general way they (the Allied governments) desire to declare their respect for the lofty sentiments inspiring the American note (of December 18th) and their whole-hearted agreement with the proposal to create a League of Nations which shall assure peace and justice throughout the world. They recognize all the benefits that would accrue to the cause of humanity and civilization from the institution of international arrangements designed to prevent violent conflicts between nations, and so framed as to provide the.
sanctions necessary to their enforcement, lest an illusory security should serve merely to facilitate fresh acts of aggression.—(From the joint reply to the American Note: dated Paris, January 10, 1917.)

The Government of Great Britian

The people of this country . . . do not believe peace can be durable if it be not based on the success of the allied cause. For a durable peace can hardly be expected unless three conditions are fulfilled: the first is that the existing causes of international unrest should be as far as possible removed or weakened; the second is that the aggressive aims and the unscrupulous methods of the Central Powers should fall into disrepute among their own peoples; the third is that behind international law and behind all treaty arrangements for preventing or limiting hostilities some form of international sanction should be devised which would give pause to the hardiest aggressor.—(From a letter from Foreign Secretary Balfour to Sir Cecil Spring Rice: dated London, January 13, 1917.)

The French Government

The Chamber of Deputies, the direct expression of the sovereignty of the French people, expects that the efforts of the armies of the republic and her allies will secure, once Prussian militarism is destroyed, durable guarantees for peace and independence for peoples great and small, in a league of nations such as has already been foreshadowed.—(From a resolution adopted by the Chamber of Deputies and approved by the Senate: Paris, June 4 and June 6, 1917.)

The Government of Switzerland

You regard as one of the most efficacious means to that end a treaty of arbitration conceived in the same spirit as the treaty of February 13, 1914, between Switzerland and the United States, a treaty which all the countries are to sign and by which they will undertake to submit to the decision of a supreme international tribunal the conflicts which may arise between them in order to
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avoid, as far as possible, a return of the catastrophe which desolates the world today. Switzerland is so much the better placed to appreciate the work of which the United States has taken the initiative, because, surrounded on all sides by war, peopled by the race and inheriting the language and the culture of three among the combatant nations, she is better able than any other country to realize the fact that war is inhuman, and is contrary to the superior interest of civilization which is the common patrimony of all men. If, then, at the conclusion of peace, the occasion should present itself for us to unite our efforts to yours, we will not fail to do so, and we will be happy to.—(Letter from Doctor Arthur Hoffman, Division of Foreign Affairs, to Hon. Theodore Marburg, December 11, 1916.)

The Spanish Government

His Majesty's government is following with keen sympathy the idea of establishing, after the end of the present war, an international league for the purpose of preventing the peace of the world being again disturbed, and when the opportunity of doing so arrives, with a guarantee of success, will lend its concourse to the realization of such a humanitarian and lofty project.—(A cablegram from Don Amalio Gimeno, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to the League to Enforce Peace: dated Madrid, January 13, 1917.)

ECONOMIC PRESSURE AS A MEANS TO PREVENT WAR

(From a report of the special committee appointed by the Chamber of Commerce of the United States to consider economic results of the war and American business. This recommendation was endorsed by a two-thirds vote of the 282 commercial organizations constituting the membership of the chamber.)

Many states that, for various reasons, might not be able to cooperate with military force could co-operate by their economic force, and so render the action against the offending state more effective, and that, in the end, would be more humane.