

Without, of course, undertaking formally to construe the present treaty obligations of France, I desire to point out that if those obligations can be interpreted so as to permit France to conclude a treaty with the United States such as that offered to me last June by M. Briand and offered again in your note of January 21, 1928, it is not unreasonable to suppose that they can be interpreted with equal justice so as to permit France to join with the United States in offering to conclude an equivalent multilateral treaty with the other principal powers of the world. The difference between the bilateral and multilateral form of treaty having for its object the unqualified renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy seems to me to be one of degree and not of substance. A Government free to conclude such a bilateral treaty should be no less able to become a party to an identical multilateral treaty since it is hardly to be presumed that members of the League of Nations are in a position to do separately something they cannot do together. I earnestly hope, therefore, that your Government, which admittedly perceives no bar to the conclusion of an unqualified anti-war treaty with the United States alone, will be able to satisfy itself that an equivalent treaty among the principal world powers would be equally consistent with membership in the League of Nations. If, however, members of the League of Nations cannot, without violating the terms of the Covenant of the League, agree among themselves and with the Government of the United States to renounce war as an instrument of their national policy, it seems idle to discuss either bilateral or multilateral treaties unreservedly renouncing war. I am reluctant to believe, however, that the provisions of the Covenant of the League of Nations really stand in the way of the co-operation of the United States and members of the League of Nations in a common effort to abolish the institution of war. Of no little interest in this connection is the recent adoption of a resolution by the Sixth International Conference of American States expressing in the name of the American Republics unqualified condemnation of war as an instrument of national policy in their mutual relations. It is significant to note that of the twenty-one states represented at the Conference, seventeen are members of the League of Nations.

I trust, therefore, that neither France nor any other member of the League of Nations will finally decide that an unequivocal and unqualified renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy either violates the specific obligations imposed by the Covenant or conflicts with the fundamental idea and purpose of the League of Nations. On the contrary, is it not entirely reasonable to conclude that a formal engagement of this character entered into by all of the principal powers, and ultimately, I trust, by the entire family of nations, would be a most effective instrument for promoting the great ideal of peace which the League itself has so closely at heart? If, however, such a declaration were accompanied by definitions of the word "aggressor" and by exceptions and qualifications stipulating when nations would be justified in going to war, its effect would be very greatly weakened and its positive value as a guaranty of peace virtually destroyed. The ideal which inspires the effort so sincerely and so hopefully put forward by your Government and mine is arresting and appealing just because of its purity and simplicity; and I cannot avoid the feeling that if governments should publicly acknowledge that they can only deal with this ideal in a technical spirit and must insist upon the adoption of reservations impairing, if not utterly destroying the true significance of their common endeavours, they would be in effect only recording their impotence, to the keen disappointment of mankind in general.

From the broad standpoint of humanity and civilization, all war is an assault upon the stability of human society, and should be suppressed in the common interest. The Government of the United States desires to see the institution of war abolished, and stands ready to conclude with the French, British, Italian, German and Japanese Governments a single multilateral treaty