

The original French proposal of June 1927, contemplating an act confined to France and the United States, appeared to the French Government to be both desirable and feasible by reason of the historical relations between the two Republics.

The American Government was only willing, however, to embody the declaration proposed by the French Government in the preamble of the Franco-American arbitration convention now in process of renewal, and considered on the other hand, for reasons of its own which the French Government has not failed to take into account, that it would be opportune to broaden this manifestation against war and to make it the subject of a separate act in which the other powers would be invited to participate.

The Government of the Republic was not opposed to this expansion of its original plan, but it could not but realize, and it felt bound to point out, that the new negotiation as proposed would be more complex and likely to meet with various difficulties.

The question as to whether there would be any advantage in having such an instrument, of a multipartite nature, signed in the first place by France and the United States, or else first elaborated by certain of the principal powers of the world and then presented to all for their signature, is essentially one of procedure.

The Government of the Republic offered a suggestion upon this point only because of its desire more speedily and more surely to achieve the result which it seeks in common with the United States. This is tantamount to saying that it is ready to concur in any method which may appear to be the most practicable.

There is, however, a situation of fact to which my Government has requested me to draw your particular attention.

The American Government cannot be unaware of the fact that the great majority of the powers of the world, and among them most of the principal powers, are making the organization and strengthening of peace the object of common efforts carried on within the framework of the League of Nations. They are already bound to one another by a Covenant placing them under reciprocal obligations, as well as by agreements such as those signed at Locarno in October, 1925, or by international conventions relative to guaranties of neutrality, all of which engagements impose upon them duties which they cannot contravene.

In particular, Your Excellency knows that all states members of the League of Nations represented at Geneva in the month of September last, adopted, in a joint resolution tending to the condemnation of war, certain principles based on the respect for the reciprocal rights and duties of each. In that resolution the powers were led to specify that the action to be condemned as an international crime is aggressive war and that all peaceful means must be employed for the settlement of differences, of any nature whatsoever, which might arise between the several states.

This is a condition of affairs which the United States, while a stranger thereto, cannot decline to take into consideration, just as must any other state called upon to take part in the negotiation.

Furthermore, the United States would not in any way be bound thereby to the provisions of the Covenant of the League of Nations. The French proposal of June last looking to the conclusion of a bilateral compact had been drawn up in the light of the century-old relations between France and the United States; the French Government still stands ready to negotiate with the American Government on the same conditions and on the same basis. It has never altered its attitude in that respect. But when confronted by the initiative of the United States in proposing a multipartite covenant, it had to