

the other states exposed to the possibility of grave controversies with that party were also signatories thereof.

At the same time it is clear that in order not to turn an instrument of progress and peace into a means of oppression, if one of the signatory states should fail to keep its word, the other signatories should be released from their engagement with respect to the offending state. On this second point, as on the first, the French Government believes itself fully in accord with the Government of the United States.

My Government likewise gathers from the declarations which Your Excellency was good enough to make to me on the first of last March, the assurance that the renunciation of war, thus proclaimed, would not deprive the signatories of the right of legitimate defense. Such an interpretation tends to dissipate apprehensions, and the French Government is happy to note it.

If such is the attitude of the American Government on these three fundamental points, and if it is clearly understood in a general way that the obligations of the new pact should not be substituted for, or prejudice in any way, previous obligations contained in international instruments such as the Covenant of the League of Nations, the Locarno agreements or treaties guaranteeing neutrality whose character and scope cannot be modified thereby, then the differences of opinion which have appeared in the course of previous phases of the negotiation have to do more with words than with the reality of the problem facing the two Governments to-day.

Hence, in accordance with the proposal contained in your note of January 11, which you kindly renewed in your note of the 27th of February, the French Government would be prepared forthwith to join with the Government of the United States in submitting for the consideration of the Governments of Germany, Great Britain, Italy and Japan, the correspondence exchanged between France and the United States since June, 1927, and in proposing at the same time for the assent of the four Governments a draft agreement essentially corresponding in purpose to the original proposal of M. Briand, in the multipartite form desired by the United States with the changes of wording made necessary by the new concept; the signatory powers of such an instrument, while not prejudicing their rights of legitimate defense within the framework of existing treaties, should make a solemn declaration condemning recourse to war as an instrument of national policy, or in other words as a means of carrying out their own spontaneous, independent policy.

They would specifically undertake, among themselves, to refrain from any attack or invasion, and never to seek the settlement of any difference or conflict of whatsoever nature or origin which might arise between them save by pacific means. It would, however, be clearly understood that an obligation could only exist for the signatories in the event that the engagement were contracted by all states, that is to say, that the treaty, open to the accession of all powers, would only come into force after having received universal acceptance; unless the powers having signed this treaty or acceded thereto should agree upon its coming into force, despite certain abstentions. Finally, in case one of the contracting powers should happen to contravene the treaty, the other contracting powers would be automatically relieved, with respect to that power, of the obligations contained in the treaty.

It is in this form, it would seem, that the negotiation of a plan for a multi-lateral pact such as conceived by the American Government could be pursued with the greatest chances of success. Your Excellency may be assured, in any case, in the conduct of this negotiation of the most sincere and most complete collaboration of my Government which is always ready to associate itself with-