

## Treaty of Versailles Packet

Source: Woodrow Wilson, speech in Pueblo Colorado, September 25, 1919. When President Wilson returned to the United States in 1919 after the Paris Peace Conference, he toured the country to raise support for the treaty and the League.

My fellow citizens, as I have crossed the continent, I have perceived more and more that men have been busy creating an absolutely false impression of the treaty of peace and the Covenant of the League of Nations.

Reflect, my fellow citizens that the membership of this great League is going to include all the great fighting nations of the world, as well as the weak ones.

And what do they unite for? They enter into a solemn promise to one another that they will never use their power against one another for aggression; that they never will violate the territorial integrity of a neighbor; that they never will interfere with the political independence of a neighbor; that they will abide by the principle that great populations are entitled to determine their own destiny; and that no matter what differences arise between them they will never resort to war without first submitting their differences to the consideration of the council of the League of Nations, and agreeing that at the end of the six months, even if they do not accept the advice of the council, they will still not go to war for another three months.

I wish that those who oppose this settlement could feel the moral obligation that rests upon us not to turn our backs on the boys who died, but to see the thing through, to see it through to the end and make good their redemption of the world. For nothing less depends upon this decision, nothing less than liberation and salvation of the world.

Source: Henry Cabot Lodge, speech, August 12, 1919. Washington, D.C. Republican Henry Cabot Lodge was a staunch opponent of the Democrat President Woodrow Wilson.

Mr. President:

I can never be anything else but an American, and I must think of the United States first.

I have never had but one allegiance - I cannot divide it now. I have loved but one flag and I cannot share that devotion and give affection to the mongrel banner invented for a league. Internationalism is to me repulsive.

The United States is the world's best hope, but if you fetter her in the interests and quarrels of other nations, if you tangle her in the intrigues of Europe, you will destroy her power for good and endanger her very existence. Leave her to march freely through the centuries to come as in the years that have gone.

No doubt many excellent and patriotic people see a coming fulfillment of noble ideals in the words 'league for peace.' We all respect and share these aspirations and desires, but some of us see no hope, but rather defeat, for them in this murky plan. For we, too, have our ideals, even if we differ from those who have tried to establish a monopoly of idealism.

Our first ideal is our country. Our ideal is to make her ever stronger and better and finer, because in that way alone can she be of the greatest service to the world's peace and to the welfare of mankind.

		Woodrow Wilson	Henry Cabot Lodge
Purpose	Why is he giving this speech?		
Contextualization	What is going on at this time?		
Point of View	What is Wilson's/Lodge's strongest argument for why the U.S. should/ shouldn't join the League of Nations?		
Audience	Who are they speaking to?		
Corroboration	Why do you think Henry Cabot Lodge won this fight? Use the documents to support your answers.		

1. Why was the League of Nations provision of the Treaty of Versailles unacceptable to Senator Henry Cabot Lodge and the Republicans?
  - a. The league could require the payment of war reparations.
  - b. The league would obligate foreign aid to adversarial nations.
  - c. The league was perceived as a threat to American sovereignty.
  - d. The league had committed to the cause of global decolonization.

There is inevitably a great deal of overlap in positions. For example, Irreconcilables would agree with many of the positions of Strong Reservationists. Mild Internationalists would agree with many of the positions of the Strong Internationalists.

### **Strong Internationalist Positions**

The League of Nations has come about by no plan of our conceiving, but by the hand of God who led us into this way. We cannot turn back. We can only go forward, with lifted eyes and freshened spirit, to follow the vision. It was of this that we dreamed at our birth. America shall in truth show the way. The light streams upon the path ahead, and nowhere else.

Any changes to the League Covenant are a rejection of the League.

It is my purpose to vote against the pending resolution of ratification incorporating reservations adopted by a majority of Senators. I believe the Senate is about to vote on an alleged resolution of ratification, a resolution that does not ratify but which, in fact and in legal effect, constitutes a rejection of this treaty.

### **Limited Internationalist Positions**

The combined pressure of the world's nations will prevent the unlikely possibility that the U.S. could be forced into a war against its will.

### **Mild Reservationist Positions**

Nations horrified at their losses in the Great War will be careful in negotiations, and good outcomes will result despite flaws in the League Covenant.

It is necessary to remember that the lack of such a league in 1914 threw the world into the chaos of this war... The question of this hour therefore is not whether a beautifully phrased and perfect document has been written, but whether it is the best hope we have.

### **Strong Reservationist Positions**

If the League ever adopts a plan to reduce armaments, the U.S. must reserve the right to increase its armaments without the consent of the council whenever it is threatened with invasion or engaged in war.

Specific and limiting changes to the Covenant must be made to protect U.S. interests.

The League would threaten U.S. sovereignty by requiring the U.S. to follow directions from an international body, so all decisions of the League must be considered suggestions only.

### **Irreconcilables**

We cannot send our representatives to deliberate with the representatives of the other great nations of the world with mental reservations as to what we shall do in case their judgment shall not be satisfactory to us.

They tell us the League of Nations will be a great brotherhood of nations assembled; and that when those nations are assembled together they will be a body devoted to the service of God and man without a single selfish thought or a single iniquitous motive. Yet, at the close of the war, many of those

same countries that we are now told will liberate nations and bring democracy to the people of the world seized every foot of territory that was held by helpless people anywhere.

Shall we go to the League to help make decisions, and then if we think that decision works for peace, join with our allies, but in case it works for war, withdraw our cooperation?

Viewpoint	Represented By:	Position
Strong Internationalists	President Woodrow Wilson Newton Baker James M. Cox William McAdoo	
Limited Internationalists	William H. Taft	Former President William H. Taft objected to putting the U.S. in a position in which it could be forced into a war against its will. Nevertheless, he was in favor of the League of Nations because he believed the chance of such a war occurring quite unlikely. The League's power to enforce a universal boycott against a country should prevent such a necessity. A world movement immune to a boycott would oblige the League's members to unite in military action. As the only sensible course of action, that would be a war in which the U.S. would willingly participate. It could not be compelled to fight.
Mild Reservationists	Senator Gilbert M. Hitchcock	
Strong Reservationists	Senator Henry Cabot Lodge Senator (and presidential candidate) Warren G. Harding	
Irreconcilables	Senator William Borah	