

TAFT OUTLINES LEAGUE PLAN

Puts It Into Plain Language Free From Legal and Diplomatic Verbiage, in Response to Request.

MANY ARE CONFUSED BY PRESENT DEBATE

Danger That People Will Lose Sight of Basic Principles During Discussion of Complicated Details and Technicalities.

(By ex-President William H. Taft.)

The plan for a League of Nations is based on a few simple principles, which are not hard to understand when lifted out of the morass of technical discussion and freed from legal and diplomatic language. As the one authority best able to present these points without partisan bias, ex-President Taft has been asked to put the league idea into a few plain words for the benefit of millions of Americans who desire a better understanding of the plan but find themselves confused by the debate in the United States Senate. In response to this request he has written the following article.

Purpose of the League.

The chief purpose of the League of Nations is to keep the world in a state of peace. Another way of expressing it is to say that the league is designed to prevent wars.

We have just finished the greatest, which is to say the most horrible, of all conflicts between nations. We have won a glorious victory. But that victory will be wasted unless this war has made the nations ready to put aside their differences and cooperate to end war forever.

It is not enough, however, to provide for the prevention of wars and the settlement of disputes after they have arisen. We must foresee causes of trouble and remove them before they have reached an acute stage. Hence there must be provision for frequent consultations of members of the league for exchange of information, for agreement on common policies and for the gradual formation of rules of international law which at present are uncertain and incomplete.

The representatives of the great free nations which won the war have met at Paris and, after long consultation, have drawn an agreement which they believe will accomplish these ends. At the very least it will set in motion great changes which will result in universal benefit to all mankind. This agreement is called the Covenant of the League of Nations and it is a part of the peace treaty.

There will be no league worth talking about, however, unless the United States is a member. The decision as to whether the United States shall join rests with our Senate. The Senators, chosen by the people, will in the end vote as the people desire. For this reason the people themselves will decide whether or not the United States will join the league. In this question every citizen should have a voice. He or she can express opinion either by writing direct to Senators, by letters to the newspapers, by speeches in his lodge or local union or in conversation with friends.

Methods of Maintaining Peace.

Since the prime object of the League of Nations is to preserve peace—and to reap the benefits of peace—let us see how the league will operate to accomplish that purpose.

In the first place it will seek to remove the main causes of war. By the formation of an international court it will create a means for the peaceful settlement of disputes between nations. Then it will seek to compel the nations to make use of this court. This is nothing more nor less than an application of the rules and customs governing private individuals in civilized communities to the relations between nations.

Secondly, the League will seek to remove a great temptation to war by the general agreement to reduce the size of armies and navies. This will halt the race for military and naval supremacy which was largely responsible for the war just ended. The amount of armament any nation may maintain will be strictly defined. Thus it will be impossible for one country to overwhelm its neighbor by unexpected attack, in the way that Germany crushed Belgium and would have crushed France had not the other democratic nations gone to her aid. The idea is that each country may keep an army and navy large enough to enable it to fulfill its responsibilities as a member of the League, but no larger. The United States, for example, probably would be expected to keep a check on Mexico and the state of constant turmoil in that country would be taken into consideration in deciding how large an army we should need.

The third important safeguard which the League will set up is a system of penalties. This will make an outlaw of any nation or group of nations which goes to war in violation of the rules of the League. The out-

lawed nation will be boycotted by all the other members of the League and will find itself cut off from both business and social communication with the rest of the world.

How It Will Prevent Wars.

It is not claimed that the League of Nations will do away with war altogether. Every possible provision that human intelligence can devise will be made to settle international disputes peaceably. But should all these measures fail and two nations go to war, this is what will happen:

If both parties to the dispute have observed the rules of the League, the other nations will stand back and let them fight it out. War under such circumstances is difficult to imagine, however, because before the angry nations will be allowed to fight in accordance with the rules of the League, so much time must elapse that in all probability their anger will cool and they will reach an amicable understanding.

What we have to fear is that some nation will go to war in defiance of the League, and every precaution has been taken to suppress such a nation by the immediate use of the united power of the other nations. If international boycott failed to bring her to terms she would have to face a combined international army and navy. The founders of the League believe that the mere possibility of such a situation will prevent any nation from violating its agreement. Does anyone think that Germany would have begun war five years ago if she had known that nearly all the other great powers would combine against her?

Doing the World's Work.

In addition to settling international disputes peaceably the League of Nations will provide means for doing much of the world's work more systematically and effectively than can be done now when each nation is working only for itself. The people you know best and like best are those who work with you on the same job. It will be the same way with the nations of the future. The more they work together, the sooner they will come to understand and like each other.

For example, the League will establish an international organization for the bettering of labor conditions in different countries, for the protection of women and children and the native inhabitants of civilized and semi-civilized countries. One of Germany's greatest crimes has been her barbarous treatment of the helpless people in some of her colonies. One of the chief tasks of the League will be to look after peoples that are not strong enough to protect themselves.

The League will appoint commissions to take charge of various international undertakings so that they may be carried on, not for the benefit of any one nation, but for the benefit of the whole world. Provision will be made for promotion of fair and equal trade conditions.

These are only a few of the benefits the world will derive from the League. As time goes on we shall find more and more tasks at which the nations can work in common and a greater number of opportunities to remove causes which stir up jealousies and animosities between races and peoples.

Objections Answered.

Of course we cannot hope to make the great changes such as the League of Nations will bring about without opposition. Fortunately the war has taught us the great advantages of international co-operation. It was only by good team work that the free liberty loving nations were able to whip Germany.

The treaty which the United States Senate is debating obligates the members of the proposed League to protect one another against attack from enemies outside their own boundaries bent upon conquest. Although this agreement (Article X of the Covenant) is vital to any arrangement which seeks to prevent war, it has been attacked on the ground that it would draw the United States into wars in various parts of the world and force us to send our boys to fight in quarrels which did not concern us.

We should remember, however, that the main purpose of Article X is to frighten nations tempted to wars of conquest from yielding to the temptation, by the certainty that they will be crushed if they begin such a war by a universal boycott and a union of forces of the world against them. If a big war breaks out again, the United States will be forced to take part in it whether we have a League of Nations or not. We tried hard enough to keep out of the war with Germany but found we couldn't.

A little war contrary to the League rules could be handled by the powers close at hand. Certainly it would not be necessary to send American troops to suppress an uprising in the Balkans when prompt action by the armies of Italy or some other nearby powerful nation could suppress the fracas before American troops could even get started.

Great Gain for Small Loss.

We had to make many sacrifices to win the last war and we made them willingly because we knew they were worth while. It will be the same in a smaller degree with a League of Nations. When men form a business partnership each one has to make concessions to the views and opinions of the other members of the firm. When we enter the League of Nations we may have to give up certain privileges, but the losses will be small compared with the profits.

The United States will not have to sacrifice her independence or right to make her own decisions.

The council, the chief governing body of the League, cannot take action without unanimous decision of its members and since the United States will have a representative in the Council our interest will be protected there. We hear it said that the League is formed for the benefit of Great Britain or Japan or some other one nation. This is not true. All the nations will gain by it, not only the great nations such as the United States, Great Britain, France, Japan and Italy, but the little nations which in the past have been oppressed by their big neighbors. The international court will give an opportunity for the settlement of old grievances which have long troubled the peoples of the world.

It has been said that the League will interfere with the Monroe Doctrine, but the League Covenant expressly protects this Doctrine. In fact, through the Covenant the Monroe Doctrine receives recognition throughout the world and its principles become forever established.

Billions of Lead Pencils.

The world's product of lead pencils probably amounts to nearly two thousand millions a year, half of which are made from American-grown cedar. The United States makes about 750,000,000 a year, or more than eight pencils for each of its inhabitants.

To Carry Heavy Loads.

One way of carrying two buckets of water with the least possible expenditure of energy is the hoop-carrying method of Macedonia. There a small hoop will carry a man's load by walking inside a hoop which keeps the weight free from the body and distributes pressure.

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