

The Government of the Republic offered a suggestion upon this point 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 guarantees 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 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 take into consideration the relations existing among the various Powers which would be called upon to participate therein. This it has done, with the object of assuring the success of the treaty contemplated by the United States. Its suggestions of the 5th January as to the terms of the multipartite treaty are inspired by the formula which has already gained the unanimous adherence of all of the States members of the League of Nations, and which for that very reason might be accepted by them with regard to the United States, just as it has already been accepted among themselves.

This is the explanation of our proposal of the 5th January.

The Government of the Republic has always, under all circumstances, very clearly and without mental reservation declared its readiness to join in any declaration tending to denounce war as a crime and to set up international sanctions susceptible of preventing or repressing it. There has been no change in its sentiments in that respect; its position remains the same. Your Excellency may, therefore, be assured of its sincere desire to respond to the idea of the American Government, and to second its efforts to the full extent compatible with the situation of fact created by its international obligations. It is this preoccupation which inspired the formula proposed on the 5th January, a formula which does, indeed, seem to be the most apt at this time to assure the accomplishment of the American project. The Government of the Republic accordingly cannot but hope that the American Government will share this view. Subject to these observations, the Government of the Republic would, moreover, very gladly welcome any suggestions offered by the American Government which would make it possible to reconcile an absolute condemnation of war with the engagements and obligations assumed by the several nations and the legitimate concern for their respective security.

Pray accept, &c.,

PAUL CLAUDEL.

(V.)

The SECRETARY OF STATE to the FRENCH AMBASSADOR.

EXCELLENCY,

27th February, 1928.

Our recent discussions of the question whether the United States and France could join in suggesting to the other principal Powers of the world the conclusion of a treaty proscribing war as an instrument of national policy in their mutual relations have been brought by your note of the 21st January, 1928, to a point where it seems necessary, if success is to be achieved, to examine the problem from a practical point of view.

It is evident from our previous correspondence that the Governments of France and the United States are of one mind in their earnest desire to initiate and promote a new international movement for effective world peace, and that they are in agreement as to the essential principles of the procedure to be followed in the accomplishment of their common purpose. As I understand your note of the 21st January, 1928, the only substantial obstacle in the way of the unqualified acceptance by France of the proposals which I submitted in my notes of the 28th December, 1927, and the 11th January, 1928, is your Government's doubt whether, as a member of the League of Nations and a party to the treaties of Locarno and other treaties guaranteeing neutrality, France can agree with the United States and other principal world Powers not to resort to war in their mutual relations, without *ipso facto* violating her present international obligations under those treaties. In Your Excellency's last note this question was suggested for consideration.