

(The following passage is excerpted from a speech delivered by a United States statesman in 1930.)

Warned by the disaster of the last great war, the statesmen of all nations have been taking measures to prevent the return of another such calamity. These measures may not constitute an absolute guarantee of peace, but, in my opinion, they constitute the greatest preventive measures ever adopted by nations. It is not to be expected that human nature will change in a day; perhaps it is too much to expect that the age-old institution of war, which has, through the centuries, been recognized by international law as a sovereign right and has darkened the pages of history with the story of blood and destruction, will be at once abolished, but people of all nations should be encouraged by the great progress which has been made since the war in the furtherance of international peace. I cannot in this brief address discuss these measures beyond enumerating them. There is the League of Nations, which has been functioning for ten years and which, I am sure, has been most beneficial in adjusting many difficult international problems; the Pact of Paris; arbitration treaties; conciliation treaties; and the Court of International Justice; and I might add that commendable progress has been made toward reduction of armament. Each one of these treaties is a step for the maintenance of peace, an additional guarantee against war. It is through such machinery that the disputes between nations will be settled and war prevented.

It is not my intention today to discuss the Pact of Paris, which has passed into history; perhaps I should not say it has passed into history, but has been cemented in the foundations of the nations' organic law, as a solemn pledge not to go to war for the settlement of their disputes—a pledge which was entered into voluntarily and backed by the united sentiment of the peoples of the world and one which I am convinced the nations intend to carry out in absolute good faith. It was inspired by the determination of peoples not to be again afflicted with the horrors of such an appalling catastrophe. It was inspired by the memory of devastated lands, ruined homes, and the millions of men and women sacrificed in that awful struggle. It was not an ordinary treaty entered into by nations to serve some temporary advantage, like treaties of amity or alliances; it was a sacred promise between all nations and to all peoples of the world not to go to war for the settlement of their differences; to use a common phrase, to "outlaw" war; to make it a crime against the law of nations so that any nations which violate it should be condemned by the public opinion of the world.

I know there are those who believe that peace will not be attained until some super-tribunal is established to punish the violators of such treaties, but I believe that in the end the abolition of war, the maintenance of world peace, the adjustment of international questions by pacific means will come through the force of public opinion, which controls nations and peoples—that public opinion which shapes our destinies and guides the progress of human affairs.

I regret very much to hear so many people, many of my own countrymen, predicting war, stating that Europe is preparing and arming for such a conflict. I rather share the opinion of those of broader vision, who see in the signs of the time hope of humanity for peace. Have we so soon forgotten those four years of terrible carnage, the greatest war of all time; forgotten the millions of men who gave their lives, who made the supreme sacrifice and who today, beneath the soil of France and Belgium, sleep the eternal sleep? Their supreme sacrifice should inspire a pledge never again to inflict humanity with such a crime. I have said before and I wish to repeat today, with all the solemn emphasis which I can place upon my words, that Western civilization would not survive another such conflict, but would disappear in the universal chaos.