KINLEY

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THE UNITED STATES AMONG THE NATIONS

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TEN YEARS AGO we engaged in a war for causes which we thought were great but to some minds were selfish. Some people regarded the World War as a struggle among the nations of Europe merely for more territory and wealth. Some hold to the opinion that our entry into the war was due to self interest only. In short, the issues leading to the war were, in the minds of some people, narrow, selfish, or special interests, and not any broad, general principles.

Such differences of opinion as to the causes of every war are traceable in the minds of historical writers and critics according to their personality, their nationality, their prejudices, and their moral standards. In the minds of some people the struggle between King John and the English barons was a mere local struggle for power while to others it was a contest for the great principles of Magna Charta. To the minds of some, the struggle between the king of France and the States General in 1789 was merely a contest for power. Yet it, too, produced far-reaching consequences and great principles of government. With reference to the World War, about which similar differences developed, my beloved and honored predecessor, President James, who discussed this subject some nine years ago, remarked:

"With one noble and sweeping gesture President Wilson wiped out all these items on the slate of world division and organization and wrote down as our goal the safeguarding of human liberty throughout the earth: to all people—not merely to ourselves—to the small as well as to the great—to the weak as to the strong—the assurance that they may order their own lives as freemen."

And

"The great thing which President Wilson has done is to make this program of his the program of the United States, the program of the Allies—nay, the program of the world."

From this point of view we went to war fired with a determination to make the world safe for democracy and for freedom. Our slogan became the slogan of the Allies and we were regarded as having pledged ourselves to the fulfillment of a promise, or, at any rate, the achievement of a purpose, that each nation should order for itself the manner of its government and life.

A year and a half later the war ended. The nations sat down around the council table to put into effect the promises, expressed and implied, to establish this condition in the world—to realize this ideal—to make substantial the dreams of people who had been living under oppression.

Success in the war brought about a relaxation of the moral tension that had underlain these promises and ideals. Concrete losses and the sufferings of the different nations came more prominently once more before the eyes of their representatives. Matters pertaining to their own welfare became more urgent in their minds, blunted the keen moral sense which they had attained under the stress of war, and brought about results not in accord with the high moral purposes described. So the critics fell to work. The cynic declared that the world was disillusioned and that the very declaration of high moral purpose in the war was itself but an expression of selfishness. The hard-headed student of diplomacy pointed out that nations did not go to war for high moral purposes, but only in their own selfish interests. The humanitarian critic, ignoring the actual conditions under which such negotiations are carried on, declared that the negotiators were false to their ideals and their promises. The critic who got nothing out of the war was particularly severe on those who profited by it, especially in a money way—and Heaven knows there were too many of these!—and insisted that the war was engineered by the "manufacturers of munitions and Wall Street speculators." Even those people who were the recipients of our aid, finding that they were not getting all they wanted as a result of our intervention, joined the chorus of criticism which questioned the honesty of our actions. And so the world is disillusioned! Never again, say some, shall

we engage in a war away from our own shores! No more, they cry, shall American life and wealth be poured out for an abstract principle, especially if the establishment of that abstract principle benefits other people!

The discussion has been going on through the period of eight or nine years that have elapsed since the close of the war. New dislikes, and even hatreds, have developed, largely from attempts to apply the principle of so-called self-determination under conditions in which it is not practicable,—to give each nation or group all in the way of economic and political right and privilege which it thought it was entitled to. Perhaps the agitation is not so fierce as it was three or four years ago. Perhaps the time has come, or is near at hand, when the people of this country, at any rate, may consider with calmness just what our purposes were, how far they have been accomplished, and whether, after all, the world has not attained all that could be reasonably expected in the application of those purposes.

We must remember that it is easy for a conflict to degenerate; easy for those that engage in it to forget high purposes and moral aims; but that in spite of such forgetting, in spite of fixing attention on smaller issues, the great principles underlying these smaller issues may yet show up in the long run as the main purpose and the main result of the conflict. Referring again to the address of President James, he points out that in spite of the announcement in the Declaration of Independence "which sounded a new note in the history of the world . . . it was nearly ninety years before we in this country were willing to draw the logical conclusion and to take the decisive step in our own policy so imperatively called for by the sentiments and language of this declaration. Eighty-five years after the Declaration of Independence was given to the world, calling for sentiments and aspirations that seemed to have died out in the world's breast, a considerable proportion of the intelligent, liberty-loving, warm-hearted American citizens pledged their lives and fortunes and sacred honor to a war in defense of this same institu-

tion of African slavery." The Declaration of Independence proclaimed the great principle of equality of men before God and the law. For that principle our War of Independence was fought. Yet those who proclaimed the principle and fought the war accepted the principle only partly in practice.

The adoption of the Federal Constitution was in substance a declaration in favor of a United country. Yet that perfect union was not attained until long after the Civil War. Indeed, our national unity, such as it is, is of very recent origin and its completion is attributable, perhaps, partly to the foreign wars in which we have engaged.

Thus we see that when a great people take action on important matters under the urge of political or moral principle and the struggle to accomplish their purpose is prolonged beyond expectation, producing weariness and disappointment, mental and moral depression usually results. The principle which animated them grows dim. The high proposals with which they set out fade away and attention becomes fixed on details. Yet, in time, the principle reasserts itself with greater force and affects wider circles of human affairs than at first had been thought possible.

A similar reflection may apply in the case of the World War. Originating, as we thought, in a high moral purpose on our part, carried to a successful conclusion so that conflicting interests were free again to develop, consequences evolved which seemed to contradict our high moral purpose so that we either forgot it or felt that its expression was a mistake. In the light of history, however, may we not now expect that the great principles which we avowed in the beginning are being more firmly established and widely applied in consequence of our participation? We fought the war to "end war." War is not ended. It is with us. It threatens on several hands. Petty minded people think to end it by eliminating external signs of it, like military drill. Yet I believe the likelihood of another great war at an early date is growing less from day to day, —not because of the trifling efforts of people who think

that if they destroy the mechanism of conflict they destroy its spirit; but because of the resurgence in a mighty tide of that spirit in the hearts of men which found expression in the desire that the World War should be the last; an ever growing belief that we can find a better way to settle our international differences, as we have found a better way to settle our individual differences. May not we expect that the high purposes which led us into the war will break forth in new strength in the ten or twenty year period on which we are entering now? Within those years it is not unlikely that we may go farther towards reaching a more permanent settlement of our relations with other nations, making a clearer definition of our world policies, than we have yet done. If so, it will be for you, and men and women like you, to determine these things. You and your generation will go back to the great purposes which animated us ten years ago and your work will be to re-establish and perpetuate the moral leadership of your country in its dealings with other peoples.

It is impossible entirely to disentangle our interests from those of the rest of the world. Even some so-called "domestic matters" have important connections with our foreign relations. We need but mention immigration to illustrate this statement. Our recent policy on this matter has led to the assertion of a theory of international relationship almost exactly contrary to the principle of self-determination. We are told that we have no moral right to prevent other people from coming into and possessing our country and sharing the resources which nature has so bountifully supplied here. We are told that any nation which possesses the raw materials of industry in greater abundance than others should be willing to have them apportioned among the nations of the world according to their needs.

With reference to the first of these two matters, it seems to me that each people or nation has, so to speak, an individuality of its own, and that each is entitled to follow its own life under its own conditions and become, so to speak, a national personality among other national

personalities. This cannot occur if the kind of internationalism which means identity should prevail. The best internationalism, it seems to me, is the product of the cooperation of independent national individualities. For in this kind of internationalism we have the benefit of the rich diversity of national peculiarities.

As for the suggested distribution of economic resources, it is as fallacious as a proposal to redistribute the land of the United States so that new immigrants shall have access to it on the same terms as those who came in the past century. But it is not my purpose to discuss these two domestic issues. I mention them simply to show how difficult, if not impossible, it is to disentangle our domestic problems from our foreign ones. We have decided that we shall not now, at any rate, be a member of the World's League or the World Court, although the idea and character of the latter are American in their origin. But, acting independently, we can apply in our international relations the principles which are claimed to be fundamental to their purposes, as conditions develop and specific circumstances justify.

Of the aims that we, as a people must desire to keep in view, the first, of course, is to do everything we can to promote peace among the nations. A second is insistence on the right of each nation to manage its own affairs. A third is the use of arbitration for the settlement of differences. A fourth is the right of our nationals to fair treatment and protection in foreign countries, equitable treatment of foreigners in all countries, under their laws. There are other important matters, but these perhaps should be our four principal aims.

The influence of our nation should always be thrown in the interest of peace. It is not for us to impose peace upon the rest of the world. In the words of President Coolidge,

> "It is our desire that it should be not a peace imposed by America but a peace established by each nation for itself. We want our relationship with other nations based not on a meeting of bayonets, but on a meeting of minds. We want our intercourse with them to rest on justice and fair-dealing and the mutual observance of all

rightful obligations in accordance with international custom and law. We have sufficient reserve resources so that we need not be hasty in asserting our rights. We can afford to let our patience be commensurate with our power."

How shall we exert our influence for peace? Certain it is that we cannot influence world affairs as we would like to do without participating in the discussion of them. We are in the position of the greatest power and therefore of the greatest potential influence of all the nations of the earth. Hence our influence is sought, naturally enough, by others for the promotion of their particular aims and interests. Our position of strength is for that reason a source of danger to us. As a country we must avoid getting into a position where our influence can be used for the promotion of the interests of particular nations rather than for the world welfare, or our own. In my opinion it was this danger which Washington had in mind when he used the phrase "*entangling* alliances."

Although we have decided thus far not to join either the League or the Court, it is still open to us to promote world peace through arbitration. It is difficult to see how the negotiation of a treaty with each nation of the world providing that our disputes with each shall be settled by arbitration can do otherwise than good. In negotiating these treaties we should try to make as few reservations as possible. True, treaties, as history shows, are not inviolable and they can always be terminated on notice. They cannot be regarded as settling anything for all time. But their sacredness is greater in public opinion as the world grows older. While, therefore, treaties to "outlaw" war will not prevent it, they are to be welcomed as more than idle gestures. They strengthen belief in the potency of discussion, of conciliation, of friendship among the peoples of the earth. They are likely to delay and make more difficult a resort to war.

We concede to other peoples the right which we claim for ourselves—to manage their own affairs without pressure from us. The application of this general principle, like the application of all general principles, is not always easy. There are many affairs of each nation that are also

the affairs of one or more other nations. However, the recognition of the principle, with an earnest effort to apply it in concrete cases, will go far to establish mutual respect and good will and to maintain peace.

In admitting the right of each people to manage its own affairs, we cannot yield our right to insist on fair treatment and protection for the person and property of Americans residing abroad. On this and other matters it seems to me that the policy of our country of late has been judicious and reasonable. To quote from President Coolidge's Memorial Day Address, as reported in the newspapers,

> "It is the settled policy of our government to deal with other nations not on the basis of force and compulsion, but on the basis of understanding and good will. . . . Our own greatness will be measured by the justice and forbearance which we manifest toward others. . . . It is because of our belief in these principles that we wish to see all the world relieved from strife and conflict, and brought under the humanizing influence of a reign of law."

While in conformity with our established and correct policy to avoid "entangling alliances" we have retained our independence of action, we should endeavor to have good "understandings" with all other nations, particularly with the English speaking peoples of the world. An Entente Cordiale, for our purpose, is far preferable to an alliance. I may add that it is better, too, for the world.

In order that we may successfully follow in our relations with other nations the principles of conduct which I have mentioned, it is imperative that from now on there shall be a deeper unity among our own people. We cannot dispassionately make national decisions on international matters in which there is a conflict of interests between ourselves and some particular nation if large sections of our people permit their judgment to be influenced by their racial or former political connections. Our "melting pot" may have melted, but it has not fused, the various elements of our population. Whatever the American type of character may be after fusion, it will not be that of one of the elements, but a complex of all. For that very reason, we

should be able to order our international relations with less bias.

The ethical principles that control individual conduct apply in the relations of nations to one another. In my opinion there is some confusion of thought about what is called morality, both in relation to the individual and to groups. We hear a great deal about the "new ethics," the "new morality," the "new education," and new this and that. We are told that morality may vary with the latitude or the topographical character of a country. The statement is true of what may be called "applied" ethics or morality. I do not believe it is a correct statement with reference to underlying principles. I believe on the contrary that there are certain eternal, immutable principles of right, as contrasted with wrong, for the guidance of the conduct of man. These principles, whatever they are, have become better known and better understood by men as the generations and centuries have passed. Being better known and better understood their application to conduct has produced in successive generations and centuries what may fairly be called a new "practical" morality. This does not mean new principles. The sun and moon and stars move according to immutable laws, although men, from time to time, with imperfect knowledge, have given different explanations of these laws; have accounted for the universe under the Ptolemaic hypothesis, the Copernican, Newtonian, or what not. The revelation of ethical principles, as of the physical universe, is eternally progressive. Hence the practical application of growing knowledge in both spheres leads in time to changes in the practices affected by these laws.

So in the process of the centuries a clearer and wider knowledge of the eternal principles of righteousness have led to their wider application in human affairs, and therefore to the abolition of one evil after another. Thus it happens that the good of today is the evil of tomorrow, to be abandoned for newer and better ways.

These thoughts are applicable to our international relations. Once the stranger, the foreigner, was our natural

enemy. Slowly, under the influence mainly of Christianity, this view has been replaced with the idea of the brotherhood of man. The principle of this relationship of brotherhood is more widely accepted now than it used to be. Its application in practical life is still limited but slowly spreading. It is for us to encourage its spread and make it a world ideal.

You are going into a world in whose affairs it will be your duty to apply these principles of international conduct. You have had, at the expense of the people, a better education than falls to the lot of some. This, I believe, entails on you correspondingly greater responsibility in the discharge of your duties of citizenship. I commend these principles of national conduct to your careful consideration.

Your adherence to them will put and keep our country in the leadership of the nations,—not in mere economic power nor in mere political dominance, but in that greatest of all influences—the moral leadership of the world.

By your adherence you will keep true to Illini traditions and ideals.