4/24/13
LC 018 a.

Chile Project (#S199900030)
U.S. Department of State
Release X Excise ____ Deny ____
Declassify: In Part ____ In Full ____
Exemption(s) ____

INDEX BUREAU
MAY
1913
DEPT OF STATE

Statement made by the Secretary of State in Presenting the President's Peace Plan to the Representatives, some thirty-six in number, of the Foreign Governments, Who Constitute the Diplomatic Circle at Washington.

Thursday, April 24, 1913, 12:00 m.

FILED
MAY 16 1913

Your Excellencies:

I have called you together in order that I may present to you all, simultaneously, a plan for the promotion of peace which I am directed by the President to submit. It reads as follows:

> "The parties hereto agree that all questions of whatever character and nature, in dispute between them, shall, when diplomatic efforts fail, be submitted for investigation and report to an international commission (the composition to be agreed upon); and the contracting parties agree not to declare war or begin hostilities until such investigation is made and report submitted.
>
> "The investigation shall be conducted as a matter of course upon the initiative of the commission, without the formality of a request from either party; the report shall be submitted within (time to be agreed upon) from the date of the submission of the dispute, but the parties hereto reserve the right to act independently on the subject matter in dispute after the report is submitted."

You will notice that it is very brief and deals only with the principles involved, not with the details which must be considered in embodying the principles in diplomatic form. The President's object is to hasten universal peace. All arbitration treaties contain certain exceptions — that is, certain questions are not to be submitted to arbitration, and, as these questions are of the highest importance, they are likely to become themselves a cause of war.

DECLASSIFIED

The plan proposed by the President, through you, to the nations which you represent, is intended to supplement the arbitration treaties now in existence and those which may be hereafter made. It is intended to subject to investigation those disputes which have not up to this time been considered fit subjects for arbitration. It is based upon the belief that we have now reached a point in the progress of civilization when nations cannot afford to engage in war before the cause of the war is impartially investigated and openly declared to the world. It is believed that the period of investigation -- a time to be fixed by agreement, and which may be different in different agreements -- will enable the parties to the controversy to separate questions of fact from questions of national honor and reach some amicable adjustment of their differences. The period of investigation will also allow passion to subside and the great forces that work for peace to assert themselves. When men are excited they talk about what they can do; when they are calm and capable of deliberation they talk about what they ought to do. And this is true of nations as well as of individuals. Public opinion is an increasing force in the world, and the time provided for investigation permits the formation and expression of public opinion.

You will note that while the proposed plan provides for the investigation of all questions which do not yield to diplomatic treatment, it reserves to each of the contracting nations the right to act independently after the investigation is concluded. If, after the time

specified elapses and after the results of the investigation are made known, the nations still desire war, they are at liberty to settle their differences with the sword, but it is believed that this will seldom be the case and it is hoped that this agreement when entered into will make war between the contracting parties a remote possibility.

The plan as outlined does not prescribe the method by which the commission will be created. This is a matter of detail which is left for discussion. It may differ in the different agreements entered into, but it is desired that the Commission shall be permanent in character, in order that the investigation may be made by the Commission, upon its own initiative, without the formality of a request from either party. This is suggested because of the fear that in times of excitement neither party might be willing to ask for investigation lest such a request be regarded as evidence of weakness.

In the original draft, as presented to the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate, a suggestion was made that the period of investigation should not be utilized for a change in the naval program of the contracting nations, but this is a detail which has been omitted from the plan as proposed because it was feared that different nations might look upon it from a different standpoint.

The plan has been made as simple as possible and everything has been eliminated except the things which seem essential to its success, and this government stands ready to discuss with these governments which are willing to enter into such an agreement such details as it may be necessary to consider.

In conclusion, let me assure you that I am very much gratified to be the medium through which the President presents this plan to the nations represented here, and I esteem myself fortunate to occupy the office with which the President has honored me at the time when the step is taken in the interest of peace. Our nation desires to use its influence for the promotion of the world's peace, and this plan is offered by the President with the hope that its acceptance by the nations will exert a large influence in this direction.

I thank you for your courtesy in coming at this time and giving me your attention. I hand to each one of you a copy of the plan as outlined, and on behalf of the President, I respectfully invite your co-operation in putting it into effect.