

WORLD WAR I AND BEYOND**Primary Source**

The Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I included a provision for a League of Nations, as Woodrow Wilson had outlined in his Fourteen Points. When the Treaty of Versailles was presented to the U.S. Senate for its approval, its inclusion of a League of Nations was a stumbling block. Henry Cabot Lodge, chair of the Foreign Relations Committee, was a strong opponent of the League of Nations as the treaty outlined it.

◆ *As you read, think about what you know about the causes of World War I. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, answer the questions that follow.*

The Fourteen Points and the League of Nations**Henry Cabot Lodge, speech to the United States Senate, August 12, 1919**

I object in the strongest possible way to having the United States agree, directly or indirectly, to be controlled by a league which may at any time, and perfectly lawfully and in accordance with the terms of the covenant, be drawn in to deal with internal conflicts in other countries, no matter what those conflicts may be. We should never permit the United States to be involved in any internal conflict in another country, except by the will of her people expressed through the Congress which represents them. . . .

Any analysis of the provisions of this league covenant . . . brings out in startling relief one great fact. Whatever may be said, it is not a league of peace; . . . Those articles upon which the whole structure rests are articles which provide for the use of force; that is, for war. This league to enforce peace does a great deal for enforcement and very little for peace. It makes more essential provisions looking to war

than to peace for the settlement of disputes. . . .

Those of us, Mr. President, who are either wholly opposed to the league, or who are trying to preserve the independence and the safety of the United States by changing the terms of the league, and who are endeavoring to make the league, if we are to be a member of it, less certain to promote war instead of peace have been reproached with selfishness in our outlook and with a desire to keep our country in a state of isolation. So far as the question of isolation goes, it is impossible to isolate the United States. . . . But there is a wide difference between taking a suitable part and bearing a due responsibility in world affairs and plunging the United States into every controversy and conflict on the face of the globe. . . .

Source: Congressional Record, 66th Congress, 1st session, part 4 (August 12, 1919), 3778–3784.

Questions to Think About

1. What reasons did Lodge give for opposing the league?
2. **Draw Inferences** What can you learn from Lodge's speech about the various responses of senators to the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations?
3. **Activity** Research the role of the Foreign Relations Committee today. Who is the present chairperson? What issues are currently being discussed?