

HST 203: ONLINE U.S.History Sp19 (Escobar)

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The Role of the U.S. in the World
by [Joe Escobar](#) - Saturday, April 20, 2019, 8:43 AM

This thread is for discussions on the The Role of the U.S. in the World topic.

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IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, which clearly describes the part number, the source, or the questions you are addressing. Do NOT simply leave it RE: The Role of the U.S. in the World

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Changing History
by [Genevieve Martini](#) - Monday, April 22, 2019, 11:12 AM

When I read the spectrum of the internationalist <—> isolationist points of view, I found it hard to choose which stance I was agreeing with. I didn’t want to say that I agreed with the internationalists who wanted the treaty in its original form without any amendments because I believe that amendments were necessary to satisfy all parties involved. Neither did I agree with the isolationists who opposed the treaty because I believe the treaty was necessary to help bring the war to an end. I didn’t even fully agree with the reservationists because their view on making amendments was only to change the treaty to help America because I don’t think that’s a very fair way to go about making a treaty. However, upon reading the statements that members of the factions would have made in 1918 helped me to ‘pick a side’.

The statement that stood out to me the most was, “It is necessary to remember that the lack of such a league in 1914 threw the world into the chaos of this war... The question of this hour therefore is not whether a beautifully phrased and perfect document has been written, but whether it is the best hope we have.” This is a statement from the mild reservationist position. Seeing as how I agreed with this statement I thought that I maybe would have agreed with some of the strong reservationist statements, but I didn’t. I found them too ‘every man for himself’ and I don’t think that the other nations involved in the treaty would have found them very appealing. Thus I believe that I would have been a mild reservationist during the Great War.

After I landed on where I stood on the spectrum I began to think about how I would have advised Wilson if I was alive in 1918. I believe that my main advice would have been to hold fast to as many terms you can, but if making an amendment means loosing one of your original points, don’t fret. It is better to lose a small battle than begin another war. “He(Wilson) refused to consider any of the Republican amendments to the treaty, even after it had become clear that compromise offered the only chance of winning the U.S. participation in the League of Nations.”(Liberty,

Equality, Power. pg. 768). I realize that many believe Wilson’s unwillingness to comply was because of his stroke, however, if I could have convinced him to agree, and if the U.S. had joined the League of Nations, the second World War might have been avoided: “The judgement of history lies heavily on these events, for many believe that the flawed treaty and the failure of the League contributed to Adolf Hitler’s rise in Germany and the outbreak of the seance wold was more devastating than the first. It is necessary to ask, then, whether American participation in the League would have significantly altered the course of world history.”(Liberty, Equality, Power. pg. 768-729). Now the book does go on to say, “The mere fact of U.S. membership in the League would not have magically solved Europe’s postwar problems.”(pg.769), however, I do believe that U.S. involvement, by agreeing to the change of terms, could have had a significant impact on history. And agreeing to a few amendments could have admitted the U.S. into the League of Nations. “And the failure of the peace process added to Europe’s problems, delayed the emergence of the United States as a leader in wold affairs, and created the preconditions for another world war.”(Liberty, Equality, Power. pg. 775).

The treatment of Germany in the Treaty of Versailles could have also been a contributing factor of why the Second World War began. “Germany was forced to admit it’s responsibility for the war...Lloyd George and Clemenceau brushed off the protests of those who viewed this desire to prostrate Germany as a cruel and vengeful act... In 1921, an Allied commission notified the Germans that they were to pay the victors \$33 billion, a sum well beyond the resources of a defeated and economically ruined Germany.”(Liberty, Equality, Power. pg. 765). If the Treaty of Versailles had not ended in this way, and Germany not treated with such vengeance, it is possible that it could have effected the terms of the League of Nations as well.

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Whose Guilt is it?!
by [Kaiser Slocum](#) - Sunday, April 28, 2019, 2:10 PM

Hey Genevieve!

Your post intrigued me, because at the end of it you said that Germany was forced to admit war guilt, which is true, but that brought up the all-important question as to if Germany really was responsible for World War One. I read this very interesting article by Julia Biris on Medium.com entitled Was Germany really responsible for the first World War?, and it helped me to understand why the war started so quickly after what seemed like a relatively small incident; after all, assassinations have happened before in many countries and even in the U.S. and no mass wars came about by it. What I learned from the article was very interesting, and helped me to understand who really was to blame. Basically, everyone was to blame. Before the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, tensions had been building up in Europe as each country built up its militaries, expanded their industrial revolutions, and formed alliances with each other. As small skirmishes and hostile leaders’ declarations continued, the stability in Europe became very tenuous. When the assassination occurred, Austria-Hungary was angered, of course, but nothing may have come of it except that Germany jumped on it. Through the ensuing years, Germany would push Austria-Hungary along, gently forcing them to do what Germany wanted them to do. Anyway, Germany told Austria-Hungary to “issue unacceptable demands to Serbia in order to start a local war in the Balkans.” (Section under Assassination and Austria-Hungary) Germany also knew that Russia would come to the aid of Serbia, so Germany thought it would appear like Russia was the aggressor as they come to the aid of Serbia and then Germany could come to “protect” Austria-Hungary and expand its power by asserting itself over Russia and Serbia. Also, Germany gave France only 16 hours to declare neutrality or enter the war which the French did, thereby starting the chain of events. “Therefore, Germany’s pushy actions and aggressive involvement in the dispute undeniably contributed to the start of WWI.” (Section under Assassination and Austria-Hungary)

However, Germany cannot be completely blamed as France and Russia were all to excited to get into the war and Austria-Hungary allowed Germany to boss them around. None of the European powers involved in the war sought to calm things down or seek peace, because many of them were scared of the others’ power and expansion and wanted to bring them down. In other terms, Germany was responsible for “getting the snowball rolling”, but they were not solely responsible for “keeping the snowball rolling and growing.” Also, assassinating a person is very rarely ever a good idea, especially when tensions around the place are super tense and aggressive. So maybe the war guilt should rest on a certain Bosnian Revolutionary named Gavrilo Princip.

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Re: Whose Guilt is it?!

by [Genevieve Martini](#) - Sunday, April 28, 2019, 8:46 PM

Kaiser,

Thank you for your input! I agree with you, it is completely unfair to put the blame of an entire world war on one country alone. As you said, tension was building, and they had been building for some time. You included a quote from the article you mentioned that articulate quite well what Germanys responsibility for the war was: "Therefore, Germany's pushy actions and aggressive involvement in the dispute undeniably contributed to the start of WWI." (Section under Assassination and Austria-Hungary) Germany is not wholly responsible, they did however, like most other nations involved in the world, contribute to its beginnings. The textbook adds: "Complicated alliances and defense treaties of the European nations undoubtedly hastened the rush toward war... Britain and Germany in particulate, were engaged in a bitter struggle for European and world supremacy."(Liberty, Equality, Power. pg. 747) I believe that the text makes it clear that Germany should not have been forced to take responsibility for the war. Because Britain, along with a handful of other nations were partially to blame as well. As you said, "Basically, everyone was to blame."

I think it's interesting that you said at the end of your post that you thought that the war guilt should rest on Gavrilo Princip, and although he did assassinate Archduke Franz Ferdinand, one assassination is most likely not to be held accountable for staring a world wide war. Assassination was not a good idea at the time, nor is it at any time in history, but that doesn't mean that Princip should be held accountable for WW1. Like I said previously, it is completely unfair to put the blame of an entire world war on one country(or in this case, man) alone. The Archdukes assassination was merely the straw that broke the camels back; descending the globe into a war like they'd never seen.

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Wilson's Hardheadedness and his Path to Failure

by [Kara Miner](#) - Wednesday, April 24, 2019, 1:26 PM

Initially, while reading chapter 23, I was in full support for wilson's league of nations. The idea of National Peace is enticing, I think to most people. After reading the spectrum on this topic I was surprised to find myself under the category of Mild Reservationist. I believe the idea of "Survival of the Fittest" is engraved in human DNA, and that this concept stretches far past the necessities of survival. Just years before World War I, nations were racing to become the biggest Imperial Powers. From the race to be the biggest imperial power in the late 18th century, to the space race in the 19th century, nations have struggled to be recognized as superior. This desire to be the best is certainly part of human nature, and makes me believe that achieving international peace very difficult. I believe international peace is important however, great compromises need to be made so that each country feels they got the better end of the deal.

I believe the Wilson's failure to ratify the League of Nations is largely due to his unwillingness to compromise on his image to what the organization would look like. Starting with the Treaty of Versailles, Wilson's idealistic nature left him unprepared for negotiations with the allied nations. As soon as negotiations began, Wilson's 14 points were stripped down and taken off of the table one by one (Liberty, Equality, Power pg. 764-765). If Wilson had gone into the negotiations with the understanding that every country would want to take every advantage they could to better their own nation, Wilson may have been more successful in achieving his goal.

After leaving Paris, Wilson continued his battle to protect his ideals when he returned home. Republicans in America wanted to retain congressional control over political affairs and to retain American Sovereignty. Henry Cabot Lodge, the US senator that led the fight against Woodrow Wilson made several logical points as to what would need to happen in order for America to logically enter the league of Nations. One point in particular, being that the League could make decisions for the U.S. in regards to going to war, violates the constitution (Liberty, Equality, Power pg.766). In order for Wilson's goal of World Peace, it is imperative that each country still feels in control of its own affairs. After all, it is peace treaties that escalated a small war into an all out world war in (Liberty, Equality Power pg. 745.) Lodge believed that there should be a "League to Enforce Peace" rather than a League of Nations (So Henry Cabot Lodge was One of History's Villains?). I believe Wilson's inability to ratify the league of Nation's is largely due to his unwillingness to compromise with the U.S concerns.

If I could give Woodrow Wilson any advice in 1918 I would start with his mentality going into the negotiations with the allied forces. He needed to be less headstrong and acknowledge the concerns and also the resentment much of Europe retained for Germany. If each country was allowed to make revisions so that they felt they were getting the resolution they deserved, they could enter into the League of Nations satisfied, all while retaining Wilson’s goal of world peace. I would also advice President Wilson to consider the United State’s values in terms of independence, if he had taken into consideration the concerns of U.S. Senators, he may have just achieved his goal.

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Re: Wilson's Hardheadedness and his Path to Failure

by [Genevieve Martini](#) - Wednesday, April 24, 2019, 2:48 PM

Kara,

In your post you talked a little bit about how you believed that the survival of the fittest is engraved into the human mind and that the desire to be the best is part of human nature. I agree with you, I believe it is. I was just curious if this was in reference to the statement in the reservationists description: “He and other senators in this group sincerely favored the treaty, but wanted some modification to protect vital American interests.”? Because it does seem like the strong reservationists were hard to negotiate with as one of their statements says: “The League would threaten U.S. sovereignty by requiring the U.S. to follow directions from an international body, so all decisions of the League must be considered as suggestions only.”. It seems as though they most certainly thought that being a part of the League would challenge America’s power and they did not approve of America joining the League unless they had the ultimate say in any decisions. Not wanting any of the treaty’s original points to be changed. I believe that an attitude like this is not a good one to have when trying to make a peace treaty. Believing that you are better and insisting on you having the final say and not budging on any of your requirements would make you a very a very agitating person.

I also found myself siding with the mild reservationists and I love the way that you worded your reason for why you believe the U.S. did not enter the League: “I believe Wilson’s inability to ratify the league of Nation’s is largely due to his unwillingness to compromise with the U.S concerns.” It’s such a perfect way of saying this because it was due to his opposition to changing any of his original points that caused the U.S. to be omitted from the League. As I mentioned in my initial post, many people believe that his stubbornness was in part due to his mental health, however, if he could have been persuaded to submit on more of his points, the U.S. might have joined the League and possibly have prevented the outbreak of the second world war.

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Advice to Woodrow Wilson

by [Kaiser Slocum](#) - Wednesday, April 24, 2019, 5:43 PM

According to the internationalist-isolationist spectrum I am a strong Reservationist. Although I disagree with Lodge on the issue of condemning others that are not a Reservationist, I believe that a committee such as the United Nations does have an important place in the world. It should be there to allow countries to mediate between each other, while not forcing any one country to have to do something against its will. Obviously, if the majority of countries decided that another country is not behaving; actions, perhaps even forceful ones, will need to be taken. I firmly believe that remaining isolated is a bad idea, because we may end up walling up in our country while other countries are overthrown and then we will not be able to stop the onslaught on us when(not if) it comes. I also do not think that internationalist actions are the best, as a world order that gets to decide *everything* sounds very much like an anarchy of some kind. (Plus, one cannot say that the United Nations came about by God, humans are not capable of understanding God’s mind let alone saying that a plan of a human is fully backed by God!)(Main document on The Role of the U.S. in the World)

If I could give advice to Wilson, I would tell him either of two things. I might tell Wilson to support the modified treaty about the United Nations; a small victory is whole lot better than no victory! Even a weak United Nations could have possibly prevented World War Two. On the other hand I might have encouraged Wilson to do just as he did so that World War Two would be guaranteed to occur again. Although it is very unfortunate that World War Two occurred, it really forced countries around the world to see the extent of

damage that a war can have and the importance of a unified league of countries as well as the importance of peace. That devastating war proved that no country is invincible, and they all need each other to work together.

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Re: Advice to Woodrow Wilson
by [Genevieve Martini](#) - Friday, April 26, 2019, 4:54 PM

Kaiser,

Your argument on how you would advise Wilson is compelling. Every other post I read on the topic(including mine) said they would advise him to compromise, as to avoid WW2, and while you did mention you would advise him to comply, you also said: "On the other hand I might have encouraged Wilson to do just as he did so that World War Two would be guaranteed to occur again." I found this statement somewhat strange as the second world war was even more devastating than the first. However, your reasoning behind why almost makes sense.

After The Great War, America was still doing well economically and many Americans didn't fear a second war as much as other countries did. "In other ways, the United States benefited a great deal from the war. By 1919, the American economy was by far the world's strongest. Many of the nation's leading corporations had flourished during the war." (Liberty, Equality, Power. pg. 774). America had benefitted from the war, the texts even states that many flourished in it. They did not feel devastating effects that the other countries involved in the war did. It's entirely possible that they didn't see the the League of Nations as something of great importance as a result.

As tragic as WW2 was, it showed America the terrible consequences that accompany war. Tragedy brings people together, and with the nationwide devastation, it most definitely brought the American people to see how beneficial a League of Nations would be. As much as I hate to admit it, I do believe that America gained perspective from WW2 and made them realize the importance of working together for world peace. Making me think that it's possible that World War 2 was inevitable, and that it was going to happen even if America had joined the League.

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What World War Two Taught Us
by [Kaiser Slocum](#) - Saturday, April 27, 2019, 10:12 AM

Genevieve,

Thanks for your thoughts. You explained my reasoning perfectly.

I gave a lot of thought to the question:"What advice would you have given President Wilson if you were one of his advisers in 1918?"After my thinking session, I came to the conclusion that what Wilson did might have been the best outcome. As human beings, typically our first reaction to a terrible crisis or event is to avoid it, but what we do not always see is what we have learned from that event. If World War Two had never taken place, the world would not have learned the valuable lessons that came about by the war, and World War Two might have still taken place but later on in world history.

We know a few things about World War One, otherwise known as the Great War. First of all, England and France "had plotted to enlarge their nations and empires through war."(Liberty, Equality, Power, page 753) We also know that England sustained virtually no damages to its country and France and Russia sustained relatively little compared to what they lost in World War Two. In addition, France and England were persistent to claim lands from Germany and be compensated for their losses. (Liberty, Equality, Power, page 765) From these facts, one could assume that England and France, or

at least their governments, were not taking the war very seriously and thought of it as a costly way to gain power and prestige. The reluctance to accept a League of Nations also proves that they did not care to bring about world peace.

With this said, if Wilson had allowed compromises to the Treaty and League of Nations and a League had existed, there may not have been World War Two and all the lessons that went along with that terrible war may not have been learned. World War Two was so devastating to so many countries that it forced them to see the importance of striving for peace and the consequences of not doing so. No longer was a war something that could enlarge a country’s wealth, but it was something that completely eliminated a country’s wealth and tore even rich countries down to devastation. Also, (pardon me for getting into this controversial topic) if it was not for World War Two and the horrible Jewish Holocaust, the land of Israel may never have been created and given to the Jews.

Do not get me wrong; I am not advocating for war “because of all the good lessons people can learn from them.” I am just showing that what has happened in the past had some very bad problems and disasters that we can learn from in the modern age and perhaps prevent from happening again.

Thanks!

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Treat of Versailles-Internationalists
by [Breanna Lindsey](#) - Wednesday, April 24, 2019, 11:35 PM

I think the internationalist views on the treaty is quite interesting. They wanted no changes or extremely minor changes to the treaty. I think if Woodrow Wilson knew what was too come especially in the second world war he would have reconsidered some of his points and agreements. Wilson wanted this to become the peace treaty and have Germany follow the 14-point plan. Unfortunately, the four powers all wanted different outcomes and in the end President Wilson caved to the other leaders. David Lloyd George wanted Germany to accept full responsibility of the war. Wilson did not want to punish Germany, but ended up agreeing to gain support from the League of Nations. Forcing this upon Germany really was the downfall of the Country, and was one of the main factors of World War 2. Wilson and the internationalist were passionate about creating peace, and sharing that around the world. Wilson considered himself one of the strong foundations of the League of Nations, and believed it was going to prevent wars in the future. Overall, the internationalist supported the Treaty of Versailles, and believed that greater cooperation among nations could work for the benefit of all. I personally agree with the internationalist and I think they genuinely wanted the best for the nations. Wilson’s 14 points could’ve been extremely beneficial for all, and honestly would have changed our entire history. They wanted peace and to try and work out the best possible way for that to happen. I strongly oppose how Wilson went about the treaty and how he was persuaded by the fellow leaders. I think if President Wilson was a true internationalist he wouldn’t have given up so easy in his plan. I don’t think President Wilson as an internationalist should’ve signed that treaty. Really,it was going against everything he believed in and to me he wasn’t practicing what he truly believed. I have a better insight on the internationalist and their way of thinking; but the decision to sign the treaty, I am not sure if it was completely right. I believe history could have gone very differently; if the four powers worked out a better treaty that would’ve left Germany in a much better position as well.

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Re: Treat of Versailles-Internationalists
by [Genevieve Martini](#) - Thursday, April 25, 2019, 5:49 PM

Breanna,

Your take on the internationalist view is compelling because you said “I think they genuinely wanted the best for the nations.” I agree, I think that they wanted the best for the nations, however, I think that it is somewhat close-minded to refuse to make any changes to a plan made by one man. Sure, Wilson’s points had good intentions,

but I think it’s too ambitious to believe that everyone would agree to everything and refuse to make changes. I believe that if alterations were made, then the U.S. may have joined the League of Nations and (possibly) prevented, or even just postponed, World War Two.

One of the main things that threw me off of the internationalist view is that they were unwilling to compromise. One of their positions listed was: "Any changes to the League Covenant are a rejection of the League." (The Role of the U.S. in the World) This statement means that the internationalists didn’t believe any changes could be made to the treaty. I disagree with this point of view because I believe if one is to make a treaty, there are bound to be compromises. After-all, a treaty is made when one wants to make peace with another. Assuming that your beliefs are best, and being unwilling to change your views in the slightest doesn't make for a very good strategy in trying to establish world peace. Compromises must be made.

The last thing that I wanted to address was your statement, "I think if President Wilson was a true internationalist he wouldn’t have given up so easy in his plan." I was curious by what you meant by this. I don’t believe that Wilson gave up easily on his plan, in fact I believe the exact opposite. "...but he refused to compromise with the Republicans and announced that he would carry his case directly to the American people instead. In September 1919, Wilson undertook a whirlwind cross-country tour that covered more than 8,000 miles with 37 stops. He addressed as many crowds as he could reach, sometimes speaking for an hour at a time, four times a day." (Liberty, Equality, Power. pg. 768) To me, this shows that Wilson was fighting hard for his cause. Especially taking into consideration what we heard in last weeks video, The Redemption of the World, "Both Edith and Dr. Greyson begged him not to go. That trip was probably the worse thing he could have done, given the state of his health." (minute mark 1:05:41). He continued to press on and give the tour even when his doctor advised him not to. This shows that he was not willing to give up easily, and he did everything in his power, even at the cost of his life, to push for his treaty.

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Re: Treat of Versailles-Internationalists
by [Breanna Lindsey](#) - Sunday, April 28, 2019, 8:28 PM

Hi Genevieve,

I appreciate your comments and points! A point I would like to address is your comments about compromising. I noticed you made a lot of points and I am in agreement with you. In my original post, I made it clear that I felt there was more that could be done; including compromising. I completely agree that it is closed minded to refuse to make any changes to a plan. I made statements such as, "I think if Woodrow Wilson knew what was too come especially in the second world war he would have reconsidered some of his points and agreements." Here I am explaining that Wilson should have reconsidered some of his points; and if he only knew what was to come it would be crucial for him to change his points. I also made the point, "Unfortunately, the four powers all wanted different outcomes and in the end President Wilson caved to the other leaders." It was not just President Wilson's mistake it was all the worlds powers faults. They all let their feelings, and hatred towards Germany get in the way of their good judgment. Woodrow Wilson no doubt made some mistakes, but he was sharing his plan with many others, that were far worse than his. The other three powers wanted Germany destroyed and it was extremely hard to convince their mind otherwise.

There are points I agree with some points of the internationalist; but they are some points I do not agree with. One is how they are not super wiling to compromise, I agree with you on that as well. I think anyone, and anything should be willing to compromise, and change their plans for the best of he people. But, I think the treaty was as compromised as it could get. None of the powers were really willing to change their mind; so it had to take Wilson to side with them. I would have to disagree with you on the last main point. I don't think Woodrow made the right decisions and worked hard enough in the right ways. Yes, he decided to take a tour and speak to the American people, but was that really a good use of time? No, I believe it wasn't. Speaking to the American people is valuable and is great to represent yourself as a strong leader. The American people do not run our country, our government and president does. America is not a pure democracy, therefore meaning the American people do not have final say and ruling over everything. So, I think having Wilson spend so much valuable time wasted on doing speeches were a poor decision. In fact it is said, "American public opinion was overwhelming in favor of ratifying the treaty, including the Covenant of the League of Nations." The people had already decided, and in the end America still did not ratify the treaty. The tour was terrible for his health, and that is one of the reasons I believe he should have spent his time and energy in the government and negotiating with the powers, not the people.

"The Paris Peace Conference and the Treaty of Versailles." *U.S. Department of State*, U.S. Department of State, 2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/wwi/89875.htm.

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Re: Treat of Versailles-Internationalists
by [Trey Husko](#) - Sunday, April 28, 2019, 7:04 PM

Hi Breanna,

I have to say I agree with a lot of what you said. It's definitely one of those "what if" situations. What if Wilson had been willing to amend some of his 14 points that would have meant the U.S. joined the League of Nations? Because Germany ended up getting all the blame and burden for WWI it left the entirety of Germany bitter about the war and left the nation in a place where it was unable to recover. Germany would have to "pay the victors \$33 Billion, a sum well beyond the resources of a defeated and economically defeated Germany" (pg 765 txt). No country at the time could do that, and here Germany was being forced to do it with a destroyed industry and economy from the war because they lost. The book also mentioned Germany did overthrow their monarchy leader Wilhelm II and imposed a new democratic government (pg 765) but are they expected to like this at a time where they would be in a major economic depression? I think that all adds up to Hitler's rise to power. He promised to get the land back Germany lost, rebuild the economy, and restore Germany's glory. Of course the German people would like that because at the time the allies left Germany in a horrible state because they were the losers of the war.

The entirety of WWII could have been avoided if history went differently and the U.S. got involved in the League of Nations and I can see why people hold that against Wilson despite all the good he did prior to the end of the war.

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Re: Treat of Versailles-Internationalists
by [Steph McGuire](#) - Sunday, April 28, 2019, 10:48 PM

I found it interesting that you brought up the poor economy of Germany and how that aided in the rise of Hitler . I hadnt thought about how Germany being held responsible for WW1 would have had a trickle down effect like that. It now has me rethinking my opinion on whether or not we did not join the League. It is unfortunate that Mr. Wilson wouldn't compromise. But hindsight is easy. I think that without knowing what the consequences would be, I'd still be against the League. There was not enough compromise with other countries and within ours.

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Wouldn't Hurt to Compromise
by [Kimberly Wong](#) - Thursday, April 25, 2019, 12:02 AM

I would advise Wilson to be more flexible and not resist compromising just a bit. The reservationists on the other side of the argument were not completely against ratifying they just had some very justified worries about some of the points. While some of the changes the wanted to make were unfounded others like Article X needed to be

discussed and possibly altered. But Wilson refused to compromise at all and because of that the treaty and the League failed. As our history book states “Many believe that the flawed treaty and the failure of the League contributed to Adolf Hitler’s rise in Germany and the outbreak of the second world war more devastating than the first.”(768) If he had been able to compromise maybe he would have been able to ratify the treaty and the League. Maybe the second world war could have been avoided. But the aftereffects of the first world war had not been as bad in consequence I don’t believe there was a lot of emphasis on avoiding another.

The U.S. got into the first world war relatively late. As such it was not effected in the same ways as other countries or as it had been effected in past wars. In fact, the economy was boosted by the war. Because the other countries involved had been invested in the war for longer their infrastructures had broken down. Their agriculture and industrial regions had been effected by a lack of workers and lack of management while all efforts went into the war. America capitalized on this and in consequence our economy was boosted. We did not escape completely unscathed, after the war the country dealt with a fallout in the labor situation and a new wave of political and racial conflicts. While bad these aftereffects could have been much worse and were brightened up by the relative bettering of living in the country at the time. For that reason, most Americans did not see the importance of avoiding another world war.

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Re: Wouldn't Hurt to Compromise
by [Genevieve Martini](#) - Thursday, April 25, 2019, 2:39 PM

Kimberly,

I noticed that you said right at the beginning of your post, “I would advise Wilson to be more flexible and not resist compromising just a bit.”, would this mean that you are also a mild reservationist? That is where I found myself on the scale and I share this opinion with you. The strong reservationists seemed to think that almost any change to the treaty would be harmful to America, “The League would threaten U.S. sovereignty...”(Role of U.S. in the World, Strong Reservationist Positions). They didn’t want other nations to make changes to the treaty unless they approved of it. Statements like, “Specific and limiting changes to the Covenant must be made to protect U.S. interests.” and “all decisions of the League must be considered as suggestions only.” Make it pretty clear what the priorities of the strong reservationists were; protect America and keep us on top.

As you said, the ultimate reason that America was not involved in the treaty is because of Wilson’s unwillingness to compromise, and I believe that if he was willing to make changes that other nations suggested, the U.S. might have joined the League, and avoided a second war. His stubbornness(although it was most likely caused by impaired judgement due to his stroke) is most likely what caused our noninvolvement.

Your take on why American’s didn’t fear another war as much as other nations is very intriguing. I never thought about the aftereffects of the war as being better in America. You make a good point in saying, “While bad these aftereffects could have been much worse and were brightened up by the relative bettering of living in the country at the time. For that reason, most Americans did not see the importance of avoiding another world war.”. Upon reading this, I found myself disagreeing with you, thinking that Americans would have still been scared of another war. However, after considering the statement a bit more, and looking into our textbook I believe you might be correct. “In other ways, the United States benefited a great deal from the war. By 1919, the American economy was by far the world’s strongest. Many of the nation’s leading corporations had flourished during the war.” (Liberty, Equality, Power. pg. 774), with this statement in mind I can most definitely see where you are coming form in saying Americans didn’t fear another war as much as they should have. Understanding where Americans stood on the possibility of facing another war helps to understand the position of those that didn’t want to budge on the treaty. They had benefitted from the last war, and thought they would hold fast in the threat of a second.

Although, I feel I must add, I’m sure that there were still a great many Americans that didn’t want another war, as they didn’t want the first. The immigrants that were discriminated against as well as those that were imprisoned for speaking out against the war were, I’m sure, horrified at Wilson’s unwillingness to cooperate, and wanted a second war less than the first.

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Re: Wouldn't Hurt to Compromise
by [Kimberly Wong](#) - Sunday, April 28, 2019, 9:59 PM

Hi Genevieve,

Yes I do consider myself a mild reservationist. Unlike the irreconcilables, I do believe we should have been involved in the League of Nations but that dosnt mean we needed to agree on every point. Some points definitely needed discussion and revision. However, I am not a strong reservationist because they wanted to keep the order exactly how it had been before which obviously was not working. As well as the fact that not all the strong reservationists motives were pure. "It soon became clear, however, that several Republicans, including Lodge, were as interestes in humiliating Wilson as they were developing an alternative approach to foreign policy."(PG. 766)

And of course not everyone didn't fear another war. Such as the farmers who underwent a depression after the war. Also anybody who had lost anyone in the first world war would have been weary of another.

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Complicated & Innovative

by [Elizabeth Crandall](#) - Thursday, April 25, 2019, 8:23 AM

Reservationists, Irreconcilables, and Internationalists were an interesting and new sensation to the United States, which abruptly updated the roles of the U.S. in the world by presenting a muliversed system of politics.

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Advice for Woodrow Wilson

by [Breanna Lindsey](#) - Thursday, April 25, 2019, 12:51 PM

Looking back on history it is easy to say what we would or wouldn't have done. Clearly President Wilson was in a high stress environment when he was making these decisions. President Wilson thought the League of Nations would prevent many wars and would solve conflict before bloodshed erupted. After President Wilson had a stroke congress did not ratify the treaty and the US refused to take part in the League of Nations. Overall, the League of Nations has done great things but has also made many mistakes. Unfortunately, the League of Nations failed during World War 2, when most countries were uninvolved and claimed neutrality; but Germany and France were involved. With Hitler taking over most of Europe and leaving the Nations it fell apart. The Treaty of Versailles was a huge fact in WW2, and left Germany with a tremendous amount of debt and Germany was outraged. Not to mention Germany finally paid off all the WW1 debt in October of 2010! Because Germany was so angry at how the four powers treated them, they were left bitter and wanted justice. Their country was so damaged and poor which caused a domino effect of depression across the world. It is hard to say if all this could have been avoided if President Woodrow Wilson, and the other leaders made a better humane compromise for Germany. I personally think it could have helped, and probably would've saved many people. There are many factors to the World Wars and Hitler is a huge part of that, and his unpredictable personality. Hitler was so angry Germany surrendered he went absolutely mad. I don't think the war could have been avoided completely even with better terms and agreements; I just think it could have been far less bad. If I were working with the President I would advise him to carefully think about the treaty he is signing and the damage it could do. I would set up a meeting with the four powers and talk about a compromise that could benefit everyone and not leave Germany so damaged. This is the route I would start on, but I realize it would be extremely difficult. It would be difficult because France and Britain were left destroyed by Germany and they were also extremely angry. This is why I don't think the war could have been avoided completely. I think the four powers should've worked together to try and rebuild their countries together. It is a very difficult topic to address and to fully grasp it. Overall, I would tell President Woodrow Wilson to not sign that treaty, until even a slightly better treaty is presented. I would also advise him to understand how angry this would leave Germany; and how they are more of a threat to all of us then the four powers. They were unpredictable; the four powers were powerful, but they were somewhat more sensible.

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Similarities between the Wilson Presidency and Modern Presidencies

by [Kaiser Slocum](#) - Saturday, April 27, 2019, 10:14 AM

One of the big similarities I see in the past few presidents and Woodrow Wilson is that the President finds it is difficult to pass anything he values through a Congress that opposes him to some extent. Wilson and Obama were both democratic Presidents who tried mainly unsuccessfully to get their laws and documents passed by a Congress

with a majority of Republicans. Trump is also struggling with this as Congress now has a Democratic majority. This is one of the parts of a democratic government; that Presidents do not have unlimited power and cannot expand their power too much without being granted it by the other parts of government.

I do believe that Wilson’s ideas would be better received today as people seem more disposed towards isolationism and “peace.” There are a whole lot more people, even republicans, who believe we should keep ourselves out of other countries’ business and work out problems via the United Nations. This said however, the majority of students in this class appear to be mild Reservationists. This majority reflects the majority of people in 1918 that were also Reservationists and my stance which is a Reservationist. I feel that a lot of people who really think about the world order come to realize the importance of a country’s right to do what it pleases, but also the importance of an international committee that can monitor its members and maintain peace. If a country feels like their cause is really important(like the U.S. has), they should not be shackled by what others feel like it should do.

When the U.S. invades another country or forces another country do something or have a certain type of government, we are encroaching on their freedom and liberty and creating enemies. However, this is not always bad because in doing so, America may be freeing the citizens of that country from a government that was not allowing its people freedom. In doing so, America could be spreading freedom to those enslaved by powerful governments. Before America steps into the matters of another country, we need to ask ourselves a few questions such as the following: “What is our real motive for doing this?”, “What good/bad can happened from doing this?”, “Are we freeing people or enslaving them?”, “Are we doing what is going to benefit the majority of people?”, “Are we going about this in such a way as to value human lives and property?”.

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Intervention Vs. Nonintervention

by [Kaiser Slocum](#) - Saturday, April 27, 2019, 11:11 AM

After watching the videos and reading the articles, I realized that most of the views are not completely ideal. I disagree with Paul that we should not be the world’s policeman. (23 seconds into Ron Paul Interview) However, I disagree with aggressive foreign policy like Trump’s idea to bomb the Islamic state to smithereens.(Paraphrased from Four_Foreign_Policies article) I guess if I had to side with a candidate I would side with McCain. These candidates’ ideas do not affect my position on the spectrum, because everyone on the spectrum, although they may all be in a certain section of it, can have radically different ideas and foreign policies that can set them apart in many ways. Just because I am a Reservationist and another person is a Reservationist, does not mean we will agree on a lot of topics. I feel that Woodrow Wilson is a cross between Paul and Keyes while Henry Cabot Lodge was a cross between Keyes and McCain. Wilson was not about keeping the U.S. military to itself, but he wanted peace whenever possible. Lodge was not about a total intervention on any inferior or potentially dangerous country, but was insistent on a large military.(Lodge article paragraph four) In the current age as opposed to the early 1900s, I feel like a lot of the same ideas are still here, but people have become more extreme and insistent upon their ideas than they were earlier on in America’s life. In other words, people are less likely to compromise which is the reason for the recent government shut downs.

In the words of Alan Keyes, “I don’t think we can turn our backs.” (0:58 into keyes vs isolationsim video) What Keyes is referring to here is that Americans should not ignore the suffering and turmoil going on in other nations. I know that problems will occur when other countries intervene in another country, but a lot of the time, if something is not done quickly, the problems will only spin out of control. My stance on intervention is if someone is being unjustly harmed either physically, mentally, or emotionally; something needs to be done. In response to the genocide in Sudan, I understand there was a lot of people in Sudan who did not want American intervention, but I can promise you that the people who were being killed would have been more than happy for some help. This topic is very involved and tricky and every situation is different. I feel like for every situation there needs to be Americans who sit down and discuss what should be done. They need to figure out how directly this problem affects America, how many American lives and much American resources will be sacrificed to intervene in this situation, how many American citizens are willing to volunteer to do something about this, will we be able to calm the problem and bring peace or will the situation only become worse. The only solution to American intervention is to have people that are willing to do what it takes to critically look at a foreign problem and hammer out a solution, weighing out the pros and cons, without focusing on just what benefits themselves and America. Every life in the world is precious and unique and America needs to do whatever it takes to promote respect and freedom for one another.

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Are we the best hope for the world?



by [Steph McGuire](#) - Saturday, April 27, 2019, 3:05 PM

I think that Mr. Wilson’s ideas concerning foreign affairs and his strong support of internationalism would be much better received today. I think this because it seems to me that a lot of people have a naïve way of thinking that the world can get along better if there is a group of representatives that get together and enforce the rules.

I am not sure that I, personally, would agree with Mr. Wilson. We have a system in place that it supposed to do that in our country and look how that is working for us. Every group is susceptible to being corrupted. (See the chapter in our book in regards to Mr. Harding’s Presidency). I believe that it is noble to want to stand up for people that cannot do it themselves. Who says that this will always be the case with the League? I agree with the gentleman in the video “Comparing Wilson and Bush” (about the 4:30 mark) when he said that we should have a “sober appreciation for the complexities of trying to change societies. This is something America learns over and over again. Or rather, forgets over and over again.” He uses losing the Vietnam War as an example.

He does go on to say to that there “will be a sober, more cautious view about how the U.S can use its hard power. But a great appreciation of how important it is to use its soft power”. I hope that this is true.

This class seems does seem to lean more towards the Reservationist (with most being Mild Reservationist). I am with the Mild Reservationist as well. I chose this because of the phrase *“The question of this hour therefore is not whether a beautifully phrased and perfect document has been written, but whether it is the best hope we have.”* It seems like being a Mild Reservationist means that you are uncertain of the “correct” answer but would like to listen to all of the facts before making a decision.

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Re: Are we the best hope for the world?
by [Genevieve Martini](#) - Saturday, April 27, 2019, 4:33 PM

Steph,

I really enjoyed your post because you mentioned that the League of Nations may not have solved any problems at all. “Every group is susceptible to being corrupted.” This is a very good point, and something that didn’t even cross my mind when I was creating my own post. If Wilson had made compromises, changed his 14 points, and the U.S. had entered the League, who’s to say that the compromises made wouldn’t have been manipulated to put another nation on top; rushing us into World War Two even sooner. There is so much that needs to be considered when discussing a topic like this. There are so many ‘what ifs’, ‘would haves’ and ‘should haves’, but ultimately, there is no way for us to know that history would have turned out any better than it did if Wilson had compromised.

The mild reservationist quote that you included in your post, “The question of this hour therefore is not whether a beautifully phrased and perfect document has been written, but whether it is the best hope we have.” makes this point somewhat clearer. At the time, many people considered the League of Nations the best option. What if it wasn’t? It’s entirely possible that avoiding the League actually helped America in the long run.

I really appreciated you insight on this topic!

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Wilson's failure to get the US in the League of Nations
by [Trey Husko](#) - Saturday, April 27, 2019, 3:20 PM

Reading over the foreign policy factions and the related terminology along with textbook chapter 23 I felt there was the three main positions on the spectrum - that being the irreconcilables, reservationists, and the internationalists.

The internationalists, the group that Woodrow Wilson belonged to, believed in the unity of nations. An idea that if all the nations were apart of a large diplomatic league there would be representatives from every nation that could decide on world issues and thus be less of a threat of war. Wilson, along with other internationalists, thought this was something “conceived by god” (pg 766 textbook) that the U.S. could be involved in the League in helping the world move forward.

The irreconcilables were on the complete opposite side of the spectrum. The league was not in the best interest of the U.S. and was rather the interests of the other great nations of the time that the U.S. would have to follow.

Then somewhere in the middle is where the reservationists fall. They believed the U.S. should have some involvement in the new league as long as it did not limit the U.S. in its’ ability to defend itself or go to war.

Had I been an advisor to Wilson I would probably had fallen under the reservationists viewpoint. Wilson had already gotten most of his big “14 Points” accepted but was too unwilling to make changes to some of the other points he wanted. He already had opposition by those like Henry Lodge who filled congress seats with members that opposed Wilson to make a failure out of him (pg 766-767 textbook) so not being able to compromise on any of the proposal ultimately cost him. He should have been more willing to change some of his terms although I’d have advocated to make sure the *Article X Covenant* passed which “would endow the League with the power to punish aggressor nations through economic isolation and military retaliation” (pg 766 txt) -- which would have given the U.S. more power to put a foot down on Hitler’s rise to power.

Wilson’s failure to get the U.S. into the League of Nations is viewed as his biggest failure as president. Some believe that if the U.S. were more involved in European policy after WWI Hitler would not have risen to the power that he did. While I’m not sure it would have completed prevented WWII, I do certainly believe the U.S. having involvement would have meant we entered the war sooner than after Pearl Harbor.

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Wilson compared to today's presidents and foreign policy poll

by [Trey Husko](#) - Saturday, April 27, 2019, 4:12 PM

Comparing Wilson to the presidents of today I do see some key similarities regarding *Wilsonianism*. Wilson strongly believed the U.S. should be involved in intervention elsewhere in the hopes that it’d promote the “spread of democracy” (one of the main principles of *Wilsonianism* listed in the Wikipedia article). He used the end of WWI as an opportunity to place democracy in nations all over the world. He saw a “*vision the U.S. could run the world*” (2 mins into Bush and Wilson video). That being if the U.S. were involved in the League then it was the perfect opportunity for the U.S. to take charge and other nations would follow and invest in the ways of democracy.

Today’s presidents have also tried to push the idea of democracy in other governments but not in necessarily the way Wilson tried to. Wilson believed in intervention but not in a forceful way of declaring war. In recent history the U.S. has been in multiple wars that involved the overthrowing of current government or supporting of new like the wars in Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, and Iraq (Wikipedia “Lists of wars involving the United States”), but most of this has been done that military action was the only considered action. Not as much the diplomatic involvement like the League of Nations Wilson supported.

As for the class poll regarding the foreign policy spectrum, 16 out of 25 students answered the Limited Internationalist or Mild Reservationists (which I chose Lim. Internationalist) reflecting that Reservationists is still the most popular group. I think it’s important today that the U.S. is involved in foreign affair, but only when it is needed. We shouldn’t have to get involved in every single foreign war unless absolutely needed if it involves an ally or is a

case of extreme government. I believe this because it is important to also to remember the people at home. There are a lot of matters in the U.S. that needs to be addressed that go unaddressed while the U.S. finds itself involved in another war. The main power at stake when the U.S. does want to deal with other nations is something that was addressed in both the Bush and Obama videos. How much leverage should the president have in choosing when to go to war (something that the Constitution says is Congress's power) and what it the amount of action needed (which is something the United Nations also decides on). There's a fine line on when and how the U.S. can intervene and it's important to know these are at stake every time we get involved in foreign affairs.

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Re: The Role of the U.S. in the World-Whos side are you on?

by [Alexandra Selig](#) - Saturday, April 27, 2019, 4:51 PM

There is so much information and opinion on what the United States role should and is in the world today and the world for yesterday. When looking at the comparisons between President Bush and President Wilson, the contrast in what they believed our position to be becomes obvious. Those who would consider themselves more on the left, like President Wilson have the belief that we can come together as a united front, all nations together to establish a peaceful world. Those who lean more to the right, like President Bush, would contradict this and take the stance that we protect our own first and foremost and in order to help others in the world you must be strong at home and abroad. I can completely agree with the stance of Henry Cabot Lodge as his initial instinct is to strengthen the United States and not give any of its control or decision making power to a "League of Nations" who could potentially make decisions that are not in the best interest for all parties involved that could result in catastrophic outcomes. I do not believe that their will ever be a true peace within our world as there will never be a consensus on the difference between what is right and wrong as this like everything else is open to interpretation. This inevitably leaves us with no way to establish a one world order. What is morally right for me may not also be what is morally right for those of Asian or Islamic decent. We must always protect that which we know and value first, then we can worry about the rest of the world, as they are most likely doing the same, be as it is human nature to do so.

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