

## WIDENOR NOTES

How does one reconcile the claims of competing nation states?

Open diplomacy was the enemy of negotiation and compromise.

Only rarely can one nation force another to do things that seem to run deeply counter to its own interest in self-preservation

Obstacles Wilson faced?

1- Promises allies made to each other before the war as to what they would grant each other after the war

2- The very democracy that Wilson thought a safeguard against war proved to be a barrier to a statesmanlike peace. The people were bloodthirsty and wanted retribution.

3- Wilson is weak politically at home

4- Wilson's obsession with the League leads him to make numerous compromises in hopes that everything will work out in the end. All the terms of the peace are implemented through the League. Without one, you can't have the other

## Why a bad treaty?

1. Didn't last
2. Didn't bring peace
3. Defeated enemy: "Either destroy him altogether or treat him so generously that he will become your friend." Middle course won't work
4. No balance of power – weak powers in the east
5. No provisions for the economic reconstruction of Europe

## Why didn't the US join the League?

1. War weariness; desire for "normalcy"
2. Republican partisanship; institutional jealousy between branches → Congress reasserts its influence after President runs war
3. It was not a simple matter to create effective collective security; people disagree on how to do this "Americans could not agree upon the nature of the League they wanted or upon the arrangements necessary to make it succeed."

“We will always have with us those who wish to have the world’s peace assured by force, without using force to do it.” – Lodge

“What will your League amount to if it does not contain powers that no one dreams of giving it?” -- Borah

Collective security based on nebulous guarantees doesn’t work

What was necessary for an effective League was not politically feasible at home. National sovereignty or an effective League, but not both

Americans will accept specific binding obligations – defend France – but not universal binding obligations --- defend everyone.

Peace, stability, and justice aren’t synonymous ends