To: Samantha Power, United States Ambassador to the United Nations

Ms. Power:

I am writing to urge adoption of the United Nations resolution for an International Day of Remembrance of the Kellogg-Briand Pact. As the number of violent world conflicts continues to increase, leaders and constituents worldwide are calling for peaceful alternatives to war. However, this is not a new development. On August 27, 1928, fifteen countries signed the General Treaty for Renunciation of War as an Instrument of National Policy (Also known as the Pact of Paris, and hereafter to be referred to as the Kellogg-Briand Pact in this letter). By today, 61 countries have joined. [1]

Articles I and II of the Kellogg-Briand Pact state the following:

“The High Contracting Parties solemly [sic] declare in the names of

their respective peoples that they condemn recourse to war for the

solution of international controversies, and renounce it, as an

instrument of national policy in their relations with one another….The

High Contracting Parties agree that the settlement or solution of all

disputes or conflicts of whatever nature or of whatever origin they

may be, which may arise among them, shall never be sought except

by pacific means.” [1]

In accordance with the worldwide growing desire for peaceful means of conflict resolution, the Kellogg-Briand

Pact can be a powerful tool in helping us transform the future of conflict resolution. However, in the time since it was originally signed, it has sadly failed to have the impact that was intended.

Criticisms of the Kellogg-Briand pact are centered around the fact that it is difficult to enforce. As is the main challenge with most international agreements, sovereign governments choose the extent to which they implement and are committed to the agreed upon resolution. Although unfortunate, this is the reality which restrains the effectiveness of peace agreements.

However, an advantage of our modern global society is that what international governmental organizations cannot enforce, the citizens of individual countries can, even in countries without high levels of public participation in government. This is evidenced by the Arab spring movement in 2011, the current, ongoing Venezuela protests, and countless other political movements instigated by the public in order to socially pressure governments into observance of public moral opinion. These demonstrations prove that public opinion has the power to enforce their respective ideals.

I submit that The United States should propose and/or support language in a United Nations resolution that would make August 27th (the anniversary of the Kellogg-Briand Pact) an International Day of Remembrance of the Kellogg-Briand Pact. Additionally, language should be included to invite nations that are not signers of the Kellogg-Briand Pact to ratify it. If an international day of remembrance is recognized in these countries, it would invite the attention of the public to the fact that their governments have agreed to a formal pact against the use of war in resolving conflict. If, then, the issue arises that a government violates the agreement of the pact, the public would have the knowledge and awareness necessary to exercise whatever social pressure they feel would represent the will of the citizens of that nation.

If citizens are empowered with knowledge of what their respective governments have agreed to, they themselves will be able to take on the responsibility of enforcing it according to public opinion. A key method for circulating this knowledge is by establishing an international day of remembrance and recognition. With this international day, media attention will inform people of the peace agreement, internet sites such as google will give a history of the meaning of the day, and tweets and facebook posts relating to the themes of the Kellogg-Briand Pact will become more prevalent. Armed with knowledge, citizens can take on the role of promoting world peace by holding their governments accountable for compliance with their international agreements.

[1] <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/imt/kbpact.htm>

Thank you for your time,