THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS

508 Young St.

Dallas, TX 75202

Attn: George Rodrigue, VP and Managing Editor at The Dallas Morning News

Dear Mr. Rodrigue:

I am a college student in Dallas. I would like to request that The Dallas Morning News run a story about the Kellogg-Briand Pact, an international treaty to outlaw war. In 1928, 10 years after the end of World War I, the United States and several other nations signed the General Treaty for Renunciation of War as an Instrument of National Policy, a legally binding international treaty also known as the Kellogg-Briand Pact. According to the State Department:

On August 27, 1928, fifteen nations signed the pact at Paris. Signatories included France, the United States, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India, Belgium, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Italy and Japan. Later, an additional forty-seven nations followed suit, so the pact was eventually signed by most of the established nations in the world. (history.state.gov).

According to Wikipedia, "[S]ignatory states promised not to use war to resolve ‘disputes or conflicts of whatever nature or of whatever origin they may be, which may arise among them’[2],” (“Kellogg-Briand Pact,” *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 14 April 2014. Web. ). Sponsored by France and the U.S., the Pact renounced the use of war and called for the peaceful settlement of disputes," (“Kellogg-Briand Pact,” *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia.* Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 14 April 2014. Web.). It was a very noble effort, and it had widespread international support in the late 1920s. By July 29, 1929, 62 countries had signed the treaty, according to Wikipedia (“Kellogg-Briand Pact*,” Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia.* Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 14 April 2014. Web.). "In the United States, the Senate approved the treaty overwhelmingly, 85–1," (“Kellogg-Briand Pact,” *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 14 April 2014. Web.). As of 2014, "The 1928 Kellogg–Briand Pact...remains a binding treaty under international law," (“Kellogg-Briand Pact,” *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia.* Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 14 April 2014. Web.). One might very well ask, "If the United States and dozens of other countries have signed a treaty forbidding war, how can countries still legally wage war against one another?" Since the Kellogg-Briand Pact went into effect in 1929, countries have claimed self-defense or collective defense as legal justification for declaring war on one another (“Kellogg-Briand Pact,” *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia.* Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 14 April 2014. Web.). For example, after the September 11th terrorist attacks, NATO invoked Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty to justify collective action against Afghanistan.

However, countries often do not have a legitimate reason for attacking one another. For example, fascist regimes invaded their neighbors in Europe and Asia before and during World War II (“Kellogg-Briand Pact,” *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 14 April 2014. Web.). According to the State Department, the Kellogg-Briand “[P]act was one of many international efforts to prevent another World War, but it had little effect in stopping the rising militarism of the 1930s or preventing World War II." (history.state.gov). According to the State Department, “[The Kellogg-Briand Pact['s] legacy remains as a statement of the idealism expressed by advocates for peace in the interwar period. [United States Secretary of State] Frank Kellogg earned the Nobel Peace Prize in 1929 for his work on the Peace Pact," (history.state.gov).

Here is some more background about the treaty. According to the State Department:

In the wake of World War I, U.S. officials and private citizens made significant efforts to guarantee that the nation would not be drawn into another war. Some focused on disarmament…Others initiated a movement to try to outlaw war outright. Peace advocates Nicholas Murray Butler and James T. Shotwell were part of this movement. Both men were affiliated with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, an organization dedicated to promoting internationalism that was established in 1910 by leading American industrialist Andrew Carnegie." (history.state.gov).

According to the State Department, France was the driving force behind the pact at its inception:

Particularly hard hit by World War I, France faced continuing insecurity from its German neighbor and sought alliances to shore up its defenses. [French foreign minister Aristide] Briand published an open letter in April of 1927 containing the proposal...the suggestion had the enthusiastic support of some members of the American peace movement. (history.state.gov)

Nevertheless, the Kellogg-Briand Pact has not been totally worthless. According to Wikipedia,

The pact is an important multilateral treaty because, in addition to binding the particular nations that signed it, it has also served as one of the legal bases establishing the international norms that the threat[11] or use of military force in contravention of international law, as well as the territorial acquisitions resulting from it,[12] are unlawful. (“Kellogg-Briand Pact,” *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia.* Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 14 April 2014. Web.).

Furthermore, "One legal consequence of this is that it is clearly unlawful to annex territory by force," (“Kellogg-Briand Pact,” *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 14 April 2014. Web.). Today, most countries do abstain from forcibly annexing the territory of other nations, and the United Nations Security Council and NATO stand ready to stop unlawful territory expansion by a belligerent power. For example, when Iraqi President Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in order to expand his country's territory and take control over Kuwait's lucrative oil fields, the United States and NATO responded by defending Kuwait from this unprovoked and illegal invasion. The United States and other countries should abide by the terms of the Kellogg-Briand Pact and refrain from launching unprovoked attacks against other nations.

Yours Truly,