The League of Nations Worksheet

Directions: Read the two excerpts below, & then answer the questions that follow on the opposite side using complete sentences.

Woodrow Wilson, speech to a Joint Session of Congress, January 18, 1918

What we demand in this war . . . is that the world be made fit and safe to live in; and particularly that it be made safe for every peace-loving nation. . . .

The program of the world's peace, therefore, is our only program; and that program, the only possible program as we see it, is this:

I. Open [agreements] of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view….

III. The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance. . . .

IV. Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety….

XIV. A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.

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….

1. According to Woodrow Wilson, what did the U.S. demand out of World War I?

2. From what you have read, what do you feel is the general theme of Wilson's fourteen points?

3. Why did Wilson propose the fourteenth point and what was created in response?

4. What reasons did Lodge give for opposing the League of Nations?

5. What can you learn from Lodge's speech about the various responses of senators to the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations?

6. Do you agree with Lodge's "reservations" about the League of Nations? Explain your answer.