

# Impact of wilson's 14 points on today's events essay

[Countries](#), [United States](#)



The question of peace remains to one of the most important issues for consideration in the world of politics and the development of the international relations. A number of countries, including two world giants such as the USA and Russia, cannot come to the same conclusion and understanding that effective international relations and peaceful co-existence are the two main goals that have to be achieved. In history, there were many politicians and philosophers who tried to promote peace and remove hostility among the countries.

In this paper, the 14 points developed by President Wilson in 1918 and the subsequent events will be discussed to comprehend if Wilson's actions could be taken in another way and how they influenced the country and international relations in the early 1900s. Wilson's idealistic approach may be interpreted in different ways, and some of them will be mentioned in this project to underline the strong and weak aspects of the work of the 28th President of the United States.

In 1918, President Wilson introduced his speech with the clearly identified 14 points that declared the importance of world peace and negotiations among the countries around the whole world. Despite the fact that this source underlines how crucial the idea of peace could be, there are still a number of controversies about the worth of this document. These 14 points have been underestimated because of certain subsequent events and numerous political debates.

In this paper, the evaluation of the 14 points developed by Wilson in 1918 will be introduced in regard to the events that occur after Wilson's speech to

comprehend if the essence of such issues as national determination, international affairs, sea freedoms, and free trade were changed with time or if these points were accepted or misunderstood and led to the creation of the conditions under which people could appreciate the idea of peace in a new way.

A number of critics admit that President Woodrow Wilson was one of the best presidents chosen in the USA. Still, at the same time, he was one of those presidents who did not know much about foreign policy. Many foreign politicians admitted that he was too idealistic and tried to make America a neutral country without getting involved in various political debates, conflicts, and wars. At the same time, America had to be introduced as the country with clear political and economic positions that can be used in the development of the international relations.

One of the points Wilson developed in his speech was the necessity of “affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike” (Wilson, 1918, p. 2). His intentions to avoid any possible developments of conflicts and wars were impressive indeed. Still, he was a kind of a dreamer with a number of ideas in his head and with no certain steps that had to be taken to achieve the goals identified.

He offered the solutions that covered the territorial disputes in the world and the international relations that were under threat. He underlined the importance of free trade, freedom of seas, and disarmament. But, he did not

give clear instructions on how to achieve all of them. "Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas," "the removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all nations," and "a free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims" (Wilson, 1918, p. 1) are the points that had a kind of demagogic nature. Wilson's speech was accepted as a powerful encouragement to the German enemies ("Woodrow Wilson's 14 points," n. d., p. 2).

At the same time, they served as a serious motivation for many other nations, and the people in the Middle East also saw their opportunities and decided to strive for their liberation and self-determination (Dawoody, 2014, p. 330).

However, the reasons for why Wilson introduced his points were rather different from how it was accepted by people who heard it. One of the main reasons for why Wilson introduced his 14 points was the thought that there could be an organization that gathered the majority of countries and created the same living, political, and economic conditions for all its participants. He wanted to create a nation free from secret treaties and violations of freedoms (Ladenburg, 2007, p. 49).

Another purpose of the points was the necessity to bring the Germans to the possible peaceful negotiations and the necessity to end the war. Wilson wanted to make Germany leave the lands of Russia and Belgium; but, in his points, there was no identification of the price the Germans had to pay for all

that hunger, ruins, and damage caused by their actions. Many countries, including France, were not ready to accept Germany as the equal to their countries without any penalties being imposed on Germany.

Germany did harm and caused much destruction in many countries, and certain penalties had to be discussed. " We have been attacked; we want security; we have been despoiled; we want restitution; we have been devastated; we want reparation" (Ladenburg, 2007, p. 49). These were the main claims from the French people.

Wilson's speech was also created to raise the questions of national self-determination and against the empire. One of his points was dedicated to the Turkish land and the necessity to assure a secure sovereignty for " the Turkish portion of the present Ottoman Empire" and to promote " an undoubted security of life and absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development" (" Woodrow Wilson's fourteen points," n. d., p. 109).

At the same time, being focused on such territories as Russia, Belgium, France, Italy, Romania, Serbia, Montenegro, etc., Wilson did not want to fight only to protect the particular countries. He wanted to call his nation to " embark on a crusade to end all wars" (Ladenburg, 2007, p. 47). The role of the United States was not clearly identified in international relations. The President had dreams, but he could not understand how all that plans and dreams could come true.

Therefore, such intentions as the promotion of open dealings among nations, sea freedoms, free trade, and disarmament were only words without any logical and real explanations. Though, in his speech, Wilson underlined that “we have laid our whole thought and purpose before the world, not in general terms only, but each time with sufficient definition to make it clear what sort of definite terms of settlement must necessarily spring out of them” (“Wilson's 14 points for peace,” 1918, p. 2).

His speech made many people think about their opportunities and possible roles in a global arena. It seemed like the United States wanted to provide all people with hope. Still, Wilson could not understand that each country could have its own goal, and the goals of different countries varied considerably.

Wilson's approach to diplomacy was idealistic, but its assessment was not quite fair. As soon as the Great War came to its end, the lasting peace was expected. However, the subsequent events changed the way of how Wilson's points were understood and accepted by people from different parts of the world. On one hand, Germany accepted the ideas developed in the speech and agreed to peace talks at the end of the war. It looked like the United States helped to end the war and create a powerful framework for further negotiations (“Woodrow Wilson's fourteen points,” n. d., p. 108).

On the other hand, the fact that not all countries accepted Wilson's position had to be taken into consideration. In 1919, the Peace Conference began. The delegation was ready to use only a few points for the creation of the future Treaty of Versailles. In several months of discussions and negotiations, the

Treaty of Versailles was signed. Though that document had little to do with the points offered by Wilson, his speech was noticed and helped the United States to join the League of Nations.

In fact, the power of the League of Nations was impressive, indeed, at the beginning of the 1900s. Wilson continued believing in the power of all his points because he thought that his words and his ideas helped to stop the war. He wanted to believe that he could easily find the required portion of support of his position and spread the ideas of peaceful relations with the help of the League. However, much opposition was observed from the Allies. Britain did not want to support the idea of sea freedoms.

France wanted penalties introduced to Germany. Wilson had to take several steps to find a compromise among the countries to offer his points as the basis for the Treaty. The results of the Treaty were controversial. The main positive achievements were connected with the chance for the United States to join the League of Nations. Wilson wanted to believe that the country's presence in this League could provide him with a chance to develop his points in the future.

Still, there were several subsequent events that broke Wilson's dreams and plans. First, President Wilson was not fully supported by his country. The ideas of internationalism were not accepted by the U. S. Senate. If Wilson believed that Americans could achieve success in the future by using free global trade opportunities and cooperation with other countries to stabilize its economy and promote the economic growth, Wilson's opponents

underlined the power of the United States in its isolation and the necessity to focus on the domestic economy.

Such contradictions led to the political downfall of President Wilson. In several years, the League of Nations was liquidated and replaced by the United Nations. The participants were not able to make all countries accept the idea of disarmament because of the necessity to be protected against the increased power of Germany and its intentions to take revenge. World War II began, involving more countries. Germany did not want to give up and tried to spread its power in Europe. The League of Nations, Wilson's 14 points, and dreams about a peaceful future were forgotten.

In general, the role of Wilson's 14 points cannot be neglected. It took a serious place in the history and the development of the United States. Though Wilson was an idealist with an extreme desire to promote peace, he demonstrated that even politics could build dreams. Still, his main mistake was the inability to support his interesting ideas with facts and rationalism. People had to understand that Wilson's 14 points were underestimated by the Versailles settlement not because they were weak but because they were created by a person who wanted to achieve a lot without taking the necessary steps to prove the correctness of the choice position.

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