

**INTERNATIONAL LAW  
SITUATIONS: THE  
DECLARATION OF LONDON  
OF FEBRUARY 26, 1909**

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International Law Situations: The Declaration of London of February 26, 1909 by Naval War College

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**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE**

**INTERNATIONAL LAW  
SITUATIONS: THE  
DECLARATION OF LONDON  
OF FEBRUARY 26, 1909**



U. S. NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

INTERNATIONAL LAW TOPICS

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The Declaration of London  
of February 26, 1909

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## PREFACE.

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On the invitation of Great Britain an International Naval Conference assembled at London, December 4, 1908, and signed the Declaration concerning the Laws of Naval War on February 26, 1909. This Declaration was the topic for consideration of the conference of the officers at the Naval War College during the past summer.

The delegates of the United States at the London Conference were Rear-Admiral C. H. Stockton, formerly president of the Naval War College, and Prof. George Grafton Wilson, of Brown University, lecturer on international law at the Naval War College. Professor Wilson presented, as fully as time allowed, to the officers of the conference at the Naval War College the main points of the Declaration of London and the reasons for the adoption of the Declaration by the representatives of the ten naval powers sending delegates to the London Conference.

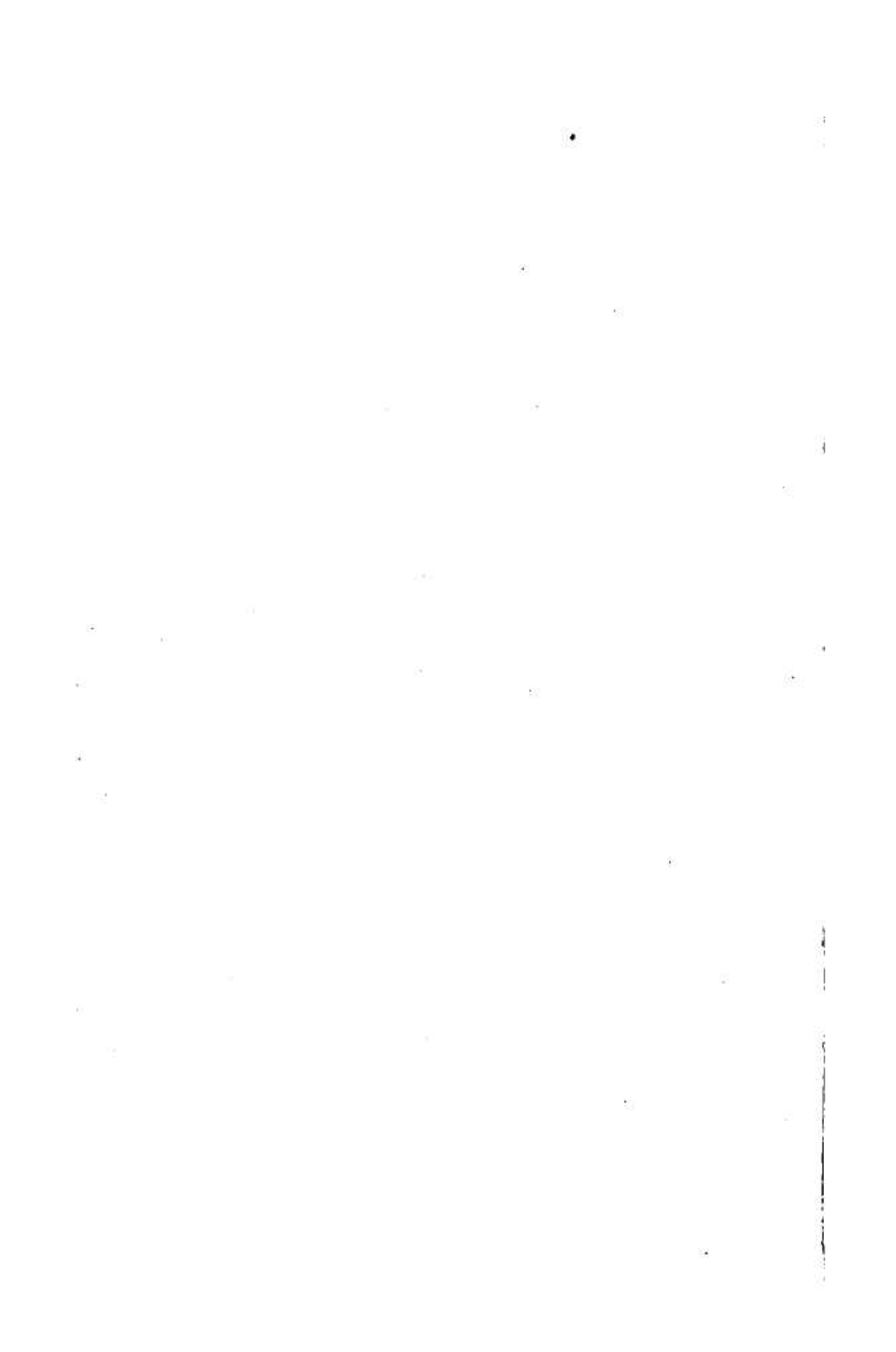
The president of the college invites suggestions from officers of the service as to cases which may arise under the provisions of the Declaration of London.

JNO. P. MERRELL,

*Rear-Admiral, U. S. Navy, President.*

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE,

*Newport, R. I., September 28, 1909.*





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### The Declaration of London, February 26, 1909.

#### INTRODUCTION.

At this time, June, 1909, the period for the ratification of the Declaration of London has not expired. It is also not certain that the Declaration will be ratified. It may be said, however, that even if the Declaration should not be ratified, that it will naturally have a great influence upon maritime international law, being an agreement reached after extended consideration by delegates appointed for the specific purpose by the leading naval powers. In cases which might come to the court at The Hague for decision great weight would be given to this Declaration because it indicates the basis of an agreement between representative powers having differing legal systems. In case of war a state might with propriety issue for the government of vessels of its naval forces regulations which should accord with the provisions of the Declaration of London. More than one-third of the delegates at the London Naval Conference which drew up the Declaration of London were naval officers of experience, one-half of these being of the grade of admiral. The military aspects of the subjects presented to the London Conference were given full consideration, as is shown in the proceedings of the Conference. (British Parliamentary Papers, Miscellaneous, No. 5 (1909) [Cd. 4555]).

It is considered that it will be most useful to the navy of the United States to furnish the general report of the Conference, the French text of which is the official inter-