

The Covenant of the League of Nations (Articles 1, 4-5, 8, and 10), and Lodge Reservations

THE COVENANT OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

THE HIGH CONTRACTING PARTIES, In order to promote international co- operation and to achieve international peace and security by the acceptance of obligations not to resort to war by the prescription of open, just and honourable relations between nations by the firm establishment of the understandings of international law as the actual rule of conduct among Governments, and by the maintenance of justice and a scrupulous respect for all treaty obligations in the dealings of organised peoples with one another Agree to this Covenant of the League of Nations.

ARTICLE 1.

The original Members of the League of Nations shall be those... Signatories... named in... this Covenant and also such of those other States [listed in the covenant]... as shall accede without reservation to this Covenant. Such accession shall be effected by a Declaration deposited with the Secretariat within two months of the coming into force of the Covenant Notice thereof shall be sent to all other Members of the League. Any fully self- governing State, Dominion, or Colony not named in the Annex may become a Member of the League if its admission is agreed to [under the Covenant's rules]... Any Member of the League may, after two years' notice of its intention so to do, withdraw from the League, provided that all its international obligations and all its obligations under this Covenant shall have been fulfilled at the time of its withdrawal....

ARTICLE 4.

The Council shall consist of [the United States, United Kingdom, France, Italy, and Japan] together with Representatives of four other Members of the League. These four Members of the League shall be selected by the Assembly [of the full League] from time to time in its discretion...

ARTICLE 5.

Except where otherwise expressly provided in this Covenant or by the terms of the present Treaty, decisions at any meeting of the Assembly or of the Council shall require the agreement of all the Members of the League represented at the meeting. ...

ARTICLE 8.

The Members of the League recognise that the maintenance of peace requires the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations. The Council, taking account of the geographical situation and circumstances of each State, shall formulate plans for such reduction for the consideration and action of the several Governments...

ARTICLE 10.

The Members of the League undertake to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all Members of the League. In case of any such aggression or in case of any threat or danger of such aggression the Council shall advise upon the means by which this obligation shall be fulfilled.

Henry Cabot Lodge: *Reservations with Regard to the Treaty*

Resolved (two-thirds of the senators present concurring therein), that the Senate advise and consent to the ratification of the treaty of peace with Germany concluded at Versailles on the 28th day of June, 1919, subject to the following reservations and understandings, which are hereby made a part and condition of this resolution of ratification, which ratification is not to take effect or bind the United States until the said reservations and understandings adopted by the Senate have been accepted... by at least three of the four principal allied and associated powers, to wit, Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan:

1. in case of notice of withdrawal from the League of Nations, as provided in [article I], the United States shall be the sole judge as to whether all [i]ts international obligations and all its obligations under the said Covenant have been fulfilled, and notice of withdrawal by the United States may be given by a concurrent resolution of the Congress of the United States.
2. The United States assumes no obligation to preserve the territorial integrity or political independence of any other country or to interfere in controversies between nations — whether members of the League or not — under the provisions of Article 10, or to employ the military or naval forces of the United States under any article of the treaty for any purpose, unless in any particular case the Congress, which, under the Constitution, has the sole power to declare war or authorize the employment of the military or naval forces of the United States, shall by act or joint resolution so provide.
3.
4. The United States reserves to itself exclusively the right to decide what questions are within its domestic jurisdiction and declares that all domestic and political questions relating wholly or in part to its internal affairs, including immigration, labor, coastwise traffic, the tariff, commerce, the suppression of traffic in women and children, and in opium and other dangerous drugs, and all other domestic questions, are solely within the jurisdiction of the United States and are not under this treaty to be submitted in any way either to arbitration or to the consideration of the Council or of the Assembly of the League of Nations, or any agency thereof, or to the decision or recommendation of any other power.
5. The United States will not submit to arbitration or to inquiry by the Assembly or by the Council of the League of Nations provided for in said treaty of peace any questions which in the judgment of the United States depend upon or relate to its long-established policy, commonly known as the Monroe Doctrine; said doctrine is to be interpreted by the United States alone and is hereby declared to be wholly outside the jurisdiction of said League of Nations and entirely unaffected by any provision contained in the said treaty of peace with Germany...

6.
7. The Congress of the United States will provide by law for the appointment of the representatives of the United States in ... the League of Nations, and may in its discretion provide for the participation of the United States in any commission, committee, tribunal, court, council, or conference, or in the selection of any members thereof, and for the appointment of members of said commissions, committees, tribunals, courts, councils, or conferences, or any other representatives under the treaty of peace, or in carrying out its provisions... and no citizen of the United States shall be selected or appointed as a member of said commissions, committees, tribunals, courts, councils, or conferences except with the approval of the Senate of the United States.
8.
9. The United States shall not be obligated to contribute to any expenses of the League of Nations... unless and until an appropriation of funds available for such expenses shall have been made by the Congress of the United States.
10. If the United States shall at any time adopt any plan for the limitation of armaments proposed by the Council of the League of Nations under the provisions of Article 8, it reserves the right to increase such armaments without the consent of the Council whenever the United States is threatened with invasion or engaged in war.
11. The United States reserves the right to permit, in its discretion, the nationals of a Covenant-breaking state... residing within the United States... to continue their commercial, financial, and personal relations with the nationals of the United States.
12.
13.
14. The United States assumes no obligation to be bound by any election, decision, report, or finding of the Council or Assembly in which any member of the League and its self-governing dominions, colonies, or parts of empire, in the aggregate, have cast more than one vote, and assumes no obligation to be bound by any decision, report, or finding of the Council or Assembly arising out of any dispute between the United States and any member of the League if such member, or any self-governing dominion, colony, empire, or part of empire united with it politically has voted.

[Abridged from <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/the-senate-and-the-league-of-nations/> ; Brigham Young University World War I Document Archive, <https://net.lib.byu.edu/~rdh7/wwi/versailles.html> ; and Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/us-treaties/bevans/m-ust000002-0043.pdf>