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Memorandum on the Treaty of Versailles, Undated [1919]

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1918 ?

WHEREAS, If a situation should arise in which any power or combination of powers should directly or indirectly menace the freedom and peace of Europe, the United States would regard such situation with grave concern as a menace to its own freedom and peace, and would consult with other powers affected with a view to concerted action for the removal of such menace.

And whereas the United States can best contribute to the peace and welfare of other nations and can best foster its own moral, social, and economic welfare by preserving undiminished its own sovereign independence, its democratic nationalism and its complete freedom to solve American problems by American methods under American institutions.

And whereas the question of permanent removal of the German menace and matters germane thereto, the forestalling of any future foreign menace to world peace, and the general consultation with foreign governments, when appropriate to these and other matters deemed by it to be of international interest, constitute the only bases of the relation of the United States to the Treaty of Versailles,

Therefore be it Resolved, That the ratification of that Treaty by the United States is made on the following conditions.

1. The United States reserves to itself the unconditional right to withdraw from the league of nations.

2. The United States declines to assume, under the provisions of article 10, or under any other article, any obligation to preserve the territorial integrity or political independence of any other country or to interfere in controversies between other nations, members of the league or not, or to employ the military or naval forces of the United States in such controversies, or to adopt economic measures, for the protection of any

other country, whether a member of the league or not, against external aggression or for the purpose of coercing any other country, or for the purpose of intervention in the internal conflicts or other controversies which may arise in any other country, and no mandates shall be accepted by the United States under article 22, Part 1, of the treaty of peace with Germany, except by action of the Congress of the United States

The United States also declines to recognize the right of any other nation to interfere correspondingly in its own affairs and reserves the right to act and to be treated, whenever it so desires, as a merely consultative party to the treaty.

3. 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 to its affairs, including immigration, coastwise traffic, the tariff, commerce, and all other domestic questions, are solely within the jurisdiction of the United States and are not under this treaty submitted in any way either to arbitration or to the consideration of the council or of the assembly of the league of nations, or to the decision or recommendation of any other power.

4. The United States declines to submit for arbitration or inquiry by the assembly or 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.

5. It shall be agreed on behalf of the British Empire that when the United States votes upon a question not more than one vote of any English-speaking people or people governed or protected by such people shall be counted as voting against the United States .

6. Upon any commissions, boards, or other bodies set up by or under the treaty or the league, the United States shall not be represented unless its representatives shall have been specially appointed for such service after nomination by the President and with the advice and consent of the Senate, and, there shall be no representation of the United States, nor shall any mandate be assumed by the United States, unless specific salaries shall have been voted by Congress for such representation or other action nor during any time for which such appropriations have not been made thus specifically available. And no international meeting provided for under the treaty shall be convened in the United States unless the Congress shall have voted in favor of the convening of such meeting and shall have made the necessary appropriation therefor.

7. The signature and ratification of the treaty by the United States are not applicable to Acts 156, 157 and 158 from which Articles the United States disassociates itself as completely as if said articles had not formed part of the treaty.

8. No instruction involving any right, obligation, or expenditure on the part of the United States under the treaty shall be issued except with the concurrence, advice, and consent of a majority of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, sitting and voting together, and after consultation by them with other committees concerned, upon the question at issue; and no action by any American representation upon any matter arising under the treaty or league shall be binding upon the United States unless taken in pursuance of instructions issued by the President through the Secretary of State after concurrence, advice and consent made on behalf of the Congress as aforesaid.

9. Further, as a part of this act of ratification, the United States in the most broad and general terms reserves to itself the fullest and most complete liberty of action in respect to any report, decision, recommendation, action, advice or

proposals of the league of nations or its executive council, or of any other body created by or under the Treaty, and also the sole right to determine its own relations and duties and course of action toward such league or toward any member thereof or toward any other nation or any body created by or under the treaty in respect to any question, matter or thing that may arise under the treaty, anything in the covenants or constitution of such league or the Treaty of Versailles to the contrary notwithstanding; and the United States also reserves to itself the unconditional right to withdraw from membership in such league and to withdraw from membership in any body, board, commission, committee or organization whatever set up in any part of the treaty for the purpose of aiding its execution or otherwise; effecting by such withdrawal as complete a release from any further obligations and duties under such treaty as if the United States had never been a party thereto.

It is further stipulated that the validity of this ratification depends upon all the terms of this instrument of ratification, and that the acceptance of this ratification by the other principle Allied and Associated Powers implies the acceptance of all of the terms hereof.