

Final Act of the International Peace Conference; July 29, 1899

The International Peace Conference, convoked in the best interests of humanity by His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias, assembled, on the invitation of the Government of Her Majesty the Queen of the Netherlands, in the Royal House in the Wood at The Hague on the 18th May, 1899.

The Powers enumerated in the following list took part in the Conference, to which they appointed the Delegates named below:

[List of Plenipotentiaries]

In a series of meetings, between the 18th May and the 29th July, 1899, in which the constant desire of the Delegates above mentioned has been to realize, in the fullest manner possible, the generous views of the August Initiator of the Conference and the intentions of their Governments, the Conference has agreed, for submission for signature by the Plenipotentiaries, on the text of the Conventions and Declarations enumerated below and annexed to the present Act:

I. Convention for the peaceful adjustment of international differences.

II. Convention regarding the laws and customs of war by land.

III. Convention for the adaptation to maritime warfare of the principles of the Geneva Convention of the 22d August, 1864.

IV. Three Declarations:

1. To prohibit the launching of projectiles and explosives from balloons or by other similar new methods.

2. To prohibit the use of projectiles the only object of which is the diffusion of asphyxiating or deleterious gases.

3. To prohibit the use of bullets which expand or flatten easily in the human body, such as bullets with a hard envelope, of which the envelope does not entirely cover the core, or is pierced with incisions.

These Conventions and Declarations shall form so many separate Acts. These Acts shall be dated this day, and may be signed up to the 31st December, 1899, by the Plenipotentiaries of the Powers represented at the International Peace Conference at The Hague.

Guided by the same sentiments, the Conference has adopted unanimously the following Resolution:

" The Conference is of opinion that the restriction of military charges, which are at present a heavy burden on the world, is extremely desirable for the increase of the material and moral welfare of mankind."

It has, besides, formulated the following wishes:

1. The Conference, taking into consideration the preliminary step taken by the Swiss Federal Government for the revision of the Geneva Convention, expresses the wish that steps may be shortly taken for the assembly of a Special Conference having for its object the revision of that convention.

This wish was voted unanimously.

2. The Conference expresses the wish that the questions of the rights and duties of neutrals may be inserted in the programme of a Conference in the near future.

3. The Conference expresses the wish that the questions with regard to rifles and naval guns, as considered by it, may be studied by the Governments with the object of coming to an agreement respecting the employment of new types and calibers.

4. The Conference expresses the wish that the Governments, taking into consideration the proposals made at the Conference, may examine the possibility of an agreement as to the limitation of armed forces by land and sea, and of war budgets.

5. The Conference expresses the wish that the proposal, which contemplates the declaration of the inviolability of private property in naval warfare, may be referred to a subsequent Conference for consideration.

6. The Conference expresses the wish that the proposal to settle the question of the bombardment of posts, towns, and villages by a naval force may be referred to a subsequent Conference for consideration.

The last five wishes were voted unanimously, saving some abstentions.

In faith of which, the Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Act, and have affixed their seals thereto.

Done at The Hague, 29th July, 1899, in one copy only, which shall be deposited in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and of which copies, duly certified, shall be delivered to all the Powers represented at the Conference.

[Signatures.]

Source:

The Hague Peace Conferences of 1899 and 1907

A Series of Lectures Delivered before the Johns Hopkins University in the Year 1908

By James Brown Scott

Technical delegate of the United States to the Second Peace Conference at the Hague

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