



OEA/Ser.X.12 (English)

# MEETINGS OF CONSULTATION OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**COLLECTION OF FINAL ACTS**  
(the First through the Tenth Meetings)

**VOLUME I**



REUNION CONSULTIVA DE LOS MINISTROS DE RELACIONES EXTERIORES  
DE LAS REPUBLICAS AMERICANAS

SECRETARIA GENERAL

FINAL ACT

OF THE

MEETING OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF THE AMERICAN  
REPUBLICS FOR CONSULTATION UNDER THE INTER-AMERICAN  
AGREEMENTS OF BUENOS AIRES AND LIMA

Panama, Republic of Panama  
September 23 to October 3, 1939



XV.

DECLARATION OF PANAMA

The Governments of the American Republics meeting at Panama, have solemnly ratified their neutral status in the conflict which is disrupting the peace of Europe, but the present war may lead to unexpected results which may affect the fundamental interests of America and there can be no justification for the interests of the belligerents to prevail over the rights of neutrals causing disturbances and suffering to nations which by their neutrality in the conflict and their distance from the scene of events, should not be burdened with its fatal and painful consequences.

During the World War of 1914-1918 the Governments of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru advanced, or supported, individual proposals providing in principle a declaration by the American Republics that the belligerent nations must refrain from committing hostile acts within a reasonable distance from their shores.

The nature of the present conflagration, in spite of its already lamentable proportions, would not justify any obstruction to inter-American communications which, engendered by important interests, call for adequate protection, This fact requires the demarcation of a zone of security including all the normal maritime routes of communication and trade between the countries of America.

To this end it is essential as a measure of necessity to adopt immediately provisions based on the above-mentioned precedents for the safeguarding of such interests in order to



avoid a repetition of the damages and sufferings sustained by the American nations and by their citizens in the war of 1914-1918.

There is no doubt that the Governments of the American Republics must foresee those dangers and as a measure of self-protection insist that the waters to a reasonable distance from their coasts shall remain free from the commission of hostile acts or from the undertaking of belligerent activities by nations engaged in a war in which the said governments are not involved.

For these reasons the Governments of the American Republics RESOLVE AND HEREBY DECLARE:

1. As a measure of continental self-protection, the American Republics, so long as they maintain their neutrality, are as of inherent right entitled to have those waters adjacent to the American continent, which they regard as of primary concern and direct utility in their relations, free from the commission of any hostile act by any non-American belligerent nation, whether such hostile act be attempted or made from land, sea or air.

Such waters shall be defined as follows. All waters comprised within the limits set forth hereafter except the territorial waters of Canada and of the undisputed colonies and possessions of European countries within these limits:

Beginning at the terminus of the United States-Canada boundary in Passamaquoddy Bay, in  $44^{\circ} 46' 36''$  north latitude, and  $66^{\circ} 54' 11''$  west longitude;

Thence due east along the parallel  $44^{\circ} 46' 36''$  to a point  $60^{\circ}$  west of Greenwich;

Thence due south to a point in  $20^{\circ}$  north latitude;

Thence by a rhumb line to a point in  $5^{\circ}$  north latitude,  $24^{\circ}$  west longitude;

Thence due south to a point in  $20^{\circ}$  south latitude;



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Thence by a rhumb line to a point in  $59^{\circ}$  south latitude,  $57^{\circ}$  west longitude;

Thence due west to a point in  $80^{\circ}$  west longitude;

Thence by a rhumb line to a point on the equator in  $97^{\circ}$  west longitude;

Thence by a rhumb line to a point in  $15^{\circ}$  north latitude,  $120^{\circ}$  west longitude;

Thence by a rhumb line to a point in  $48^{\circ} 29' 38''$  north latitude,  $136^{\circ}$  west longitude;

Thence due east to the Pacific terminus of the United States-Canada boundary in the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

2. The Governments of the American Republics agree that they will endeavor, through joint representation to such belligerents as may now or in the future be engaged in hostilities, to secure the compliance by them with the provisions of this Declaration, without prejudice to the exercise of the individual rights of each State inherent in their sovereignty.

3. The Governments of the American Republics further declare that whenever they consider it necessary they will consult together to determine upon the measures which they may individually or collectively undertake in order to secure the observance of the provisions of this Declaration.

4. The American Republics, during the existence of a state of war in which they themselves are not involved, may undertake, whenever they may determine that the need therefor exists, to patrol, either individually or collectively, as may be agreed upon by common consent, and in so far as the means and resources of each may permit, the waters adjacent to their coasts within the area above defined.

(Approved, October 3, 1939)