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TERMS OF ARMISTICE SIGNED BY GERMANY

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ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

TO THE

JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1918

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 18, 1918.—Referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs
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TERMS OF ARMISTICE SIGNED BY GERMANY

GENTLEMEN OF THE CONGRESS: In these anxious times of rapid and stupendous change it will in some degree lighten my sense of responsibility to perform in person the duty of communicating to you some of the larger circumstances of the situation with which it is necessary to deal.

The German authorities who have, at the invitation of the Supreme War Council, been in communication with Marshal Foch have accepted and signed the terms of armistice which he was authorized and instructed to communicate to them. Those terms are as follows:

I. MILITARY CLAUSES ON WESTERN FRONT.

One. Cessation of operations by land and in the air six hours after the signature of the armistice.

Two. Immediate evacuation of invaded countries: Belgium, France, Alsace Lorraine, Luxemburg, so ordered as to be completed within fourteen days from the signature of the armistice. German troops which have not left the above mentioned territories within the period fixed will become prisoners of war. Occupation by the Allied and United States forces jointly will keep pace with evacuation in these areas. All movements of evacuation and occupation will be regulated in accordance with a note annexed to the stated terms.

Three. Repatriation beginning at once and to be completed within fourteen days of all inhabitants of the countries above mentioned, including hostages and persons under trial or convicted.

Four. Surrender in good condition by the German armies of the following equipment: five thousand guns (two thousand five hundred heavy, two thousand five hundred field), thirty thousand machine guns. Three thousand minenwerfer. Two thousand aeroplanes (fighters, bombers—firstly D. Seventy three's and night bombing machines). The above to be delivered in Simmstu to the Allies and United States troops in accordance with the detailed conditions laid down in the annexed note.

Five. Evacuation by the German armies of the countries on the left bank of the Rhine. These countries on the left bank of the Rhine shall be administered by the local authorities under the control of the Allied and United States armies of occupation. The occupation of these territories will be determined by Allied and United States garrisons holding the principal crossings of the Rhine, Mayence, Coblenz, Cologne, together with bridgeheads at these points in thirty kilometer radius on the right bank and by garrisons similarly holding the strategic points of the regions. A neutral zone shall be reserved on the right of the Rhine between the stream and a line drawn parallel to it forty kilometers to the east from the frontier of Holland to the parallel of Gernsheim and as far as practicable a distance of thirty kilometers from the east of stream from this parallel upon Swiss frontier. Evacuation by the enemy of the Rhine lands shall be so ordered as to be completed within a further period of eleven days, in all nineteen days after the signature of the armistice. All movements of evacuation and occupation will be regulated according to the note annexed.

Six. In all territory evacuated by the enemy there shall be no evacuation of inhabitants; no damage or harm shall be done to the persons or property of the inhabitants. No destruction of any kind to be committed. Military establishments of all kinds shall be delivered intact as well as military stores of food, munitions, equipment not removed during the periods fixed for evacuation. Stores of food of all kinds for the civil population, cattle, etc., shall be left *in situ*. Industrial establishments shall not be impaired in any way and their personnel shall not be moved. Roads and means of communication of every kind, railroad, waterways, main roads, bridges, telegraphs, telephones, shall be in no manner impaired.

Seven. All civil and military personnel at present employed on them shall remain. Five thousand locomotives, fifty thousand wagons and ten thousand motor lorries in good working order with all necessary spare parts and fittings shall be delivered to the Associated Powers within the period fixed for the evacuation of Belgium and Luxemburg. The railways of Alsace Lorraine shall be handed over within the same period, together with all pre-war personnel and material. Further material necessary for the working of railways in the country on the left bank of the Rhine shall be left *in situ*. All stores of coal and material for the up-keep of permanent ways, signals and repair shops left entire *in situ* and kept in an efficient state by Germany during the whole period of armistice. All barges taken from the Allies shall be restored to them. A note appended regulates the details of these measures.

Eight. The German command shall be responsible for revealing all mines or delay acting fuses disposed on territory evacuated by the German troops and shall assist in their discovery and destruction. The German command shall also reveal all destructive measures that may have been taken (such as poisoning or polluting of springs, wells, etc.) under penalty of reprisals.

Nine. The right of requisition shall be exercised by the Allied and the United States armies in all occupied territory. The up-keep of the troops of occupation in the Rhine land (excluding Alsace-Lorraine) shall be charged to the German Government.

Ten. An immediate repatriation without reciprocity according to detailed conditions which shall be fixed, of all Allied and United States prisoners of war. The Allied Powers and the United States shall be able to dispose of these prisoners as they wish.

Eleven. Sick and wounded who cannot be removed from evacuated territory will be cared for by German personnel who will be left on the spot with the medical material required.

II. DISPOSITION RELATIVE TO THE EASTERN FRONTIERS OF GERMANY.

Twelve. All German troops at present in any territory which before the war belonged to Russia, Roumania or Turkey shall withdraw within the frontiers of Germany as they existed on August first, 1914.

Thirteen. Evacuation by German troops to begin at once and all German instructors, prisoners, and civilian as well as military agents, now on the territory of Russia (as defined before 1914) to be recalled.

Fourteen. German troops to cease at once all requisitions and seizures and any other undertaking with a view to obtaining supplies intended for Germany in Roumania and Russia (as defined on August first 1914.)

Fifteen. Abandonment of the treaties of Bucharest and Brest-Litovsk and of the supplementary treaties.

Sixteen. The Allies shall have free access to the territories evacuated by the Germans on their eastern frontier either through Danzig or by the Vistula in order to convey supplies to the populations of those territories or for any other purpose.

III. CLAUSE CONCERNING EAST AFRICA.

Seventeen. Unconditional capitulation of all German forces operating in East Africa within one month.

IV. GENERAL CLAUSES.

Eighteen. Repatriation, without reciprocity, within a maximum period of one month, in accordance with detailed conditions hereafter to be fixed, of all civilians interned or deported who may be citizens of other Allied or Associated States than those mentioned in clause three, paragraph nineteen, with the reservation that any future claims and demands of the Allies and the United States of America remain unaffected.

Nineteen. The following financial conditions are required: Reparation for damage done. While such armistice lasts no public securities shall be removed by the enemy which can serve as a pledge to the Allies for the recovery or repatriation for war losses. Immediate restitution of the cash deposit, in the National Bank of Belgium, and in general immediate return of all documents, specie, stocks, shares, paper money together with plant for the issue thereof, touching public or private interests in the invaded countries. Restitution of the Russian and Roumanian gold yielded to Germany or taken by that power. This gold to be delivered in trust to the Allies until the signature of peace.

V. NAVAL CONDITIONS.

Twenty. Immediate cessation of all hostilities at sea and definite information to be given as to the location and movements of all German ships. Notification to be given to neutrals that freedom of navigation in all territorial waters is given to the naval and mercantile marines of the Allied and Associated Powers, all questions of neutrality being waived.

Twenty one. All naval and mercantile marine prisoners of war of the Allied and Associated Powers in German hands to be returned without reciprocity.

Twenty two. Surrender to the Allies and the United States of America of one hundred and sixty German submarines (including all submarine cruisers and mine laying submarines) with their complete armament and equipment in ports which will be specified by the Allies and the United States of America. All other submarines to be paid off and completely disarmed and placed under the supervision of the Allied Powers and the United States of America.

Twenty three. The following German surface warships which shall be designated by the Allies and the United States of America shall forthwith be disarmed and thereafter interned in neutral ports, or, for the want of them, in Allied ports, to be designated by the Allies and the United States of America and placed under the surveillance of the Allies and the United States of America, only care-takers being left on board, namely: Six battle cruisers, ten battleships, eight light cruisers, including two mine layers, fifty destroyers of the most modern type. All other surface warships (including river craft) are to be concentrated in German naval bases to be designated by the Allies and the United States of America, and are to be paid off and completely disarmed and placed under the supervision of the Allies and the United States of America. All vessels of the auxiliary fleet (trawlers, motor vessels, etc.) are to be disarmed.

Twenty four. The Allies and the United States of America shall have the right to sweep up all mine fields and obstructions laid by Germany outside German territorial waters, and the positions of these are to be indicated.

Twenty five. Freedom of access to and from the Baltic to be given to the naval and mercantile marines of the Allied and Associated Powers. To secure this the Allies and the United States of America shall be empowered to occupy all German forts, fortifications, batteries and defense works of all kinds in all the entrances from the Categat into the Baltic, and to sweep up all mines and obstructions within and without German territorial waters without any question of neutrality being raised, and the positions of all such mines and obstructions are to be indicated.

Twenty six. The existing blockade conditions set up by the Allies and Associated Powers are to remain unchanged and all German merchant ships found at sea are to remain liable to capture.

Twenty seven. All naval aircraft are to be concentrated and immobilized in German bases to be specified by the Allies and the United States of America.

Twenty eight. In evacuating the Belgian coasts and ports, Germany shall abandon all merchant ships, tugs, lighters, cranes and all other harbor materials, all materials for inland navigation, all aircraft and all materials and stores, all arms and armaments, and all stores and apparatus of all kinds.

Twenty nine. All Black Sea ports are to be evacuated by Germany; all Russian war vessels of all descriptions seized by Germany in the

Black Sea are to be handed over to the Allies and the United States of America; all neutral merchant vessels seized are to be released; all warlike and other materials of all kinds seized in those ports are to be returned and German materials as specified in clause twenty eight are to be abandoned.

Thirty. All merchant vessels in German hands belonging to the Allied and Associated Powers are to be restored in ports to be specified by the Allies and the United States of America without reciprocity.

Thirty one. No destruction of ships or of materials to be permitted before evacuation, surrender or restoration.

Thirty two. The German Government shall formally notify the neutral Governments of the world, and particularly the Governments of Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Holland, that all restrictions placed on the trading of their vessels with the Allied and Associated Countries, whether by the German Government or by private German interests, and whether in return for specific concessions such as the export of shipbuilding materials or not, are immediately canceled.

Thirty three. No transfers of German merchant shipping of any description to any neutral flag are to take place after signature of the armistice.

VI. DURATION OF ARMISTICE.

Thirty four. The duration of the armistice is to be thirty days, with option to extend. During this period, on failure of execution of any of the above clauses, the armistice may be denounced by one of the contracting parties, on forty eight hours previous notice.

VII. TIME LIMIT FOR REPLY.

Thirty five. This armistice to be accepted or refused by Germany within seventy two hours of notification.

The war thus comes to an end; for, having accepted these terms of armistice, it will be impossible for the German command to renew it.

It is not now possible to assess the consequences of this great consummation. We know only that this tragical war, whose consuming flames swept from one nation to another until all the world was on fire, is at an end and that it was the privilege of our own people to

enter it at its most critical juncture in such fashion and in such force as to contribute in a way of which we are all deeply proud to the great result. We know, too, that the object of the war is attained; the object upon which all free men had set their hearts; and attained with a sweeping completeness which even now we do not realize. Armed imperialism such as the men conceived who were but yesterday the masters of Germany is at an end, its illicit ambitions engulfed in black disaster. Who will now seek to revive it? The arbitrary power of the military caste of Germany which once could secretly and of its own single choice disturb the peace of the world is discredited and destroyed. And more than that,—much more than that,—has been accomplished. The great nations which associated themselves to destroy it have now definitely united in the common purpose to set up such a peace as will satisfy the longing of the whole world for disinterested justice, embodied in settlements which are based upon something much better and much more lasting than the selfish competitive interests of powerful states. There is no longer conjecture as to the objects the victors have in mind. They have a mind in the matter, not only, but a heart also. Their avowed and concerted purpose is to satisfy and protect the weak as well as to accord their just rights to the strong.

The humane temper and intention of the victorious governments has already been manifested in a very practical way. Their representatives in the Supreme War Council at Versailles have by unanimous resolution assured the peoples of the Central Empires that everything that is possible in the circumstances will be done to supply them with food and relieve the distressing want that is in so many places threatening their very lives; and steps are to be taken immediately to organize these efforts at relief in the same systematic manner that they were organized in the case of Belgium. By the use of the idle tonnage of the Central Empires it ought presently to be possible to lift the fear of utter misery from their oppressed populations and set their minds and energies free for the great and hazardous tasks of political reconstruction which now face them on every hand. Hunger does not breed reform; it breeds madness and all the ugly distempers that make an ordered life impossible.

For with the fall of the ancient governments which rested like an incubus upon the peoples of the Central Empires has come political

change not merely, but revolution; and revolution which seems as yet to assume no final and ordered form but to run from one fluid change to another, until thoughtful men are forced to ask themselves, With what governments, and of what sort, are we about to deal in the making of the covenants of peace? With what authority will they meet us, and with what assurance that their authority will abide and sustain securely the international arrangements into which we are about to enter? There is here matter for no small anxiety and misgiving. When peace is made, upon whose promises and engagements besides our own is it to rest?

Let us be perfectly frank with ourselves and admit that these questions cannot be satisfactorily answered now or at once. But the moral is not that there is little hope of an early answer that will suffice. It is only that we must be patient and helpful and mindful above all of the great hope and confidence that lie at the heart of what is taking place. Excesses accomplish nothing. Unhappy Russia has furnished abundant recent proof of that. Disorder immediately defeats itself. If excesses should occur, if disorder should for a time raise its head, a sober second thought will follow and a day of constructive action, if we help and do not hinder.

The present and all that it holds belongs to the nations and the peoples who preserve their self-control and the orderly processes of their governments; the future to those who prove themselves the true friends of mankind. To conquer with arms is to make only a temporary conquest; to conquer the world by earning its esteem is to make permanent conquest. I am confident that the nations that have learned the discipline of freedom and that have settled with self-possession to its ordered practice are now about to make conquest of the world by the sheer power of example and of friendly helpfulness.

The peoples who have but just come out from under the yoke of arbitrary government and who are now coming at last into their freedom will never find the treasures of liberty they are in search of if they look for them by the light of the torch. They will find that every pathway that is stained with the blood of their own brothers leads to the wilderness, not to the seat of their hope. They are now face to face with their initial test. We must hold the light steady until they find themselves. And in the meantime, if it be possible, we

must establish a peace that will justly define their place among the nations, remove all fear of their neighbours and of their former masters, and enable them to live in security and contentment when they have set their own affairs in order. I, for one, do not doubt their purpose or their capacity. There are some happy signs that they know and will choose the way of self-control and peaceful accommodation. If they do, we shall put our aid at their disposal in every way that we can. If they do not, we must await with patience and sympathy the awakening and recovery that will assuredly come at last.



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