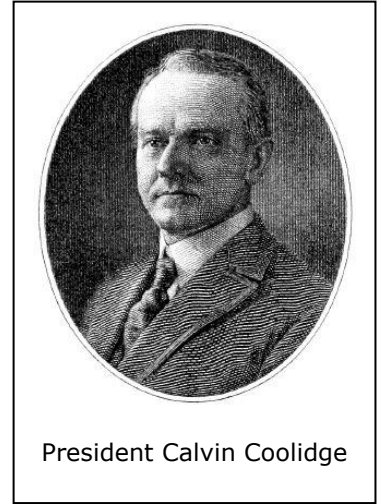


Seventieth Congress

Dec. 5, 1927-Mar. 3, 1929

Second Administration of Calvin Coolidge

Historical Background.....	1
War or Peace?	2
Economic Trends and Conditions.....	3
Major Treaties.....	5
Landmark U.S. Supreme Court Decisions.....	5
1927 Events.....	6
1928 Events.....	6
Major Acts.....	7



Historical Background

Heavy rains beginning in the summer and autumn of 1926 resulted in what, to this day, were the most damaging riverine floods in United States history. By the time the flood waters had fully receded in August 1927, the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 inundated over 27,000 square miles and left 700,000 homeless. In response, Congress enacted the Flood Control Act of 1927, which appropriated \$325 million over 10 years to create a system of levees and other measures aimed at preventing similar calamities along the Mississippi River floodplain.

In foreign affairs, the 70th Congress transpired during a period of great hope in the ability of intergovernmental organizations and dialogue to forestall the devastation of armed conflicts. In August 1927, the United States became a party to the General Treaty for Renunciation of War as an Instrument of National Policy, better known as the Kellogg-Briand Pact. The Pact, to which 62 nations would ultimately become signatories, abjured the use of war as a tactical means to achieve a state's foreign policy goals and actively encouraged dialogue. Be that as it may, the renewal of civil war in Nicaragua led to the Coolidge Administration re-establishing military occupation in that country to maintain stability and protect U.S. interests.

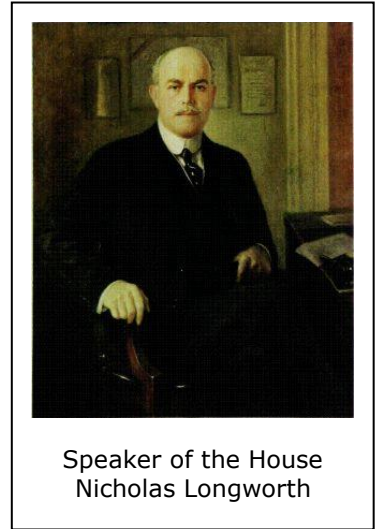
In the country's interior, the 70th Congress continued the tradition of conserving the nation's natural heritage with the enactment of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act. The Act created the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission with a mandate to consider recommendations by the Secretary of the Interior for lands to be purchased or leased by the Federal government for the purpose of conserving migratory bird habitats. The Congress also enacted the McSweeney-McNary Act, which authorized the first comprehensive survey of forest reserves in the United States, on both public and private lands.

House	Senate
Majority Party: Republican (238 seats)	Majority Party: Republican (48 seats)
Minority Party: Democrat (194 seats)	Minority Party: Democrat (46 seats)
Other Parties: Farmer-Labor (2 seats); Socialist (1 seat)	Other Parties: Farmer-Labor (1 seat); Vacant (1 seat)
Speaker of the House: Nicholas Longworth	Majority Leader: Charles Curtis

Concerned for what was characterized as the nation's languishing merchant marine, Congress passed the Jones-White Act of 1928, which increased mail subsidies appropriated \$250 million for construction loans, and authorized the sale of the remaining Government-owned merchant vessels. This Act permitted private companies to obtain first-class ships at about one-tenth of their original cost and underwrote the construction of 68 new vessels. Finally, in February 1928, the Congress enacted the Administration of American Samoa, which formally accepted the seven Pacific islands comprising American Samoa which had originally been ceded to the United States in 1900 and 1904 by the native chiefs.

Source:

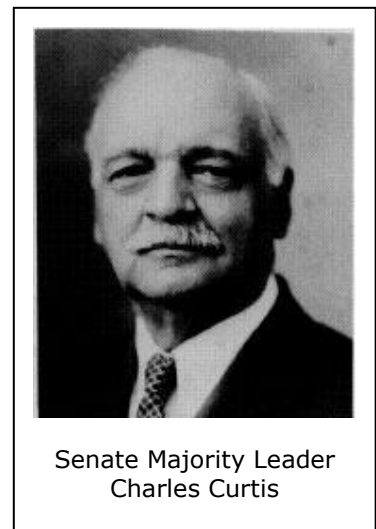
Dell, Christopher and Stephen W. Stathis. [Major Acts of Congress and Treaties Approved by the Senate, 1789-1980](#). Government Division (CRS), Sept. 1, 1982. 97th Congress, 2nd Session, 82-156 GOV. ProQuest Congressional, CRS-1982-GOV-0005



War or Peace?

Isolationism at Home – A Commitment to Peace Abroad

After the catastrophic death and destruction of the First World War, Americans had little appetite for further armed conflict. During his 1927 State of the Union Address, President Coolidge stressed that the country was at peace. Nevertheless, he argued that there remained a need for maintaining a moderate military force solely for defense. An important part of this was the President's priority for developing U.S. defensive air power. He therefore outlined a five-year development program for military aeronautics. The President also argued that it was time to do away with the "Old World policy of competitive armaments," which was expensive to maintain and put the world in danger of future, more destructive wars. Citing the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922 as an example, President Coolidge pledged that the United States would continue to seek further arms limitations initiatives such as those carried out under the auspices of the League of Nations.



Though the United States never ratified the Treaty of Versailles or joined the League of Nations, this did not mean that the nation was uninvolved in international efforts to forestall future, devastating armed conflicts. To this end, the United States participated in several international initiatives aimed at increasing dialogue and understanding and mitigating conflict. Perhaps the most significant of these initiatives resulted in the General Treaty for Renunciation of War as an Instrument of National Policy, or, more concisely, the Kellogg-Briand Pact. Sponsored by the United States and France and named for the document's authors—U.S. Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg and French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand—the Pact bound signatory states from using war as a matter of tactical policy for the resolution of International disputes. There was a strong current of isolationism among many in the Congress during this period, which complicated efforts to enjoin the U.S. to any international agreements, the Kellogg-Briand Pact avoided these concerns, in the first place because it was organized independently of

the League of Nations, but also it did not include a robust mechanism for ensuring the compliance of signatory nations.

Occupation of Nicaragua

In Nicaragua, civil war broke out after ultra-conservative former President Emiliano Chamorro deposed the recently elected government in a coup d'état on August 28, 1925. A small contingent of United States Marines had occupied the country since 1912 to maintain stability and protect American interests after a series of coups and periods of unrest. A new government, led by Conservative Party President Carlos Solórzano and Liberal Party Vice President Dr. Juan B. Sacasa, was installed following elections in 1924, at which time the U.S. determined that it was safe to end the occupation, exiting August 3, 1925. Less than a month later, former President Chamorro seized the opportunity and engineered a coup.

The United States refused to recognize Chamorro's Presidency due to its extra-constitutional origin. The situation rapidly deteriorated, with exiled political leaders from both the Liberal and Conservative parties returning to the country, seeing an opportunity in the resultant chaos. The Coolidge Administration attempted to defuse matters by calling for a truce and hosting peace negotiations between members of the Liberal and Conservative parties aboard the USS Denver docked in Nicaragua's Bluefields Harbor in October 1926. The negotiations were fruitless and fighting resumed the following month. Chamorro resigned the Presidency later that month and Conservative Party member Adolfo Diaz, who was the United States's preferred candidate, assumed the Presidency on November 14. However, the government still faced members of the Liberal Party who were armed by the Mexican government.

Hoping to avoid direct participation in the conflict by U.S. Marines, President Coolidge dispatched his Secretary of State, Henry L. Stimson, to negotiate a settlement. The agreement, signed at the town of Tipitapa on May 4, 1927, stipulated that Adolfo Diaz would remain President until new elections could be held in 1928, and required that both sides in the conflict disarm.

Sources:

Coolidge, Calvin. [*Message of the President of the United States Communicated to the Two Houses of Congress at the Beginning of the First Session of the Seventieth Congress 1927*](#). House, Dec. 6, 1927. 70th Congress, 1st Session, H.doc.1 (Pr30.1:927). ProQuest Congressional, 8897 H.doc.1

Coolidge, Calvin. [*Message of the President of the United States Communicated to the Two Houses of Congress at the Beginning of the Second Session of the Seventieth Congress 1928*](#). House, Dec. 4, 1928. 70th Congress, 2nd Session, H.doc.344 (Pr30.1:928). ProQuest Congressional, 9035 H.doc.344

Economic Trends and Conditions

In 1927 wages were high and unemployment low. While parts of the agricultural sector had not fully recovered from the postwar depression, these difficulties were generally met by greater gains in the larger economy.

Nevertheless, agricultural policy reform aimed at providing relief for struggling farmers was high on the President's agenda. Moreover, President Coolidge insisted during his 1927 address before the Congress that "stocks of goods are moderate and wholesome caution is prevalent," indicating general health in the economy as a whole. The President also emphasized the need to pay off the national debt incurred during World War I through "financial sacrifices, accompanied by a stern self-denial in public expenditures," and believed that tax reduction would both help the economy and reduce the public debt.

The President evinced even greater confidence in his 1928 State of the Union Address, claiming that "the country can regard the present with satisfaction and anticipate the future with optimism." Agriculture had made marked improvements over the course of 1928, if not uniform ones. The livestock industry had attained a balance while cash grains, hay, tobacco and potatoes brought in smaller returns than the previous year. Coolidge continued to emphasize the problem of crop surplus due to overextension of acreage, while maintaining the stance that the Government should not assume sole responsibility for the health of the agricultural sector.

Throughout 1927 and 1928 the stock market rose almost without exception. However, speculation was becoming a matter of serious concern in the stock market during this period, with stocks being bought overwhelmingly on margin, which is to say investors made orders to purchase stocks though they didn't have the capital to pay for them, instead relying on their confidence that gains in the value of the stocks could be used to pay for them retroactively. The long bull market began in the early-1920s of good earnings, and then continued because of misplaced confidence in the market.

Sources:

Coolidge, Calvin. [*Message of the President of the United States Communicated to the Two Houses of Congress at the Beginning of the First Session of the Seventieth Congress 1927*](#). House, Dec. 6, 1927. 70th Congress, 1st Session, H.doc.1 (Pr30.1:927). ProQuest Congressional, 8897 H.doc.1

Coolidge, Calvin. [*Message of the President of the United States Communicated to the Two Houses of Congress at the Beginning of the Second Session of the Seventieth Congress 1928*](#). House, Dec. 4, 1928. 70th Congress, 2nd Session, H.doc.344 (Pr30.1:928). ProQuest Congressional, 9035 H.doc.344

Mellon, Andrew W. [*Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on the state of the finances for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1927*](#). Department of Treasury. Nov. 19, 1927, 70th Congress, 1st Session. H.doc.9 (T1.1:927) ProQuest Congressional. 8902 H.doc.9

Mellon, Andrew W. [*Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on the state of the finances for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1928*](#). Department of Treasury. Nov. 20, 1928, 70th Congress, 1st Session. H.doc.351 (T1.1:928) ProQuest Congressional. 9039 H.doc.351

Joint Committee on Economics. [*Great Depression: Can It Happen Again?*](#) GPO, Oct. 29, 1979. 96th Congress, 1st Session, 80-J841-22 (Y4.Ec7:D44). ProQuest Congressional, HRG-1979-EJ-0021

Major Treaties

Kellogg-Briand Pact. Renounced war as an instrument of national policy and advocated arbitration as the appropriate means for settling international controversies. Concluded Aug. 17, 1928. Approved by the Senate Jan. 15, 1929 ([46 Stat. 2343](#))

Source:

Dell, Christopher and Stephen W. Stathis. [Major Acts of Congress and Treaties Approved by the Senate, 1789-1980](#), Government Division (CRS), Sept. 1, 1982. 97th Congress, 2nd Session, 82-156 GOV. ProQuest Congressional, CRS-1982-GOV-0005

Landmark U.S. Supreme Court Decisions

McGrain v. Daugherty, holding that Congress has the authority to compel witness and testimony. 273 U.S. 135 (1927)

DiSanto v. Pennsylvania, holding that a Pennsylvania statute requiring persons who engage in the sale of steamship tickets or transportation to and from foreign countries to procure a license violates the Constitution's commerce clause. 273 U.S. 34 (1927)

Nixon v. Herndon, holding that a Texas statute restricting participation in Democratic Party primaries to white voters violated the Fourteenth Amendment. 273 U.S. 536 (1927)

Buck v. Bell, holding that a Virginia statute permitting compulsory sterilization of the "unfit" did not violate the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. 274 U.S. 200 (1927)

Whitney v. California, holding the states have the authority in exercising their police power to limit speech "inimical to the public welfare." 274 U.S. 357 (1927)

Bedford Cut Stone Co. v. Journeymen Stone Cutters Assn., holding that a coalition of union stonecutters who sought to interfere with interstate commerce of certain producers of building stone by declaring their stone "unfair" and forbidding their members from working on it was a violation of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. (1967). 274 U.S. 37 (1927)

Gong Lum v. Rice, holding that a Mississippi law that denied the admission of a Chinese-American student to a state high school did not violate the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Effectively overturned by *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). 275 U.S. 78 (1927)

Olmstead v. United States, holding the admissibility of illegally-obtained phone wiretaps as evidence. Overturned by *Katz v. U.S.* (1967). 277 U.S. 438 (1928)

Source:

1927 Events

- **Jan. 7:** First transatlantic telephone call is made via radio from New York City to London
- **Jan. – Aug.:** [Great Mississippi Flood of 1927](#)
- **Feb.:** Werner Heisenberg publishes his uncertainty principle at the University of Copenhagen
- **Mar. 9:** *Weimar Republic* - The German state of Bavaria lifts the ban on public speaking for National Socialist (Nazi) Party leader Adolf Hitler that was imposed as a condition of his early release from prison following the Beer Hall Putsch
- **Apr. 12:** Shanghai Massacre of 1927 involving the violent suppression of the Chinese Communist Party by conservative factions in the Chinese Nationalist Party marking the start of the Chinese Civil War
- **May 20:** Saudi Arabia becomes independent from the United Kingdom by the Treaty of Jeddah
- **May 20-21:** [Charles Lindbergh makes the first solo, nonstop transatlantic flight from New York to Paris in his single-engine aircraft, the Spirit of St. Louis](#)
- **Aug. 1:** The Communist Chinese People's Liberation Army is formed during the Nanchang Uprising
- **Sept. 25:** [Convention to Suppress the Slave Trade and Slavery is signed by the League of Nations abolishing all slavery](#)
- **Oct. 4:** [Work begins on Mount Rushmore in South Dakota](#)
- **Oct. 6:** The Jazz Singer, the first feature-length 'talkie' motion picture opens in the U.S.
- **Nov. 12:** [Leon Trotsky is expelled from the Soviet Communist Party](#)

1928 Events

- **Feb. 11-19:** The first Winter Olympics to be held as a separate event take place in St. Moritz, Switzerland
- **Mar. 20:** *Weimar Republic* - The Nazi Party wins 2.6% of the vote in the German Reichstag (legislature) elections
- **Apr. 10:** The Republican Party primary Mayoral election in Chicago, Illinois is marred by violence as scandal-tainted former Mayor William Hale Thompson, who supported lax enforcement of prohibition in Chicago and therefore gained the support of organized crime figures, including Al Capone, vied for the nomination against U.S. Senator from Illinois Charles Deneen. The event was dubbed the "Pineapple Primary," due to the similarity between hand grenades and pineapples
- **May 3:** Jinan Incident, a conflict between the Japanese Imperial Army allied with Northern Chinese warlords and the Kuomintang's

southern army, occurs in Jinan, China during Kuomintang's Northern Expedition

- **May 7:** Voting age of women in the United Kingdom lowered from 30 to 21 giving them equal suffrage with men
- **May 10:** The first regular schedule of television programming begins in Schenectady, New York by the General Electric's television station W2XB
- **June 17–18:** [Amelia Earhart becomes the first woman to make a successful Transatlantic flight as a passenger](#)
- **Aug. 27:** [The Kellogg–Briand Pact is signed in Paris renouncing war as an instrument of national policy](#)
- **Oct. 26:** International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (ICRM) formally established
- **Nov. 16:** *Weimar Republic* - Nazi Party leader Adolf Hitler gives his first speech at the Berlin Sportpalast, the largest venue in Germany
- **Dec. 21:** [The U.S. Congress approves the construction of Boulder Dam, later renamed Hoover Dam](#)

Source:

["Bills Introduced."](#) Congressional Record, 69th Congress, 2nd Session (Feb. 28, 1927) Vol. 68, pp. 4977-4978. ProQuest Congressional, CR-1927-0228

Coolidge, Calvin. [Foreign relations, 1928, vol. 1](#). Department of State, House, Dec. 4, 1928. 70th Congress, 2nd Session, H.doc.639 (S1.1:928/v.1). ProQuest Congressional, 9038-1 H.doc.639

Kahn, Florence Prag. [Amelia Earhart Putnam](#). Committee on Military Affairs. House, May 31, 1932, 72nd Congress, 1st Session. H.rp.1460. ProQuest Congressional, 9493 H.rp.1460

[Lower Mississippi River flood, May-July 1927 \[with data on farmland flooded, livestock losses, and estimated future planting; by selected State, county, and commodity; and sample form\]](#). Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Department of Agriculture. Jan. 1, 1927. (A36.2:M69i) ProQuest Congressional, A36.2-154

Mansfield, Joseph Jefferson. [Authorizing the construction of protective works on the Colorado River between the Yuma project and Boulder Dam](#). Committee on Rivers and Harbors, House. Apr. 25, 1940. 76th Congress, 3rd Session, H.rp.2011. ProQuest Congressional, 10441 H.rp.2011

[Multilateral or Kellogg-Briand Treaty](#). Senate, Jan. 14, 1929, 70th Congress, 2nd Session. Exec.Rpt.1, 70-2; Exec.Doc.A, 70-2 (Y1.70/2:rp.1) ProQuest Congressional, SED-70-2-48

["The National Defense."](#) Congressional Record, 76th Congress, 1st Session (Feb. 27, 1939) Vol. 84, pp. 1913-1935. ProQuest Congressional, CR-1939-0227

U.S. House. 70th Congress, 1st Session. "[70 H. Con. Res. 22 Introduced in House](#)." (Feb. 23, 1928). ProQuest Congressional

Major Acts

Flood Control Act of 1928. Appropriated \$325 million for flood control in the Mississippi Valley over a 10-year period. Approved May 15, 1928. ([45 Stat. 534, Chap. 569; PL70-391](#))

Jones-White Merchant Marine Act. Increased from \$125 million to \$250 million a ship construction loan fund from which private builders could

borrow up to three-quarters of the cost of constructing, reconditioning, and remodeling a vessel. Also permitted sale of Government-owned craft at low prices and liberalized long-term mail-carrying contracts. Approved May 22, 1928. ([45 Stat. 689; PL70-463](#))

McSweeney-McNary Act. Authorized a broad permanent program of research and the first comprehensive nationwide survey of forest reserves on public as well as private lands. Approved May 22, 1928. ([45 Stat. 699, Chap. 678; PL70-466](#))

Hawes-Cooper Act. Permitted states to refuse to consider goods produced by prison labor as interstate commerce, thereby allowing them to ban the sale of such goods, even if produced in another state, without interfering with the Constitutional restriction of regulation of interstate commerce to the Federal government. Approved Jan. 19, 1929. ([45 Stat. 1084, Chap. 79; PL70-669](#))

Migratory Bird Conservation Act. Created the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission with a mandate to consider recommendations by the Interior Secretary for lands to be purchased or leased by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the protection of migratory bird habitats. Approved Feb. 18, 1929. ([45 Stat. 1222, Chap. 257; PL70-770](#))

Administration of American Samoa. Accepted the seven islands which comprise American Samoa as of the time they were ceded by the native chiefs in 1900 and 1904. Also stated that “until Congress shall provide for the government of such islands, all civil, judicial, and military powers shall be vested in such person or persons and shall be exercised in such a manner as the President of the United States shall direct.” Approved Feb. 20, 1929. ([45 Stat. 1253, Chap. 281](#))

Source:

Dell, Christopher and Stephen W. Stathis. [Major Acts of Congress and Treaties Approved by the Senate, 1789-1980](#). Government Division (CRS), Sept. 1, 1982. 97th Congress, 2nd Session, 82-156 GOV. ProQuest Congressional, CRS-1982-GOV-0005

Copyright©2018, ProQuest LLC. All rights reserved.