

Seventy-Ninth Congress

Jan. 3, 1945 - Aug. 2, 1946

Fourth Administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt/ First Administration of Harry S. Truman*

* President Roosevelt died April 12, 1945, of a cerebral hemorrhage and was succeeded by his Vice President Harry S. Truman

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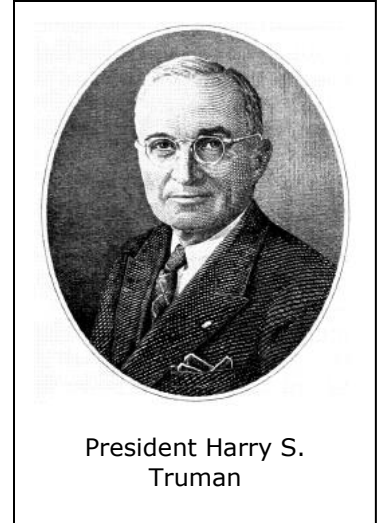
Historical Background

President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had led the country through twelve years of economic and military crises, died April 12, 1945, of a cerebral hemorrhage. In his final State of the Union message, Roosevelt reaffirmed his determination to bring the Second World War to a victorious conclusion and looked forward to the political and economic challenges of peace, in what he believed would be “the greatest year of achievement in human history.”

Two weeks later, on April 25, delegates of the Allied Powers gathered in San Francisco to write the United Nations Charter. Late in July, the Senate ratified the Charter and near the end of the year provided for the U.S. representatives.

On May 6, 1945, Roosevelt's successor, Harry S. Truman, announced the end of the war in Europe. Early in August, he ordered the first atomic bomb to be dropped on Hiroshima on August 6th, 1945. Japan's unconditional surrender quickly followed the dropping of the second bomb on Nagasaki on August 9. In his first State of the Union message, Truman laid out plans for the adjustment to peace, in both foreign and domestic policy.

As an immediate outgrowth of the need to control atomic energy, Congress approved the Atomic Energy Act of August 1, 1946, establishing a 5-member civilian Atomic Energy Commission and a Joint (Congressional) Committee on Atomic Energy.



| House | Senate |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Majority Party: Democrat (244 seats) | Majority Party: Democrat (57 seats) |
| Minority Party: Republican (189 seats) | Minority Party: Republican (38 seats) |
| Other Parties: Progressive (1 seat) American Labor (1 seat) | Other Parties: Progressive (1 seat) |
| Speaker of the House: Samuel T. Rayburn | Majority Leader: Alben W. Barkley |

By approving American participation in the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the first of five institutions which composes the World Bank Group) Congress helped to stabilize the currencies of Western Europe and improve international trade. The following July, the President signed a 50-year \$3.75 billion loan to Great Britain to assist her in removing trade and currency restrictions hampering postwar programs for economic reconstruction and trade liberalization. In August 1946, the "Fulbright Scholars" program, which issued international educational grants for exchange students and professionals, became a reality.

Congress seeking to reform its own internal structure, in drafting the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, drastically reduced the number of standing committees in both the Senate and the House; strengthened its professional staff and information resources; enacted lobby restriction and reporting requirements; and provided for an annual legislative budget to complement the President's. Other notable pieces of legislation produced by the 79th Congress included the Employment Act of 1946, establishing the President's Council of Economic Advisers and the Joint (Congressional) Economic Committee; and two construction programs providing \$875 million in matching Federal grants to States and local jurisdictions to build airports and hospitals.

Federal aid to school-lunch programs which had begun a decade earlier under the auspices of the Department of Agriculture were put on an entirely new basis with the passage of the National School Lunch Act of June 1946. Two months later, Congress established the Indian Claims Commission to attempt to rectify any past unfair treatment in Indian land transactions with the Federal government.

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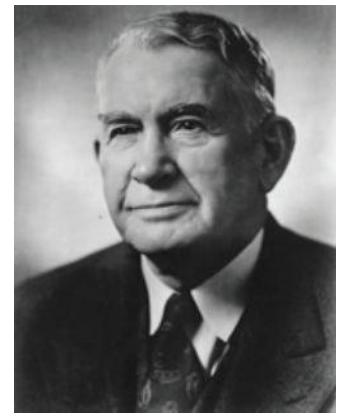
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Roosevelt, Franklin D. [The State of the Union. Message from the President of the United States Transmitting a Message on the State of the Union](#). House, Jan. 6, 1945. 79th Congress, 1st Session, H.doc.1. ProQuest Congressional, 10969 H.doc.1

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Speaker of the House
Samuel T. Rayburn



Senate Majority Leader
Alben W. Barkley

War or Peace?

The End of World War II – The Beginning of a New Global Order

A concerted effort to bring the war to an end in Europe began with Soviet forces continuing a massive push through Poland in January 1945. Budapest was captured in mid-February and by early April Hungary and Slovakia had

surrendered. The Soviets continued their march westward, capturing Vienna on April 13, and began their final offensive with the siege of Berlin on April 16, 1945. Meanwhile, Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, pushed U.S. troops across the Rhine River in March and by April 1st had moved the bulk of the forces into Germany to capture the Ruhr, Germany's western industrial center. British forces began Operation Plunder in late March. By April 29th, British and U.S. troops met the advancing Soviets and effectively routed what was left of the Nazi forces. Surrounded on all sides by the Allies and left with no chance of escape, Hitler committed suicide on April 30, 1945. Germany surrendered on May 8, 1945, ending World War II in Europe.

The Pacific theater did not conclude for several more months. Despite the neutralization of many of Japan's strategic bases in the Pacific and crippling supply losses inflicted on Japanese shipping by Allied forces in Operation Starvation, the Japanese continued the war. By early 1945, the U.S. and Allied forces had defeated the Japanese in several key battles, including the fierce Battle of Iwo Jima and the Battle of Okinawa. Air raids on Japan began in 1944, culminating in the firebombing of Tokyo on the night March 9-10, 1945. The U.S., Britain, and China called for Japan's unconditional surrender in the Potsdam Declaration on July 26, 1945. It was not until after the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, 1945, however, that Japan surrendered. With their official surrender on September 2, 1945, World War II finally came to an end after six years and one day.

With the end of the war, the U.S. and other Allied powers turned to questions of national demobilization, reconstruction, the disarmament of the Axis powers, and punishment of war crimes. For those who had lived through six years of war and survived the horrors of the Holocaust, recovering from the terrible aftermath was just beginning.

With the Allied occupation of Germany and Poland, dozens of concentration camps were captured and their atrocities documented. The International Military Tribunal was formed to try leading German officials and major war criminals in Nuremberg, Germany, between October 18, 1945 and October 1, 1946. Out of 22 defendants, 12 were sentenced to death, 3 to life imprisonment, and 4 to prison terms ranging from 10 to 20 years. The remaining 3 were acquitted.

On the reconstruction front, the Allies became increasingly fractured over how to reconstruct Europe, punish Germany, and ensure a world war did not happen again. The Soviet Union suffered tremendous losses during the war, with over 20 million deaths and thousands of cities and villages destroyed. Their economy and industry, more so than their Western European allies, was devastated. As a result they demanded Germany pay massive reparations. In addition, there were the previous agreements made during the Tehran, Yalta, and Potsdam Conferences to consider. These agreements gave the Soviet Union an established sphere of influence in Eastern Europe and moved Poland's borders west to encompass part of Germany. With the

Soviet occupation of Eastern Germany and Poland, these terms inevitably changed to include what the Soviets possessed.

However, the U.S., Britain, France, and other Allies could not agree amongst themselves on what to do with Germany, let alone agree with the Soviet Union's calls to subject Germany to crushing economic restraints. Many believed the previous reparations from the First World War had contributed to the rise of Hitler and the start of World War II. There was also the rising concern that poverty in Germany would inhibit all of Europe's economic recovery and drive the populace to communism. At first, the Morgenthau Plan, proposed by U.S. Secretary of Treasury Henry Morgenthau, was implemented but it was abandoned by September 1946 with U.S. Secretary of State James Byrnes' "Restatement of Policy in Germany." Instead, the western Allies focused on the 'denazification' of Germany by first creating new military governments to secure Allied-partitioned areas and reorganizing the judicial system to punish domestic war crimes. In conjunction with this, the Allies began dismantling Germany's armament industry. They then restarted domestic manufacturing and agriculture to make up for the shortage of foodstuffs and consumer goods. Negotiations for more extensive continental reconstruction, guided in part by the newly established International Bank of Reconstruction and Development and the United Nations Conference on International Organization, were held throughout 1945 and 1946.

During 1946, the wartime alliance and cooperation between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union began to fray and fall apart as the Soviets continued to occupy Eastern Europe. The occupation split continental Europe into two different political, socio-economic, and military blocs—the Communist (Eastern Europe) and the non-Communist (Western Europe)—setting the stage for the Cold War.

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Economic Trends and Conditions

With the end of the war, the U.S. was faced with the demobilization from wartime policies, resuming an economy centered on civilian rather than military consumption, and absorbing returning veterans in to the civilian labor force.

The employment situation was of particular concern, alongside lags in the production of consumer goods and resulting price fluctuations and inflation. The Employment Act of 1946 was the key government response to economic challenges during this Congress, establishing Federal programs to economically assist agriculture, industry, and state and local governments. The Act also established the Council of Economic Advisers to assist the President in developing national economic policy.

Unlike its Allies, the U.S. economy was booming from wartime production and it remained stable despite unemployment and inflation fears. In Truman's 1946 State of the Union address, he spoke of promoting this prosperity further by aiding and stabilizing the world markets through U.S.-supplied foreign assistance. This would open up a number of negotiations for loans and large aid packages, for Allied and occupied countries alike, which continued well into the next Congress.

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Truman, Harry S. [*Message from the President of the United States on the State of the Union.*](#) Committee of the Whole House. House, Jan. 21, 1946. 79th Congress, 2nd Session, H.doc.398. ProQuest Congressional, 11055 H.doc.398

Major Treaties

Ratification of the United Nations Charter. Provided for membership in the United Nations, which consisted of six chief organs: a General Assembly, a Security Council, an Economic and Social Council, an International Court of Justice, a Trusteeship Council, and a Secretariat. Concluded June 26, 1945. Ratified by the Senate July 28, 1945. ([59 Stat. 1031](#))

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

Cramer v. United States, overturned the treason conviction of Anthony Cramer, a German-born naturalized citizen, who had been convicted on having an association with two convicted German saboteurs. Ruled that the Constitution clearly stated the definition of treason and that the prosecution's arguments had failed to prove Mr. Cramer's association met the requirements for treason, 325 U.S. 1 (1945)

Southern Pacific Co. v. Arizona, holding under the "negative commerce clause" doctrine that an Arizona law limiting the size of freight and passenger trains in the state placed an undue burden on interstate commerce and therefore violated Article I of the Constitution, 325 U.S. 761 (1945)

Marsh v. Alabama, holding that a state trespassing statute could not be used to curb rights protected under the First Amendment—in this case the distribution of religious materials—even if the alleged offense occurred on private property if that property enjoys a *de facto* monopoly over public space in a community, 326 U.S. 501 (1946)

Tucker v. Texas, holding a state statute making it an offense to distribute literature in a Federal Government-owned town was an improper restriction on freedom of the press and religion, 326 U.S. 517 (1946)

Duncan v. Kahonomoku, holding that although the Hawaii Organic Act permitted the institution of martial law after the attack on Pearl Harbor, it did not authorize the state to substitute military tribunals for civilian courts, 327 U.S. 304 (1946)

United States v. Lovett, holding that Congressional efforts to defund the salaries of Federal government employees because of alleged "subversive" activities constitute an unconstitutional bill of attainder, 328 U.S. 303 (1946)

Morgan v. Virginia, holding Virginia's state law enforcing segregation on interstate buses is unconstitutional, 328 U.S. 373 (1946)

Freeman v. Hewitt, holding that an Indiana law levying taxes on income generated by the sale of securities outside of Indiana is an undue, unconstitutional burden on interstate commerce, 329 U.S. 249 (1946)

Source:

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1945 Events

- **Jan. 12:** *World War II* - The Soviet Union begins the Vistula–Oder Offensive in Eastern Europe against the German Army
- **Jan. 17:** *Holocaust* - [The SS begins evacuation of Auschwitz concentration camp; nearly 60,000 prisoners are sent on a death](#)

march to other locations in Germany and as many as 15,000 die; 7,000 too sick to move are left behind without supplies

- **Jan. 25:** *World War II* - Battle of the Bulge concludes, resulting in an estimated 47,500 wounded, 23,000 captured or missing, and 19,000 deaths for the Allies
- **Jan. 27:** *Holocaust* - The Soviet Red Army liberates the Auschwitz and Birkenau concentration camps
- **Feb. 3-Mar. 3:** *World War II* - Battle of Manila
- **Feb. 4-11:** *World War II* - President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Prime Minister of Great Britain Winston Churchill, and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin hold the Yalta Conference
- **Feb. 19-Mar. 26:** *World War II* - Battle of Iwo Jima
- **Mar. 7-8:** *World War II* - American troops seize the bridge over the Rhine at Remagen, Germany
- **Mar. 9-10:** *World War II* - Bombing of Tokyo, U.S. Air Force B-29 Bombers drop incendiary bombs on Tokyo, Japan, killing an estimated 100,000 citizens
- **Apr. 1-June 22:** *World War II* - Battle of Okinawa
- **Apr. 1:** *Holocaust* - U.S. troops liberate their first Nazi concentration camp, Ohrdruf extermination camp in Germany
- **Apr. 12:** President Franklin D. Roosevelt dies in Warm Springs, Georgia; Vice President Harry S. Truman is sworn in as the 33rd President of the U.S.
- **Apr. 25:** Negotiations to develop United Nations Charter begin in San Francisco
- **Apr. 28:** *World War II* - Benito Mussolini and his mistress, Clara Petacci, are executed as they attempt to flee the country; their bodies are then hung by their heels in the public square of Milan
- **Apr. 30:** *World War II* - Adolf Hitler and his wife, Eva Braun, commit suicide in the Führerbunker in Berlin; his body is burned
- **May 2:** *World War II* - The Soviet Union announces the fall of Berlin
- **May 8:** *World War II* - Victory in Europe Day, marking the formal Allied acceptance of the surrender of Nazi Germany
- **June 5:** *World War II* - The Allied Control Council, military occupation governing body of Germany, formally takes power
- **July 1:** *World War II* - Germany is divided between the Allied occupation forces
- **July 16:** The Trinity Test occurs: the first detonation of a nuclear weapon, is conducted by the U.S. Army at the White Sands Proving Ground in New Mexico marking the beginning of the Atomic Age
- **July 16-Aug. 2:** *World War II* - Potsdam Conference takes place, with Stalin, Truman, Churchill, and Attlee in attendance
- **July 26:** Winston Churchill resigns as Prime Minister after the Labour Party defeats the Conservative Party in the 1945 general elections; Clement Attlee becomes the new Prime Minister
- **July 26:** *World War II* - Potsdam Declaration issued, setting terms for unconditional surrender of Japan; Japan rejects it
- **Aug. 6:** *World War II* - Gun-type uranium atomic bomb “Little Boy” is dropped on Hiroshima, Japan
- **Aug. 9:** *World War II* - Implosion-type plutonium atomic bomb “Fat Man” dropped on Nagasaki, Japan

- **Aug. 15:** *World War II* - [Japan's Emperor Hirohito announces his country's unconditional surrender in a radio broadcast](#)
- **Sept. 2:** *World War II* - [Victory Over Japan Day, marking the formal Allied acceptance of the surrender of Japan](#)
- **Sept. 8:** [American troops occupy southern Korea, while the Soviet Union occupies the north, with the dividing line being the 38th parallel of latitude](#)
- **Oct. 24:** [The United Nations is founded after ratification of its Charter by the five permanent members of the Security Council and other 29 nations](#)
- **Nov. 20:** International Military Tribunal convened for the first time at Nuremburg, Germany
- **Dec. 27:** [Twenty-eight nations sign an agreement creating the World Bank](#)

1946 Events

- **Jan. 1:** Emperor Hirohito of Japan issues decree denying own divinity
- **Jan. 7:** Allies recognize the Austrian republic with 1937 borders, and divide the country into four occupation zones
- **Jan. 10:** The first meeting of the United Nations is held at Methodist Central Hall Westminster in London; Project Diana bounces radar waves off the Moon, measuring the exact distance between the Earth and the Moon, and proves that communication is possible between Earth and outer space
- **Jan. 17:** United Nations Security Council holds its first session at Church House, Westminster in London
- **Jan. 19:** General Douglas MacArthur announced the establishment of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, for the trial of Japanese war criminals
- **Jan. 24:** [President Truman establishes the Central Intelligence Group \(later the Central Intelligence Agency\)](#)
- **Jan. 31:** [Yugoslavia's new constitution establishes 6 constituent republics \(Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia\)](#)
- **Mar. 2:** British troops withdraw from Iran according to treaty; the Soviets do not withdraw until May, after Iran issues official complaint to the newly formed United Nations Security Council
- **Mar. 5:** Winston Churchill delivers "Iron Curtain" speech
- **March:** [Chinese Civil War - Truce between communist and nationalist forces in China breaks down; the Chinese Civil War begins again](#)
- **Apr. 29:** International Military Tribunal for the Far East convened in Tokyo; the accused include former Prime Minister Hideki Tōjō, Minister of Foreign Affairs Shigenori Tōgō, and ambassador to Nazi Germany Hiroshi Ōshima
- **June 3:** The Interpol organization re-founded
- **June 14:** [Bernard Baruch presented his Baruch Plan to the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission, proposing international control of atomic energy; the Soviets reject it](#)

- **July 1:** [The Philippines attain full independence](#)
- **July 1 & 25:** [U.S. tests new atomic bombs at Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands](#)
- **Aug. 1:** [Atomic Energy Commission established](#)
- **Sept. 2:** Interim government formed in India, as first step towards independence from Britain
- **Oct. 16:** 10 Nazi war criminals convicted and sentenced to death in the Nuremberg Trials are executed by hanging
- **Nov. 4:** [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization \(UNESCO\) is founded](#)
- **Nov. 5:** Republicans win majorities in both chambers of Congress for the first time since 1930
- **Dec. 11:** [United Nations Children's Emergency Fund \(UNICEF\) in founded](#)

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Major Acts

McCarran-Ferguson Act. Enacted in response to the Supreme Court's ruling in *United States v. South-Eastern Underwriters Assn.*, the McCarran-Ferguson Act exempted insurance from most Federal regulations, including antitrust law. Approved July 31, 1945. ([59 Stat. 33, Chap. 20; PL79-15](#))

Bretton Woods Agreements Act. Provided for U.S. participation in the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Approved July 31, 1945. ([59 Stat. 512, Chap. 339; PL79-171](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

United Nations Participation Act of 1945. Provided for appointment of representatives of the United States in the organs and agencies of the United Nations. Approved Dec. 20, 1945. ([59 Stat. 619, Chap. 583; PL79-264](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

War Brides Act. Allowed for the immigration of non-citizen spouses and biological and adopted children of members of the United States Armed Forces outside of the immigration quota systems. Approved Dec. 28, 1945. ([59 Stat. 659, Chap. 591; PL79-271](#))

Employment Act of 1946. Established the President's Council of Economic Advisers and the Joint (Congressional) Economic Committee. Declared that it was the policy and responsibility of the Federal Government to use all practical means to assist industry, agriculture, labor, and State and local governments in promoting maximum employment, production, and purchasing power. Approved Feb. 20, 1946. ([60 Stat. 23, Chap. 33; PL79-304](#))

Federal Airport Act. Authorized a seven-year, \$500 million program of matching Federal grants to cities and States for construction of airports. Approved May 13, 1946. ([60 Stat. 170, Chap. 251; PL79-377](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

National School Lunch Act. Authorized regular Federal cash grants to the States for non-profit school lunch programs in public and private schools. Part of the funds available could be used by the Agriculture Department to purchase and donate commodities to lunch programs, but at least 75 percent was reserved for cash grants to the States for local purchase of foods. Approved June 4, 1946. ([60 Stat. 230, Chap. 281; PL79-396](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

Administrative Procedure Act. Articulated the restrictions and procedures for the promulgation of Federal regulations by agencies of the Federal government, including the requirement of public disclosure and participation in the rulemaking process, and the scope of judicial review of Federal regulations. Approved June 11, 1946. ([60 Stat. 237, Chap. 324; PL79-404](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

Luce-Cellar Act of 1946. Allowed for the immigration of 100 Filipinos and 100 Indians to the United States and allowed residents of Filipino or Indian

nationality to naturalize as U.S. citizens. Approved July 2, 1946. ([60 Stat. 416, Chap. 534; PL79-483](#))

Hobbs Anti-Racketeering Act. Criminalized and set penalties for robbery and extortion as Federal crimes. Approved July 3, 1946. ([60 Stat. 420, Chap. 537; PL79-486](#))

British Loan Act. Authorized a loan of \$3.75 billion to assist Great Britain in removing trade and currency exchange restrictions hampering postwar programs for economic reconstruction and trade liberalization. Approved July 15, 1946. ([60 Stat. 535, Chap. 577; PL79-509](#))

Fulbright Scholars Act. Established an international educational and cultural exchange program for American citizens in schools and institutions of higher learning abroad and for citizens of foreign countries in American schools and institutions of higher learning. Financing included payment for transportation, tuition, maintenance, and other expenses incidental to scholastic activities. Approved Aug. 1, 1946. ([60 Stat. 754, Chap. 723; PL79-584](#))

Atomic Energy Act of 1946. Transferred control over all aspects of atomic energy development from the War Department to a five---member civilian Atomic Energy Commission appointed by the President to administer research, production, control, and military application. Also authorized a Joint Commission on Atomic Energy to be composed of nine Members of the Senate to be appointed by the President of the Senate, and nine Members of the House, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House to make continuing studies of the activities of the Atomic Energy Commission and the problems relating to the development, use and control of atomic energy. Approved Aug. 1, 1946. ([60 Stat. 755, Chap. 724; PL79-585](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946. Reduced the number of standing committees from 48 to 19 in the House and from 35 to 15 in the Senate. Provided for preparation of an annual legislative budget to complement the President's budget; and raised the salaries of Senators and Representatives from \$10,000 to \$12,500. Provided for professional committee staffs and strengthened the Legislative Reference Service. Also included as part of the law, as a separate title, the Federal Regulation of Lobby Act, requiring lobbyists to register and report their lobbying expenses. Approved Aug. 2, 1946. ([60 Stat. 812, Chap. 753; PL79-601](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

Hospital Survey and Construction Act. Authorized a five-year, \$375 million program of matching Federal grants to State and local health bodies for hospital construction. Approved Aug. 13, 1946. ([60 Stat. 1040, Chap. 958; PL79-725](#)) ([Regulatory History](#))

Indian Claims Commission Act. Established an Indian Claims Commission to consider the claims of those Indian tribes who felt they had received unfair treatment in land transactions with the Federal government. Judgments favorable to the Indians were to result in compensatory monetary awards. Approved Aug. 13, 1946. ([60 Stat. 1049, Chap. 959; PL79-726](#))

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

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