

# MONROE DOCTRINE DEFINITION ASKED

All Latin America Waiting for  
President Wilson's Answer to  
Salvador's Request.

BASED ON LEAGUE ARTICLE

Is Pointed Out Doctrine Under  
Covenant Becomes Formal Prin-  
ciple of international Law.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 7 (Associated Press).—Latin-American countries which participated in the Peace Conference, and also those which have been invited to join the League of Nations, are watching the request of Salvador that the United States define the Monroe Doctrine so that they will know just what they are agreeing to if they join the league.

The State Department has acknowledged receipt of the request from Juan Franco Paredes, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Salvador. It now remains with President Wilson to draft a reply. Meanwhile Latin-American statesmen are discussing the question and some of the Latin-American countries are delaying joining the league until the definition of the Monroe Doctrine is made.

The reference to the Monroe Doctrine is in Article XXI. of the covenant of the League of Nations. For the first time the text of the communication of the Salvadorean Government is made public. It recites that despite its neutrality in the war, Salvador manifested "its sympathy on every occasion for the ideals which animated the Government of the United States in entering the war," praises President Wilson for "having crystallized the legitimate hopes of a fruitful peace, by submitting the draft of a League of Nations covenant," says Salvador, "manifests the desire to adhere to this treaty which sanctions arbitration as the only method of settling disputes between nations," and continues:

"The whole text of the treaty is both suggestive and attractive. In it there is a return to those principles of life long awaited by sociologists and publicists. And indeed it seems as if from the ruins of war there have arisen with greater strength and potency the beautiful gospels which in a moment of folly were relegated to the discard by those

Continued on Page Three.

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Continued from Page 1, Column 7.

who through the immutable laws of international interdependence were especially charged with sustaining and upholding them.

## One Article That Lacks Clearness.

"The text of the treaty contains, however, one article which has awakened warm discussions throughout the whole American continent including the United States, due no doubt to its brevity and lack of clearness. I refer to Article XXI, drafted in the following terms:

"Nothing in this covenant shall be deemed to affect the validity of international engagements, such as treaties of arbitration or regional understandings like the Monroe Doctrine, for securing the maintenance of peace."

"The legal scope of this provision from an international viewpoint is open to differing interpretations, since in the vast scheme of the League of Nations treaties of arbitration and regional understandings, such as the Monroe Doctrine, are recognized and sanctioned, despite the fact that as to the highly peaceful purpose of the latter doctrine there does not exist harmonious meeting of minds nor an absolute criterion.

"From the year 1823, in which the distinguished James Monroe rejected all intervention by European nations in the affairs of the American continent to the present day, this doctrine has undergone different applications depending upon the divers political tendencies prevailing at that particular time in the United States.

"It would be unnecessary, Mr. Secretary, to undertake any detailed exposition of the various views of prominent thinkers and public men of the United States as to the genuine and correct interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine, which former Secretary of State Elihu Root regarded as a declaration based on the right of the people of the United

States to protect itself as a nation, and which could not be transformed into a declaration, joint or common, to all the nations of America or even to a limited number of them."

"My Government recognizes that the Monroe Doctrine consolidated the independence of the Continental States of Latin America, and saved them from the great danger of a European intervention. It realizes that it is a powerful factor in the existence of the democratic form of Government on this continent and that it raised a barrier to European colonization.

## Authentic Interpretation Requested.

"Since, however, the covenant of the League of Nations does not set forth nor determine the purposes nor fix a definite criterion of international relationship in America, and since, on the other hand, the doctrine will be forthwith transformed—in view of the full sanction of the nations of the world—into a principle of universal public law, *juris et de jure*, I request that your Excellency will be good enough to give the authentic interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine as it is understood in the present historical movement and in its future application by the Government of the United States, which must realize that my Government is keenly desirous of securing a statement which shall put an end to the divergence of views now prevailing on the subject, which it is recognized by all is not the most propitious in stimulating the ideals of true Pan Americanism.

"Contrary to the authorized and respected view of former Secretary of State Root, the Monroe Doctrine through its inclusion in the covenant of the League of Nations will be converted without doubt into a genesis of American international law.

"Since any amendment to the text of the treaty and even the rejection of all of its provisions by the American Senate would still leave intact the various points which this international agreement covers as to the other signatory nations, by virtue of their general and expressed acceptance, the principle embraced in the League of Nations, and therefore the Monroe Doctrine, would be virtually accepted as a fundamental principle of public American law by all those countries that signed or manifested their adherence to the Peace Treaty.

"The necessity of an interpretation of the genesis and scope of the Monroe Doctrine not only in the development of the lofty purpose of Pan Americanism, but in order that that doctrine may maintain its original purity and prestige, is rendered all the more urgent."