

The Corollary, *declared.*

The Roosevelt Corollary — four passages of the Fourth Annual Message to Congress, December 6, 1904, in the order Roosevelt delivered them.

DATE OF DELIVERY

Dec 6, 1904

Fourth Annual Message to Congress

PASSAGES

Four

The inversion, in the order written

TRIGGER

10 months

After the Hague Award of Feb 22, 1904

Four passages. Roosevelt's Fourth Annual Message ran approximately 30,000 words across many topics — military reform, civil service, conservation, the Panama Canal, Indian affairs. The four passages below are the foreign-policy core that historians call the Roosevelt Corollary, parsed in the order Roosevelt delivered them within the message.

Source. Miller Center, University of Virginia. *December 6, 1904: Fourth Annual Message.*

millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/december-6-1904-fourth-annual-message

Important. What is called "the Roosevelt Corollary" is not a separate document but a section embedded in this longer annual message. No vote was taken. No constitutional amendment was passed. No treaty was ratified. The declaration alone became the operative interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine for the next three decades.

The Corollary, in order.

PASSAGE 01

The peace of justice. Roosevelt reframes peace itself — some peace is to be shunned. The moral frame for projecting force is set.

PASSAGE 02

The international police premise. International law has no tribunal. Civilized powers must keep enough armament to perform police duties themselves.

PASSAGE 03

The Corollary itself. Chronic wrongdoing in the Western Hemisphere may force the United States to the exercise of an international police power under the Monroe Doctrine.

PASSAGE 04

Operational naming. Cuba, Venezuela, Panama, the Far East, China — the Corollary is the ledger of what has already been done.

December 2, 1823

Monroe's original line — defensive, passive, protective intent. Step 01 receipt. The doctrine being inverted by declaration.

November 29, 1902 – Feb 17, 1903

Venezuela crisis — the proof of concept Roosevelt harvests in this message. Step 02 receipt.

February 22, 1904

The Hague Tribunal Award — preferential treatment for blockading powers. The international ruling that rewarded force and made the Corollary politically possible. Published in FRUS 1904.

1906 – 1934

Six occupations cite the Corollary as authorization — Dominican Republic, Haiti, Nicaragua, Cuba, Panama, Veracruz. Step 04 of the authorization pattern.

Roosevelt opens the foreign-policy section of his message by reframing peace itself. Not all peace is desirable. The peace of tyrannous terror, the peace of craven weakness, the peace of injustice — all are to be shunned. The moral frame for projecting force is set.

"The peace of tyrannous terror, the peace of craven weakness, the peace of injustice, all these should be shunned as we shun unrighteous war."

The steady aim of this Nation, as of all enlightened nations, should be to strive to bring ever nearer the day when there shall prevail throughout the world the peace of justice. There are kinds of peace which are highly undesirable, which are in the long run as destructive as any war. Tyrants and oppressors have many times made a wilderness and called it peace. Many times peoples who were slothful or timid or shortsighted, who had been enervated by ease or by luxury, or misled by false teachings, have shrunk in unmanly fashion from doing duty that was stern and that needed self-sacrifice, and have sought to hide from their own minds their shortcomings, their ignoble motives, by calling them love of peace. The peace of tyrannous terror, the peace of craven weakness, the peace of injustice, all these should be shunned as we shun unrighteous war. The goal to set before us as a nation, the goal which should be set before all mankind, is the attainment of the peace of justice, of the peace which comes when each nation is not merely safe-guarded in its own rights, but scrupulously recognizes and performs its duty toward others.

Roosevelt sets up the mechanism. International law has no tribunal. Until one exists, civilized powers must keep enough armament to perform international police duties themselves.

"A sufficient armament would have to be kept up to serve the purposes of international police."

But in international law we have not advanced by any means as far as we have advanced in municipal law. There is as yet no judicial way of enforcing a right in international law. When one nation wrongs another or wrongs many others, there is no tribunal before which the wrongdoer can be brought. Either it is necessary supinely to acquiesce in the wrong, and thus put a premium upon brutality and aggression, or else it is necessary for the aggrieved nation valiantly to stand up for its rights. Until some method is devised by which there shall be a degree of international control over offending nations, it would be a wicked thing for the most civilized powers, for those with most sense of international obligations and with keenest and most generous appreciation of the difference between right and wrong, to disarm. Under any circumstances a sufficient armament would have to be kept up to serve the purposes of international police; and until international cohesion and the sense of international duties and rights are far more advanced than at present, a nation desirous both of securing respect for itself and of doing good to others must have a force adequate for the work which it feels is allotted to it as its part of the general world duty.

The inversion. Roosevelt names the Monroe Doctrine as the source of an American prerogative to intervene preemptively in the Western Hemisphere. This single paragraph is what historians call the Roosevelt Corollary.

"Chronic wrongdoing... may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power."

It is not true that the United States feels any land hunger or entertains any projects as regards the other nations of the Western Hemisphere save such as are for their welfare. All that this country desires is to see the neighboring countries stable, orderly, and prosperous. Any country whose people conduct themselves well can count upon our hearty friendship. If a nation shows that it knows how to act with reasonable efficiency and decency in social and political matters, if it keeps order and pays its obligations, it need fear no interference from the United States. Chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power. If every country washed by the Caribbean Sea would show the progress in stable and just civilization which with the aid of the Platt amendment Cuba has shown since our troops left the island, and which so many of the republics in both Americas are constantly and brilliantly showing, all question of interference by this Nation with their affairs would be at an end. Our interests and those of our southern neighbors are in reality identical. We would interfere with them only in the last resort, and then only if it became evident that their inability or unwillingness to do justice at home and abroad had violated the rights of the United States or had invited foreign aggression to the detriment of the entire body of American nations.

Roosevelt names the operations that are already running under the new interpretation. Cuba, Venezuela, Panama, China. The Corollary is not theoretical — it is the ledger of what has already been done.

"In asserting the Monroe Doctrine, in taking such steps as we have taken in regard to Cuba, Venezuela, and Panama... we have acted in our own interest as well as in the interest of humanity at large."

In asserting the Monroe Doctrine, in taking such steps as we have taken in regard to Cuba, Venezuela, and Panama, and in endeavoring to circumscribe the theater of war in the Far East, and to secure the open door in China, we have acted in our own interest as well as in the interest of humanity at large. There are, however, cases in which, while our own interests are not greatly involved, strong appeal is made to our sympathies. The cases must be extreme in which such a course is justifiable. There must be no effort made to remove the mote from our brother's eye if we refuse to remove the beam from our own. But in extreme cases action may be justifiable and proper. What form the action shall take must depend upon the circumstances of the case; that is, upon the degree of the atrocity and upon our power to remedy it.