

SUBCHAPTER S—INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

PART 181—COORDINATION, REPORTING AND PUBLICATION OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

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§ 181.1 Purpose and application.

(a) The purpose of this part is to implement the provisions of 1 U.S.C. 112a and 112b, popularly known as the Case-Zablocki Act (hereinafter “the Act”), on the reporting to Congress, coordination with the Secretary of State and publication of international agreements. This part applies to all agencies of the U.S. Government whose responsibilities include the negotiation and conclusion of international agreements. This part does not, however, constitute a delegation by the Secretary of State of the authority to engage in such activities. Further, it does not affect any additional requirements of law governing the relationship between particular agencies and the Secretary of State in connection with international negotiations and agreements, or any other requirements of law concerning the relationship between particular agencies and the Congress. The term *agency* as used in this part means each authority of the United States Government, whether or not it is within or subject to review by another agency.

(b) Pursuant to the key legal requirements of the Act—full and timely disclosure to the Congress of all concluded agreements and consultation by agencies with the Secretary of State with respect to proposed agreements—every agency of the Government is required

to comply with each of the provisions set out in this part in implementation of the Act. Nevertheless, this part is intended as a framework of measures and procedures which, it is recognized, cannot anticipate all circumstances or situations that may arise. Deviation or derogation from the provisions of this part will not affect the legal validity, under United States law or under international law, of agreements concluded, will not give rise to a cause of action, and will not affect any public or private rights established by such agreements.

[46 FR 35918, July 13, 1981, as amended at 61 FR 7071, Feb. 26, 1996]

§ 181.2 Criteria.

(a) *General.* The following criteria are to be applied in deciding whether any undertaking, oral agreement, document, or set of documents, including an exchange of notes or of correspondence, constitutes an international agreement within the meaning of the Act, as well as within the meaning of 1 U.S.C. 112a, requiring the publication of international agreements. Each of the criteria except those in paragraph (a)(5) of this section must be met in order for any given undertaking of the United States to constitute an international agreement.

(1) *Identity and intention of the parties.* A party to an international agreement must be a state, a state agency, or an intergovernmental organization. The parties must intend their undertaking to be legally binding, and not merely of political or personal effect. Documents intended to have political or moral weight, but not intended to be legally binding, are not international agreements. An example of the latter is the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Cooperation and Security in Europe. In addition, the parties must intend their undertaking to be governed by international law, although this intent need not be manifested by a third-party dispute settlement mechanism or any express reference to international law. In the absence of any provision in

the arrangement with respect to governing law, it will be presumed to be governed by international law. This presumption may be overcome by clear evidence, in the negotiating history of the agreement or otherwise, that the parties intended the arrangement to be governed by another legal system. Arrangements governed solely by the law of the United States, or one of the states or jurisdictions thereof, or by the law of any foreign state, are not international agreements for these purposes. For example, a foreign military sales loan agreement governed in its entirety by U.S. law is not an international agreement.

(2) *Significance of the arrangement.* Minor or trivial undertakings, even if couched in legal language and form, are not considered international agreements within the meaning of the Act or of 1 U.S.C. 112a. In deciding what level of significance must be reached before a particular arrangement becomes an international agreement, the entire context of the transaction and the expectations and intent of the parties must be taken into account. It is often a matter of degree. For example, a promise to sell one map to a foreign nation is not an international agreement; a promise to exchange all maps of a particular region to be produced over a period of years may be an international agreement. It remains a matter of judgment based on all of the circumstances of the transaction. Determinations are made pursuant to §181.3. Examples of arrangements that may constitute international agreements are agreements that: (i) Are of political significance; (ii) involve substantial grants of funds or loans by the United States or credits payable to the United States; (iii) constitute a substantial commitment of funds that extends beyond a fiscal year or would be a basis for requesting new appropriations; (iv) involve continuing and/or substantial cooperation in the conduct of a particular program or activity, such as scientific, technical, or other cooperation, including the exchange or receipt of information and its treatment, or the pooling of data. However, individual research grants and contracts do not ordinarily constitute international agreements.

(3) *Specificity, including objective criteria for determining enforceability.* International agreements require precision and specificity in the language setting forth the undertakings of the parties. Undertakings couched in vague or very general terms containing no objective criteria for determining enforceability or performance are not normally international agreements. Most frequently such terms reflect an intent not to be bound. For example, a promise to “help develop a more viable world economic system” lacks the specificity essential to constitute a legally binding international agreement. However, the intent of the parties is the key factor. Undertakings as general as those of, for example, Articles 55 and 56 of the United Nations Charter have been held to create internationally binding obligations intended as such by the parties.

(4) *Necessity for two or more parties.* While unilateral commitments on occasion may be legally binding, they do not constitute international agreements. For example, a statement by the President promising to send money to Country Y to assist earthquake victims would not be an international agreement. It might be an important undertaking, but not all undertakings in international relations are in the form of international agreements. Care should be taken to examine whether a particular undertaking is truly unilateral in nature, or is part of a larger bilateral or multilateral set of undertakings. Moreover, “consideration,” as that term is used in domestic contract law, is not required for international agreements.

(5) *Form.* Form as such is not normally an important factor, but it does deserve consideration. Documents which do not follow the customary form for international agreements, as to matters such as style, final clauses, signatures, or entry into force dates, may or may not be international agreements. Failure to use the customary form may constitute evidence of a lack of intent to be legally bound by the arrangement. If, however, the general content and context reveal an intention to enter into a legally binding relationship, a departure from customary form will not preclude the arrangement

from being an international agreement. Moreover, the title of the agreement will not be determinative. Decisions will be made on the basis of the substance of the arrangement, rather than on its denomination as an international agreement, a memorandum of understanding, exchange of notes, exchange of letters, technical arrangement, protocol, note verbale, aide-memoire, agreed minute, or any other name.

(b) *Agency-Level agreements.* Agency-level agreements are international agreements within the meaning of the Act and of 1 U.S.C. 112a if they satisfy the criteria discussed in paragraph (a) of this section. The fact that an agreement is concluded by and on behalf of a particular agency of the United States Government, rather than the United States Government, does not mean that the agreement is not an international agreement. Determinations are made on the basis of the substance of the agency-level agreement in question.

(c) *Implementing agreements.* An implementing agreement, if it satisfies the criteria discussed in paragraph (a) of this section, may be an international agreement, depending upon how precisely it is anticipated and identified in the underlying agreement it is designed to implement. If the terms of the implementing agreement are closely anticipated and identified in the underlying agreement, only the underlying agreement is considered and international agreement. For example, the underlying agreement might call for the sale by the United States of 1000 tractors, and a subsequent implementing agreement might require a first installment on this obligation by the sale of 100 tractors of the brand X variety. In that case, the implementing agreement is sufficiently identified in the underlying agreement, and would not itself be considered an international agreement within the meaning of the Act or of 1 U.S.C. 112a. Project annexes and other documents which provide technical content for an umbrella agreement are not normally treated as international agreements. However, if the underlying agreement is general in nature, and the implementing agreement meets the specified

criteria of paragraph (a) of this section, the implementing agreement might well be an international agreement. For example, if the underlying agreement calls for the conclusion of "agreements for agricultural assistance," but without further specificity, then a particular agricultural assistance agreement subsequently concluded in "implementation" of that obligation, provided it meets the criteria discussed in paragraph (a) of this section, would constitute an international agreement independent of the underlying agreement.

(d) *Extensions and modifications of agreements.* If an undertaking constitutes an international agreement within the meaning of the Act and of 1 U.S.C. 112a, then a subsequent extension or modification of such an agreement would itself constitute an international agreement within the meaning of the Act and of 1 U.S.C. 112a.

(e) *Oral agreements.* Any oral arrangement that meets the criteria discussed in paragraphs (a)(1)–(4) of this section is an international agreement and, pursuant to section (a) of the Act, must be reduced to writing by the agency that concluded the oral arrangement. In such written form, the arrangement is subject to all the requirements of the Act and of this part. Whenever a question arises whether an oral arrangement constitutes an international agreement, the arrangement shall be reduced to writing and the decision made in accordance with § 181.3.

§ 181.3 Determinations.

(a) Whether any undertaking, document, or set of documents constitutes or would constitute an international agreement within the meaning of the Act or of 1 U.S.C. 112a shall be determined by the Legal Adviser of the Department of State, a Deputy Legal Adviser, or in most cases the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs. Such determinations shall be made either on a case-by-case basis, or on periodic consultation, as appropriate.

(b) Agencies whose responsibilities include the negotiation and conclusion

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of international agreements are responsible for transmitting to the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, for decision pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section, the texts of any document or set of documents that might constitute an international agreement. The transmittal shall be made prior to or simultaneously with the request for consultations with the Secretary of State required by subsection (c) of the Act and § 181.4 of this part.

(c) Agencies whose responsibilities include the negotiation and conclusion of large numbers of agency-level and implementing arrangements at overseas posts, only a small number of which might constitute international agreements within the meaning of the Act and of 1 U.S.C. 112a, are required to transmit prior to their entry into force only the texts of the more important of such arrangements for decision pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section. The texts of all arrangements that might constitute international agreements shall, however, be transmitted to the Office of the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs as soon as possible, and in no event to arrive at that office later than 20 days after their signing, for decision pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section.

(d) Agencies to which paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section apply shall consult periodically with the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs in order to determine which categories of arrangements for which they are responsible are likely to be international agreements within the meaning of the Act and of 1 U.S.C. 112a.

§ 181.4 Consultations with the Secretary of State.

(a) The Secretary of State is responsible, on behalf of the President, for ensuring that all proposed international agreements of the United States are fully consistent with United States foreign policy objectives. Except as provided in § 181.3(c) of this part, no agency of the U.S. Government may conclude an international agreement, whether entered into in the name of the U.S. Government or in the name of the agency, without prior consultation

with the Secretary of State or his designee.

(b) The Secretary of State (or his designee) gives his approval for any proposed agreement negotiated pursuant to his authorization, and his opinion on any proposed agreement negotiated by an agency which has separate authority to negotiate such agreement. The approval or opinion of the Secretary of State or his designee with respect to any proposed international agreement will be given pursuant to Department of State procedures set out in Volume 11, *Foreign Affairs Manual*, Chapter 700 (Circular 175 procedure). Officers of the Department of State shall be responsible for the preparation of all documents required by the Circular 175 procedure.

(c) Pursuant to the Circular 175 procedure, the approval of, or an opinion on a proposed international agreement to be concluded in the name of the U.S. Government will be given either by the Secretary of State or his designee. The approval of, or opinion on a proposed international agreement to be concluded in the name of a particular agency of the U.S. Government will be given by the interested assistant secretary or secretaries of State, or their designees, unless such official(s) judge that consultation with the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, or an Under Secretary is necessary. The approval of, or opinion on a proposed international agreement will normally be given within 20 days of receipt of the request for consultation and of the information as required by § 181.4(d)–(g).

(d) Any agency wishing to conclude an international agreement shall transmit to the interested bureau or office in the Department of State, or to the Office of the Legal Adviser, for consultation pursuant to this section, a draft text or summary of the proposed agreement, a precise citation of the Constitutional, statutory, or treaty authority for such agreement, and other background information as requested by the Department of State. The transmittal of the draft text or summary and citation of legal authority shall be made before negotiations are undertaken, or if that is not feasible, as early as possible in the negotiating process. In any event such transmittals

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must be made no later than 50 days prior to the anticipated date for concluding the proposed agreement. If unusual circumstances prevent this 50-day requirement from being met, the concerned agency shall use its best efforts to effect such transmittal as early as possible prior to the anticipated date for concluding the proposed agreement.

(e) If a proposed agreement embodies a commitment to furnish funds, goods, or services that are beyond or in addition to those authorized in an approved budget, the agency proposing the agreement shall state what arrangements have been planned or carried out concerning consultation with the Office of Management and Budget for such commitment. The Department of State should receive confirmation that the relevant budget approved by the President provides or requests funds adequate to fulfill the proposed commitment, or that the President has made a determination to seek the required funds.

(f) Consultation may encompass a specific class of agreements rather than a particular agreement where a series of agreements of the same general type is contemplated; that is, where a number of agreements are to be negotiated according to a more or less standard formula, such as, for example, Pub. L. 480 Agricultural Commodities Agreements. Any agency wishing to conclude a particular agreement within a specific class of agreements about which consultations have previously been held pursuant to this section shall transmit a draft text of the proposed agreement to the Office of the Legal Adviser as early as possible but in no event later than 20 days prior to the anticipated date for concluding the agreement.

(g) The consultation requirement shall be deemed to be satisfied with respect to proposed international agreements of the United States about which the Secretary of State (or his designee) has been consulted in his capacity as a member of an interagency committee or council established for the purpose of approving such proposed agreements. Designees of the Secretary of State serving on any such interagency committee or council are to

provide as soon as possible to the interested offices or bureaus of the Department of State and to the Office of the Legal Adviser copies of draft texts or summaries of such proposed agreements and other background information as requested.

(h) Before an agreement containing a foreign language text may be signed or otherwise concluded, a signed memorandum must be obtained from a responsible language officer of the Department of State or of the U.S. Government agency concerned certifying that the foreign language text and the English language text are in conformity with each other and that both texts have the same meaning in all substantive respects. The signed memorandum is to be made available to the Department of State upon request.

§ 181.5 Twenty-day rule for concluded agreements.

(a) Any agency, including the Department of State, that concludes an international agreement within the meaning of the Act and of 1 U.S.C. 112a, whether entered into in the name of the U.S. Government or in the name of the agency, must transmit the text of the concluded agreement to the Office of the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs as soon as possible and in no event to arrive at that office later than 20 days after the agreement has been signed. The 20-day limit, which is required by the Act, is essential for purposes of permitting the Department of State to meet its obligation under the Act to transmit concluded agreements to the Congress no later than 60 days after their entry into force.

(b) In any case of transmittal after the 20-day limit, the agency or Department of State office concerned may be asked to provide to the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs a statement describing the reasons for the late transmittal. Any such statements will be used, as necessary, in the preparation of the annual report on late transmittals, to be signed by the President and transmitted to the Congress, as required by subsection (b) of the Act.

§ 181.6 Documentation and certification.

(a) Transmittals of concluded agreements to the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs pursuant to § 181.5 must include the signed or initialed original texts, together with all accompanying papers, such as agreed minutes, exchanges of notes, or side letters. The texts transmitted must be accurate, legible, and complete, and must include the texts of all languages in which the agreement was signed or initiated. Names and identities of the individuals signing or initialing the agreements, for the foreign government as well as for the United States, must, unless clearly evident in the texts transmitted, be separately provided.

(b) Agreements from overseas posts should be transmitted to the Department of State by priority airgram, marked for the attention of the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, with the following notation below the enclosure line: FAIM: Please send attached original agreement to L/T on arrival.

(c) Where the original texts of concluded agreements are not available, certified copies must be transmitted in the same manner as original texts. A certified copy must be an exact copy of the signed original.

(d) When an exchange of diplomatic notes between the United States and a foreign government constitutes an agreement or has the effect of extending, modifying, or terminating an agreement to which the United States is a party, a properly certified copy of the note from the United States to the foreign government, and the signed original of the note from the foreign government, must be transmitted. If, in conjunction with the agreement signed, other notes related thereto are exchanged (either at the same time, beforehand, or subsequently), properly certified copies of the notes from the United States to the foreign government must be transmitted with the signed originals of the notes from the foreign government.

(e) Copies may be certified either by a certification on the document itself, or by a separate certification attached to the document. A certification on the

document itself is placed at the end of the document. It indicates, either typed or stamped, that the document is a true copy of the original signed or initialed by (insert full name of signing officer), and it is signed by the certifying officer. If a certification is typed on a separate sheet of paper, it briefly describes the document certified and states that it is a true copy of the original signed by (full name) and it is signed by the certifying officer.

§ 181.7 Transmittal to the Congress.

(a) International agreements other than treaties shall be transmitted by the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives as soon as practicable after the entry into force of such agreements, but in no event later than 60 days thereafter.

(b) Classified agreements shall be transmitted by the Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

(c) The Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs shall also transmit to the President of the Senate and to the Speaker of the House of Representatives background information to accompany each agreement reported under the Act. Background statements, while not expressly required by the act, have been requested by the Congress and have become an integral part of the reporting requirement. Each background statement shall include information explaining the agreement, the negotiations, the effect of the agreement, and a precise citation of legal authority. At the request of the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, each background statement is to be prepared in time for transmittal with the agreement it accompanies by the office most closely concerned with the agreement. Background statements for classified agreements are to be transmitted by the Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

(d) Pursuant to section 12 of the Taiwan Relations Act (22 U.S.C. 3311), any

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agreement entered into between the American Institute in Taiwan and the governing authorities on Taiwan, or any agreement entered into between the Institute and an agency of the United States Government, shall be transmitted by the Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations to the President of the Senate and to the Speaker of the House of Representatives as soon as practicable after the entry into force of such agreements, but in no event later than 60 days thereafter. Classified agreements entered into by the Institute shall be transmitted by the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations to the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs.

§ 181.8 Publication.

(a) The following categories of international agreements will not be published in United States Treaties and Other International Agreements:

(1) Bilateral agreements for the rescheduling of intergovernmental debt payments;

(2) Bilateral textile agreements concerning the importation of products containing specified textile fibers done under the Agricultural Act of 1956, as amended;

(3) Bilateral agreements between postal administrations governing technical arrangements;

(4) Bilateral agreements that apply to specified military exercises;

(5) Bilateral military personnel exchange agreements;

(6) Bilateral judicial assistance agreements that apply only to specified civil or criminal investigations or prosecutions;

(7) Bilateral mapping agreements;

(8) Tariff and other schedules under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and under the Agreement of the World Trade Organization;

(9) Agreements that have been given a national security classification pursuant to Executive Order No. 12958 or its successors; and

(b) Agreements on the subjects listed in paragraphs (a) (1) through (9) of this section that had not been published as of February 26, 1996.

(c) Any international agreements in the possession of the Department of State, other than those in paragraph (a)(9) of this section, but not published will be made available upon request by the Department of State.

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