

American Government In-Class Activity

Name:

The Articles of Confederation Summarized

1. Establishes the name of the confederation with these words: "The Style of this confederacy shall be "The United States of America."
2. Asserts the sovereignty of each states, except for the specific powers delegated to the confederation government, i.e. "Each state retains its sovereignty, freedom, and independence, and every power, jurisdiction, and right, which is not by this Confederation expressly delegated."
3. Does not call the United States of America a "nation" or "government," but instead says, "The said States hereby severally enter into a firm league of friendship with each other, for their common defense, the security of their liberties, and their mutual and general welfare, binding themselves to assist each other, against all force offered to, or attacks made upon them, or any of them, on account of religion, sovereignty, trade, or any other pretense whatever."
4. Establishes freedom of movement – anyone could pass freely between the states, excluding "paupers, vagabonds, and fugitives from justice." All people are entitled to the rights established by the state into which he travels. If a crime is committed in one state and the perpetrator flees to another state, he will be extradited to and tried in the state in which the crime was committed.
5. Allocates one vote in the Congress of the Confederation (the "United States in Congress Assembled") to each state, which was entitled to a delegation of between two and seven members. Members of Congress were appointed by state legislatures. Also, individuals could not serve more than three out of any six years.
6. Only the central government was allowed to conduct foreign relations and to declare war. No states could have navies or standing armies, or engage in war, without permission of Congress (although the existence of state militias is encouraged).
7. Whenever an army is raised for common defense, colonels and military ranks below colonel will be named by the state legislatures.
8. Expenditures by the United States of America will be paid by funds raised by state legislatures, and apportioned to the states based on the real property values of each.
9. Defines the powers of the United States of America: to declare war, to set weights and measures (including coins), and for Congress to serve as a final court for disputes between states.
10. Defines a Committee of the States to be a government when Congress is not in session.
11. Requires nine states to approve the admission of a new state into the confederacy. It pre-approved the British held Province of Quebec (referred to as "Canada"), if it had applied for membership.
12. Reaffirms that the Confederation accepts war debt incurred by Congress before the existence of the Articles.
13. Declares that the Articles are perpetual, and can only be altered by approval of Congress with ratification by all the state legislatures.

Ratified March 1, 1781