

# ATLANTIC CHARTER

During World War II (1939-45), the United States and Great Britain issued a joint declaration in August 1941 that set out a vision for the postwar world. In January 1942, a group of 26 Allied nations pledged their support for this declaration, known as the Atlantic Charter. The document is considered one of the first key steps toward the establishment of the United Nations in 1945.

## ROOSEVELT AND CHURCHILL DISCUSS ATLANTIC CHARTER

From August 9 to August 12, 1941, U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt (1882-1945) and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill (1874-1965) met aboard naval ships in Placentia Bay, off the southeast coast of Newfoundland, to confer on a range of issues related to World War II. It was the first time the two leaders had met as heads of their respective governments, and at that point, the United States had not yet entered the war (it would do so in December of that year).

*DID YOU KNOW? Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill had a close relationship, and the U.S. president once sent the British leader a cable that read: "It is fun to be in the same decade as you."*

The document that resulted from the Roosevelt-Churchill meetings was issued on August 14, 1941, and became known as the Atlantic Charter. The document, which was not a treaty, stated that the two leaders "deem it right to make known certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world."

## ATLANTIC CHARTER ISSUED: AUGUST 14, 1941

The Atlantic Charter included eight common principles. Among them, the United States and Britain agreed not to seek territorial gains from the war, and they opposed any territorial changes made against the wishes of the people concerned. The two countries also agreed to support the restoration of self-government to those nations who had lost it during the war. Additionally, the Atlantic Charter stated that people should have the right to choose their own form of government. Other principles included access for all nations to raw materials needed for economic prosperity and an easing of trade restrictions. The document also called for international cooperation to secure improved living and working conditions for all; freedom of the seas; and for all countries to abandon the use of force.

## ALLIED NATIONS SUPPORT ATLANTIC CHARTER

On January 1, 1942, at a meeting in Washington, D.C., representatives of 26 governments (the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, China, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Poland, South Africa, Yugoslavia) signed a "Declaration by United Nations" in which they pledged their support for the Atlantic Charter's principles.