The earliest antecedents of Treaties and other international agreements, seen going backwards from our time, are present in the most ancient historic and even archaeological records, and finally disappear as they blend into the mists of antiquity. One of the earliest such documents still extant is the Treaty between the Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses II and the Hittite Monarch Hattusili after the battle of Kadesh, in 1283 BCE. It was recorded in Egypt in hieroglyphics on the wall of the tomb of Ramses II, and was also found in present day Turkey, then the Hittite empire, on a clay tablet in the Hittite palace archives, uncovered during a modern day archaeological dig. After all that ancient context, the subject of the treaty – to conclude hostilities and establish peaceful relations again, is very modern and resonates clearly with some of the most recent treaties in the present time. The Treaty of Versailles in 1919, between Germany and the Allied Powers, put a formal end to the First World War. The Second World War ended with a series of Treaties, the last being the Treaty of San Francisco in 1951.

Although, the Treaty of Versailles ending World War I included the foundation document for a shared future in the League of Nations, in many ways it was a traditional peace treaty. There were winners and losers, and the losers were soundly punished going forward through the terms of the treaty. In the globalized world that was being created through advances in technology and communication, transportation and migration, economics and business, and interconnected and mutually dependent international trade, this no longer worked. Instead, an even more destructive and more widespread conflict erupted in the Second World War. Therefore, perhaps it could be said that the real “treaty” which concluded the Second World War was also created in San Francisco, and was the Charter of the United Nations. The world could no longer function in a winner-take-all mode.

As the United Nations was being created, Article 102 of the Charter mandated that for all nations who were members of the organization, every treaty and international agreement entered into by a member state had to be registered with and published by the Treaty Office of the UN. In part, this was to counter the practice of the 19th and early 20th centuries of nations entering into secret agreements harmful to the international good. To understand the terms used in Treaties published by the U.N., a useful document is the United Nations Treaty Guide, online at http://untreaty.un.org/ola/internet/Assistance/guide.pdf. It is published by the UN Office of Legal Affairs, provides a succinct list of definitions, and explains several processes in treaty work.

Another thread useful in understanding UN Treaty work could be said to begin with an English document of the year 1215, the Magna Carta, which was one of the first agreements to limit the power of the state – in this case the English King John. It said that no freeman – non-serf in that distant time, could be punished except through the law of the land, a right in England which is still in existence today.

A second element in this group could be said to be the Protocols to the Geneva Convention, brought into force over many years, and most recently updated in 1949. These delineate what is acceptable treatment of both civilians and others – prisoners of war, combatants in time of war. Today the Geneva conventions have their own web page, courtesy of the International Committee of the Red Cross, at http://www.icrc.org/eng/war-and-law/treaties-customary-law/geneva-conventions/.

A third element could be said to be a ruling at Nuremberg War Crime trials, after the second World War, where those bringing harm in contradiction to the Geneva Protocols were tried, and were not permitted to excuse their behavior by the defense that they had “only been following the commands of their superior officers.” The age of enforceable international rule of law had begun, at a terrible price for those harmed counter to the rule during the time of the Second World War. It was after the fact, and halting – no combatants from the Allied Forces were tried in this instance, but it was a beginning.

Today the web site of the United Nations Treaty Office serves as a repository for treaties and other international agreements reaching back into the time of the League of Nations, and coming forward to the present time. It provides the text of treaties, along with listings of nations which have joined those treaties in various ways – the status of the treaty. Also, a number of publications are available on this web site, and even a file of signatory photographs. For details see the next page of this Guide.
UNITED NATIONS TREATIES AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

1. Database Searching is available by:
   - Title
   - Popular Name
   - Participant
   - Full Text
   - Advanced - Can Combine:
     o Date of Adoption
     o Date of Conclusion
     o Participants (All Categories)
     o Subject
     o Terms
     o Popular Name
     o Registration Number
     o Title Key-Word

*Hint: Search under PARTICIPANTS to get to full text.*

2. Publications of the U N Treaty Office include:
   - LNTS – League of Nations Treaty Series – Text, Amendments and Status
   - MTDSG - Multilateral treaties deposited with the Secretary-General
   - Cumulative Index and Monthly Statements of Treaties and International Agreements
   - Summary of Practice of the Secretary-General as Depositary of Multilateral Treaties
   - Treaty Handbook
   - Handbook of Final Clauses
   - Treaty Event Focus Books
   - Photographs of Signatory Events

3. “Certified True Copies (CTCs) of Multilateral Treaties Deposited with the Secretary-General
   Are Grouped in These “Chapters”:

   I. Charter of the United Nations & Statute of the International Court of Justice
   XV. Declaration of Death of Missing Persons
   II. Pacific Settlement of International Disputes
   XVI. Status of Women
   III. Privileges and Immunities, Diplomatic and Consular Relations, etc
   XVII. Freedom of Information
   IV. Human Rights
   XVIII. Penal Matters
   V. Refugees and Stateless Persons
   XIX. Commodities
   VI. Narcotic Drugs & Psychotropic Substances
   XX. Maintenance Obligations
   VII. Traffic in Persons
   XXI. Law of the Sea
   VIII. Obscene Publications
   XXII. Commercial Arbitration
   IX. Health
   XXIII. Law of Treaties
   X. International Trade and Development
   XXIV. Outer Space
   XI. Transport and Communications
   XXV. Telecommunications
   XII. Navigation
   XXVI. Disarmament
   XIII. Economic Statistics
   XXVII. Environment
   XIV. Educational and Cultural Matters
   XXVIII. Fiscal Matters
   XV. Declaration of Death of Missing Persons
   XXIX. Miscellaneous