

# America and the first world war

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The First World War was initially declared in Europe, and America sought to maintain a neutral approach to it. This move was widely accepted across America as Americans were disgusted by the trench wars taking place in Europe as seen through horrors of the war, which had gone up to the American shores. Wilson Woodrow was actively engaged in all matters pertaining America's foreign policies and saw no need to engage in the war as he acknowledged that none of America's interests were threatened by the European war; America's trade relations with European nations was not impeded by the ongoing war. America's neutrality in the war meant that her banks could lend money to either of the warring sides. However, America's neutrality is somewhat questionable as she was the main manufacturer and supplier of arms to the warring nations, especially to the Allied side, which was against the Imperial Germans. In addition, America supplied both financial aid and other goods such as army attire to both France and Britain. Her neutrality is also doubtful as she sought the affirmation of her right to immunity from submarine attacks from German submarines. Moreover, America kept a small army active in anticipation for joining the war, she sent out army divisions into Europe, whose tasks were to help out France and Britain. This neutrality was, however, stopped President Wilson after America received the Zimmerman Telegram, intercepted by Britain on its way to Mexico from the German government. The telegram sought to establish and alliance between Imperial Germany and Mexico against America. It also assured Mexico of Germany's assistance in reclaiming the former's land, which had been acquired by America (Venzon, p. 516).

Wilson, who was re-elected because of his insistence on neutrality and seeking an amicable end to the war, was extremely aggravated by the Zimmerman Telegram, resulting in his decision to declare war on Germany. According to Wilson, the move by Germany to declare unrestricted submarine warfare on all marine vessels was evidence of Germany's disregard for democracy. Wilson saw this as reason enough to go into war against Germany because the German's had already sunk an American ship, Luisitania, resulting in the death of many Americans. Wilson's move is acceptable as Germany's intentions to assist Mexico reclaim her lost land would have resulted in war between the America nations. In addition, Wilson knew that Germany's promise, to Mexico, of strong financial assistance were unrealistic in the Mexican context because America was the main supplier of arms and ammunition, which Mexico would need in reclaiming their former territories. Moreover, if Germany was able to convince Mexico into alliance, foreign relations would be threatened. This is because Mexico had already formed an alliance with the ABC nations in South America, a confrontation between America and Mexico would have tarnished the good relations (Venzon, p. 637).

According to Benjamin Freedman, Germany was willing to back down from the war before America launched her offensive against the later. This is, however, untrue because the reason behind America's entry in the war was the Zimmerman Telegram (Venzon, p. 264). America's involvement in the war assured marine safety, along the Atlantic Ocean, for all nations. Had America opted not get involved in the war, Germany would have continued in its indiscriminate submarine warfare along the Ocean. In addition, America's involvement in the war led to the defeat of Germany thereby

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bringing to a stop the latter's tyranny and oppression.

#### Works Cited

Venzon, A. C. The United States in the First World War: An Encyclopedia (Military History of the United States). USA: Routledge, 1999. Print.