

The Zimmerman Telegram

BERLIN, JANUARY 19, 1917

WE INTEND TO BEGIN ON THE FIRST OF FEBRUARY UNRESTRICTED SUBMARINE WARFARE. WE SHALL ENDEAVOR IN SPITE OF THIS TO KEEP THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA NEUTRAL. IN THE EVENT OF THIS NOT SUCCEEDING, WE MAKE MEXICO A PROPOSAL OF ALLIANCE ON THE FOLLOWING BASIS: MAKE WAR TOGETHER, MAKE PEACE TOGETHER, GENEROUS FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND AN UNDERSTANDING ON OUR PART THAT MEXICO IS TO RECONQUER THE LOST TERRITORY IN TEXAS, NEW MEXICO, AND ARIZONA. THE SETTLEMENT IN DETAIL IS LEFT TO YOU. YOU WILL INFORM THE PRESIDENT [OF MEXICO] OF THE ABOVE MOST SECRETLY AS SOON AS THE OUTBREAK OF WAR WITH THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IS CERTAIN AND ADD THE SUGGESTION THAT HE SHOULD, ON HIS OWN INITIATIVE, INVITE JAPAN TO IMMEDIATE ADHERENCE AND AT THE SAME TIME MEDIATE BETWEEN JAPAN AND OURSELVES. PLEASE CALL THE PRESIDENT'S ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT THE RUTHLESS EMPLOYMENT OF OUR SUBMARINES NOW OFFERS THE PROSPECT OF COMPELLING ENGLAND IN A FEW MONTHS TO MAKE PEACE.

ZIMMERMANN

(Turn over for questions)

Critical thinking questions

1. Who sent this telegram and what country is he/she from?
2. What does this mean, "WE INTEND TO BEGIN ON THE FIRST OF FEBRUARY UNRESTRICTED SUBMARINE WARFARE"?
3. Was Germany's intent to bring the United States into World War I? Why or why not? (Use evidence from this telegram for your answer.)
4. What things did Germany offer Mexico if they assisted them in the war?
5. How would Germany help Mexico "reconquer the lost territory in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona"?
6. Why were the Germans confident the war would be over so soon?
7. You make the decision. Based off this telegram, should the United States declare war on Germany and become involved in World War I? Why or why not? Provide good ideas and input in your response. (3-4 sentences)