WORLD WAR I - US ENTRANCE

Wilson, Zimmerman and Why We Go to War
Neutrality

- Despite acceptance of a British mine blockade of the North Sea, many Americans were outraged when the German government announced a submarine blockade of Great Britain in February 1915.
- The Germans had stopped viewing the United States as neutral.
- The sale of munitions by the United States to the Allied powers was a clear indication of America’s partiality.
- Stopping U.S. shipments of supplies to the Allies was therefore a major goal of Germany and its allies.
Zimmerman Telegram

- The note, from a high official in the German government to the German ambassador to Mexico, revealed that Germany intended to resume unrestricted submarine warfare.
- It also proposed an alliance with Mexico should the United States enter the war.
- At this point, after years of debating continued neutrality in the face of devastating human loss, Wilson was convinced that war was inevitable.
Declaration of War

- Wilson asks Congress for a declaration of war on April 2, 1917. It is met with enormous enthusiasm.

- However, one in opposition to the war was Senator George Norris of Nebraska.

- In Senator Norris’ view, the U.S. had not been totally innocent thus far.

- He asserted that the true motivating factors for U.S. entry into the war were financial in nature: the guarantee of repayment of loans to the Allies and the proceeds from continued munitions sales.
Guiding Questions with Documents

Document 1 - Zimmerman Telegram

1. What does the telegram reveal about Germany’s plans regarding submarine warfare?

2. What role does Zimmerman want Mexico to play?

3. Why do you think the Telegram provoked the US to enter the WWI? What other factors contributed to the US declaring war against Germany?
Guiding Questions

- **Document 2**
  1. What is the purpose of Wilson’s speech?
  2. What reasons does Wilson give to go to war?
  3. What words/language does he use to persuade his audience?

- **Document 3**
  1. What is the purpose of Norris’s speech?
  2. What hypocrisy does Norris point out in US foreign policy and relations with Britain and Germany?
  3. What sort of language does Norris use to persuade his audience?
How do their views differ and which do you find most convincing?