

## The United States Enters

The United States managed to stay out of World War I for three years. Although many Americans sympathized with the Allied cause, few favored going to war. In general, Americans felt that what went on in Europe was of no concern to them.

Several things happened from 1914 on that gradually changed this viewpoint. Germany's invasion of neutral Belgium in 1914, the sinking of the *Lusitania* in 1915, and the effects of Allied propaganda slowly turned American opinion against the Germans. When Germany resumed unrestricted submarine warfare in February 1917, the United States broke off diplomatic relations with them.

American involvement in the war was assured even before the Germans gave free rein to their U-boats. In January 1917 the British intercepted a note sent by German foreign secretary Arthur Zimmermann to the German ambassador in Mexico. The note instructed the ambassador to urge Mexico to attack the United States. In return for its cooperation, the Germans promised to restore to Mexico land in the southwestern United States that it had lost during the Mexican War some seventy years earlier.

The British immediately forwarded the note to Washington, and Americans were outraged. When three American cargo ships were torpedoed and sunk by German U-boats two months later, President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress for a declaration of war. After remaining neutral for three years, the United States joined the fighting on April 6, 1917.

*Number the following events to put them in chronological order.*

1. \_\_\_\_ The United States declares war on Germany.
2. \_\_\_\_ Germany invades Belgium.
3. \_\_\_\_ The British intercept Zimmermann's note.
4. \_\_\_\_ The *Lusitania* is sunk by a German submarine.
5. \_\_\_\_ The United States breaks off diplomatic relations with Germany.
6. \_\_\_\_ German submarines sink three American cargo ships.

7. How did most Americans feel about the war when it broke out in 1914?

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8. Why was Zimmermann's note so upsetting to the American people?

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