

the general principles of visit and search and destruction of merchant vessels recognized by international law such vessels, both within and without the area declared a naval war zone, shall not be sunk without warning and without seeing human lives unless these ships attempt to escape or offer resistance.

"But," it added, "neutrals can not expect that Germany, forced to fight for its existence, shall, for the sake of neutral interests, restrict the use of an effective weapon if its enemy is permitted to continue to apply at will methods of warfare violating the rules of international law. Such a demand would be incompatible with the character of neutrality and the German government is convinced that the government of the United States does not think of making such a demand, knowing that the government of the United States has repeatedly declared that it is determined to restore the principle of the freedom of the seas, from whatever quarter it has been violated."

#### RESPONSIBILITY IS SINGLE

"To this the government of the United States replied on the 8th of May, accepting of course the assurance given, but adding:

"The government of the United States feels it necessary to state that it takes it for granted that the imperial German government does not intend to imply that the maintenance of its newly announced policy is in any way contingent upon the course or result of diplomatic negotiations between the government of the United States and any other belligerent government, notwithstanding the fact that certain passages in the imperial government's note of the 4th instance were... in construction. In order, however, to avoid any misunderstanding, the government of the United States notifies the imperial government that it can not for a moment entertain, much less, a suggestion that respect by German naval authorities for the rights of citizens of the United States upon the high seas should in any way or in the slightest degree be made contingent upon the conduct of any other government, affecting the rights of neutrals and non-combatants. Responsibility in such matters is single, not joint, absolute, not relative."

"To this note of the 8th of May the imperial German government made no reply.

#### WITHDRAW ASSURANCES

"On the 21st of January, the Wednesday of the present week, the German ambassador handed to the secretary of state, along with a formal note, a memorandum which contained the following statement:

"The imperial government therefore does not doubt that the government of the United States will understand the situation thus forced upon Germany by the entente allies' brutal methods of war and by their determination to destroy the central powers and that the government of the United States will further realize that the now openly disclosed intentions of the entente allies gives back to Germany the freedom of action which is reserved in its note addressed to the government of the United States on May 4, 1916.

"Under these circumstances Germany will meet the illegal measures of her enemies by forcibly preventing after February 1, 1917, in a zone around Great Britain, France and Italy and in the eastern Mediterranean, all navigation, that of neutrals included, from and to England and from and to France, etc., etc. All ships met within the zone will be sunk."

"I think that you will agree with me that, in view of this declaration, which suddenly and without prior intimation of any kind, deliberately withdraws the solemn assurance given in the imperial government's note of the 4th of May, 1916, this government had no alternative consistent with the dignity and honor of the United States, but to take the course which, in its note of the 18th of April, 1916, it announced that it would take in the event that the German government did not declare and effect an abandonment of the methods of submarine warfare which it was then employing and to which it now purposes again to resort."

#### RELATIONS ARE SEVERED

"I have, therefore, directed the secretary of state to announce to his excellency, the German ambassador, that all diplomatic relations between the United States and the German empire are severed, and that the American am-

bassador at Berlin will immediately be withdrawn; and, in accordance with this decision, to hand to his excellency his passports.

"Notwithstanding this unexpected action of the German government, this sudden and deeply deplorable renunciation of its assurance given this government at one of the most critical moments of tension in the relations of the two governments, I refuse to believe that it is the intention of the German authorities to do in fact what they have warned us they will feel at liberty to do. I can not bring myself to believe that they will indeed pay no regard to the ancient friendship between their people and our own or to the solemn obligations which have been exchanged between them, and destroy American ships and take the lives of American citizens in the willful prosecution of the ruthless naval program they have announced their intention to adopt. Only actual overt acts on their part can make me believe it even now.

"If this confidence on my part in the solicitude and prudent foresight of their purpose should unhappily prove unfounded; if American ships and American lives should in fact be sacrificed by their naval commanders in heedless contravention of the just and reasonable understandings of international law and the obvious dictates of humanity, I shall take the liberty of coming again before the congress to ask that authority be given me to use any means that may be necessary for the protection of our seamen and our people in the prosecution of their peaceful and legitimate errands on the high seas. I can do nothing less. I take it for granted that all neutral governments will take the same course.

#### WOULD AVOID CONFLICT

"We do not desire any hostile conflict with the imperial German government. We are the sincere friends of the German people and earnestly desire to remain at peace with the government which speaks for them. We shall not believe that they are hostile to us unless and until we are obliged to believe it; and we purpose nothing more than the reasonable defense of the undoubted rights of our people. We wish to serve no selfish ends. We seek merely to stand true alike in thought and in action to the immortal principles of our people, which I have sought to express in my address to the senate only two weeks ago—seek merely to vindicate our right to liberty and justice and an unmolested life. These are the bases of peace, not war. God grant that we may not be challenged to defend them by acts of willful injustice on the part of the government of Germany!"

#### TEXT OF PRESIDENT WILSON'S INVITATION TO NEUTRALS

A Washington dispatch, dated Feb. 4, says: The President's invitation to neutrals to follow his action in breaking off relations with Germany was contained in instructions to American diplomats to announce the break with Germany to the governments to which they are accredited. It was contained in the following note:

"You will immediately notify the government to which you are accredited that the United States, because of the German government's recent announcement of its intention to renew unrestricted submarine warfare, has no choice but to follow the course laid down in its note of April 18, 1916 (the Sussex note).

"It has, therefore, recalled the American ambassador from Berlin and has delivered passports to the German ambassador to the United States.

"Say also that the President is reluctant to believe Germany actually will carry out her threat against neutral commerce, but if it be done the President will ask congress to authorize use of the national power to protect American citizens engaged in their peaceful and lawful errands on the seas.

"The course taken is, in the President's view, entirely in conformity with the principles he enunciated in his address to the senate Jan. 22 (the address proposing a world league for peace).

"He believes it will make for the peace of the world if other neutral powers can find it possible to take similar action.

"Report fully and immediately on the reception of this announcement and upon the suggestion as to similar action."

## An Appeal for Peace

### TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE:

In the presence of threatening dangers, whose magnitude can not be overestimated, I venture to address my countrymen, justifying my appeal by my interest in their welfare and by their acquaintance with me.

The President has felt it his duty to break off diplomatic relations with Germany for reasons stated in his message, and has announced to congress his purpose, in case of any overt act, to ask authority to use any means necessary to protect our seamen and people.

We are thus face to face with a grave possibility of being drawn into the European war. The President, senators and congressmen, who must act for the people in this crisis, desire to carry out the will of their constituents, but unless the rank and file of the people make known their wishes by direct communication, these officials must judge public opinion by the expressions of the metropolitan press which may or may not correctly reflect the sentiments of the nation.

To decide whether war is necessary or not we must consider the situation. The belligerent nations on both sides think themselves in a death struggle, and both sides feel justified in resorting to acts which we regard as contrary to international law as heretofore interpreted. While we dispute their right to conduct the war as they have, and earnestly protest against the violation of our rights and the sacrifice of our interests, we must not forget that the injuries which we suffer from both sides are incidental to their effort to injure each other and are in no case intended against us. We can better afford, therefore, to be patient and forbearing than we could if injuries came from avowed enemies and were intended.

The President, in his noble appeal to the belligerents, has asked that they forget the bitterness engendered by the killing of more than six millions of human beings and the expenditure of more than fifty billions in money, and come together in an honorable peace. If we can expect such an exhibition of virtue by them, are we not in duty bound to measure up to the standard which we have set for them?

There are several alternatives from which to choose. First, we can postpone until the war is over the settlement of any dispute which can not now be settled by peaceful means. Second, we can keep American citizens off belligerent ships. Third, we can refuse clearance to ships of the United States and other neutral countries carrying contraband and passengers on the same ship. Fourth, we can withdraw protection from American citizens who are willing to jeopardize the nation's peace by traveling as seamen with contraband on American or neutral vessels. Fifth, we can, if necessary, keep all American vessels out of the danger zone for the present, just as the mayor of a city keeps citizens in their homes when a mob is in possession of the street. Sixth, congress, which has exclusive power to declare war, can submit the declaration to a referendum vote, making exception in case of actual invasion.

Other alternatives are likely to be suggested. We can not depend upon precedent to meet an unprecedented situation. The most important thing is that the officials at Washington shall know that the people at home protest against entering this war on either side, with its frightful expenditure of blood and treasure; that they are not willing to send American soldiers across the Atlantic to march under the banner of any European monarch or to die on European soil in settlement of European quarrels; and that they are not willing to surrender the opportunity to render a supreme service to the world as a friend of all and peacemaker when peace is possible.

Wire immediately to the President, senators and your congressmen. A few cents now may save many dollars in taxation and possibly a son.

(Signed)

W. J. BRYAN.