

AMERICAN VESSEL IS TORPEDOED

LONDON, Feb. 3.—It was officially announced tonight that the American Steamship Housatonic has been sunk by a German Submarine.

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UNITED STATES ON VERGE OF WAR WITH HISTORIC PRECEDENTS PRESSING HER ON

PRESIDENT WILL ASK FOR DECLARATION OF WAR IN CASE OF OVERT ACT AGAINST AMERICAN LIVES OR RIGHTS

WASHINGTON, Feb. 3. — Announcement was made before the joint session of Congress at two o'clock this afternoon that the United States stands on the verge of war with all historic precedents of the centuries pressing her forward.

Fervently invoking the guidance of Almighty God in the step he had taken, President Wilson detailed to Congress why the United States could not continue relations with a warring power which repeatedly invades our sacred rights and takes the lives of our citizens.

Calm with a sense of right in what may prove the most somber moment in American history, the President stood in the historic hall of the House of Representatives, and with Senators and Representatives before him, spoke words which may carry the country into the world conflict, not for aggression, and not for power, but only for law and humanity. Silent and attentive the grim company of the Nation's lawmakers listened with rapt attention while President Wilson told of America's course in the now unsuccessful diplomatic struggle to dissuade Germany from her campaign of ruthlessness. In concluding his address, President Wilson declared that he could not even now believe that Germany intends any overt acts against American citizens, but that if overt acts are forthcoming he will again come before Congress and ask authority to use any means that may be necessary for the protection of our seamen and our people. All neutral governments, he believed, will take the same course.

MAY AWAIT OVERT ACT

WASHINGTON, Feb. 3.—That the President of the United States will not ask the United States Congress to declare war against Germany unless some overt act contrary to the law of Nations should be committed against American citizens, American ships or American rights was clearly indicated in the address of President Woodrow Wilson delivered to the Congress this afternoon, but that he will ask for such a declaration in case of such an overt act was also clearly indicated.

The President appeared before Congress sharply at two o'clock this afternoon, and announced the action that had been taken, and discussed the situation looking towards the future. He said in part:

"If American lives or American ships should in fact be sacrificed in heedless contravention of the just and reasonable understanding of international law and the obvious dictates of humanity. I shall take the liberty of again coming before Congress to that authority be given me to use any means that may be necessary for the protection of 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.

REVIEWS HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS

The President reviewed at great length the negotiations between the United States and Germany relative to submarine warfare, and laid before Congress all the correspondence that had passed between the two countries, including the President's ultimatum of April 18, 1915, wherein the President notified the German government that if American rights were invaded through the unlawful acts of the German naval warfare that this country would sever diplomatic relations with her, and including Germany's assurance of May 16, 1916, that she would respect the rights of Americans on the high seas.

GERMANY LEAVES AMERICA NO OTHER COURSE

The President said that Germany's deliberate withdrawal of her solemn assurance, given May 16, 1916, leaves this government no alternative consistent with the dignity and honor of the United States but which it announced it would do in its note of April 18. If the German government did not abandon its methods of submarine warfare," he continued: "Notwithstanding this unexpected action of the German government, this sudden, deeply deplorable renunciation of its assurance given this government at one of the most critical moments of tension in the relations of the governments, I refuse to believe that it is the intention of the German authorities to do in fact what they have notified the United States they will feel at liberty to do. I cannot bring myself to believe that they will indeed pay no regard to the ancient friendship between their people and our own, or to 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 intentions

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JAMES W. GERARD

United States Ambassador to Germany who this forenoon was instructed to close the United States Embassy at Berlin and leave that country.

COUNTRY STANDS BEHIND WILSON IN GREAT CRISIS

WASHINGTON, Feb. 3. — That President Wilson's course in severing diplomatic relations with Germany has met with the enthusiastic approval of Senator and Representatives of all parties and the people and press of the United States was clearly indicated by the statements made everywhere by everybody and the dispatches that are pouring into the capital from all points of the compass.

ONLY THING TO DO.

"It was the only thing that could be done," said Senator George E. Chamberlain, of Oregon, chairman of the Senate military affairs committee.

"We must now look out for something like Dewey at Manila," remarked Senator Morris Sheppard, of Texas.

"The President has done the only thing that any self-respecting nation could do," said Senator James A. Reed, of Missouri.

"WE TAKE NO PASSES," SAYS TILLMAN.

Senator Benjamin R. Tillman, of South Carolina, chairman of the (Continued on Page Eight)

PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON



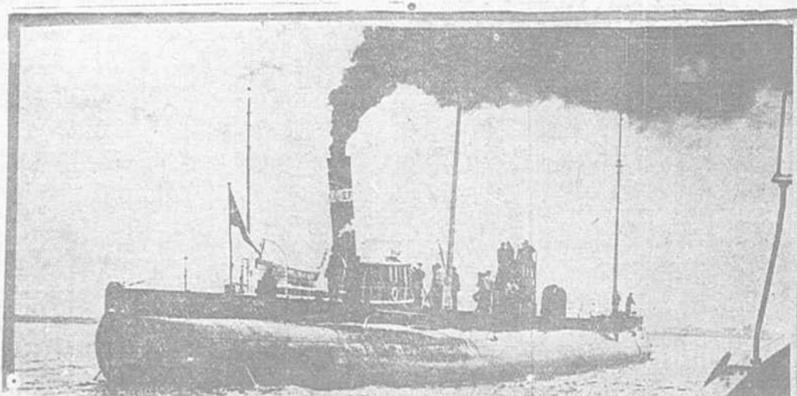
Chief executive of the United States, the man behind whom is assured united support. President Wilson today came to the conclusion that there was only one course to pursue in the present crisis, that was to break off diplomatic relations with Germany.

AMERICANS SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT.

In giving the German Ambassador his passports and directing that Ambassador Gerard close the American embassy at Berlin and all the American consulates in Germany and to request passports for himself and other Americans in the German Empire, President Wilson is acting in accord with the highest American traditions. For 127 years of history under the Constitution the United States has stood steadfastly for the freedom of the high seas. In that cause was fought our naval conflict with France in the closing days of the eighteenth century, our war with Tripolitan pirates in the Jefferson administration and the War of 1812 with Great Britain. If necessary we will fight Germany in the same cause.

President Wilson has struggled for months to secure the recognition of the rights of neutrals on the high seas through peaceful means, and more than once he received assurances from Germany that they would be recognized. But Germany has at last thrown away her mask, and announced that she will make indiscriminate warfare, against neutrals in the exercise of their rights on the sea as well as against her enemies in war. President Wilson had given fair warning that such a course would cause a severance of diplomatic relations between the two nations. This morning he made good his ultimatum, and behind his act there stands every true American no matter his politics or religion or the place of residence.

DEUTSCHLAND IS NOW DUE; RETURN CARGO IS ON FIRE



NEW LONDON, Feb. 3.—The cargo intended for the German submarine Deutschland, which is expected momentarily, was in flames at 11 o'clock this morning. The fire in the warehouse where the freight was stored, broke out soon after word was received that diplomatic relations were severed with Germany. The cargo was stored only 200 feet from the interned German steamship Willehad.

DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BROKEN WITH GERMANY AND BERNSTORFF HANDED PASSPORTS, GERARD IS INSTRUCTED TO QUIT BERLIN

WASHINGTON, Feb. 3.—Diplomatic relations with Germany have been broken off and German Ambassador von Bernstorff has been handed his passports. United States Ambassador Alfred W. Gerard, at Berlin, has been ordered by the United States government from Berlin.

The above was the startling announcement issued early this forenoon. Following quickly on the announcement of the breaking off of the diplomatic relations it was further announced that President Wilson would address a joint session of the United States Congress on the submarine question at two o'clock this afternoon.

Whether the diplomatic break with Germany will be accompanied by a similar break with Austria-Hungary could not be learned definitely. Inasmuch as Austria-Hungary is understood to have endorsed the action of Germany on unrestricted warfare, a break is expected to follow, if it has not already been taken.

PRESIDENT RESOLVED ON "BREAK" YESTERDAY.

When President Wilson returned from the Capitol Building late yesterday he had apparently made up his mind that nothing remained but the breaking off of relations at once. During the three hours the President was at the Capitol he was in conference with members of all foreign committees and those high in the councils of the administration. The President early last evening began preparing his address which was delivered to Congress this afternoon.

SAFEGUARDING OF NATIONAL INTERESTS.

No announcement of the break was made at the White House, and that was reserved for disclosure to the public through other channels. This morning when it was officially announced that the break had occurred, however, all of the machinery of the United States government was set in motion to safeguard national interests and further prepare the country for the unprecedented and momentous situation in which it now finds itself.

PRESIDENT CONFIDENT COUNTRY BEHIND HIM.

Confident that the sentiment of the entire country is behind him and assured of the united support of Congress, President Wilson finally came to the conclusion to break relations with Germany and which brings the United States on the verge of War.

Never in the history of the world have two first class powers severed their diplomatic relations without hostilities following.

The President in taking the momentous step has counted the consequences carefully as has all of his advisors.

Germany and all of her officials have openly said that they had counted the cost of the break with the United States and was prepared to pay it in the hope of shortening the war.

INSTRUCTIONS SENT TO GERARD.

Washington, Feb. 3.—The instructions sent to Ambassador Gerard are for him to close his embassy as well as all consulates in Germany, all embassy attaches, consuls, and consular agents and their staffs are to be brought out of Germany. This makes the severance of relations more complete than is usual in such cases.

BERNSTORFF TURNS EMBASSY OVER TO SWISS.

Washington, Feb. 3.—German Ambassador von Bernstorff turned the German embassy in the United States over to the Swiss embassy, after being handed his passports.

To questions asked him von Bernstorff replied: "I am only a private citizen. I have no right to talk for my government now as a private citizen. I have never desired to talk."

Von Bernstorff said this afternoon that he did not know the manner of his leaving the United States or what steps would be taken. It is thought doubtful by some of the Ententes that he will be granted any such safe passage as granted to the Austrian ambassador. In that event von Bernstorff might choose to go to South America or to Mexico.

FIVE HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS FOR PREPAREDNESS.

Washington, Feb. 3.—Senator Charles S. Thomas, of Colorado, today introduced an amendment to the House bill proposing \$500,000,000 non-interest bearing treasury notes issued to put the nation in a "state of naval and military preparedness."

ALL UNITED STATES NAVAL STATIONS CLOSED TODAY.

Washington, Feb. 3.—All naval stations in the United States were barred today to all save naval officials and the employees.

UNITED STATES MAKES DEMAND ON GERMANY.

Washington, Feb. 3.—The United States has formally demanded of Germany the immediate release of Americans who were taken prisoners on the prize ships captured by the German raiders in the South Atlantic.

CREWS OF INTERNED SHIPS TO BE TAKEN OFF.

Newport News, Feb. 3.—The Coast Guard Cutter Yamacraw has (Continued on Page Eight)