

# STUDENT RESOURCE 6-C

## The Zimmermann Note

To German Ambassador, Mexico City  
Top Secret—Decipher Personally

Berlin, January 19, 1917

On the first of February we intend to begin submarine warfare unrestricted. In spite of this, it is our intention to endeavor to keep neutral the United States of America.

If this attempt is not successful, we propose an alliance on the following basis with Mexico: That we shall make war together and together make peace. We shall give general financial support, and it is understood that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona. The details of settlement are left to you.

You are instructed to inform the President of Mexico of the above in the greatest confidence as soon as it is certain that there will be an outbreak of war with the United States and suggest that the President of Mexico, on his own initiative, should communicate with Japan suggesting adherence at once to this plan; at the same time, offer to mediate between Germany and Japan.

Please call to the attention of the President of Mexico that the employment of ruthless submarine warfare now promises to compel England to make peace in a few months.

ZIMMERMANN

(Source: Congressional Record, March 1, 1917, Vol. LVI, pt. 1, pp. 680-681.)

### Questions

1. Why did the Germans send this telegram? Give at least three reasons.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Imagine that you are President Wilson and have just read this telegram. What are your emotions? What are your first words to your advisors?

(Over)

3. Imagine that you live in Texas and have just read this telegram. What message would you send to President Wilson in reaction to its message?

4. The U.S. had failed to capture the Mexican bandit Pancho Villa, even though it had sent troops into Mexico looking for him. With this history in mind, how might Germany have evaluated the relative abilities of the Mexican and American armies?

~~5. Imagine that you are German foreign secretary Arthur Zimmermann and have just been told that the British have decoded your telegram and that President Wilson has read it. What is your reaction? Explain.~~

5. Imagine that you are German foreign Secretary Zimmermann & have just been told that the British have decoded your telegram & that President Wilson has read it. What is your reaction to this news? Explain.