Zimmermann Telegram 1917

It was a secret diplomatic encrypted message issued from the German Foreign Office in January 1917, that offered a military alliance between Germany and Mexico during the war, in return of recovering New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona to the republic of Mexico. The telegram was intercepted and decoded by British intelligence. The disclosure of its contents enraged American public opinion, especially after the German Foreign Secretary Arthur Zimmermann publicly admitted the telegram was genuine on March 3, and paved the way for United States to declare the war on Germany in April.**([[1]](#footnote-1))** The success in decrypting the telegram was described as the most significant intelligence triumph for Britain during World War I, and the first time on which a part of intelligence signals influenced world events.

The telegram was a part of German efforts aimed to postpone the transportation of supplies and war materials from the United States to the Allies in Europe that were at war with Germany.**([[2]](#footnote-2))** The main purpose of the telegram was to make the Mexican government declare war on the United States in hopes of involving American forces in a conflict far from Europe and slowing the export of American arms. The Germans success on the Eastern Front led them to believe that they would be able to transfer large numbers of troops to the Western Front in support of their goals, and this created a big turning point. The German High Command believed they would be able to defeat the British and French on the Western Front, and relying on submarine warfare to cause great damage to Britain before American forces could be trained and shipped to Europe in sufficient numbers to aid the Allies.

**The attitude of Mexico:**

The Mexicans were convinced that it would be neither possible nor even desirable to accept or carry out the German proposal for a various reasons such as **1st** the military superiority of the United States, **2nd** no serious plans existed which make Mexico able to win a war against the United States, **3rd**Germany's promises of financial support were very unreliable. Even if

1. **()**See: Justus D. Doenecke, Neutrality Policy and the Decision for War, in : Ross A. Kennedy (editor), A Companion to Woodrow Wilson, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd publications, West Sussex, UK, 2013, p. 250; Glen Gendzel, 1914–1929, in : Stephen J. Whitfield (editor), A Companion to 20th-Century America, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, Oxford, UK, 2004, p.p 21-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. **()** Barbara W. Tuchman, The Zimmermann Telegram, Macmillan Publications, London, 1966, pages: 8, 158. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)