

## **The Causes of World War I** **Kimberly Leverette Cruz, Mulberry Middle School**

**Directions:** The following question is based on the accompanying documents (A-D). Some of these documents have been edited for the purposes of these exercises. This question is designed to test your ability to work with historical documents. As you analyze the documents, take into account both the sources of the document and the author's point of view.

Question: Discuss the actions and events that led to the start of WWI. Be sure to include the reasons for U.S. involvement.

### **Historic Background: Document A**

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir of the Austro- Hungarian throne was the event that led to the start of WWI. On June 28, 1914 while driving through Sarajevo, Serbia an assassin approached the vehicle he was in and shot him and his wife. The following document comes from the memoir of Count Franz Von Harrach, a witness standing on the sideboard of the Archduke's vehicle.

<http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/harrachmemoir.htm>

Source: Memoir of Count Franz von Harrach

As the car quickly reversed, a thin stream of blood spurted from His Highness's mouth onto my right cheek. As I was pulling out my handkerchief to wipe the blood away from his mouth, the Duchess cried out to him, "For God's sake! What has happened to you?"

At that she slid off the seat and lay on the floor of the car, with her face between his knees.

I had no idea that she too was hit and thought she had simply fainted with fright. Then I heard His Imperial Highness say, "Sophie, Sophie, don't die. Stay alive for the children!"

At that, I seized the Archduke by the collar of his uniform, to stop his head dropping forward and asked him if he was in great pain. He answered me quite distinctly, "It is nothing!"

His face began to twist somewhat but he went on repeating, six or seven times, ever more faintly as he gradually lost consciousness, "It's nothing!"

Then came a brief pause followed by a convulsive rattle in his throat, caused by a loss of blood. This ceased on arrival at the governor's residence.

The two unconscious bodies were carried into the building where their death was soon established

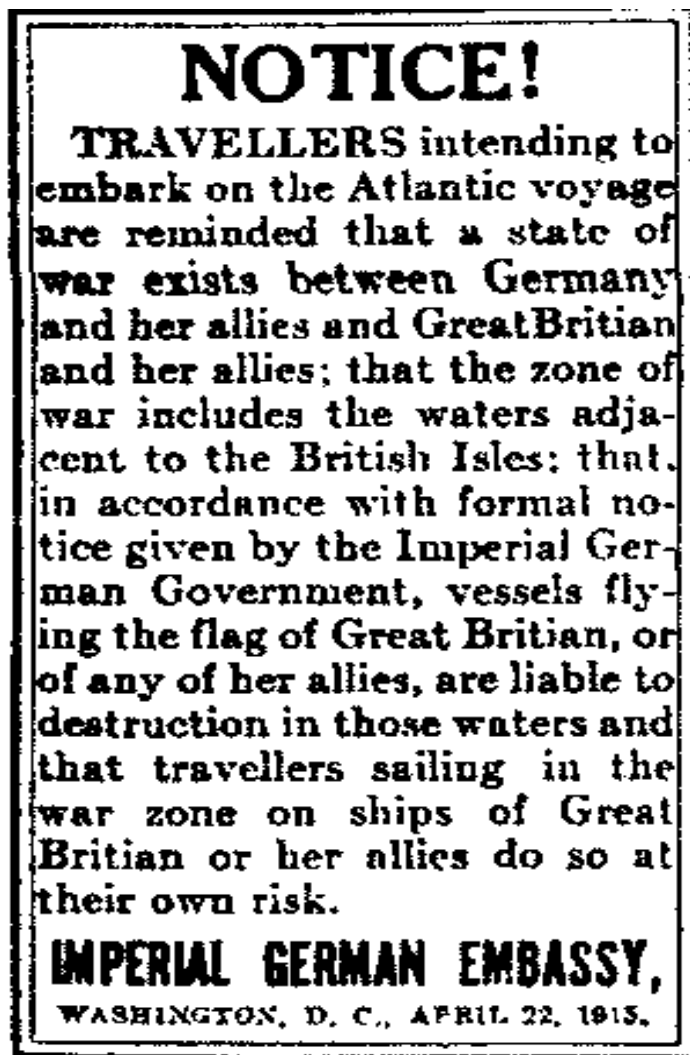
1. What did the Count do after the car went into reverse in order to help the Archduke?

2. What made the Count realize that Sophie, the Archduke's wife had been hit as well?
3. What was the Archduke's response to his injury?

### **Historical Background: Document B**

The notice below was placed next to the ad for the Lusitania's last voyage.

[http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.vw.vccs.edu/vwhansd/HIS122/Images/Lusitania\\_warning.gif&imgrefurl=http://www.vw.vccs.edu/vwhansd/HIS122/Lusitania.html&h=543&w=305&sz=12&hl=en&start=7&um=1&tbnid=DAf4v6jOOH11CM:&tbnh=132&tbnw=74&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dlusitania%2Bnotice%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26rlz%3D1T4ADBF\\_e nUS285US285](http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.vw.vccs.edu/vwhansd/HIS122/Images/Lusitania_warning.gif&imgrefurl=http://www.vw.vccs.edu/vwhansd/HIS122/Lusitania.html&h=543&w=305&sz=12&hl=en&start=7&um=1&tbnid=DAf4v6jOOH11CM:&tbnh=132&tbnw=74&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dlusitania%2Bnotice%26um%3D1%26hl%3Den%26rlz%3D1T4ADBF_e nUS285US285)



4. What is the political relationship between Germany and Great Britain?
5. What are the passengers being warned of if they should travel under the flag of Great Britain?
6. Who issued this notice?

**Historical Background: Document C**

On May 7, 1915 the steam liner, Lusitania, was sunk by a German U boat. This act was seen as aggression toward the U.S. The ship left New York on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1915 with 1257 passengers and 706 crew members. The Lusitania was headed with supplies and munitions for Great Britain. The casualties were 1,198 people; 128 of which were American citizens. When news of this tragedy reached the U.S. many Americans protested German's unrestricted submarine warfare. The excerpt below is a response from President Woodrow Wilson to the German attacks.

<http://www.firstworldwar.com/features/lusitania.htm>

Source: Text of the Second U.S. Protest by President Woodrow Wilson

..." Whatever be the other facts regarding the *Lusitania*, the principal fact is that a great steamer, primarily and chiefly a conveyance for passengers, and carrying more than a thousand souls who had no part or lot in the conduct of the war, was torpedoed and sunk without so much as a challenge or a warning, and that men, women, and children were sent to their death in circumstances unparalleled in modern warfare.

The fact that more than one hundred American citizens were among those who perished made it the duty of the Government of the United States to speak of these things and once more, with solemn emphasis, to call the attention of the Imperial German Government to the grave responsibility which the Government of the United States conceives that it has incurred in this tragic occurrence, and to the indisputable principle upon which that responsibility rests...

The Government of the United States therefore deems it reasonable to expect that the Imperial German Government will adopt the measures necessary to put these principles into practice in respect of the safeguarding of American lives and ships, and asks for assurances that this will be done..."

7. How does President Wilson view the duty of the U.S. government with regards to this crisis?
8. What does the U.S. government expect from Germany?

### **Historical Background: Document D**

In January of 1917 cryptographers deciphered a telegram from Arthur Zimmermann, German Foreign Secretary, to Heinrich von Eckardt, the German Ambassador in Mexico. In this telegram Zimmermann offered U.S. territory to Mexico for their alliance with the German government. This telegram helped to draw the U.S. into the war. The following document is the Zimmerman telegram.

Source: Zimmerman Telegram

To the German Minister to Mexico

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 are left to you for settlement...

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.

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9. What did Germany intend on doing beginning in February with regards to naval warfare?
  
10. What was the proposal if the U.S. does not stay neutral in the war?
  
11. What was Zimmerman's suggestion to Mexico if war should break out between Mexico and the U.S.?

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