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Influence of unofficial diplomacy on the attitude of the United States toward the Great War, 1914--1917; a study of the activities of Colonel Edward M. House

Harry Paul Budewitz

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THE INFLUENCE OF UNOFFICIAL DIPLOMACY
ON THE ATTITUDE OF THE UNITED STATES TOWARD THE GREAT WAR
1914 - 1917

A Study of the Activities of Colonel Edward M. House

by

HARRY PAUL BUDEWITZ

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts

State University of Montana
1933

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Diplomacy is the art and practice of conducting negotiations between nations. The principles and rules governing the intercourse of states have no sanction except the consent of the Powers, and are established and maintained by diplomacy. They are working rules, established for mutual convenience, which it is the function of diplomatists to apply.

The greater mass of diplomatic work consists of giving particular application to rules generally admitted. The rest consists in adjusting disputes about matters to which the application of the existing rules is doubtful, or to which they admittedly do not apply. In debates on questions of the latter nature, the diplomatist is an advocate; his object is not justice, but the advantage of the country he represents.¹

In the United States, the Department of State is the "foreign office" of the nation, and under the supervision of the President, it directs the foreign relations of the United States. Under the Secretary of State is the Diplomatic Service, consisting abroad of ambassadors and ministers to foreign nations. Their duties are to represent the United States in the country to which they are sent in any negotiations and discussions with a view to securing by peaceful means the preservation of American rights under the treaties and under international

1. Encyclopaedia Britanica: "Diplomacy"
These services are carried on in the other important nations of the world through the offices of Foreign Secretaries. The functions and duties of those offices are similar to those of our State Department.

During the period covered by this study the office of Secretary of State in the United States was filled first by William Jennings Bryan, and later by Robert Lansing. The United States Ambassador to England was Walter Hines Page, and James W. Gerard represented this Government in Germany.

The British Foreign Minister was Sir Edward Grey. The British Ambassador to the United States was Sir Cecil Spring-Rice.

In Germany the Minister for Foreign Affairs was Mr. Gottlieb von Jagow, and Mr. Arthur Zimmermann was Assistant Secretary. That Government was represented in Washington by Count Johann von Bernstorff.

When Woodrow Wilson was elected to the Presidency in 1912 he selected Bryan as his Secretary of State. Bryan was the foremost leader of the progressive forces of the Democratic Party, and it was only through his decisive influences that Wilson secured the nomination at Baltimore. Bryan had dominated the committee on platform, and had succeeded in getting a progressive platform; and then he threw his influence behind the nomination of Wilson in order to get a candidate who was free to push that progressive platform.\(^2\) For this Wilson was politically obliged

to offer Bryan the chief post in his Cabinet. Then, too, it was agreed that it would be best to make him Secretary of State in order to have him at Washington, and in harmony with the Administration, rather than outside, and possibly in a critical attitude.\footnote{3}

But Mr. Bryan was not Mr. Wilson's adviser. That place was held by the man whose activities form the theme of the following study, Colonel Edward M. House. "He is my second personality. His thoughts and mine are as one. If I were in his place I would do as he suggested", are Wilson's own comments on his adviser.\footnote{4}

House had made himself a power in Democratic circles in Texas, and from 1892 he had worked successfully in placing his candidates for governor into office in every case. He would then devote his time to advising those governors in their administration of public affairs.\footnote{5}

In 1910 House became interested in the national situation. In that year the political pendulum had swung far to the Democratic side, and House determined to have a hand in the selection of a progressive Democratic candidate. After much consideration he chose to come out for Woodrow Wilson, then Governor of New Jersey.\footnote{6}

\footnote{4}{Ibid. p.}
\footnote{5}{Ibid. p. Also, William Martin, Statesmen of the War, in Retrospect, 1918-1928 (New York, 1928) p.236}
\footnote{6}{House, \textit{op.cit.} p. 42
Martin, \textit{op.cit.} p. 236}
On November 24, 1911 Governor Wilson called upon Mr. House. This was their first meeting. From that time began the personal friendship of the two men.\(^7\) Mr. House wrote in his diary, "The first hour we spent together proved to each of us that there was a sound basis for a fast friendship. We found ourselves in such complete sympathy... that we soon learned to know what each was thinking without either having expressed himself.

"A few weeks after we met and after we had exchanged confidences which men do not usually exchange except after years of friendship, I asked him if he realized that we had only known one another for so short a time. He replied, 'My dear friend, we have known one another always.'\(^8\)

House now became satisfied of Wilson's political possibilities. He advised the Governor now to concentrate on the tariff question. This Wilson did, to the enhancement of his chances to be the liberal Democratic candidate.

Then House turned to the task of securing Bryan's approval of Wilson. That he succeeded is shown by the events at Baltimore.

After the nomination House worked to secure party harmony, and especially to secure the favor of the New York group. This he did, saving Wilson from a threatened break with Tammany.\(^9\)

When Roosevelt was shot by an assassin, House feared that something of the sort would happen to Wilson, so he secured the

7. House, *op.cit.* p. 43
   Martin, *op.cit.* p. 236
8. House, *op.cit.* p. 45
9. Ibid., p. 75-76
   Martin, *op.cit.* p. 237
services of his own personal friend, Captain Bill McDonald, to act as a personal bodyguard to Wilson. Captain Bill and the Governor became close friends, and of course McDonald told Wilson all about House's political successes in Texas.10

In view of all this, it was inevitable that Wilson should turn to Colonel House for assistance when he became President.

Mr. House continued to be the President's adviser preceding and during the course of the World War. Especially was his advice heeded, and his suggestions asked for, in those critical years before the American entry.

Commenting upon the foreign policy of the President during the years in question, William Martin, in his book, "Statesmen of the War" writes, "Mr. Wilson had, if not two policies, at least two diplomatic systems. One portion of public affairs went through the Department of State and the Ambassadors. But the President had a profound distaste for the diplomats, and everything that interested him personally, everything that had a political bearing, was dealt with by Colonel House and himself. Two Secretaries of State in succession, Bryan and Lansing, came into conflict with the President from causes not solely connected with the presence of Colonel House but due in large measure to him."11

It is with this second phase of Wilson's diplomacy that this study is concerned. It has been called "Unofficial Diplo-

10. House, op.cit. p.81
11. Martin, op.cit. p.241
macy” in contrast with the first phase which may rightly be called "Official Diplomacy". It is the purpose of this study to present illustrations showing that our policy was directed more by Mr. House in an unofficial way than it was by those who held the offices which were directly charged with the conduct of our foreign relations; that is, while our Secretaries of State were taking steps which were outwardly necessary in the carrying on of our international interests and obligations, they were merely following the "legal procedure", while a strong undercurrent of diplomacy was being carried on unofficially.

The influence of Colonel House on our policy and our attitude toward the War during the years 1914 to 1917 has been recognized by numerous writers and authorities. As an example of current newspaper recognition, the Montgomery (Alabama) Advocate, on April 14, 1916, carried a cartoon showing the Muse of History demanding of Colonel House the "opener" to the bottle labeled "Foreign Policy".12

In writing of House's mission to Europe in 1914, Martin says: "That mission of his and the relations which it enabled him to establish enhanced House's credit with the President, and made him the inspirer of the American war policy."

Count J. von Bernstorff wrote this about Colonel House, "Mr. House occupies a peculiar and very influential position at the White House. Bound to the President by intimate friendship,

he has always refused to accept any Ministerial appointment, although he could have had any post in the Cabinet or as an Ambassador that he had liked to choose. In this way he remained entirely independent, and since Wilson's entry into the Presidency, was his confidential advisor in domestic, and particularly in foreign, politics. As such, Colonel House had a position that is without precedent in American History.\(^{13}\)

The following pages will be an attempt to give illustrations of how House's influence upon the President, the Secretary of State, and the American and foreign diplomats DID inspire the American policy during those critical years.

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CHAPTER II
THE FIRST UNOFFICIAL MOVE FOR PEACE
House Plans to Prevent War

As early as 1913 Colonel House was convinced that a European war was imminent, and that such a war would attain proportions so tremendous that every part of the world would be affected. Feeling that it was not only the duty but also the interest of the United States to do all in its power to avert it, moreover he believed that the day had passed when America was isolated from Europe; that she had much to fear from European trouble, and that she could do much to prevent it. House, even before the inauguration of President Wilson, had planned a policy of co-operation which should include the United States, Great Britain, and Germany. He saw that the great danger lay in the animosity of Germany and Great Britain; and he hoped that it might be allayed by getting the two countries to work together toward a common end.¹

With these aims in mind, on May 9, 1913, House interviewed Count von Bernstorff, suggesting that it would be a great thing if there was a sympathetic understanding between England, Germany, Japan, and the United States. Together they would be able to wield an influence for good throughout the world. These powers could insure peace and the proper development of the waste places of the world, besides maintaining an open door and equal opportunity to

¹. House, op.cit. p. 238-239
Constantine Dumba, Memoirs of a Diplomat (Boston, 1932) p.215
every one everywhere. Bernstorff agreed and offered a suggestion that China would afford a field of mutual action.2

Later in the year, House discussed his ideas with Ambassador Page in London. "If the great world forces could be united and led to clean up the tropics", he said, "the great armies might gradually become sanitary police, and finally forget the fighting idea and at last dissolve." Page was sympathetic to House's ideas, but doubted whether the European nations involved could see the virtues of the plan.3

At luncheon with Sir Edward Grey, House detailed his conversation with von Bernstorff. He told Grey that Bernstorff believed that good feeling would soon come between England and Germany. "My purpose in repeating this", House wrote in his diary, "was to plant the seeds of peace."4

In December of the same year, 1913, House talked at greater length with Sir William Tyrell, Grey's secretary, then visiting in the United States, concerning the subject. House told Sir William that he wished to bring about an understanding between France, Germany, England, and the United States regarding a reduction of armaments, both military and naval. Tyrell replied that he thought such an understanding would be one of the most far-reaching proposals that had been put forward. He considered the chances of success as fair. When House asked Tyrell to sug-

4. House, I. p.241
gest a procedure, Sir William said that he thought House should first go to Germany and see the Kaiser. He advised having Ambassador Gerard whisper to the Kaiser that "I was the power behind the throne in the United States". Tyrell assured House that England would co-operate with Germany cordially. With England, the United States, France, and Germany agreed, the balance of the world would follow, and a great change would come about.

When the plan was presented to President Wilson, it was received with enthusiasm. The two men then planned that early in the summer of 1914 House should go to Berlin to see the Kaiser. If he could be brought to favor the plan, then House was to go to England.

Gerard arranged for an interview with the Kaiser for June. House spent the winter preparing for the visit, studying the German situation and holding conferences with people from whom he hoped to get information concerning the Kaiser.

5. Here we see evidence of Colonel House's method: put the ideas forward and allow the others to develop them.
6. House, op. cit., I, p. 242-3; Page, op. cit., I, p. 277-8, 280. The plan forming in Colonel House's mind was one for permanent international co-operation.
7. House, op. cit., I, p. 243; Page, op. cit., I, p. 286-7: Our friend in Washington thinks it is worth while for me to go to Germany. See also Bemis, op. cit. Vol. I, p. 22. "Colonel House's personal efforts, on his tour of Europe in the spring of 1914, to bring about better relations among the great powers, are to be regarded as entering into the Administration's program, although they had no connection with the Department of State."
8. House, op. cit., p. 244; Page, op. cit., p. 277
9. House, op. cit., p. 244; also, James W. Gerard, My Four Years in Germany (New York, 1917) p. 65; Page, op. cit., p. 289; Dumba, op. cit., p. 215
10. House, op. cit., p. 244-7
Late in May, then, House went to Germany. Before he had his interview with the Kaiser, he met and talked with other important German officials. He summed up his impressions in a letter to the President, dated from Berlin, May 29. "The situation is extra-ordinary—mad militarism. Unless some one acting for you can bring about a different understanding, there is some day to be an awful cataclysm. No one in Europe can do it. Whenever England consents, France and Russia will close in on Germany and Austria. England does not want Germany wholly crushed, for she would then have to reckon alone with her ancient enemy, Russia, but if Germany insists upon her ever-increasing navy, then England will have no choice. The best chance for peace is an understanding between England and Germany in regard to naval armaments, and yet there is some disadvantage to us in these two getting too close. It is an absorbing problem ... of tremendous consequence. I wish it might be solved, to the ... glory of your Administration and our American civilization."

In arranging for the interview with the Kaiser, House insisted that the meeting must be of the two alone, or not at all. With difficulty the occasion was provided, and the conversation took place at Potsdam, June 1, 1914. The two men talked for a half hour. When House finally brought the conversation around to the subject which he had come to discuss, he found the Kaiser much less belligerent than he had found some of his immediate advisers. The Kaiser spoke kindly and admiringly of England.

11. House, op. cit. p. 248-9; Page, op. cit. p. 289
12. House, op. cit. p. 252; Page, op. cit. p. 290
13. Page, op. cit. p. 289: von Tirpitz was openly and demonstratively hostile.
"England, America and Germany," the Kaiser said, "are kindred people, and should draw closer together." House told the Kaiser that the English were very much concerned over his ever-growing navy, which taken together with his enormous army, constituted a menace; and there might come a time when it would have to be decided whether England ran more danger from him and his people making a successful invasion than they did from Russia. House said further that when that point was reached, the decision would be against Germany.  

House suggested the idea that if England, Germany, and the United States stood together, the peace of the world could be maintained. The Kaiser agreed quite readily to this. However, House said, there could be no peace between England and Germany so long as he continued to increase his navy. To this the Kaiser replied that he must have a large navy—both to protect Germany's commerce ... and to defend against the combined efforts of France and Russia. Great Britain, he said, had nothing to fear from Germany; he himself was personally a friend of England, and was doing her a great favor by holding the balance of power against Russia. House said that the President and he thought that perhaps an American might be able to compose the difficulties and bring about an understanding ... better than any European. The Kaiser agreed that this was true. House then said that he had undertaken this work and that was

15. Ibid., p. 256
his reason for coming to Germany; as he wanted to see the Kaiser first; that after leaving Germany he intended to go directly to England and take the matter up with Sir Edward Grey in like manner. House expressed his willingness to keep him fully informed of his progress if the Kaiser so desired. The Kaiser said that such would be his wish.16

House was satisfied with this; although the Emperor had made no promises, he left House with sufficient encouragement to proceed in taking the matter up with the English.17

The letters of Colonel House to the President now aroused Wilson to a sense of the possibilities of the situation. Here-tofore he had been rather indifferent to the state of affairs in Europe; now he expressed himself as confident that House had begun a great work and was carrying it out with tact.18

In Paris, House found it impossible to enter into a discussion with the French Government.19 He therefore went on to London. He records in his diary under date of June 12, 1914, that Page told him that he considered his work in Germany the

17. House, op.cit., p. 257-8; Page, op.cit., p. 297, a letter from House to Page dated June 3, 1914. Hendrick notes that House was not particularly hopeful. The one hopeful factor was that the Kaiser had wished to discuss the matter again after House had been to London. The basis for this statement may be in Page's private letters, but from a reading of House's letters, I cannot subscribe to the lack of hope on his part.
18. House, op.cit. p.258
most important work done in a generation. House and Page decided to approach Sir Edward Grey first, and leave it to him to say whether to bring in the Prime Minister and the King.

House was delayed five days by the requirements of the London social season, but on June 17 he had the opportunity of telling Grey of his visit to the Kaiser, and of the proposition which he had made. He felt that the English Foreign Secretary was impressed with the news, and therefore suggested that he and Grey meet the Kaiser at Kiel for a conference. House intimated that there was a feeling in Germany, which he shared, that the time had come when England could protect herself no longer merely by her isolated position; that England was now as accessible as continental powers.

Ten days later House had another opportunity to press his case upon the British officials. At this time he broached the plan of international co-operation in developing the backward nations of the world.

In all of these plans and projects House found Grey a sympathetic listener, and personally responsive; but withal a man inclined to delay. Grey felt that before he could move, he had to consider the French and the Russians, and that any

20. House, op. cit. p. 260
21. Ibid. p. 259
22. Ibid. p. 259-60, 262
23. Ibid. p. 260. Grey did not entertain this possibility at all, for reasons given in the next paragraph.
24. Ibid. p. 261
25. Ibid. p. 264-5
method of coming in touch with the Germans had to be such as not to offend the other members of the Entente. For this reason he was not willing to go to Keil, as House had suggested. Then, too, Irish affairs were at a crisis, and the British Cabinet could not be persuaded that the international situation was near the exploding point.26

On July 3 House received word that Grey wanted him to let the Kaiser know of the peaceable sentiments of the British people, in order that further negotiations might follow. House at once wrote to the Kaiser.27 On the same date he wrote to the President that things "were moving in the right direction as rapidly as could be hoped for."28

But the letter to the Kaiser was too late. England had delayed too long. The assassination at Sarajevo occurred on June 28, and by the time House had written to the Kaiser, that person had gone on his vacation cruise in the North Sea.29

House's mission was a failure. He had failed to prevent war; but his experience during the attempt demonstrated to him the need of an international organization, and confirmed his belief in the necessity of some positive purpose to be followed by such organization. He was now an advocate of a League of Nations,

27. Ibid. p. 271
28. Ibid. p. 271
29. Ibid. p. 269
and his influence with Wilson in this respect was to be a factor of much importance.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{30} House, \textit{op. cit.} p. 274-5
CHAPTER III

OFFICIAL DIPLOMACY

Bryan Arbitration Treaties

At the same time that Colonel House was carrying on his unofficial mission, Mr. Bryan was acting in an official capacity in an effort to bring about world peace.

It had long been Mr. Bryan's plan to secure international peace by a series of treaties which required each nation which was a party to one of them to agree to wait one year after an international question arose before declaring hostilities against another nation also a party to a Bryan treaty. During this year of waiting a commission of five members, including a representative of each of the contending parties, was to investi-gate the justice of the controversy. The report of the com-mission was not to be binding on the parties, but it was hoped that facts would be brought out during the investigation that would afford an opportunity for settlement, and that the year would allow for time to "cool off". ¹

As soon as Bryan became Secretary of State he secured the President's approval of the plans. On April 24, 1913, all of the diplomats in Washington assembled in Mr. Bryan's office. Each was presented with a copy of a treaty.²


² Count Bernstorff, My Three Years in America (New York 1920) p. 27: This reference acknowledges Count Bernstorff's presence at the meeting. Also, Dumba, op. cit. p. 227.
By July 1914 most of the large South and Central American countries had signed such treaties. Netherlands signed one.

After the war broke out England, France, and Russia signed such treaties. Germany and Austria declined as did Japan. Mr. Bryan planned a trip to Europe to urge his treaties on the European countries, but was prevented by the House adventure.

It might be asked, did Colonel House come in contact with any echoes of these treaties while on his mission? On the occasion of his visit to the Kaiser in June, 1914, he asked the Kaiser why Germany refused to sign a Bryan treaty. To this the Kaiser replied that Germany would never sign such a treaty, that such a "cooling off" period would give her enemies time to prepare, and it was up to Germany to be prepared at a second's notice. The Kaiser pooh-poohed Bryan.

3. Werner, op. cit. p. 235; Bryan Memoirs, op. cit., p. 386; Bernstorff, op. cit. p. 27: As is well known, the German Government, unlike all others, refused to fall in with Mr. Bryan's wishes.

4. This statement is taken from Werner, op. cit. p. 238; Page heard of Bryan's proposed visit to England and wrote to House, "If he comes with his 'grape juice plan' and you come to talk reducing armaments, you'll wish you'd never been born. Get your ingenuity together and prevent that visit." House prevented it, for meanwhile he and the President were worried about the possibility of war in Europe, and Colonel House planned a visit . . . to see what could be done about universal peace; they did not think it necessary to mention the matter to the Secretary of State, who was so busy with his own arbitration treaties. . . .


6. Page, op. cit. p. 294
Again, to House in London on his mission, Prime Minister Asquith 'cast the usual slur' upon Mr. Bryan. House did what he could to explain Mr. Bryan's position in the Cabinet, but found it 'absolutely useless to fight his battles, because in doing so you are discrediting the purpose you are striving for.'

Bernstorff writes of Bryan in his book, "My Three Years in America": "An honest visionary and fanatic - not a statesman whose concern is the world of realities." Germany refused to fall in with Mr. Bryan's plans on Arbitration Treaties - and later I often regretted this refusal. Mr. Bryan had always been a pacifist, and sacrificed his Ministerial position to his convictions. So long as he remained in office he continued to influence the American Government to maintain neutrality, and constantly strove to bring about peace.

Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, in his book of Memoirs, tells his reflections on Mr. Bryan at this time. "Talking to Mr. Bryan," he says, "is like writing on ice. The only argument he is likely to feel is that his peace treaties, on which he hopes to base a new record, will not meet with a favorable reception until it is proved that the United States keeps what engagements it has already made, and shows the wish to conform to the ordinary usages of diplomacy."

7. House, op.cit. p. 269; Werner, op.cit. p. 238
8. Bernstorff, op.cit. p. 26
9. Ibid. p. 27
10. Ibid. p. 68
"Mr. Bryan is unlike any other Secretary of State... that has ever been known. He has a strong desire to negotiate new treaties, and there is no reason... why he should not be humored, as long as we do not attach too much importance to the treaties when negotiated."

After the war had begun Spring-Rice wrote to Grey, under date of August 25, 1914, "Mr. Bryan regards the war... as a background to his own peace treaties. It is hard to take him seriously; all the State Department is on our side except Bryan, who is incapable of forming a settled judgment on anything outside of party politics."

That, then, was Mr. Bryan's position. The balance, was in Mr. House's favor. The Colonel had shown himself to be a discreet agent; he appeared to have something to offer which each of the governments appeared to want; and the thing that he desired, the confidence of those in responsible positions, was apparently his. This study will try to show that both England and Germany were willing and anxious to extend that confidence when the situations became difficult.

Unofficial diplomacy had achieved more than official.

12. Spring-Rice, op.cit. p.203
14. Ibid. p. 220
On the eve of the war, while the world was waiting for developments from the Sarajevo incident, Colonel House wrote from London to the President, "I have a feeling that if a general war is finally averted, it will be because of the better feeling that has been brought about between England and Germany. England is exerting a restraining hand upon France, and as far as possible, upon Russia; but her influence with the latter is slight. If the matter could have been pushed a little further, Germany would have laid a heavy hand upon Austria and possibly peace could have been . . . brought about."¹

What did the Colonel mean? His first statement evidently may be interpreted as pertaining to his own efforts of the early summer. He wrote earlier in the same letter, "It was my purpose to go back to Germany and see the Emperor, but the delay of Sir Edward Grey made that improbable." He apparently felt that had the English officials arrived at their assenting decision earlier, he would have succeeded in averting the war.²

To Page he wrote, "Just think how near we came to making such a catastrophe impossible! If England had moved a little faster and had let me go back to Germany, the thing, perhaps, could

¹. House, op.cit. p. 278
². Ibid.
have been done."³

Page agreed with the Colonel in that opinion. He issued an announcement to the London Press, stating "The United States did everything possible to avert war. If ever a job was done right up to the hilt, it was that."⁴

But Page could not see the idea of English responsibility. His biographer⁵ writes, "The fact that the British statesmen entertained little apprehension of a German attack may be a reflection upon their judgment; yet Colonel House's visit has a great historical value, for the experience afterward convinced him that Great Britain had no part in bringing on the European war; and that Germany was solely responsible. It certainly should have put the Wilson Administration right on this all-important point."⁶ This is evidently a conclusion drawn from Page's own.

Again in reply to House's letter, quoted above, Page wrote that "no power on earth could have prevented the war". House should have no conscience about it, he said, as he had done all he could. "Nobody could have done anything effective."⁷ Page never receded from this attitude. He placed the sole responsibility upon Germany, and to him the war was fought that militarism might not grow up again.⁸

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3. Page, op. cit. p. 299
5. Burton J. Hendrick
6. Page, op. cit. p. 299
7. Ibid. p. 300
8. Ibid.
Ambassador Gerard, observing events at Berlin, cabled to the State Department on August 31, that a general European war was inevitable unless America intervened. He had offered his services to that purpose in a letter to the German Chancellor, but had received no reply.9

Spring-Rice, the British Ambassador to the United States, while agreeing that House had come very near preventing the war, thought that he had in reality helped precipitate it by frightening the war party in Germany into action.10

Mr. Bryan, in the State Office, was very uneasy during this interim. He had, as has been previously told, been busily engaged in securing signatures to his peace treaties, and could not understand why there should be war.11 As has been shown earlier in this paper, Mr. Bryan's services were looked at with askance by foreign nations, and on August 1 Colonel House, in a letter to Wilson, suggested that the President should not let Mr. Bryan make any overtures to any of the Powers involved.12 From this time on Mr. Bryan's influence with the President steadily decreased.13

The war came. Immediately upon the outbreak of hostilities, the Senate of the United States passed a resolution urging the President to issue a formal appeal to the belligerents,

9. James W. Gerard, My Four Years in Germany (New York, 1917) p. 132
13. Ibid.
offering his services in case of mediation. Colonel House was opposed to sending any such appeal, and he wrote to the President, under date of August 5: "... it would be unwise to tender your good offices at this time, ... it will lessen your influence when the proper moment arrives ... nothing further should be done than to instruct our different ambassadors to inform the respective governments to which they are accredited that you stand ready to tender your good offices whenever such an offer is desired." In a second letter of the same date he wrote, "If a statement is made, let me suggest that you make it clear that what you have done is at your own instance. If the public here or in Europe thought that Mr. Bryan instigated it, they would conclude that it was done in an impractical way and was doomed to failure from the start."

House's suggestion was followed. Instead of a direct appeal to the belligerents of Europe, the President approached each government indirectly through the ambassadors. Page was instructed to seek an audience with King George and to present the offer. This offer was merely an expression of willingness to act. The note was sent under the signature of Secretary Bryan. Gerard received a similar note to be presented to the

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15. Page, op.cit. p. 319
16. House, op.cit. p. 283
17. Page, op.cit. p.320
18. A copy of this Note may be found in House, op.cit. p.263; also in Page, op.cit. p. 320. In regard to Bryan's signature, it is said parenthetically that the Note received his "heartly approval". Berlis, op.cit. p. 23.
Government at Berlin.\textsuperscript{19}

There was no response from any of the Allied Powers, but from the German Government the reply was a defense of the German policy.\textsuperscript{20}

Meanwhile in war-mad Europe, the Embassies of the United States were taking over the work of the enemy-embassies. In London, Page and his corps took over the work of the Austrian embassy\textsuperscript{21} and of the German embassy.\textsuperscript{22} In Germany, Gerard took over the British Embassy.\textsuperscript{23}

On August 4 Wilson issued a Presidential Proclamation of Neutrality.\textsuperscript{24} In it he set forth rules of conduct for American citizens toward the war; the various regulations, under international law, for belligerent vessels in American waters. No restriction was made upon the free and full expressions of sympathy in public or in private, nor upon the manufacture and sale of munitions of war within the United States, but citizens of the United States cannot carry such articles upon the high seas for the service of a belligerent country, nor transport soldiers and officers of a belligerent, nor attempt to break any lawfully established blockade WITHOUT INCURRING THE RISK OF HOSTILE CAPTURE AND THE PENALTIES ATTACHED THEREON.

\textsuperscript{19} House, \textit{op.cit.} p.283; Gerard, \textit{op.cit.} p. 199
\textsuperscript{20} Gerard, \textit{op.cit.} p. 300-204. This reply was never made public until the U.S. entered the war. Ibid. p.203. In England, neither Page nor Grey regarded these representations seriously. Page, \textit{op.cit.} III, p. 170.
\textsuperscript{21} Page, \textit{op.cit.} I, p.305
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid. p.306
\textsuperscript{23} Gerard, \textit{op.cit.} p.139
\textsuperscript{24} American Journal of International Law, Supplement to Vol. IX, p.194-98.
This stand received the commendation of most statesmen. Roosevelt congratulated the country on the separation from Europe which permitted its neutrality. Ambassador Page, who was soon to take a different attitude, seemed pleased with the step. Spring-Rice wrote, on September 12, "I hope and believe that at any rate ONE part of the world will keep out of it."
CHAPTER V
UNOFFICIAL DIPLOMACY AVERTS A CRISIS

House Settles a Difficult Problem While the State Department Fails

American isolation from the war was not to be. On August 6 Secretary Bryan asked the belligerent nations to accept the Declaration of London as the existing code for the rights of neutrals. This Declaration the English had never ratified.

The British Government's reply to the message was that they would accept the Declaration of London, subject to certain modifications and additions . . . indispensable to the efficient conduct of their naval operations.

The British held the mastery of the sea. It was to their interest, therefore, to prevent the arrival in Germany, either directly or indirectly, of any article that might help the enemy prolong the war; and in a modern war almost any article of common necessity, such as oil, copper, or foodstuffs, may be of as much military value as what was formerly contraband of war. It was inevitable, then, that the Allies, led by Great Britain, should seize and search such neutral vessels as might be carrying contraband, and it was equally certain that they would extend the definition of contraband.

2. American Journal of Int. Law, Vol. IX, supplement, p. 3
On the other hand, it was certain that these extensions would touch the United States, for she was the largest neutral Power, and was vitally concerned in preserving open routes to the neutral countries of Europe and in an open market for non-contraband goods.4

On August 15th the State Department opened the controversy, advancing the right of neutrals to trade with belligerent countries in non-contraband, and with non-combatant countries in goods that might otherwise be considered contraband of war.5

The British countered by extending the list of conditional contraband and an extension of the doctrine of ultimate destination. Then, in September, they made rubber and copper absolute contraband.6 They were much concerned over the matter of "backdoors to Germany", through the neutral ports of Rotterdam, Copenhagen, Gothenburg, and Genoa. By a series of orders and by pressure upon some of the smaller neutral nations, they were enabled to completely shut off the shipment of food to Germany. In August and September the United States shipped no wheat, only 65 barrels of flour, and no lard to Germany.7

On October 22 Acting-Secretary Lansing wired to Page in London that the United States would withdraw its suggestion that the Declaration of London be used as the basis for neutral rights, and that they would insist that the rights and duties

4. House, op.cit. p. 303
5. Edward J. Clapp, Economic Aspects of the War (New Haven 1915,) p. 36
6. American Journal of International Law, op.cit. p.4-5
7. Clapp, op.cit. p. 38
of the United States and its citizens in the present war be
defined by the existing rules of international law and the
treaties of the United States; and that this Government re-
served to itself the right to enter a protest or a demand in
each case in which the rights and duties so defined were vi-
olated . . . or interfered with . . . by England. 8

A like Note was sent to Gerard for the German Government,
giving for a reason that some of the belligerents were unwilling to accept the Declaration of London without modifications. 9

From October 22 to December 26, 200 vessels with American
cargoes bound for European countries were seized. 10 Vigorous
protests from our State Department, under signatures of both
Bryan and Lansing, failed to obtain any sort of a concession
to our point of view on the part of the British Foreign Office. 11

It is apparent that the legal processes of our diplomacy
were unsuccessful. Bryan and Lansing could do nothing to bring
the British to our point of view. Now, was unofficial diplomacy
any more successful?

Mr. House had returned to the United States. He shared
with Page the conviction that too much depended upon the friend-
ship of Great Britain and the United States to permit a quarrel
over anything that was not vital; but he appreciated, as Page
did not, the irritation caused by the British methods of holding

9. Ibid.
10. Clapp, op.cit. p. 53
11. American Journal of International Law, op.cit. p.55-83, gives a list of the protests filed.
up American cargoes; and he realized that unless the United States maintained her rights as a neutral with vigor, she would not be able to protest effectively should more serious attacks follow.\textsuperscript{12} He believed, however, that by care in drafting of the protests, and by maintaining close personal relations with the British Ambassador at Washington, much friction could be avoided.

On September 27th House was in conference with the President. As they were sitting there a large package was brought in from the State Department. The President was tired, and did not want to look at it, but was told that it was to go off by the morning's mail. He read it - it was some sort of an ultimatum, couched in not too friendly terms - the sort of document which would have convulsed the world if it had gotten out. It was a message from the State Department to Ambassador Page, to be presented to the British Foreign Office, relating to the controversy over the Declaration of London. The two men were astonished. The President declared that the document, though signed, could not go at once. House said that if the message were sent as written, there would be a catastrophe. It was then arranged that instead of this dispatch, a telegram should be sent giving the general heads for a friendly discussion. The President agreed to let House see Sir Cecil Spring-Rice

\textsuperscript{12} House, \textit{op.cit.} p. 306
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
and try to get to the bottom of the question.  

When House showed the dispatch to the British Ambassador, Sir Cecil expressed considerable alarm over some of the diplomatic expressions; one paragraph in particular he thought amounted almost to a declaration of war. He feared that if information of this dispatch got into the press, the headlines would indicate that war with Great Britain was inevitable, and that one of the greatest panics the country had ever seen would ensue. He said that he did not know what House had accomplished in a busy life, but he felt sure that he had never done as important a piece of work as in this instance.

The two men talked over the best ways of getting out of the difficulty, which Spring-Rice said would never have arisen if the State Department had talked the matter over with him frankly from the beginning. As it was, the English position had been known to the State Department for a month, and no objection had been made. Now that their intentions were published, it would be difficult to adjust matters in a way to save the self-respect of the British Government.


17. House, op.cit. p.308. Sir Cecil used the expression "amour propre".
Colonel House's method worked. Spring-Rice cautioned Grey to go easy. On October 20th he wrote, "The matter requires delicate handling. Mr. Bryan is away. Mr. Lansing, the Counsellor, is a lawyer accustomed to conduct matters of small importance, like claim commissions. You will see the difficulty of negotiating with a subordinate who has the lawyer's instinct to make good his case."\textsuperscript{18}

Seymour says that it would be difficult in all history to find another instance of diplomacy so unconventional and so effective. Colonel House, a private citizen, spreads all the cards on the table andconcerts with the Ambassador of a Foreign Power the despatches to be sent to the American Ambassador and the Foreign Minister of that Power. As a result of this intervention, the threatened crisis was tided over, and during the next five weeks it proved possible to approach the problems of neutral shipping peaceably, although no solution was found.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{18} Spring-Rice, \textit{op.cit.} II, p. 238
\textsuperscript{19} House, \textit{op.cit.} p. 308. Page, \textit{op.cit.} p. 378: In a letter to Wilson on the subject of the Bryan and Lansing demands, Page wrote, "It appears that only the intervention of Colonel House prevented the whole thing from becoming a tragedy." See also \textit{Ibid.} p. 385.
CHAPTER VI
WALTER HINES PAGE
A Sidelight on the British Controversy

Walter Hines Page considered all pacific plans of the President and of Secretary Bryan as mere wasted effort. Yet he believed that the United States could end the war, and could do so without a large loss of American life.¹ In a letter to Wilson, dated October 6, 1914, he outlined his plan, a plan primarily to cripple militarism: "If we stopped all shipping to Germany and gave England arms, peace will come quickly. Then we could perhaps make them all disarm. England would force Russia and Japan to disarm. And we could stop the war - we would not have to fight, but only to give the English guns and hold back everything, food and all else, from Germany; and perhaps threaten to fight."²

Hendrick says that Page's proposal now appears as consummate statesmanship.³ But it failed to produce the desired result. Instead, the United States began the long, tedious, and unprofitable quarrel with Great Britain over contraband and blockade.

A confidential dispatch to Page from the State Department under the signature of Counsellor Lansing, and dated October 6, 1914, requested Page to ask the British Government to issue an

¹ Page, op.cit. III, p. 171
² Ibid. Also, House, op.cit. p. 333-5
³ Page, op.cit. III, p. 173
Order in Council adopting the Declaration of London without any amendments whatever. Page was to intimate that the plan was his own personal suggestion and not one for which his Government was responsible.\(^4\)

The plan was that the British Government issue the Order as above suggested, and follow it by another Order in Council, of which the United States Government need not be previously advised.\(^5\) The second Order might declare that when the British Government was convinced that a port or territory of a neutral country was being used as a base for the transit of supplies for an enemy Government, a Proclamation shall be issued declaring such port or neutral territory had acquired enemy character as far as trade in contraband was concerned, and that vessels trading with them shall be subject to the rules governing trade to the enemy's territory.\(^6\)

The despatch goes on to say that Page was to make all these suggestions to Sir Edward Grey in an entirely personal way, and with the distinct understanding that his Government

4. Page underscored this last sentence on his private copy and wrote on the margin, "This is not true." Page, *op.cit.* p. 186
5. Page's copy was underscored as I have it here, with the marginal note, "Hardly frank". *Ibid.* p. 186.
6. Page's marginal comment on this statement is, "In the delicate and dangerous temper of the present, this would have a tendency to drive Italy, Holland, Denmark, and Sweden into war against England." *Ibid.* p. 187
was in no way responsible for what he might say. 7

Page was considerably irritated by the 'legal tenor' of the despatch. His reply was written directly to the President. "I can see no reason for continued insistence upon the Declaration of London, insofar as England has positively refused three times to accept it. In her naval conduct England will give us as little offense as possible, if we act frankly, in good faith, and trust to her good faith, and cease to irritate her. This is all we can do - or we can fight. I think the stake is too big to risk for the satisfaction of arguing to the finish about ... the acceptance of a Declaration that was rejected in time of peace. Grey wants only to prevent war materials from reaching Germany. He does not wish to hinder our commerce or to irritate us. I am only criticising the State Department's method

7. Page made the following note at this point: "I can hardly believe that such subterfuge or misrepresentation of the real facts is necessary between representatives of two great and friendly nations. My relations with Sir Edward have not been built upon this basis, and could not survive this method of dealing long." Page, III, p.187. Sir Edward Grey, Twenty-five Years (2 vols. New York, 1925) II, p.110: "In all this (he is dealing with the naval controversy with the United States) Page's advice and suggestions were of the greatest value in warning us when to be careful, or encouraging us when we could safely be firm . . . . Page came to see me at the Foreign Office one day and produced a long despatch from Washington contesting our claim to act as we were doing in stopping contraband going to neutral ports. "I am instructed," he said, "to read this despatch to you." He read, and I listened. He then said, "I have now read the despatch, but I do not agree with it; let us consider how it is to be answered. On other occasion he would urge us to find other means of avoiding provoca-
of approach on the subject, and this is not directed personally at Mr. Lansing.³

Page now determined to end the condition that was intolerable to him, and he wrote to Colonel House asking him to inform the President that if he was requested again to move for the adoption of the Declaration of London, he would resign as Ambassador. On this the State Department withdrew its demand and the incident was closed. The whole episode was a humiliating defeat for Mr. Lansing and the State Department — but there was nothing to do but to back down. The United States abandoned its attempt to enforce on Great Britain a maritime code which every nation except the United States had rejected, and agreed, in the future, to rest its protests upon the existing rules of international warfare.⁹

tion of American feeling . . . . The "Dacia" was an example of this. Everybody knew what the Dacia was, when she was to sail, and where. She was an open challenge to our blockade which we were bound to take up. Page suggested that the French Navy instead of the British Navy should intercept the Dacia. This was done, and there was not a murmur from America.

9. See page 27 of this paper; also, Page, op. cit. p.188
CHAPTER VII

COLONEL HOUSE GOES TO EUROPE A SECOND TIME

An Unofficial Quest for Peace

All through the fall of 1914 Colonel House had engaged in frequent conferences with the German and the British Ambassadors concerning the possibility of American mediation. By December the President had given up the idea and the hope of meeting the ever-increasing problems by means of the Ambassadors, either in Washington or in foreign capitals, and he felt now that the only way to settle the problems was to send House again to Europe. This mission the Colonel agreed to undertake.

On December 17, 1914, Bernstorff and House met, and they took up the question of European peace. House informed Bernstorff that the President had decided to leave the matter to him as to the time and the manner of procedure. Bernstorff gave House the opinion that the German Government would be willing to parley if the Allies would do so, even on the basis of evacuation of Belgium, indemnity to her, and disarmament in the interests of permanent peace.

1. House, op.cit. p. 317; 323-25. Page, op.cit. I, p.415: The failure of the first attempt at peace did not discourage the Administration. Colonel House was constantly meeting the German and British Ambassadors, and was in touch with Zimmermann, the German Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs.


On December 20 House received a call from Sir Cecil Spring-Rice. The British Ambassador had received word from Grey indicating the possibility of British consideration of a peace move. Plans were therefore made for House to leave at an early date in January.

House took steps to inform the Ambassadors from the three Allied nations as to his intent; and he found that at first the Russian and the French representatives doubted the chances of success. House wished them to prepare the way for him to their Governments, so he told them that at least it would be worth while to "find out how utterly unreliable and treacherous the Germans were by exposing to the world their false pretensions for peace." That suited them better, and they now offered every facility to meet the heads of their respective Governments.

In a letter to Sir Edward Grey, Spring-Rice writes this about House's presentation of the plan, "The Russian and French Ambassadors and the Belgian Minister are all three convinced that the assurances and promises that have been made to House are simply part of the plan to get the Allies into assuming attitudes inconsistent with one another on the peace question.

House's suggestion, then, that he would expose this suspected piece of trickery would naturally satisfy the Russian and French officials.

4. House, op.cit. p. 341
5. Ibid. p. 341,349
6. Ibid. p. 352; Spring-Rice, op.cit. p. 258
7. By the German Ambassador: this paper, p.35
8. Spring-Rice, op.cit. p.258
House reported to Secretary Bryan the results of his interview with the Allied Ambassadors, and told him of what the President desired him to do. House thought that Mr. Bryan was disappointed at hearing this, as he had planned to do this same thing himself. He told the Secretary that the President thought it would be unwise for anyone to do this work officially, and that if Mr. Bryan went, it would attract a good deal of attention and people would wonder why he was there. Mr. Bryan then said that if the mission was to be an unofficial one, House was the one to go. In this way Bryan's policy of positive and official steps for peace were shelved.

House and Wilson planned the Mission for Peace. There was to be a private code to be used between them for messages. Wilson was to send a letter of instructions as a passport, as it were, for his representative abroad.

House made an appointment with Bernstorff and told him that he had met the Allied Ambassadors, and that none of them felt that Germany was sincere. He asked Bernstorff to advise his Government not to make useless and senseless raids upon England by Zeppelins, etc., as it would have a bad effect upon his mission; also to inform the German Government that House

9. House, op.cit. p. 352
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid. Also Bemis, op.cit. p. 34: Bryan finally accepted House's plan for a personal mission to Europe.
12. William Martin, Statesmen of the War, in Retrospect (New York, 1928) p. 241
expected to be in Berlin in February.\(^\text{14}\)  

The letter which Wilson prepared for Mr. House emphasized the fact that House was representing not an official attempt at mediation but merely the desire of the President to serve as a channel for confidential communications through which the belligerent nations might exchange views with regard to terms upon which the present conflict might be ended and future conflicts rendered less likely.\(^\text{15}\)  

Before House sailed, the President asked him to say to Sir Edward Grey that, while he was abroad, all intermediaries were to be eliminated, and the President was expecting to act directly through House.\(^\text{16}\) House then asked Wilson if it would be possible for him to come to Europe in the event that a peace conference could be arranged, and in case he was invited to preside over it. Wilson thought that it would be well to do this, and that the American people would desire it.\(^\text{17}\)  

Arrangements were made through the State Department for the Government to place $4000 to House's credit to defray the expenses of the mission.\(^\text{18}\)  

Upon bidding goodbye to House, the President expressed himself that House was the only one in all the world to whom


\(^{15}\) House, op. cit. p. 354.  

\(^{16}\) The President was not disposed to deal further thru Page and Spring-Rice. Ibid. p. 317  

\(^{17}\) Ibid. p. 357  

\(^{18}\) Ibid. p. 357
he could open his entire mind.\textsuperscript{19}

Arriving in England, House immediately conferred with Grey. Theirs was a "frank talk", and House felt that Grey explained to him the exact situation in England. House emphasized the point that Wilson's only interest was in bringing the nations together, and that he had no desire to suggest terms; furthermore, what he said to Grey was merely his own personal view and was not official.

It was at this conference, Seymour believes, that Grey and House brought together their ideas for an international mechanism for world peace; and that it was through Colonel House that these ideas were later impressed upon President Wilson and finally translated into the Covenant of the League of Nations. In the drafting of that Covenant the ideas and the diplomacy of Colonel House became of the utmost importance.\textsuperscript{21}

It was while House was in England at this time that Germany complicated matters by announcing their proclamation of a war zone around the British Isles, to take effect February 18, 1915.\textsuperscript{22} This Proclamation became the subject of a series of diplomatic Notes handled through the State Department of the United States Government, in the same manner as was the question of British seizures and the blockade. The State Department now had its hands full with the two questions, and it was probably well for

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{19} Ibid. p. 358
  \item \textsuperscript{20} Ibid. p. 363; also Page, \textit{op.cit.} p. 431: Colonel House reached London early in February, and was soon in close communication with the Prime Minister and Grey. He made a great personal success... but he made little progress in his peace plans.
  \item \textsuperscript{21} House, \textit{op.cit.} p. 364-5.
  \item \textsuperscript{22} American Journal of International Law, Special Supplement to Vol. XIX, p.83-4 for the text of this proclamation; see also Clapp, \textit{op.cit.} p. 77.
\end{itemize}
the Quest for Peace that it was in Colonel House's hands.

These developments did not alter the purpose that House had in mind. On February 12 he received a despatch from Zimmermann, now the Foreign Minister for Germany, inviting him to come to that country.23

House showed the invitation to Grey. They discussed their problem, and House advanced the point that it was up to the two of them to decide when to begin peace movements. Grey did not believe it wise for House to go to Germany on such a mission just at this time, as Germany was now engaged in a military envelopment movement; and that the civil Government there would not act until such a movement either succeeded or failed.24

As a result of this conference, House did postpone his visit to Germany. His answer to Zimmermann's invitation was that he understood that his conversations there were to be based upon evacuation of and indemnity to Belgium; and that Zimmermann's letter saying that such a move was not feasible25 made it necessary for him to delay his visit until he could hear from Zimmermann again. House suggested, in his reply to Zimmermann, that as the situation in regard to Belgium was understood, conversations should be opened on the basis of evacuation and a permanent peace. In conclusion he wrote, "I need not tell you, Sir, what great moral advantage this position will give Germany

23. House, *op.cit.* p. 371; Evidently this invitation was the result of Bernstorff's work. Ibid. p. 367.
24. Ibid. p. 373
25. Ibid. p. 371
and how expectantly the neutral nations will look toward the Allies that they meet so fair an attitude. Your favorable reply to this will, I believe, mark the beginning of the end of this unhappy conflict." 26

Now Gerard became active, and in a letter to House under date of February 15, 1915, he advised that Germany was serious about the submarine reprisal. They would not initiate peace proposals, he said, but he was sure that if a reasonable peace was proposed "now" it would be accepted. Gerard parenthesized this last statement as being made on his own authority. He then suggested that the Allies send a peace proposal or an offer to parley, to him verbally and secretly at Berlin. 27 If it was accepted, all right; if not, there would be no harm done nor any publicity. "If you can get some such an intimation from the Allies, and then come here, it will go," he wrote. Then in the postscript of the letter, he said, "I am sure of the acceptance of a proposal." 28

House found the British too slow-moving. The President cabled to House on the 20th, indicating a fear that House was yielding too far to the wishes of the British Government in deferring his trip to Germany. In reply, House said that the British Government had as much as said that if he should go to Germany now they would cease to consider the President as a medium for peace. That, he thought, would defeat the entire

26. Ibid. p. 375
27. Thru House, I interpret this suggestion.
mission, and it was for that reason he deferred the trip.29

As an illustration of the method by which House carried on his work while in London, this is all quotation from a letter from his personal files, a letter to a personal friend: "I have succeeded in keeping my name absolutely out of the European press, and I remain in as much obscurity as is possible for one having such work in hand. No one, not even Page, knows when I see the different Ministers or personages of importance.30

By March 8 Grey and House had decided that the time had come for House to go to Berlin. Zimmermann had written on March 2nd31 saying that he regretted the decision to abandon the visit to Germany, and that he thought it possible that the German Government would consider House's suggestion.32 Gerard, too, wrote at this time, expressing his own hope, and that of von Jagow, that House would come to Berlin.

House decided to make the visit, going by way of France. He asked Grey whether he should see Delcasse.33 After some discussion, Grey said that it might be all right, but that House would have to be very discreet in what he said to Delcasse.34

29. In his reply to Gerard to the above mentioned letter. Ibid. p. 377 and 379.
30. Ibid. p. 380-82
31 Ibid. p. 391
32. See pages 48-49 this paper.
33. Delcasse had again become French Foreign Minister.
34. House, op. cit. p. 392. Grey comments upon House at this point. "It is not necessary to spend much time in putting our case to him. Our conversations were not only friendly but intimate. His criticism or comment was valuable, his suggestions fertile; these all were conveyed with a sympathy that made it pleasant
House left London for Paris and Berlin carrying with him "an appreciation of Grey's honesty and moderation, fear of the demands of France, suspicion of German sincerity; yet determined to find . . . a way . . . across the chasm." 35

He succeeded better in France on this visit than on the previous one. He met Delcasse, and at once showed him the President's letter. House felt that Delcasse's attitude was better from this moment, and so he proceeded to explain the President's position. Delcasse promised House that on his return to Paris from Germany he would tell him what France was willing to do. House wrote to the President that he felt that by Delcasse's statement France tentatively accepted Wilson as a mediator. 36

Seymour says that House knew by this time that his "Quest for Peace" was hopeless. France demanded territorial annexations that would defeat his plan. "France", he wrote in his diary, "wants Alsace-Lorraine and so much more that the two countries are not within sight of peace. If it is brought about, it will be through . . . Sir Edward Grey and British opinion." 37

House might have given up his trip to Germany at this juncture. But he saw the chance of placing German-American relations on a better footing through personal conversations, and

to listen to them. . . . my affairs were so arranged that an hour was made convenient for Mr. House to come whenever he wanted to talk." Grey, op.cit. II, p. 124

35 House, op.cit. p. 394
36 Ibid. p. 396
37 Ibid. p. 399
did not wish to lose the opportunity of indicating to the Germans some basis for future compromise with the British. He determined, however, that it would be worse than useless to raise the question of immediate peace parleys in Berlin.

House arrived in Berlin March 20th. There he presented the President's letter to Zimmermann. He told the Foreign Secretary frankly of what he had done in England, and of the conclusions which he had drawn. He let him know that there was a lack of bitterness in England. House thought that Zimmermann was surprised when he told him that the difficulty was with France; and felt that the surprise indicated that the Germans had tried to cultivate good relations with both France and Russia with the purpose of making separate terms with them. "I think I convinced him", wrote House in his report, "that England did not desire Germany crushed, and that in the end, terms would have to be agreed upon between these two countries." 38

Under date of March 26, however, House's letter to Wilson gave evidence of disappointment. The Civil Government was as sensible and fairminded as that in England, this letter said, but that Government was at the moment impotent. The people of Germany were influenced against the United States, largely because of the sale of munitions of war to the Allies. Every German that is killed or wounded is so done by an American rifle, bullet, or shell, they believe. 39

38. House, op.cit. p.400-401; Gerard, op.cit. p.221: Colonel House . . . arrived to pay a visit on March 19 and remained until March 28. During this period he met all the principal members of the German Government and many men of influence in the world of affairs.
Gerard helped House in his negotiations to such an extent as to draw the following comment, "He has been exceedingly helpful here. He has not interfered in the slightest, . . . is very courageous. . . and is different from some of our representatives, inasmuch as his point of view is wholly American."40

House told the German Civil Officials that they could not expect the United States to lay an embargo on exportations of munitions of war, and that they must soften their press and people on this point. "They have promised to do this, and I have told them that I would help them in the big thing, later," he wrote to the President. Then he added, "As in the case with the French, I think these people have tentatively accepted you as mediator."41

When House went back to Paris he did not again raise the peace question. He met Poincaré for the first time. House had received a cable from Wilson the day previous, in which there was a message to both Delcasse and Poincaré. House felt that this message had made an agreeable impression upon them both, and wrote to the President, "There is nothing you could do that would promote better feeling than occasionally to send some word that I might repeat to those in authority in the country in which I happen to be. We are all susceptible to these little attentions." House found the French to be very much of the opinion that Wilson was pro-German.42

41. Ibid. p. 411
42. Ibid. p. 416-17, a letter to the President, April 7, 1915.
House went on his way, now returning to London. But before he could develop his now-enlarging plan for mediation, the Lusitania sinking occurred. On May 5 Wilson cabled House asking for advice in view of the attack of a German submarine on an American oil-tanker, Gulflight. House cabled in reply, "I believe that a sharp note, indicating your determination to demand full reparation, would be sufficient. I am afraid a more serious breach may at any time occur, for they seem to have no regard for consequences." He was right. On May 7, 1915, the Germans sank the Lusitania off the Irish coast.43

43. House, *op.cit.* p.432
CHAPTER VIII
THE UNOFFICIAL DIPLOMACY OF THE LUSITANIA AFFAIR

The sinking of the Lusitania destroyed all hopes of bringing Great Britain and Germany together to discuss peace terms. It was now a question as to whether the United States itself could remain out of the war.¹

Ambassador Page regarded immediate intervention as inevitable, and cabled the President to that effect. He tried to show the trend of public opinion in England. "Official comment . . . is . . . reticent; unofficial feeling is that the United States must declare war or forfeit European respect. So far as I know, that opinion is universal. If the United States comes in . . . the moral and physical effect will be to bring peace quickly, and to give the United States a great influence in ending the war and in so reorganizing the world as to prevent its recurrence. If the United States submit to German disregard of her citizen's lives, and of her property, and her neutral rights at sea, they will have no voice or influence in settling the war. . . . This, so far as I can ascertain, is the unanimous opinion here. The Americans in London are outspoken to the same effect."²

But Page's presentation of the Lusitania case fell upon unsympathetic ears. In fact, Hendrick says, it was unwelcome.

¹. Ibid. p. 433. James W. Gerard, Face to Face With Kaiserism (New York, 1918) p. I believed I would be recalled immediately.
In the archives of the State Department may be found the original of the above cable, to which is attached a brief letter from Wilson to Secretary Bryan, the substance of which is, "After all, this does not express Page's own opinion, but what he takes to be public opinion at the moment in Great Britain. It is very serious to have such things thought, because everything that effects the opinion of the world regarding us effects our influence for good." 3

President Wilson kept himself carefully secluded from everyone for a few days following the Lusitania disaster. He saw no members of his Cabinet, not even the Secretary of State. For several days Mr. Bryan held himself in readiness for the President's call, but it never came. So far as is known, the only communication between them preceding the Cabinet meeting of May 12 was the note mentioned above. 4

On May 10 Wilson delivered the speech at Philadelphia in which were embodied the celebrated words, "There is such a thing as a nation being too proud to fight." 5

By May 11 Page became urgent and wired the President again, asking him to take some definite action. The British were beginning to develop contempt for America, he wrote. The most conservative action hoped for was that the United States would sever diplomatic relations with Germany pending a satisfactory

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3. Ibid. p. 241-2
4. Ibid. p. 241; also Bemis, op.cit. p.59
settlement, and that Congress be convoked so that the voice of
the nation might be heard.  

Now to return to Colonel House. On May 9 he wrote in his
diary, "It seems clear to me that the Lusitania is merely the
first incident of the kind, and that more will follow; Germany
will not give any assurance that she will discontinue her pol-
icy of sinking passenger ships filled with Americans and non-
combatants." On the same date he cabled to the President from
London, "I believe an immediate demand should be made upon Ger-
many for assurance that this shall not happen again. If she
fails to give such assurance, I should inform her that our Gov-
ernment expects to take such measures as are necessary to en-
sure the safety of American citizens. If war follows, it will
not be a new war, but an endeavor to end more speedily an old
one. Our intervention will save, rather than increase, the
loss of life. America has come to a parting of the ways; she
must determine whether she stands for civilized or uncivilized
warfare. We can no longer remain neutral spectators. Our ac-
tion . . . will determine the part we will play when peace is
made."  

Again on the 11th he cabled, "I cannot see any way out
unless Germany promises to cease her policy of making war on
non-combatants. If you do not call her to account over . . .
the Lusitania, her next move will probably be the sinking of an

7. House, op. cit. p. 434
American liner, giving as an excuse that it carried munitions of war and that we had been warned not to send ships into the danger zone.® The question must be settled, either now or later, and it seems to me that you would lose prestige by deferring it. You can never know how deeply I regret the turn of affairs, but it may be for the ultimate good. My heart goes out to you . . . and I wish that I was at your side.*

In the meantime Wilson had made his "Too Proud to Fight" speech at Philadelphia. He now faced two alternatives; to break diplomatic relations with Germany, as Page wished him to do, on the grounds that the Lusitania sinking was a crime against civilization; or to demand an official disavowal and the assurance that inhuman acts of the kind would not be repeated, Mr. House's suggested alternative. To break relations without giving Germany any chance to alter her methods was contrary to the President's instincts, and it is unlikely that the country would have supported him with unity in such a step.10

Wilson chose the second alternative. A note was prepared, "conceived and expressed with vigor, but avoiding the form of an ultimatum".11 This Note was issued through the State Department and was signed by Bryan. It demanded that the German Government disavow the acts of her submarines, including the recent sinking of the Lusitania, and that reparations be made as far as possible.

9. House, op.cit. p. 435
10. Author's statement, Ibid. p.439
11. Ibid. p.439; Bernstorff, p.147-9, "a strongly worded note".
for injuries; . . . and that immediate steps be taken to prevent a recurrence of such acts. "Expressions of regret cannot justify nor excuse a practice . . . which subjects neutral nations and neutral persons to new and immeasurable risks."\textsuperscript{12}

Both House and Page agreed that unless Germany now yielded to the demands of the Note, and ceased the torpedoing of ships without warning, the United States could not avoid intervention. But House, with Wilson, believed that war with Germany could not be justified unless every possible means to secure a peaceful settlement were first attempted. House worked to discover a plan by which Germany might be induced to give up submarine warfare. In this he had the co-operation of Sir Edward Grey, who was ready to consider any reasonable compromise.\textsuperscript{13}

In conversation with House, Grey had said that if Germany would consent to discontinue her submarine war policy of sinking merchantmen, and would also agree to discontinue the use of asphyxiating gases and the ruthless killing of non-combatants, England would be willing to lift the embargo on foodstuffs. House rushed a cablegram to Wilson outlining this idea. He felt that now if he could have Grey, Wilson, and the German Foreign Office within talking distance, he could bring about a settlement.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{12} House, \textit{op.cit.} p.439; American Journal Int.\textit{Law \textit{op.cit.}} p.129-133; Wilson, \textit{op.cit.} I, p.323-8; Bemis, \textit{op.cit.} p.39
\textsuperscript{13} House, \textit{op.cit.} p. 442-3
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid. p. 443; Bemis, \textit{op.cit.} p.40.
Wilson cabled an immediate reply, expressing deep interest in the suggestion. He saw in this move an opportunity to settle both the German and the British controversies. "It would be a great stroke on England's part," the cable stated, "if she would of her own accord relieve the situation and put Germany wholly in the wrong."\[^{15}\]

House requested Page to make an appointment with Grey so that they could find out definitely whether the English Government would lift the embargo on foodstuffs provided Germany would discontinue her submarine policy. Page promised to make the appointment, but failed to do so, giving as an excuse that he thought it worse than useless to do anything because he felt that the British Government would not consider for a moment the proposal to lift the embargo.\[^{16}\] House then went to Grey on his own accord and without consulting Page. The two men drew up a memorandum, a sort of an understanding between them, on the question: first, permitting all foodstuffs to go to neutral ports without question; second, all foodstuffs now detained to be brought before the prize courts as quickly as possible; third, claims for cotton cargoes now detained to be made as soon as shippers certify as to each cargo that they are the real owners to whom payment should be made. Should England agree to the first proposition, Germany was to cease submarine warfare on mer-

\[^{15}\] House, *op.cit.* p. 446
\[^{16}\] Ibid. p. 447. No mention is made of this in Page's papers.
chant vessels and discontinue the use of asphyxiating and poisonous gases.  

House next sent a cable to Gerard in Berlin, asking him to get the German Government to answer the American Note on the Lusitania by proposing that if England would permit foodstuffs in the future to go to neutral ports without question, Germany would discontinue her submarine warfare on merchant vessels and would also discontinue the use of poisonous gas. "Such a proposal from Germany at this time will give her great advantage", the cable reads, "and she will make a grave mistake if she does not seize the opportunity."  

Page thought that House was making a grave mistake and that the move would result in bad feeling between the United States and England if Germany should agree to the proposal and then Grey could not get the British Government to accept it. House said that this would be a matter beyond his control; that his purpose was to place the United States and the President clearly in the right, so if trouble came between the United States and Germany, the President would have done everything in his power to prevent war, and would have the approval of the American people.  

The attempt failed, but not because House misjudged the issue. The blame for failure lay elsewhere. Gerard cabled

17. House, op.cit. p.446
18. Ibid. p. 448
to House, "Zimmermann told me yesterday that Dumba, Austrian Ambassador, had cabled him that Bryan told him that America was not in earnest about the Lusitania matter."\(^{20}\) Gerard had seen the telegram, and had cabled House at once.\(^{21}\) It was this telegram that caused Germany to refuse House's suggestion. Gerard had presented the proposal, as advised to do, but von Jagow answered 'that if raw materials were added, the matter could perhaps be arranged. Germany was in no need of food.'\(^{22}\)

House gave up the attempt to negotiate, especially so when he heard from Grey that the British Cabinet was not agreeable to carrying out their part.\(^{23}\)

He decided to return to the United States. He was convinced that the German Policy would lead to American intervention, and he wanted to be near the President so as to urge him to wage war with vigor.\(^{24}\) And, if contrary to expectations, Germany did abandon or modify the submarine warfare, or if the crisis should be tided over, House was equally desirous of being

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21. He was obliged to inform Washington in some way. If he sent the information to Washington, it would have to go to Bryan himself, so he sent the information to House in London, knowing that he could get it to the President without others seeing it. Bemis, op.cit. p.40

22. House, op.cit. p. 452. Bernstorff, op.cit. p. 156. This telegram from Dr. Dumba had just been received by the German Foreign Office at the moment when the American Ambassador arrived to inform...Zimmermann, in his customary blunt and abrupt way, that Germany must yield to American demands or war would follow. Zimmermann, hoping to get Gerard to moderate his tone, showed him Dumba's wire, which pointed to the inference that the attitude of the American Ambassador was merely a bluff. Gerard reported the facts to Washington. Mr. Bryan was
in the United States and near the President, for in that case the dispute with Great Britain over the blockade would become acute. He was anxious that Wilson should know the difficulties which Grey faced, and how important it was that the United States remain on friendly terms with the Allies. Before leaving England, House held conferences with members of the new British Cabinet...in order that no misunderstanding should mar Anglo-American relations. In all of these talks he cautioned the British, and hinted that it was only Germany's rashness that kept the United States and England from coming to blows over their disputes.

Grey and House arranged for a private code that would permit them to communicate with each other, and Grey promised to write to House frequently and frankly. In this way the President was kept in close touch with the currents of Allied politics.

The German Government replied to the first Lusitania Note by claiming that the Lusitania was an armed cruiser and transport, and, as such, a vessel of war.

Wilson's reply, the Second Lusitania Note, was sent while House was on the Atlantic, bound for the United States. This Note denied the right of the German Government to restrict the made to appear as the wrecker of the President's policy.

25. House, op. cit. p.453
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid. p.456
26. Ibid. p.456-8; Bryan, Memoirs, p.421-2, A Note was prepared to be sent to England, protesting against interference with our trade. The President ordered it stopped, because House, in London, thought it unwise.
27. House, op. cit. p.470
28. American Journal International Law, op. cit. p.133-6; Remis op. cit. p.41; Bernstorff op. cit. p.149
passage of American citizens on merchant ships of belligerent nations; and asked for assurance that American lives and American ships be safeguarded.29

This note was the cause of the rupture between Bryan and Wilson, and lead to the resignation of Mr. Bryan from the office of Secretary of State. Bryan was willing to submit the dispute with Germany to arbitration, and to limit the rights of Americans by warning them not to travel on merchant ships of belligerent Powers or on those carrying munitions. Wilson was determined not to sacrifice nor even debate any American rights.30

Robert Lansing was given the appointment as Secretary of State.31 The Second Lusitania Note was sent under his signature of June 9, 1915.32

The Germans replied on July 8.33 Their answer was mainly a complaint of British methods. It maintained the principle that neutrals travelling in the "barred zone"...did so at their own

29. American Journal of Int.Law, op.cit. p.138-41; Bernstorff, op.cit. p. 151: I heard...that on the day this note was sent, all preparations had been made for breaking relations and for the inevitable resulting war. As a result of my interview with the President, however, they were cancelled.


31. House, op.cit. p.9; Spring-Rice,op.cit. p.273; Bernstorff, op.cit. p.186 - Mr. Lansing replaced Bryan. He was a lawyer, not a politician, and looked at everything from the point of view of a lawyer and his position as the President's sole legal adviser. He was Mr. Wilson's legal conscience.


33. Ibid. p. 149-153.
risk. Then the Note suggested that vessels whereon Americans
were travelling could be marked with distinctive bars. There
was no indication in the Note that the German Government would
act on the demands that there be no more sinkings.

Colonel House wrote to Wilson immediately upon his learn-
ing the contents of the German reply. "In thinking of your reply
to the German Note, the following occurred to me: The Government
of the United States is unwilling to consent to any suggestion... of...abridgement of the rights of American citizens upon the high
seas. If this Government were willing to bargain with the German
Government for less than our inalienable rights, then any belli-
ergent nation might transgress the rights of our citizens...and
count upon our trafficking...for concessions.

"This war has already caused invaluable loss to the neutrals
of the world, and this Government cannot lend its consent to any
abridgement of those rights which civilized nations have con-
ceded....

"The soul of humanity cries out against the destruction of
the lives of innocent non-combatants,...and the Government of the
United States can never consent to become a part of an agreement
which sanctions such...warfare." 36

House asked the President's permission to see Bernstorff,

34. Bernstorff says Gerard made this suggestion to the
    German Foreign Office. Bernstorff, op.cit. p.158.
35. House, op.cit. p.15.
36. Ibid. p. 15-16.
and Wilson gave his assent, telling House to impress upon the
German Ambassador that some way out must be found, and that Ger­
many must...abstain from submarine attacks without warning, un­
less they...desired war.37

The Third Lusitania Note bears the earmarks of the above
suggestions made by House.38 The final statement was a near­
ultimatum: "repetition...of acts in contravention of those rights
must be regarded by the Government of the United States, when
they affect American citizens, as deliberately unfriendly."39

On July 29 the President wrote to House saying that he did
not believe that the German Ambassador was dealing with us frank­
ly, and suggested that House try to make him impress upon Berlin
the danger of the course which they were taking there. This the
Colonel did, with the result that Bernstorff wrote a long dis­
patch to his home Office asking that he be given authority to
carry on the negotiations at Washington, as there only lay the
hope of keeping peaceful relations. Bernstorff warned his Gov­
ernment that another such act as the Lusitania would bring on war,
and he urged that it would be worth while to make concessions to
Wilson in the hope that he might help in removing, or at least in
slackening, the British blockade. "He is reported by a witness in
whom I have complete confidence40 to have said, 'If I receive a
favorable reply from Germany, I will see this thing through with
England to the end.'"41

37. Ibid. p.17; Bernstorff, op.cit. p.169.
39. Ibid.
40. Colonel House
41. Bernstorff, op.cit. p. 171.
CHAPTER IX
UNOFFICIAL SETTLEMENT OF THE ARABIC AFFAIR

Gerard forecast an "inevitable accident"¹ and it came when the British liner Arabic was torpedoed on its westward voyage, August 19. Two Americans lost their lives in the sinking. The attack was made without warning.²

Wilson turned to House, and demanded his advice.³ House set forth three alternatives, and advised against any more "notes": 'Send Bernstorff home and recall Gerard; call Congress and let it meet the emergency; or work with Bernstorff privately and tell him that a disavowal and complete surrender on the submarine question alone could prevent a rupture.'⁴

Bernstorff was alive to the danger, and before the President could decide on a course, he came to the State Office and asked for time in which to obtain from Berlin sufficient concessions to prevent the threatened break.⁵

Wilson wrote to House asking his opinion on Bernstorff's request.⁶ House replied that he thought Germany might weaken and come to terms, but he was suspicious of her.⁷

On August 29 Bernstorff wrote to House intimating that Germany was ready to yield to the demands made by Wilson, and to

1. Gerard, op.cit. p.66
3. "Demanded" is the word used by Seymour in House, op.cit. p.28.
4. Ibid. p.30-31
6. House, op.cit. p.33
7. Ibid. p.34.
promise that the submarine warfare on passenger liners would cease. House sent the letter to the President, and Wilson, though still suspicious of Bernstorff's sincerity, replied that he was ready to consider any offer of conciliation. House then warned Bernstorff that he must make himself clear and explicit.8

On September 1st, then, Bernstorff wrote formally to Lansing: "...liners will not be sunk by our submarines without warning and without safety of the lives of non-combatants, provided that the liners do not try to escape or offer resistance."9

Germany had now yielded on the main issue, and Seymour says that Wilson had won a great diplomatic victory; he had secured from Germany a written acknowledgement of the principle that if submarines are used, they must observe the established rules of warning, of visit and search, and provide for the safety of non-combatants.10

No disavowal was made either for the Lusitania or the Arabic. The American Government and public opinion demanded a complete disavowal of the Arabic sinking, at least. The temper of the President was shown at this time by the dismissal of the Austrian Ambassador, Dr. Dumba, for indiscretions.11

8. Ibid. p.36
9. Ibid. p.37; Bernstorff, op.cit. p.176-79. This reference shows that Bernstorff somewhat exceeded his instructions in allowing the report to get to the Press. Read also Ibid. p.179-81; Gerard, op.cit. p.71; Page, op.cit. III, footnote, p.282.
10. House, op.cit. p.37
11. Ibid. p.39; Bernstorff, op.cit. p.196-99; Page, op.cit. II, p.30. Certain documents seriously compromising Dr. Dumba were published in the British Press. They disclosed that Dr. Dumba was fomenting strikes in the United States and conducting other intrigues.
Bernstorff called upon House, and told him that he thought he could get his Government to say that, from the evidence presented, they believed the submarine commander was mistaken in thinking that the Arabic tried to ram him. House told him to get his Government to go as far as it would, and then let him find out unofficially from the President whether it was acceptable. If it was, it could be presented to the State Department officially.\textsuperscript{12}

Bernstorff cabled to Berlin, "As position is still very difficult, I am carrying on conversations in strict confidence with a personal friend of Wilson's. Request, therefore, that no direction be sent as regards...Arabic...till you hear from me again. Main point of dispute is question of disavowing action of submarine commander. I hope...you will be able to find a formula for such a disavowal, agreeable to both Governments, especially if I can get the concurrence of Wilson before the Press gets hold of it."\textsuperscript{13}

Throughout the month of September House worked with Bernstorff to secure the formal disavowal of the Arabic sinking. On September 16 they had an interview. House said that the President was determined about this issue, and it would be well for the German Government to heed Bernstorff's advice. It was ar-

\textsuperscript{12} House, op.cit. p.40; Dumba, op.cit. p.216. The content of every Note or answer returned to the German Foreign Office concerning the Lusitania affair, and later on the subject of ...the Arabic...were first agreed upon by Bernstorff and House together. House always informed Bernstorff of the minimum of concessions or German guarantees for the future which would suffice to delay the ever-imminent rupture of diplomatic relations.

\textsuperscript{13} Bernstorff, op.cit. p.184-5.
ranged that when it came to the wording of the disavowal regarding the Arabic, it should be given to House first unofficially, in order that there might be no mistake made by a premature publication of something entirely unsatisfactory.\textsuperscript{14}

Bernstorff succeeded finally in getting the disavowal. On October 2 he telephoned to House that he had received sufficient authority from Berlin to satisfy Wilson's demands.\textsuperscript{15} These instructions were satisfactory to House. He insisted, however, on an exact disavowal of the commander's actions, which the instructions did not give. Bernstorff took the responsibility for the addition of such a disavowal.\textsuperscript{16} Three days later Bernstorff sent to Lansing the necessary formal letter.\textsuperscript{17}

The United States had won a diplomatic victory, and it was arrived at unofficially.\textsuperscript{18} Except for a flare-up with Austria over the Ancona affair, and which was handled effectively by Lansing, relations with the Central Powers were for a time quiet.

\textsuperscript{14} House, op.cit. p.41. Gerard wrote to House about this time that he was waiting, as usual; and he complained that he had not been taken into confidence on the Arabic negotiations. (Gerard, op.cit. p.70; Page, op.cit p.42. Of course, he did not know of the wholly unofficial manner in which the controversy was being handled.) Lansing was away on leave at this time. Bernstorff, p.184.

\textsuperscript{15} Copy of instructions to Bernstorff found in Bernstorff, op.cit. p.187.

\textsuperscript{16} House, op.cit. p.45; Bernstorff, op.cit. p.187-8.

\textsuperscript{17} Bernstorff, op.cit. p.188. The above explanation finally solved the second crisis. See also Bemis, op.cit. p.62.

\textsuperscript{18} Spring-Rice, II, p.28. The Arabic disavowal was given in undiplomatic form, a private letter to the Secretary of State.

\textsuperscript{19} House, op.cit. p.48; also, Bernstorff, op.cit. p.189-90.
CHAPTER X
THE ALLIED BLOCKADE - A Lansing-Page Affair

On July 8, when the controversy with Germany was at its height, House wrote to Grey in the frank tone which he and Grey had agreed upon, "We are still waiting for the German reply to our last Note, and upon it will depend our course of action. In the event our immediate differences with Germany are composed, there will at once arise a demand for an adjustment...with England." ¹

Late in that month House expressed the opinion to Wilson that the British Government would go to any length rather than have a serious break with the United States. With this in mind, he had suggested to Sir Cecil Spring-Rice that he encourage Grey to bring the French, Italian, Belgian, and Russian Governments into the controversy, so that the United States might see that it was not Great Britain alone that was holding up our trade, but...all the Allies. ²

Page was very much irritated over the Anglo-American controversy. Lansing persisted in regarding it from a legalistic point of view, and Page wrote to House that "the lawyer-way in which the State Department goes in its dealings with Great Britain is losing us...our international friendship. Nothing has yet been gained, we have yielded every point to now, yet

¹ House, op.cit. p. 57
² Ibid. p.59
we insist, insist. This is not the way Sir Edward Grey takes up business. It's not the way I've done business,...nor that you have. I sometimes wish there were not a lawyer in the world...
I suspect that in spite of all the fuss we have made we shall at last come to acknowledge the British blockade.3

Secretary Lansing agreed with Wilson and House that a break with the Allies must be avoided, but at the same time he contended that the United States could not countenance infractions of international law. After assuming a strong tone to Germany, Wilson must do likewise with the Allies.4

All summer long the State Department awaited an adequate reply from the Allies, to protests already sent out. None came, and when the crisis with Germany was passed, the Department prepared another note, and dispatched it October 21st.5

Colonel House had in the meantime been busy with Sir Cecil Spring-Rice. Upon House's advice, the British Ambassador had warned his Government of what they might expect. The telegram to this effect indicated that a strong communication was to be expected;6 that the United States Government must be impartial

4. House, op.cit. p. 70; Bemis, op.cit. p.67. Lansing at this time was writing to House, "In no event should we take a course that would seriously endanger our friendly relations with Great Britain, France, and Russia, for our friendship with Germany is a matter of the past."
5. House, op.cit. p.70; the Note may be found in American Journal of Int.Law, op.cit. p.75-108. See also Bemis, op.cit. p.64. In Page, II, p.69: The Note...reached the British Embassy in October, 1915. The State Department had spent six months in preparing it.
at this time, and that the "pin-prick policy" ought to cease.

Page had been protesting very much against sending another Note at this time, and when it arrived, he let loose of his feelings in a long letter to House. He complained bitterly of the lack of courtesy in the Note. "It was not discourteous, but uncourteous", he said. He also complained of being left out of consideration in the drafting of the Note. "One would have thought that a draft of the Note would have been sent to the man on the ground whom our Government keeps in London to study the situation at first hand and to make the best judgment he can about the most effective methods of approach on delicate and difficult matters", he complained. In conclusion he wrote, "It will be a lasting shame if lawyers are now permitted to tear the garments with which Peace ought to be clothed...."

The Note was entirely the work of Secretary Lansing; the groundwork for its reception had been prepared by Colonel House, and the criticism was by Page.

Grey wrote to House that he was in despair over the note and did not know at the time how to answer it. Colonel House believed that the note would serve to satisfy public opinion in America, and that it was now possible to worry along; but sooner or later we would have to adopt a positive policy in the matter.

7. Page, op.cit. II, p.69-80
8. Ibid. House, op.cit. p.75; Bemis, op.cit. p.64,66.
9. House, op.cit. p.81
   See also Bemis, op.cit. p.71
CHAPTER XI

A NEW PLAN FOR PEACE TO BE ARRIVED AT UNOFFICIALLY

Mr. House viewed the situation in the fall of 1915 from three angles. The President might let things drift, trusting that the difficulties with each belligerent could be met separately and safely. Or he might push the unsettled Lusitania dispute to the breaking point, and enter the war on the side of the Allies. In the third place he might openly demand a peace conference, stating that the United States would support whichever group would agree to terms securing Europe from the threat of military aggression, and would enter the war against the side that refused; that is, make a crusade for peace.¹

The first two ideas he did not consider for long. The third offered a more positive policy, and the most possibility of success. When laying the idea before Wilson, he said, "I think we have lost our opportunity to break with Germany. We should do something decisive now - something that will either end the war in a way to abolish militarism, or that would bring us in with the Allies to help them do it. My suggestion is to ask the Allies, unofficially, to let me know whether or not it would be agreeable to them to have us demand that hostilities cease. We would put it upon the high ground that the neutral world was suffering along with the belligerents and that we had

¹ House, op.cit. p.82
rights as well as they, and that peace parleys should begin upon the basis of both military and naval disarmament....

If the Allies understood our purpose, we could be as severe in our language concerning them as we were with the Central Powers. They, after some hesitation, could accept our offer or demand, and, if the Central Powers accepted, we would then have accomplished a master-stroke of diplomacy. If the Central Powers refuse..., we could then push our insistence to a point where diplomatic relations would be first broken off, later the whole force of our Government...might be brought against them."^2

The President was somewhat startled at this plan, and House did not get his immediate assent. Not long after that, House discussed the plan with Lansing, who agreed with the plan and advised that a strong course be taken.4

The big problem which House had to face with his plan was that of meeting the Allied demands for annexation and indemnity. House knew of the Russian, British, and French agreements on the Near East disposal, and of the treaty with Italy bringing that nation into the war on the side of the Entente, and it was not a part of his plan to enter the war to assure such aspirations. House depended upon Sir Edward Grey to assist him, as Grey had voiced just such opinions as House was

2. House, op. cit. p. 85
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid. p. 86
now advancing.\textsuperscript{5}

Grey had written to House, in September, 1915, "To me the great object of securing the elimination of militarism and navalism is to get security for the future against aggressive war. How much are the United States prepared to do in this direction? Would the President propose that there be a League of Nations binding themselves to side against any Power which broke a treaty; which broke certain rules of warfare on sea or land; or which refused, in case of dispute, to adopt some other means of settlement than war? Only on some such agreement do I see a prospect of diminishing militarism and navalism in the future, so that no nation will build up armies or navies for aggressive purposes. I cannot say which Governments would be prepared to accept such a proposal, but I am sure that the Government of the United States is the only Government that can make it with effect."\textsuperscript{6}

This letter provided House with the opportunity he desired. He took the letter to Wilson, and the President encouraged House to draft a reply to it. This, the President believed, would be a first step toward offering American help to the Allies, if Germany refused.\textsuperscript{7}

House wrote in his diary that the resulting letter was one of the most important he had ever written. He therein asked

\textsuperscript{5} House, \textit{op. cit.} p.87-9
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid. p.89; Grey, \textit{op. cit.} p.125
\textsuperscript{7} House, \textit{op. cit.} p.89-90
Grey to let him know when he considered the time ripe for American intervention. House would then propose such intervention to the President. Wilson might then ask House to go to Europe in order that a more intimate understanding as to the procedure might be had. He would confer with the British officials, and then go to Berlin. "I would not let Berlin know, of course, of any understanding had with the Allies, but would rather lead them to think our proposal would be rejected by the Allies. This might induce Berlin to accept the proposal. If the Central Powers would not accept, it would probably be necessary for us to join the Allies and force the issue.... It might be well for you to cable me under code.... The understanding will be that the discussion is entirely between you and me until it is desired that it be broadened further."10

Grey cabled in reply asking if the proposal was to be taken in conjunction with his proposal for a League of Nations after the war; and with Wilson's approval House answered affirmatively.

After some delay Grey answered, but the response was disappointing to Mr. House. Grey was certain that the Allies would refuse the plan, and had not even discussed it with them. He feared that the United States would not make the proposal when the time came.12

8. The President insisted that this word "Probably" be inserted here.
9. See p. 55, this paper, where House and Grey arranged for a private code to be used between them.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid. p.98
President Wilson was convinced that a better understanding with the Allies was necessary in order that the plan might succeed, and that such an understanding could not be brought about through the Ambassadors. He saw in Mr. Page's letters to him a lack of sympathy with his policies, which led him to question Page's ability to explain the Administration's point of view.\(^{13}\)

Nor was he satisfied that the British Ambassador at Washington was doing any better. Sir Cecil Spring-Rice was in a constant state of nerves over the blockade question, and it seemed impossible to deal with him in the matter.\(^{14}\)

Mr. Lansing wished to expedite matters by a change of Ambassadors all around, but the President saw little value in doing so. He insisted that the quickest and surest method of reaching the desired end was to send House once more to England and France. There he could explain the factors that compelled American protests against the Allied blockade and the lack of basis for the suspicion of American unfriendliness. If conditions seemed favorable, House would also present the desire of the United States Government to help in winning the war, provided that the victory were used to assure, not selfish territorial aspirations, but a real triumph of ideals.\(^{15}\)

The President and Mr. House decided that House would go to Germany on this trip only if he was invited to do so. Then,

\(^{13}\) Page's letters to the President, Page, *op.cit.* II, 94-102; III, p.245-64.
\(^{15}\) Ibid. p.101-2, House's diary, under date of Nov.28, 1915.
as an excuse for making the trip at all, House suggested that they say that it was thought inadvisable to bring home any of the Ambassadors from the belligerent countries at this time; and that in order that they may have a more intimate knowledge of our position regarding pending international questions, at the President's request House was undertaking the journey.  

The State Department was still writing Notes to Germany on the Lusitania question, and further trouble with that Government arose over the dismissal of von Papen and Boy-Ed, military attaches. Colonel House hoped that a break on any of these counts could be avoided. Bernstorff was aware of the danger, too, and when told of House's proposed visit to Europe

16 House, op. cit. p.102. In a letter to Grey, Dec. 23, 1915, Sir Cecil Spring-Rice wrote, "I saw Colonel House in New York and he told me he was going over to London and Paris and perhaps Rome in order to convey personal messages from the President to the United States Ambassadors. They could not leave, nor could Mr. Lansing. But there were many things which could only be fully explained by word of mouth. Therefore the President and Mr. Lansing had approved of his journey in order to convey to United States representatives abroad, and from them to the Government here, the local atmosphere in the United States and in Europe. Colonel House assured me that he had no mission of any description and conveyed no proposal, and would not even make a suggestion of a political character. But he would do his best to explain to everybody he met what was the feeling of the Administration and of the country, and when he came back he would faithfully represent to the United States Government what impressions he had collected in Europe. I told the French and Russian Ambassadors what he had said to me, and they think such a journey would have an excellent effect." Spring-Rice, op. cit. II, p.304-5.  
18 House, op. cit. p.103.
he declared that he would be welcome in Germany on such a mis-
sion.\(^{19}\)

Bernstorff cabled to his Government on the topic of House's visit, and in reply that Government indicated a desire for House to come directly to Berlin before going to London. This was not House's plan, however. He told Bernstorff so, and the German Ambassador then informed his Government that he believed if they would consent to a plan which embraced general disarmament, the President would be willing to throw the weight of the United States into the scales and demand that the war cease; that the United States were not concerned regarding territorial questions or indemnity, but were concerned regarding the larger questions which involved not only the belligerents but the neutrals as well.\(^{20}\) Bernstorff made the necessary arrangements for House's visit in Berlin.\(^{21}\)

House asked the President to write to him at intervals during his journey in such a way that he might show the letter to some member of the Government where he should happen to be. He cited the effect of the letter containing a message to Poincaré and the Delcasse on his previous trip to Europe.\(^{22}\)

He now asked Wilson for instructions for the trip, and Wilson replied that he needed none, as the Colonel's views were

\(^{19}\) House, \textit{op.cit.} p.106.
\(^{20}\) Ibid. p.107, in a letter to Wilson, Dec.22,1915.
\(^{22}\) See p.45 of this paper.
the same as his own. "The United States," Wilson said, "was interested only in the future peace of the world and its guarantees. These guarantees were disarmament, both military and naval, and a league of nations to secure...against aggression and maintain the absolute freedom of the seas."23

The necessity for the mission, the President pointed out at this time, was now more imperative because of the demand coming from the Senate for further and immediate pressure upon England and her allies to remove the restrictions upon neutral trade.24

Gerard welcomed the idea of House's visit, and wrote in his diary, "I am very glad to hear that Colonel House is coming over. There are many things I want to tell the President, but which I do not dare to commit to paper."25

23. House, op.cit. p.110
CHAPTER XII
THE HOUSE MEMORANDUM

Colonel House left the United States on December 28, and arrived in England on January 5, where he immediately began conversations with British Government officials. He did not intend, however, to suggest his specific plan until he had formed an exact estimate of the factors necessary for success. He wanted first to explain American opinion on the trade dispute and to discuss the more general aspects of American co-operation in a world organization such as Grey and he had in mind.\(^1\)

House wired the President that he was to hold a conference with Grey and the Prime Minister,\(^2\) on Monday, January 9, and that Wilson should cable him some assurance of his willingness to co-operate in a policy seeking to bring about and maintain permanent peace.\(^3\) The President cabled in reply that House might convey the assurance "that the President would be willing and glad, when the opportunity came, to co-operate in a policy seeking to bring about and maintain permanent peace...."\(^4\)

House told Grey, in the ensuing conversation, that he had advised the President against a definite break with Germany at

2. Lord Balfour
4. Ibid. Seymour says that the cable marks Wilson's first definite step upon a course which was to make him the foremost proponent of a league of nations. It was a clear-cut departure from the traditional American policy of isolation.
this time, because he hoped some sort of international agreement could be made, while the Secretary of State was insistent upon an actual break, and that the President was in sympathy with the House view.\textsuperscript{5}

House spent two weeks in London, and talked with every important official of the British Government.\textsuperscript{6} Of the greatest importance were his conferences with Grey, Lloyd George and Balfour. With these three men he discussed the end of the war and the role of co-operation which the United States might play, if the British should agree to his plan for American intervention. He even went so far as to attempt to frighten the British into acceptance by prophesying that the Russians might make a separate peace.\textsuperscript{7} He outlined for the three British officials the international phases of what constituted Freedom of the Seas and the elimination of militarism, and what protection Great Britain would secure on the one hand and lose on the other. Balfour was suspicious of Germany, but House and Grey argued that a majority of nations would back Great Britain and Germany could do nothing. This conference resulted in an understanding that the British officials would talk the matter over further, and take it up with House when he returned from the Continent.\textsuperscript{8}

\textsuperscript{5} House, \textit{op.cit.} p.118
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid. p.121; also p.128; Page, \textit{op.cit.} III, p.279
\textsuperscript{7} Footnote in House, \textit{op.cit.} p.129
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid. p.130; Grey, \textit{op.cit.} p.124-26.
On January 12 Wilson cabled to House that it appeared likely that the difficulties with Germany would soon be arranged, and that in this case the demand, especially from the Senate, would be imperative that the United States force England to make at least equal concessions. Wilson himself felt that such a demand was only just.9 On January 7 the German Ambassador at Washington delivered a Note to the Secretary of State in which the American demands were met on the submarine question, that is, submarine warfare against merchant vessels was to be according to the principle of international law; passengers and crews were to be accorded safety; and commanders who disobeyed the order were to be punished, and reparations made.10

House wrote a letter to the President in reply to the above cablegram, telling him that he had been informed by various British officials that if Grey granted the President’s request at this time, he would be forced to resign. He had, he wrote in his letter, aroused the British officials to an appreciation of the American plan, and though the time was not ready to advance it, he would try to do so when he returned from Paris and Berlin.11 He advised that there be no serious break with the Allies over the blockade12 and that the United

12. In other words, block the Senate demands that pressure be brought upon England and her allies. p.73 this paper.
States keep on good terms with Germany.\textsuperscript{13}

On January 20 House went to Paris. So far he had not specified the exact terms of the American offer. He wished to see whether Germany would yield enough to give hopes of an early peace or whether she was determined to carry on the war. Ambassador Page did not approve of House's mission to Germany, but both Grey and Lord Bryce approved.\textsuperscript{14}

House did not discuss his mission in Paris, as he wished to do so only upon his return. He arrived in Berlin on January 26th.\textsuperscript{15}

Conversations with Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg and Foreign Minister von Jagow were not fruitful.\textsuperscript{16} Zimmermann was more sympathetic. In his telegram to the President, after he had left Berlin, House summed up his impressions of the visit. He felt that Germany would never agree to such peace terms as would be offered by the Allies. There was a great controversy going on in Germany between the Civil Government and the Naval officials. If the President insisted upon the German Government admitting that the submarine war was illegal, the Civil Government would fall and a war with the United States would follow. House suggested that Gerard be allowed to try to arrange a satisfactory agreement, and nothing final be done until he reached

\textsuperscript{13} House, \textit{op.cit.} p.133-34
\textsuperscript{15} House, \textit{op.cit.} p.137; Grey, \textit{op.cit.} p.86; Official German Documents Relating to the World War, \textit{op.cit.} p.232.
\textsuperscript{16} House, \textit{op.cit.} p.140-43; Grey, \textit{op.cit.} p.88-89.
home. He considered that he had been well received in Germany. Gerard, too, considered House's visit a success, and wrote to him on February 15, "You have the satisfaction of knowing you probably kept us out of war;" and later wrote again, "The Germans all feel that if matters are arranged it will be due to you, and seem most grateful."

House was now thoroughly convinced that the future of the United States was bound up in an Allied victory, and he wanted to find a way to help them. The difficulty was that the Allies wanted America to help merely for the purpose of smashing Germany, while House felt that the only justification for American participation would be the hope of ending the war.

In Paris, House saw Cambon, of the Foreign Office, and Prime Minister Briand. He told Cambon, as he had told Grey, that he was working to prevent a break between the United States and Germany over the Lusitania affair. "However", he said, "Germany will soon give the United States another opportunity to go to war, if they want one." He then told them of his discussions with the German officials.

On February 7 House went over his plans with the two French officials. As a result, an understanding was made that in the event the Allies had some notable victories during the spring

17. House, op. cit. p.146
18. Gerard, op. cit. p.89; House, Ibid.
19. House, op. cit. p.154
20. Ibid. p.154-5
21. Ibid. p.157-8
and summer, the President would not intervene; and in the event that the tide of the war went against them...the President would intervene. This understanding was go to no further than between Briand, Cambon, and House; and House promised that no one in America should know of it except Wilson and Lansing. The French officials were to keep in touch with House through wholly unofficial messages and letters.22

House now thought he saw a way out. He wrote to the President, "A great opportunity is yours, my friend, - the greatest, perhaps, that has ever come to a man. The way out seems clear to me, and when I lay the facts before you, I believe it will be clear to you, also.23

House went back to London to impress upon Sir Edward Grey the need for an immediate decision on his plan.24

In the course of the next eight days House conferred with Grey, Asquith, and Lloyd George on the question of American intervention. The result was an agreement that the President of the United States was to demand of the belligerents that a conference be called to discuss peace terms. The British officials thought that such a step would be better than intervention on the submarine issue. The Allies were to agree to the conference, and, if Germany did not, House promised for

23. Ibid. p.165
the United States that all her weight would be thrown in so as to bring Germany to terms.25

Page absolutely refused to assist House in this plan. He declared that "nobody had any confidence in the President."26

The most difficult problem with which House had to deal in getting the British officials to accept his plan was the matter of time. WHEN should the President propose the Conference? This was settled at a dinner at the home of Lord Chief Justice Reading, at which were Lloyd George, Grey, Balfour, and Asquith, as well as Colonel House. Page was not there. These men decided first that the Conference should be called to meet at The Hague, as it would be impossible for the leading statesmen of the belligerent countries to leave Europe for so long a time and go so far as Washington. House promised that the President would come to The Hague, if invited, and remain as long as necessary.27 With that decided, House wanted to know when the

26. Page, op.cit. p.281-2,286: House arrived from Berlin and Paris full of the idea of American intervention. First his plan was that he and I and a group of the British Cabinet should work out a minimum program of peace - the least that the Allies would accept, which, he assumed, would be unacceptable to the Germans; and that the President would present it to both sides; the side that declined would be responsible for continuing the war. Then to end the war, the President would help the other side - that is, the Allies. Ibid. p.284: "If the British public learns that this is going on, you will be lucky if you are not thrown into the Thames," Page told House.
United States should demand that the war cease and a Conference be held? Grey wished to try it at once, but Lloyd George and Asquith wanted to wait until an Allied victory would make the Germans more receptive of such a proposal.  

In conference with Grey on February 17, House and the British Foreign Secretary drew up the tentative understanding. Grey had received word from the French Government which proved that House had broached his plan to them, and that they were willing that an attempt be made. The two men drew up a Memorandum covering the agreement. It was to be shown to the French Ambassador, and House was to have a copy before he left for the United States. House used various arguments to show that the Allies should not wait too long before asking the President to demand peace. One was the possibility of the death of the President; another was the fact that Wilson was certain of only one more year of office.

The memorandum as worked out by Grey and House was as follows:

Confidential.

Colonel House told me that President Wilson was ready on hearing from France and England that the moment was opportune, to propose that a Conference should be summoned to put an end

29. House, op.cit. p.194
30. Ibid. p.195
to the war. Should the Allies accept the proposal, and should Germany refuse it, the United States would probably enter the war against Germany.

Colonel House expressed the opinion that, if such a conference met, it would secure peace on terms not unfavorable to the Allies; and, if it failed to secure peace, the United States would (probably) leave the Conference as a belligerent on the side of the Allies, if Germany was unreasonable. Colonel House expressed an opinion decidedly favorable to the restoration of Belgium, the transfer of Alsace and Lorraine to France, and the acquisition by Russia of an outlet to the sea, though he thought that the loss of territory incurred by Germany in one place would have to be compensated to her by concessions to her in other places outside of Europe. If the Allies delayed accepting the offer of President Wilson, and if, later on, the course of the war was so unfavorable to them that the intervention of the United States would not be effective, the United States would probably disinterest themselves in Europe and look to their own protection in their own way.

I said that I felt the statement, coming from the President of the United States, to be a matter of such importance that I must inform the Prime Minister and my colleagues; but that I could say nothing until it had received their consid-

32. This word probably was inserted by President Wilson, to correspond with the 'probably' in the sixth line of the Memorandum as quoted here. It is a recognition of the limitation on the President in declaring war.
eration. The British Government could, under no circumstances,
accept or make any proposal except in consultation with the
Allies. I thought that the Cabinet would probably feel that the
present situation would not justify them in approaching their
Allies on this subject at the present moment; but, as Colonel
House had had an intimate conversation with M. Briand and M.
Jules Cambon in Paris, I should think it right to tell Mr. Briand
privately, through the French Ambassador in London, what Colonel
House had said to us; and I should, of course, whenever there is
an opportunity, be ready to talk the matter over with M. Briand
if he desires.

(Initialized) E.G.33

House returned to the United States, and on March 6 he pre-
sented the Memorandum to Wilson. The President accepted it as
drawn, with the exception of the word 'probably' in the second
paragraph.34

Wilson and House drew up a reply to the Memorandum. The
President typed the reply himself. It was signed by House, and
reads, "I reported to the President the general conclusions of
our conference of the 14th of February, and in the light of
those conclusions he authorizes me to say that, so far as he can
speak for the future action of the United States, he agrees to

33. House, op. cit. p. 201-2; Grey, op. cit. p. 127-8;
Page, op. cit. p. 287-8; Dumba, op. cit. p. 218.
34. See page 82, this paper.
the Memorandum which you furnished me, with only this correction; that the word probably be added....

E.M. House

CHAPTER XIII

THE LANSING PROPOSALS

Official Diplomacy Gives Way to Unofficial Diplomacy

On February 26th President Wilson made a speech at the Gridiron Dinner in Washington, in which he publicly issued a call to the Allies to provide the opportunity for American intervention. America ought to keep out of this war. She ought to keep out... at the sacrifice of everything except this one thing upon which her character and history are founded, her sense of humanity and justice. Valor strikes only when it is right to strike. Valor withholds itself from all small implications and entanglements and waits for the great opportunity when the sword will flash as if it carried the light of heaven on its blade."

Relations with Germany, in the meantime, had again come to a crisis. Wilson was very anxious to avoid a break before the Allies had given their answer to the House Memorandum.

A new problem had arisen. Since the fall of 1915 Mr. Lansing had been considering a method of meeting the German complaint that it was impossible for a submarine to conform with the laws of visit and search, in view of the fact that an armed merchant vessel could sink the submarine while it was giving warning. The Germans claimed that such merchant vessels were in effect armed

1. House, op.cit. p.206
3. House, op.cit. p.206
for offensive purposes, and should be regarded therefore as auxiliary cruisers.\textsuperscript{4}

On January 28 Lansing presented all Allied Ambassadors at Washington with an informal and confidential Note, suggesting that all merchantmen be disarmed, in return for which they were not to be attacked without warning, nor be fired upon except in case of resistance or flight.\textsuperscript{5}

The Allies were not pleased with the Note. Lansing wired to House, who was still in London, complaining of Page's lack of sympathy with the proposal. "I feel strongly that the proposal is fair and the only humane solution of submarine warfare. If merchantmen are armed and guns are used to sink attacking submarines...then it is unreasonable to insist that submarines should risk coming to the surface to give warning", he wrote.\textsuperscript{6}

On February 10 the German Government announced that, after February 29, armed merchant vessels would be regarded as warships and would be dealt with accordingly.\textsuperscript{7}

These two announcements aroused the British to a suspicion that Lansing had made the suggestion in order to render the Germans more yielding in the dispute over the Lusitania.\textsuperscript{8}

Lansing's telegram to House\textsuperscript{9} attempted to clear the charge,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{4} House, \textit{op.cit.} p.214, Bemis, \textit{op.cit.} p.75-6
  \item \textsuperscript{5} American Journal of Int.Law, \textit{op.cit.} p.310-313; House, \textit{op.cit.} p.214; Bernstorff, \textit{op.cit.} p.225.
  \item \textsuperscript{6} House, \textit{op.cit.} p.215
  \item \textsuperscript{7} American Journal Int.Law, \textit{op.cit.} p.318; Bernstorff, \textit{op.cit.} p.222
  \item \textsuperscript{8} House, \textit{op.cit.} p.214; Bemis, \textit{op.cit.} p.76
  \item \textsuperscript{9} Quoted on preceding page.
\end{itemize}
as he said, "This proposal has no relation to the Lusitania settlement, and has not been mentioned to Germany...."\(^{10}\)

Part of the suspicion may have been due to Spring-Rice, who wrote to Grey on February 12th, "Shortly after the receipt of a message from Colonel House...and after the President returned from St. Louis...it was announced that...the United States Government was about to legalize submarine warfare, and to treat armed merchant ships as cruisers, and to prohibit American citizens from traveling on board such vessels. The announcement from Berlin that the submarine warfare was to recommence with renewed severity on March 1st against all vessels carrying guns was hailed by the press as a further proof that a good understanding prevails between the United States and Germany, and that their difficulties are successfully overcome.\(^{12}\)

The announcement which Sir Cecil referred to was the resolution introduced into the House of Representatives on February 17 by Representative McLemore, and discussed in that body on March 7.\(^ {13}\) Wilson immediately announced that the Lansing proposals were tentative; that according to custom merchant vessels had the right to arm defensively, and that if a German submarine attacked an unresisting merchantman without warning, Berlin must face the diplomatic consequences. He demanded that Germany give assurance that the submarine warfare against

\(^{10}\) House, *op. cit.* p.215  
\(^{11}\) Where he made the "Valor" speech.  
\(^{12}\) Spring-Rice, *op. cit.* p.311  
\(^{13}\) Called the Gore Resolution in the Senate
merchant vessels be conducted in such a way as not to imperil Americans traveling on the high seas.¹⁴

Pursuant with this announcement, the President requested the House of Representatives to table the MoLeMore Resolution. This was done by a vote of 276 to 142.¹⁵

Mr. House was seriously disturbed by the controversy, for he saw in it danger of an upset to his plan for American mediation with a threat of force. It had been pushed during his absence in Europe, and he feared that the Allies would regard the Lansing proposals as an indication of unfriendliness and would therefore refuse to put confidence in Wilson's offer to help secure a reasonable peace. On February 5 he cabled Lansing that his proposal "seemed fair taken by itself, but there were many collateral questions to be considered with it". A week later he wired again, "There are so many issues involved in the controversy concerning armed merchant vessels, that I sincerely hope you will hold it in abeyance until I return."¹⁶

House wrote in his diary, dated March 4, 1916, "In precipitating this controversy...I feel that the President and Lansing have largely interfered with my efforts abroad. If they had held the situation quiet, as I suggested them to do, I am sure the plan for intervention...would have gone through...."¹⁷

Germany's reckless haste in declaring her new submarine

¹⁴ House, op.cit. p.216
¹⁶ House, op.cit. p.218. Dumba, op.cit. p.216. In the absence of House, Wilson was often unfortunate in the execution of his resolutions as well as in the wording of his communications, even in the official Notes of the State Department, which were otherwise regularly
policy furnished an opportunity for the United States Government to drop the Lansing proposals. Lansing cabled to House, "In view of Germany's new Orders in Council in regard to armed merchant ships, and the interviews given out by various German officials misstating the position of this Government, it is our intention to move slowly in the matter." 18

When House explained to Wilson the attitude of the Allies, the President was disturbed 19 and took occasion to blame himself and Lansing for allowing the controversy to crop out. 20

The proposals made by Lansing were declined by the Allies 21 and were forgotten. 22

inspected and often amended by House.
17. Ibid. p. 218-19
18. Ibid. p. 219; Bernstorff, op. cit. p. 222: In view of the German announcement the American Government refused to complete the exchange of letters.... Instead there began a new controversy on the question of 'armed merchant vessels'.
20. About the end of the year 1915 Mr. Wilson had married for the second time, and was absent from Washington. Consequently he seems not to have exerted....close control over the political actions of his Ministers (Cabinet). In any case he had not read, or only hastily glanced through, a Memorandum on the submarine campaign which Mr. Lansing had handed on the 18th of January, 1916, to the representatives of the Entente, and had not therefore realized its far-reaching importance.

The Memorandum...recognized that the use of submarines could not be prohibited to the combatants after they had proved their value in attacking enemy commerce.... It was not in keeping with Mr. Wilson's usual methods to make such a sharp thrust at the Entente....so long as the negotiations with me on the subject of the Lusitania incident were not yet concluded, and so long as it was not absolutely sure of the support of public opinion. Just as the Note of the 21st of October, 1915, was not sent to London until the President thought he had cleared the way... by the settlement of the Arabic question, so in January, 1916, he wanted to keep his hands free until the chance of a conflict was passed. Bernstorff, op. cit. p. 225-26.
CHAPTER XIV

THE UNOFFICIAL DIPLOMACY OF THE SUSSEX CASE

Contrary to the German Ambassador's insistence that his Government would respect the promises made in the Arabic Settlement, and pursuant with the declaration of February 10th, on March 24 the unarmed passenger ship, Sussex, was torpedoed. Though no American lives were lost, there were Americans on board. ¹

Colonel House immediately went to Washington. There he found that Lansing wished an immediate rupture with Germany and was advising that Bernstorff be sent home. ²

But Wilson still desired peace more than war, and he believed that the United States could bring peace more easily by mediation than as a belligerent. ³ From this time on until the declaration of war against Germany, negotiations were all conducted through and by Colonel House; not only with Germany but with England, also. ⁴

The President requested House to see Bernstorff and tell him that "the United States was at the breaking point and were sure to go to war with Germany unless some decisive change was made in the German submarine policy." ⁵

2. House, op.cit. p.227
3. Ibid.
4. It would be difficult to cite all of the proofs of this statement, but a brief reading of Bernstorff, op.cit. Chaps.9 to 12, will indicate innumerable references to House and his conferences with the German Ambassador. Also, p.231, In accordance with the wish of the President, I had discussed the peace question exclusively with Colonel House since his second visit to Europe.
Bernstorff cabled to his Government that there should be no official exchange of Notes, and that if there was no desire for a break with the United States, the German Government could do no less than pledge to carry on the submarine campaign for the future in accordance with the principles laid down by international law.6

While Bernstorff and House were working unofficially, Lansing was preparing the Note which would sever diplomatic relations with Germany. It recalled Gerard and notified the German Government that Bernstorff would be given his passports.7 But before the Note was sent the President and Colonel House decided to cable to Sir Edward Grey, telling him of the condition of affairs, and asking him whether or not it would be wise to intervene now rather than to permit the break to come.8 The President asked House to frame the despatch, but House insisted that the President do it. The despatch, as Wilson wrote it, was as follows, "Since it seems probable that this country must break with Germany on the submarine question unless the unexpected happens, and since, if this country should once become a belligerent, the war would undoubtedly be prolonged, I beg to suggest that if you had any thought of acting at an early date on the plan we agreed upon, you might wish to consult your Allies with a view to acting immediately.9

6. Bernstorff, op. cit. p.244
7. House, op. cit. p.230
8. Ibid. p.231
9. Ibid. p.231
When Bernstorff asked House for suggestions for a settlement of the Sussex crisis, he was told to cable to his Government that he was completely discouraged; that it has been only by the grace of God that American lives had not been lost... that it might happen today, tomorrow, or next week, but it would surely come unless they renounced their submarine policy....

Bernstorff followed this suggestion, and his cable is a very accurate report of House's words, "House gave me a gloomy view...with regard to the Sussex. At the White House the situation is regarded as hopeless...because the view is held that... the German Government cannot curb the submarine campaign. It has hitherto been due to luck that no American has lost his life, and any moment might precipitate a crisis which would be bound to lead to a break...."

The German Government did not heed Bernstorff's cable, and replied evasively. Bernstorff called this reply "the most unfortunate document that ever passed from Berlin to Washington, as Mr. Wilson thought he detected a direct untruth."

When the German reply was received, Wilson called House to Washington to discuss a Note to be sent in answer. The President had already drafted one. He had discarded Lansing's Note entirely, and the one he had prepared, House thought, was a much abler one. "I could see that the data I brought home from England...had had their effect", he wrote in his diary.

10. Ibid. p.245
11. Bernstorff, op. cit. p.245
12. Ibid. p.248
13. See p.72, this paper.
14. House, op. cit. p.235; Bemis, op. cit. p.79
The Note prepared was sent to the German Government through Gerard on April 18,\(^{15}\) with Lansing's signature. On April 19 the President addressed Congress on the Sussex Affair.\(^{16}\)

The Note to Germany stated, "Unless the German Government should now immediately declare and effect an abandonment of its present methods of submarine warfare against passenger and freight-carrying vessels, the Government of the United States can have no choice but to sever diplomatic relations with the German Empire altogether."\(^{17}\)

On May 4 the German reply came,\(^{18}\) accepting the main demands and announcing that the German Government had issued new orders to submarine commanders and declaring that the submarine campaign would return to the recognized laws of cruiser warfare.\(^{19}\)

The President sent a telegram to House asking him what he thought of the German reply, and what attitude and action he ought to take. House replied that no formal reply should be made, and that the President should let Lansing make any statement to the public that he considered proper. The announcement to the public should bring out the real concessions made by Germany, House thought, and a curt statement made to the effect

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19. That is, no more merchant ships would be sunk without warning and without saving of human lives, unless these ships attempted to escape or offered resistance.
that the United States Government would deal with the other belligerents who violated international law as it saw fit.

"I do not see how we can break with Germany on this Note," he wrote. 20

Lansing did not consider the German reply as satisfactory and again advised that Bernstorff be sent home. 21 The President adopted House's suggestion, 22 but decided to reply himself, formally, to the German Note. So he wrote a Note, and Lansing wrote one. The resulting Note was all Lansing's except the last paragraph, which was Wilson's. This Note definitely notified Germany that the United States could not discuss the suggestion that Germany's policy in the submarine issue should be contingent upon the conduct of any other Government on any issue. "Responsibility in such matters is single, not joint; absolute, not relative", the Note declared. 23

The crisis was again passed. Gerard wrote to House, "I think Germany is now determined to keep peace with America." 24

In April the British Government replied to the American Note of protest of the previous November. It was not a satisfactory reply, and not one to placate the feeling in the United States at this time, especially as negotiations with Germany were progressing in so satisfactory a manner. Spring-Rice himself recognized that the timing of the reply was not wise, and

20. House, op.cit. p.243; Bemis, op.cit. p 'the concessions were buried in the middle of a long note....'
22. Bernstorff, op.cit. p.254. As always, Colonel House used his influence on the side of peace with regard to the Sussex affair.
24. House, op.cit. p.245; Bemis, op.cit. p.255; Bernstorff
asked Colonel House for advice as to whether the Note should be delivered to the State Department or be with-held. House advised that it be with-held for the present, in order that it might not become entangled with the German controversy. Three days later he heard from the British Ambassador again, and he then agreed that the Note might as well be delivered, as it was known that the message had been received.25

op. cit. p.254. Mr. House took the opportunity to tell me the pleasing news contained in a telegram from Gerard, that the German Government was now ready to agree to American mediation.

25. House, op.cit. p.307; Bemis, op.cit. p.82
CHAPTER XV
THE PEACE EFFORTS OF HOUSE AND WILSON IN 1916

Coincident with the settlement of the Sussex incident the German Government gave indications that they would welcome a peace move. Gerard wrote, "I think the psychological moment is approaching when Colonel House should appear as the President's White Emissary of Peace."¹ Then to House he wrote, "We are rather in a calm after the last crisis. The Chancellor sent for me and said he hoped we would do something to England or propose a general peace."² Later he wrote, "Hope to hear you are starting soon for Europe with a mouthful of olive branches."³

Germany had experienced military setbacks at Verdun. These, together with the Sussex settlement, seemed to Colonel House to furnish the opportunity for the Allies to express their willingness to accept reasonable peace terms; if Germany refused, then it could be seen that her peace protests were empty.⁴

So House again cabled to Grey⁵ and followed it with a letter. He tried to impress upon Grey the danger of delay and

1. From his diary, Gerard, op.cit. p.99.
2. House, op.cit. p.251
3. Ibid. p.253; Bernstorff, op.cit. p.270; Ibid. p.277,83: In a letter from von Jagow to Bernstorff, "Your Excellency will...bring to the notice of the President and Mr. House the serious dangers which the President's passivity toward England involves."
4. House, op.cit. p.277-78; Bernstorff, op.cit. p.270: At midsummer, 1916, the political lull desired by Colonel House actually set in. The Colonel betook himself to... New Hampshire...where in the ordinary way I could only reach him by letter or telegram. How secret we kept our communications is shown by the fact that, according
the opportuneness of the time. "All things that you and I have wished to bring about seem ready of accomplishment, and I earnestly hope you may bring your Government to a realiza-
tion of the opportunity that is seeking fulfillment," he wrote.⁶

Grey's reply that he thought that mediation or a confer-
ence at this time would be premature, was disappointing to
House.⁷

Wilson now asked the Colonel to prepare a cable to Grey, putting the matter up to him in a friendly spirit, but with a firm tone.⁸ House wrote out the cable, sent it to the
President for suggestions and change, and then sent it on to Grey in their private code. He warned Grey that if the
Allies refused the American offer, the United States would have to protect their neutrality, and that trouble with Great Britain must threaten. He did not insist upon an immediate conference, but that the refusal of American co-operation would compel the United States to follow their own interests. The Allies must not then blame the United States for their indifference.⁹

to agreement, I wrote and telegraphed under the pseudonym "Martin".
5. House, op.cit. p.277-78
8. House, op.cit. p.284: "America", he said, "must either make a decided move for peace on some basis likely to be permanent, or else must insist upon her rights against Great Britain as firmly as she had against Germany. To do nothing is impossible."
Grey's reply to this message was no better than the earlier one. He could not act without the consent of France, and until France raised the subject, the British must remain silent.\textsuperscript{10}

On May 30, Spring-Rice wrote to Grey, "The President's speech\textsuperscript{11} is, of course, pure politics, though it no doubt represents his private opinion. But in its main point, that of immediate peace and subsequent negotiations, which are to include the freedom of the seas, it plays into the hands of Germany. The German Embassy here says openly that if the President is able to press effectively for peace, he will have the German vote. Fortunately, he says he will not intervene unless both parties ask him to do so. He cannot pledge the action of Congress in advance.... If Congress had supported the President, Germany would have been forced to give satisfaction on the question of the Lusitania.

We have no security that Congress will act otherwise when the question at issue is not American, but European. Therefore, in giving this promise, the President gives a promise the fulfillment of which does not depend upon him. But in return for this promise he asks for a \textit{fact}, that is, immediate surrender of our right to exercise pressure by sea power. The Central Powers have the military advantage of the interior line. They

\textsuperscript{10} House, \textit{op.cit.} p.289; Grey, \textit{op.cit.} p.133
\textsuperscript{11} Address before The League to Enforce Peace, delivered May 21, 1916, was the first commitment to the League of Nations. Wilson, \textit{New Democracy}, II, p. 184-9; Bernstorff, \textit{op.cit.} p.271
have the disadvantage of being encircled and having their supplies cut off. This disadvantage is to be removed and the advantage remain as it is. And in return for this immense concession we are to receive a promise which cannot be fulfilled.

We can give promise for promise. We can say we will do our best to fulfill a wish for peace, and in the meantime we intend to use such means as are still in our power to secure the safety of the world and the proper observance of treaties."\(^1\)12

The British reluctance to initiate a peace proposal at this time may partly be traced to the above communication.\(^1\)3

House tried to reach an understanding through the French Ambassador at Washington, but failed there.\(^1\)4 So he wrote to Grey, "As far as I can see, there is nothing to add or to do for the moment; and if the Allies are willing to gamble...we must rest content."\(^1\)5 Then he wrote to Page, "I have come to feel that if the Allies cannot see more clearly in the future than they have in the past, it is hardly worth while for us to

13. It was the duty of the British Ambassador in Washington to give his Government a more accurate picture of the President, but unfortunately Sir Cecil himself was quite out of sympathy with Mr. Wilson. House, op.cit. p.266; "Spring-Rice goes only with your enemies... and gets their point of view and conveys it to his Government." In a letter to the President, July 12, 1918. Ibid.
14. Ibid. p.289-90. Sir Edward had intimated in his reply to House that Wilson should negotiate directly with France in order that the French Government "in this way be sufficiently impressed with his real intentions and good will."
15. House, op.cit. p.292; Bemis, op.cit. p.82
bother as much as we have."\(^{16}\)

Matters with England were again aggravated when a controversy arose over seizure of mails,\(^{17}\) which was relieved by informal means between House and Grey.\(^{18}\) Then on July 18th, the British Government published a blacklist of firms in the United States with which British subjects were forbidden to trade.\(^{19}\) Wilson now had Page called back from London on leave.\(^{20}\)

The President, on the advice of House and Counsellor Polk, asked Congress for authority to prohibit loans and to restrict importations. This was granted.\(^{21}\)

Official relations with Great Britain were none too cordial, but unofficially, House maintained his close intimacy with both the British Foreign Office and the American State Department, and was 'able to pour oil when the occasion demanded.'

17. Ibid. p.307-8; Bemis, op.cit. p.85; American Journal of Int. Law, op.cit. p.405-12.
18. House, op.cit. p.310
19. Ibid. p.312
20. Ibid. p.313. Page, op.cit. II, p.148; In order that he might thereby get something of the American point of view. See also House, op.cit. p.314, a letter to the President from House, "When he comes I hope he may be sent West to get a complete bath of American opinion."
21. Ibid. p.315; also Congressional Record, Vol.53, 63rd Congress, 1st Session, p.14022. "Before asking Congress to do this, I would suggest that you let Jusserand and Spring-Rice inform their Governments that you intend to do so unless they immediately change their procedure." House, op.cit. p.315.
22. Ibid. p.326. Sir Cecil Spring-Rice asked House if he might let him know in advance when he saw breakers ahead so that House might take a hand in averting trouble. Ibid. p.351.
In November Wilson was re-elected to the Presidency. He summoned House to Washington to discuss his plans for mediation. The President planned to write a Note to the belligerents, demanding that the war close. Germany had already violated her promise of May 4th when the passenger ship Marina was sunk October 28th. It seemed necessary now to break off diplomatic relations with her. Before doing this he wished to try another move for peace. House did not consider the time appropriate, as the Allies had just begun to be successful. Wilson suggested another trip to Europe, but this idea was discarded.

The President was determined to make the attempt, and wrote out the draft of his Note and sent it to House. The Note, as Wilson had written it, asked the belligerent Powers to state the terms demanded as a basis for peace. House pronounced it a "wonderfully well-written document, yet likely to offend the Allies."

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23. Gerard had come back to the United States on leave, and told House that the Germans were not ready for a peace move. Ibid. p.391.
24. Ibid. p.390-91; Bernstorff, op.cit. p.303. Mr. Wilson caused the investigation of the Marina, etc. to be carried on in a dilatory fashion because he did not want to see his peace move disturbed by controversies.
25. House, op.cit. p.294: It contained the phrase, "The causes and objects of the war are obscure." Bernstorff, op.cit. p.302: Immediately after...his re-election, Mr. Wilson wrote a Peace Note, but unfortunately he kept it in his desk. Mr. Wilson was in the habit of typing the drafts of his Notes...himself, and only submitting them to his advisers on points of law and other technicalities.
Just at this time a British Cabinet crisis resulted in the retirement of Sir Edward Grey from the office of Foreign Secretary. Although House maintained close touch with Grey's successor, Balfour, yet the personal intimacy hitherto maintained was necessarily lacking.

Before the President could present the Note which he had prepared, the German Government "exploded a diplomatic bombshell." This was a Note which expressed the willingness of Germany to enter a peace conference, and asked the United States to communicate the desire to the Allied Powers. This was supplemented by like Notes from Turkey, Austria, and Bulgaria.

The State Department, under Lansing's signature, at once transmitted the message to the Allies. But Wilson was disappointed at being anticipated in this way. In transmitting the messages, therefore, he did not accompany them with any of his own.

27. House, op.cit. p.398: Grey cabled that Sir Eric Drummond, his Secretary, would hold the same position with Balfour, and that Balfour would expect House to use the private code as necessity arose.
28. Ibid. p.398. Bernstorff, op.cit. p.30203. "The American mediation would have anticipated our peace offer." Ibid. p.311. "the peace offer of the Imperial Government involved with Mr. Wilson's plan of mediation." Ibid.p.305: Wilson commissioned House to tell me in strict confidence that he was anxious to take steps toward mediation as soon as possible.
31. Ibid. p.277-79
32. Bernstorff, op.cit. p.315
33. Ibid. p.316
House, in close contact with the British Embassy, suggested that the British hold off their answer to the Note, until it could be found out unofficially what the German terms were. The British refused to delay, and asked the French Government to draft an identical Note in reply. The reply was sent through Ambassador Sharp in Paris. It was a refusal to deal with the German offer on the grounds that it contained no specific proposals.

In spite of Wilson's disappointment at being forestalled by the German proposal, he decided to issue his Note before the French and English had a chance to refuse the German offer. He sent his Note on December 18, under the signature of Secretary Lansing. In writing to House about it he said that events had moved so fast that he did not have time to get him down to Washington to go over it with him. It was written and sent off in a few hours. The Note, Wilson said, was written along a different line than the draft which House had seen.

The President's Note was sent to all belligerent Powers, asking them to state their terms for peace. But in the Note he unfortunately wrote, "...takes the liberty of calling attention

34. House, op.cit. p.399-400; House had developed a new confidential contact with the British Government through Sir William Wiseman, an attaché of the British Embassy at Washington.
35. Ibid. p.401
36. Ibid. p.403
38. House, op.cit. p.403-4; Berstorff, op.cit. p.317, The President did not allow himself to be turned from his purpose, and dispatched his Note, which had long been ready, but with certain alterations.
to the fact that the objects...of the belligerents on both sides...are virtually the same."39

Neither the Allies nor the Central Powers considered the President's Note adequate. Germany and her allies wished an immediate conference of delegates of belligerent States in a neutral place, though not in America.40 The Allies refused to negotiate on the grounds that a durable peace presupposed a satisfactory settlement of the conflict, and that at the moment it was hopeless to expect from the Central Powers the reparations, restitutions, and guarantees necessary to such a peace. The Allied reply took exception to the sentence indicated above in the President's Note, and insisted that the attitude of the Central Powers was a menace to humanity and civilization. Their reply, the Note said, "could be considered the same as their reply to the German Note of that moment."41

House arranged a conference with Bernstorff, and told him that a conference would not come about without previous confidential negotiations, and that they could do so on this question in such a way that only they and the President would know.42

42. Bernstorff, op.cit. p.323: Under the circumstances complete discretion was assured, as Wilson and House, unlike most Americans, are both very clever at keeping secrets.
Bernstorff cabled to his Government for permission to carry on such confidential negotiations, and advised that the German Government state its terms and to agree to guarantee against future wars. 43

The German Government did not reply to this request, but instead, Bernstorff was asked to discuss with Mr. Lansing the possible result of a memorandum on renewal of unrestricted submarine warfare. Bernstorff telegraphed in reply that it was useless to discuss the matter with Lansing, as Wilson decided everything, Lansing never giving an answer until he received instructions from Wilson. 44

The German Government then requested Bernstorff to continue negotiations with Colonel House. 45

43. Ibid. p. 323-5
44. Ibid. p. 420
45. Ibid. p. 330
CHAPTER XVI
THE BREAK WITH GERMANY

On December 27th House proposed to the President that he set forth clearly the main lines upon which a stable peace might be drawn and which the United States would take part in ensuring, thereby developing further the declaration of the President on May 27th of that year. Such a presentation of a future international organization could be made in terms so general that it would not carry the offensive appearance of an offer of mediation. Yet, if the United States remained neutral, it would provide a basis upon which the belligerents might rely if they desired American mediation at any time. On the other hand, if the United States entered the war against Germany, it would serve to warn the Allies that the American Government was not fighting for their nationalistic aims, but for the security and tranquility of the world.¹

The President discussed the suggestion with House, and decided to outline some such terms in an address to the Senate. House asked for time in which to study the matter, and at the same time he encouraged the President in doing "this great and dramatic thing."²

1. House, op. cit. p.413-14; Bernstorff, op. cit. p.335: In a cipher telegram to the Foreign Office, Berlin, under date of January 16, 1917, "A further pronouncement of Wilson's is expected almost immediately; it will probably take the form of a communication to Congress."
2. House, op. cit. p.414
The address was prepared, and after some suggested changes were made, the Colonel was satisfied. He asked the President if he had shown the message to Lansing. The President replied that he had not shown it to any one, but that he intended to show it to Lansing before he sent it to the Ambassadors. House made the necessary arrangements for getting our Ambassadors abroad to put the message before the public in their respective countries.\(^3\)

On January 22 Wilson read his message to the Senate.\(^4\) This address is known as the "Peace Without Victory" address. The official response from abroad was similar to previous responses. The British took offense at the phrase "peace without victory"; while the Germans refused to see in it an opportunity to prove the sincerity of their peace protests.\(^5\)

Bernstorff was still trying to get his Government to state specifically their peace terms. He felt that if he could secure such a statement, and the terms proved not unreasonable, Colonel House might take the matter up with the British. House knew that Bernstorff was doing all he could to hold off the recommencement of submarine warfare.\(^6\) So he proposed that Bernstorff cable again for terms, and that negotiations of them should go

3. Ibid. p.416-17; Bernstorff, op.cit. p.359: The President officially communicated this proposal to all the belligerent Powers on the same day.
4. Senate Document #685, 64th Congress, 2nd Session.
5. House, op.cit. p.420-422; Bernstorff, op.cit. p.331: "It had already struck me...that the first step taken by the United States to force the conclusions of peace had not made the impression in Germany that its importance warranted. Also, Ibid. p.369: The diplomats of the Entente in Washington were quite beside themselves with anger.
6. Bernstorff, op.cit. p.330: "I understood...that I was to continue the negotiations with Colonel House."
only as far as the President and himself. 7

The German answer was the announcement of January 31. All ships in the barred zone, neutrals included, would be sunk. 8

On February 3rd President Wilson addressed Congress, announcing a break in diplomatic relations with Germany. 9 Bernstorff was given his passports, and on February 15 he left the United States. 10

House made one more effort to arrange for peace negotiations, this time through the newly-arrived Austrian Ambassador. This effort, too, was futile, and the Austrian official was not permitted to present his credentials. 11

On February 26th Colonel House received information of the Zimmermann telegram, inviting Mexico to ally herself with Germany, in which Mexico was to receive assistance in recovering the lost southwest territory. Wilson feared the immediate publication of the news, but House urged its immediate announcement. 12

7. House, op.cit. p.423; 425; Bernstorff, op.cit. p.373; The day after the President read his appeal to the Senate, I received a telegram inviting me to visit Mr. House in New York. Mr. House read me a memorandum of Mr. Wilson's. With the utmost speed I sent...telegrams about my interview with Mr. House.
9. Wilson, op.cit. p.422-27
12. House, op.cit. p.452; Bernstorff, op.cit. p.380-81: It has frequently been asserted that the notorious Mexican telegram led to the war with the United States. I do not believe this is correct. The telegram was used
On February 26th Wilson again addressed Congress, requesting authority to arm merchant ships. A resolution granting this request was carried in the House of Representatives, but was subjected to severe debate and a filibuster in the Senate. A manifesto, signed by 75 Senators, indicating their approval of Wilson's request, was all that could be secured. On his own authority, then, the President ordered the Secretary of State to announce the arming of all American merchant ships sailing through the barred area.

On March 3rd the Cunard liner Laconia was sunk without warning, and the lives of two American women were lost. On March 12th the American steamer Algonquin was sunk. Other American ships were sunk in increasing numbers.

A special session of Congress was called for April 2nd, 1917, and on that evening Wilson asked that body to declare the existence of a state of war between the United States and Germany.

with great success as propaganda against us; but the rupture of diplomatic relations was equivalent in all circumstances to war. The telegram, as is well known, was only conditional; the instructions it contained were only to apply if the United States came to war.

14. Ibid. p.458
15. Ibid. p.488
On Friday, April 6th, the Congress of the United States declared war against Germany. All of the efforts of the President to bring about a peaceful settlement had failed. Colonel House's efforts to make the President the peace mediator of the conflict failed. The next best thing in Colonel House's plan did come to pass, the United States entered the war on the side of the Allies.

This paper began as an attempt to show that the undercurrent of diplomacy, carried on unofficially by Colonel House through his personal contacts with the foreign Ambassadors at Washington and more intimately with the Foreign Ministers of the belligerent Powers themselves, determined the United States' attitude toward the war. Throughout the paper there has been a succession of incidents pointed out to support that thesis.

It has been pointed out that even before the World War began, Mr. House established contacts with the Governments of Europe which opened the way for him to become the unofficial channel through which the belligerents could arrive at some settlement without compromising their Government in case of failure of the negotiations. His first mission to Europe gave him the idea of a League of Nations, and through his influence
Woodrow Wilson became the leading advocate of that principle of international relations.

The slight respect in which the efforts of Mr. Bryan were held, and the disinclination of the larger Powers to abide by the terms of his Arbitration Treaties, is presented as evidence that an intermediary who could withhold information that should be withheld, and in whom the utmost confidence could be placed, could serve the cause of peace better than the first Secretary of State of the Wilson period.

When the war began, it was necessary that the United States define its attitude. Neutrality was declared, and upon Mr. House's advice the President approached the belligerents unofficially with an offer to act as an intermediary. It is to be noted that this offer was made by the President, and not by Mr. Bryan.

Then the war touched us. Our trade was subjected to the British interpretation of their control of the sea. The State Department could do nothing to get the British to recognize our inconvenience. But Colonel House did, unconventionally and effectively. He stopped a message from the State Department to the British Government that frightened the British Ambassador when it was shown to him, and on the strength of his advice the British Government allowed the matter of contraband to be discussed as a matter of international concern.
President Wilson did not have much faith in Ambassadors. Page did not seem to be giving the American interpretations to our Notes, and his letters to the President and to Mr. House savored of English partisanship. When a time came, in January, 1916, when a peace move on the part of the United States seemed to offer a chance of success, the President passed by his Ambassadors in both England and Germany and again chose to trust the fortunes of the case to his friend House. The Secretary of State had a similar mission in mind, as both Wilson and House knew, and it was in a large measure to anticipate such a move, on the Secretary's part that House made his trip in early 1916.

House was welcomed in England and in Germany. He went to France on this trip, and there he saw for the first time the impossibility of an agreeable peace, and came to the conclusion that the best he could do at the time was to work for agreeable relations between the different nations and the United States. It was while he was abroad on this mission that the Lusitania was torpedoed and sunk.

The Lusitania affair brought the American position to a crisis. Advice as to what we should do varied, but all agreed that something must be done promptly. Our Ambassadors, especially Page in London, advised an immediate rupture with Germany. Secretary Bryan advised that the dispute be submitted to arbitration, and the right of Americans to travel on merchant ships of belligerent Powers be limited. House advised that a demand
be made upon Germany for assurance that such an incident would not happen again, that a disavowal be made, and that reparations for the loss of American life be provided. Three Lusitania Notes give evidence that Mr. House's advice prevailed. The Second of these was so vigorously expressed that Mr. Bryan resigned.

Before the Lusitania question was adjusted another crisis was precipitated when the Arabic was sunk. Now something had to be done. House still advised against a break with Germany, and by some vigorous work on his part with Count von Bernstorff, assurance was gained from Germany that liners would not be sunk by submarines without warning and without providing for the safety of the lives of the crew and passengers. But still Germany had not given a disavowal, and House and Wilson demanded a disavowal. Bernstorff and House arrived at a very unofficial method by which the German Government could disavow the acts by which the Lusitania and Arabic were sunk, and in a private letter to Secretary Lansing this was satisfactorily done. Unofficial diplomacy had won a diplomatic victory.

Through the summer of 1915 we were engaged in the twin controversies, with England over the blockade, and with Germany over the submarine issue. Late that summer House proposed a plan to the President whereby the President might enforce peace upon the warring Powers. The President was to suggest that a peace conference be held. The proposal was to be made first to
the Allies. They were to be made to understand unofficially through Mr. House that they were to agree to a peace parley on the basis of military and naval disarmament. Then the proposal was to be made to Germany. If Germany agreed, then the United States would have accomplished a master-stroke of diplomacy.

If Germany refused, we could break off diplomatic relations with her, and probably enter the war on the side of the Allies. Colonel House went to Europe on a second mission, carrying with him the above proposal. Germany wanted him to come to Berlin first, but that was not the idea which House had in mind.

In London, in Paris, and in Berlin House discussed his plan, and as a result he concluded that the future of the United States lay in an Allied victory, and that the problem of the United States was to help them win and yet avoid pulling the Allied chestnuts out of the fire. The mission was completed in London, when he and Grey drew up the House Memorandum, embodying the plan for American intervention in case of Germany's refusal to meet in a conference. The proposed conference was to be called upon the request of the Allied Powers at such a time when it was deemed opportune. The United States was protected on their part by a clause saying that if the conference was proposed for a time when the intervention of the United States would not be effective, then they would disinterest themselves in Europe and look to their own protection in their own way.
While Colonel House was in England arranging for his plan for intervention, Secretary Lansing was getting himself involved in a controversy over armed merchant vessels. He presented the Allied Ambassadors in Washington with an informal Note suggesting that all merchant vessels be disarmed, in return for which they were not to be attacked without warning. This move, and the current German announcement that merchantmen were to be regarded as warships, did not make Mr. House's mission any easier. He cabled to Mr. Lansing and to the President of his difficulties arising out of the Lansing proposals, and with as good grace as possible the United States Government allowed the proposals to be forgotten. Official diplomacy came very near to making unofficial diplomacy ineffective.

When Mr. House returned to the United States from his second mission to Europe, the German Government carried on practically all of their negotiations through him and von Bernstorff. The Sussex case developed at this time, and Lansing was for an immediate rupture. But the President and Mr. House wanted to try out their peace plan according to the House-Grey Memorandum. Bernstorff and House worked unofficially and again succeeded in getting the German Government to accept the demands made by the United States and return to the recognized rules of international law.

The President and Mr. House waited vainly for the Allies
to propose that a peace conference be called. At the time of the Sussex controversy, and again in May, House asked Grey whether the time was not opportune to initiate the move. Germany was now making peace overtures through Bernstorff and Gerard, and in November, after his re-election to the Presidency, Wilson made another strong move for peace. But events were against him. A British Cabinet crisis removed Sir Edward Grey from the Foreign Office, and coincident with his proposal the Germans, having tired of waiting for Wilson to propose a conference, asked the United States Government to transmit to the Allied Powers a proposal for a peace parley. The Allies refused to negotiate, and England refused to take the President's proposal seriously.

January 31st the Germans renewed their unrestricted submarine warfare, and all efforts for peace were laid aside. War was declared with Germany on April 6, 1917.
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