

The History of the Twentieth Century

Episode 134

“The Zimmerman Telegram”

Transcript

[music: Fanfare]

“We intend to begin on the first of February unrestricted submarine warfare. We shall endeavor in spite of this to keep the United States of America neutral. In the event of this not succeeding, we make Mexico a proposal of alliance on the following basis: make war together, make peace together, generous financial support and an understanding on our part that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona...”

Cable from German foreign minister Arthur Zimmerman to German Ambassador to the US, Count Bernstorff.

Welcome to *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

[music: Opening War Theme]

Episode 134. The Zimmerman Telegram.

When we last looked at the situation in Mexico, it was July 1916. General Black Jack Pershing’s expedition had failed to kill or capture Pancho Villa, but had succeeded in getting into combat with the forces of the Carranza government, which the US recognized as the legitimate government of Mexico and who were just as anxious to get rid of Pancho Villa as Pershing was. Whoever said, “The enemy of my enemy is my friend,” never studied this conflict.

The irony here is that earlier in the Mexican Revolution, Pancho Villa was arguably the most pro-US of the revolutionary leaders. He was friendly with many Americans, he regularly received American journalists and even re-enacted his own battles for the benefit of American movie studios. When the US occupied Veracruz, Pancho Villa was the only revolutionary leader who declined to denounce the American action, even though it had been intended to help unseat the Revolution’s enemy, Victoriano Huerta.

And the Americans had returned the compliment. US journalists wrote laudatory pieces, Hollywood depicted him as a romantic hero, even Woodrow Wilson compared him to Robin Hood. But the US ultimately sided with Carranza, who was emerging as the winner in the battle among the various revolutionary factions.

Hence Villa's attack on Columbus, New Mexico, in the hope of baiting the North Americans to invade. If Villa had a weak hand, perhaps the US invasion would reshuffle the deck, so to speak, pitting the North Americans and the *carrancistas* against each other, and giving Villa breathing room to stage another comeback.

The German government was also devoting considerable resources in a clandestine effort to get the US bogged down in all-out war with Mexico. The US was selling munitions to the Allies in Europe, and the Germans reasoned that the Americans wouldn't have so many munitions to sell if they needed them themselves for their own war.

Recall that the Germans had already made a deal to supply money and arms to Victoriano Huerta when he returned to Mexico for his comeback tour. Sadly for the Germans, Huerta never made it back to Mexico. He was taken prisoner by US authorities at the Mexican border and died in their custody in January 1916.

By then, oddly enough, the Germans were turning to none other than Pancho Villa to become their man in Mexico. There's no evidence of any cooperation between Villa and the Germans prior to this, but by the time he was losing out to Carranza, the man the US was supporting, Villa was ready to accept German help because the Germans were the only ones offering. How much the Germans could actually help him remains unclear.

Germany was not betting all its chips on Villa. The Germans were also dangling money in front of at least one of Porfirio Díaz's former military commanders, now in exile in Cuba, in the hope they could tempt him to return to Mexico and begin the counter-revolution that Huerta had not lived long enough to incite.

After Villa's attack on Columbus and the Pershing Expedition into Mexico, German officials must have thought their dream of war between Mexico and the US was on the verge of becoming a reality. But despite a couple of combat incidents between US and Mexican soldiers, the hoped-for war never materialized. As the US ambassador to Germany put it in a cable to Washington, "[every night] fifty million Germans cry themselves to sleep because all Mexico has not risen against us."

Some credit for this has to be given to Woodrow Wilson, who understood perfectly well how dearly Germany wanted to see a war in North America. After the attack on Columbus, some sort of military response was unavoidable, but Wilson kept it limited. He resisted two pleas from Pershing for permission to retaliate against Carranza's soldiers when they fired on US troops,

much to Pershing's private irritation, though Pershing was too loyal a soldier to criticize the President publicly.

By the way, in hindsight, later in his life, Pershing would acknowledge that he had come around to the view that Wilson had made the right decision not to escalate the conflict with Mexico.

1916 was an election year, and the Republicans were faulting Wilson for not responding more firmly to both Germany and Mexico, but Wilson would not be swayed, despite the wild rumors that were flying. A panicked US consul reported to Washington the circulation of something called the Plan of San Diego. This plan supposedly called for an armed uprising in Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico of African Americans, Native Americans, and Mexican Americans, toward the goal of creating a new, independent republic in the US southwest that would be a haven for Americans of color to escape white American domination.

At the same time, German officials were telling the Carranza government, and any other Latin American government that would listen, that of course the Pershing expedition was just the first step of an American plan to occupy and annex everything between the Rio Grande and the Panama Canal, because of course the canal, which is so important to US interests, would never be secure so long as it remained geographically separated from US territory.

And then there was Japan. In our earlier episodes on the Mexican Revolution, we saw that Japan has been going out of her way to build closer ties with Mexico. These overtures were warmly received in Mexico City, and while you can't deny that there are many good reasons why these two countries should seek a closer relationship, you also can't deny that creating a counterweight against US influence in Latin America and the Pacific would be one of them. By 1916, Japan was selling weapons to the Carranza government. This was technically a violation of an agreement among the Great War Allies not to sell weapons to any nation except other members of their alliance, though these arms sales to Mexico didn't seem to be bothering the British or the French or the Russians very much. The Japanese ambassador in Mexico City was a frequent guest of Carranza's at the National Palace, and Mexican officials visiting Tokyo enjoyed lavish hospitality.

All of this was worrisome to American officials in Washington. As long as Pershing and his troops were in Mexico, the possibility of a conflict between them and Carranza's forces couldn't be ruled out, and it was becoming all too clear which way Japan was leaning.

The British government had their own reasons to worry about Japan. Selling arms to Mexico was small beer, but the British had other concerns about their ally's motives. The biggest one was the unseemly way the Japanese had so quickly pivoted from fighting the Germans and seizing Qingdao to using their enhanced position in East Asia to bully neutral China with the twenty-one demands, episode 93.

Britain formed an alliance with Japan all the way back in 1902, and the main reason was that the British judged they didn't have the resources necessary to fully protect their interests in far-off East Asia, so a deal under which they could rely upon the growing naval power of Japan to help protect their interests in the region seemed just the thing.

In fairness to Japan, it has to be said that the Japanese were scrupulous about upholding their end of the treaty. Japanese assistance was always there when the British needed it. If anything, it was the opposite problem. Japan was so enthusiastic that it gave the British pause. German power in East Asia had been eliminated forever. But with Britain and France and Russia preoccupied with the fighting in Europe—and with no end in sight—that would leave the Japanese with a free hand in East Asia. The Japanese clearly understood this, as their sudden aggressive attitude toward China shows.

The German government understood it, too, and by 1916, Germany was putting out feelers to Japan, in the form of informal diplomatic talks between German and Japanese diplomats in neutral China. The Germans were trying to tempt the Japanese into switching sides. If Japan did, she could move with impunity against British and French and Russian interests in East Asia, and from the German point of view, make sure you underline *Russian* interests. The Central Powers have almost completely blockaded Russia, with the ports of Archangel and Vladivostok the only points of entry for foreign military assistance. The Japanese archipelago lies in a great arc across all the approaches to Vladivostok, making it the ideal base for a blockade of the Russian Far East.

Besides being well-positioned to cripple Russia, Japan was also well positioned to cause trouble for the United States. If the US joined the war, Japan could turn her flank with attacks on the Philippines or Hawaii or the Panama Canal. Even if the US remained neutral, Japan might be a source of arms to the quarreling factions in Mexico, which would help keep the unrest in that country going, and help force a deeper and deeper US commitment and thus diverting weapons and ammunition the Americans otherwise might be selling to the Allies.

And again, in fairness to Japan, she kept her British allies informed of these German overtures and gave no indication she was taking them seriously, but Whitehall was nonetheless nervous.

[music: Brahms, *Piano Quartet No. 1*]

By late 1916, over 10,000 US soldiers, over three-quarters of the entire standing Army of the United States, was camped out in Mexico, in northern Chihuahua. The active phase of Pershing's hunt for Pancho Villa and his soldiers was over, but to withdraw would be awkward. The 1916 election campaign was heating up and the Republicans would surely make hay out of any reduction in the US presence in Mexico and brand it a cowardly retreat. And so the soldiers held their position and did nothing, amusing themselves in the usual ways of bored soldiers: they organized boxing matches and baseball games, these being the two most popular sports in the US at the time, as well as other pastimes such as drinking and gambling, and whoring. US camps

attracted Mexican prostitutes, which Pershing permitted. In return for permission to ply their trade, the prostitutes were required to submit to regular medical examinations and the fee for their services was limited to two dollars, that being the going rate at the time, hence the old-fashioned expression “two-dollar woman” as a euphemism for “prostitute,” although inflation would render that figure of speech obsolete later in the century.

You might think that these women would resent all this regulation, but the fact is that prostitution is a difficult and dangerous business, and these women were happy to submit to price and quality controls in exchange for a safe and steady supply of clients, so everybody was happy. It is said that the prostitutes volunteered to cook Thanksgiving dinner for the soldiers as an expression of their gratitude.

Meanwhile, in Washington, Woodrow Wilson and his administration hoped the US Army presence would give Carranza and his forces an incentive to track down and kill or capture Pancho Villa themselves and incidentally, give Woodrow Wilson room to declare “mission accomplished” and bring the troops home.

Carranza would have loved to get Pancho Villa out of the way, but he had bigger fish to fry. Now that his faction had control of most of the country, it was time to make good on his promises. The lesson of Madero’s failure and of Carranza’s success was that the Mexican people were interested in something much more far-reaching than reinstatement of the old Liberal Constitution of 1857. A new century required more than representative legislatures and Presidential term limits. These things had not made Mexicans’ lives any better. The people wanted land reform and labor rights. They wanted universal suffrage. And they wanted the land and the wealth of Mexico reserved for the Mexican people. Carranza had promised these things and it had won him the support he had needed to oust Huerta and take control of the government. Now it was time to fulfill the promises.

In the fall of 1916, Carranza ordered elections to be held to create a special Congress to meet at the city of Querétaro, a city 200 kilometers north of Mexico City. Querétaro has a special role in Mexican national history. It was one of the places where the revolt against Spanish rule began, and it was later the site of the execution of the would-be Emperor Maximilian. Now it would be the birthplace of a new Mexican constitution.

The Congress set to work in December. Carranza presented them with a draft constitution that was little more than a light revision of the old one. The Congress soon voted by huge majorities to add newer and more radical provisions, including a lengthy article setting out the rights of workers, including minimum wages, maximum hours, a right to strike and guarantees of racial equality in employment. Another provision granted the government power to seize private lands, opening the door to real land reform, as well as restricting foreign ownership of land in Mexico. Another provision outlawed monopolies.

Pancho Villa had been busy, too. He recovered from his leg wound, left his cave, and assembled a new army. He avoided provoking the North Americans; instead he returned to raiding local garrisons of Carranza's army. In September, his army entered Chihuahua City, the state capital and held control of it for seven hours, opening up the local prison and freeing all the prisoners before withdrawing back into the mountains.

On Thanksgiving Day, the same day the hookers were serving up dinner for the US soldiers, Pancho Villa and his army returned to Chihuahua City. This time they laid siege to it, and it fell a few days later, after the 2,000 or so soldiers of Carranza's garrison inside the city switched sides. Now Villa had control of the state and a force of about 5,000 under his command. Was he about to make another comeback? He must have thought so. He issued a manifesto, calling on all Mexicans to join with him in the fight against the twin evils of "the barbarians of the north" and "the most corrupt government we have ever had."

A mere one hundred and fifty miles away, Black Jack Pershing was seething. After nine frustrating months, he and his army now knew at last *exactly* where Pancho Villa was. And yes, Villa has an army, but so does Pershing, and his is bigger. Now the opportunity to capture or kill Pancho Villa is at hand. All Pershing needs is permission from the President. He wrote on December 9: "A swift blow delivered by this command should be made at once against this pretender. Our own prestige in Mexico should receive consideration at this time. In the light of Villa's operations during the past two weeks, further inactivity of this command does not seem desirable, and there is no longer doubt as to the facts."

Pershing did not get his wish. Quite the opposite. With the election now safely in the rear view mirror, Woodrow Wilson no longer felt pressure to look tough. Instead, the War Department ordered Pershing to begin withdrawing his forces from Mexico; the withdrawal operation was completed in early February, 1917. Besides bringing home 11,000 US soldiers and their 9,000 horses, Pershing brought back two thousand Mexicans and five hundred ethnic Chinese who had worked for the Americans and now sought refuge against the wrath of Villa. The Chinese in particular required special permission from Washington because immigration of ethnic Chinese into the United States was banned by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

So what do we make of the Pershing Expedition? The Army and the Wilson Administration declared it a success, but it's hard to agree, unless you define "success" cynically to mean "soothed the American impulse to go to war in retaliation for the attack on Columbus without actually getting the US involved in any kind of war." It helped protect the US border perhaps, although there were a couple of other small raids across the border into Texas even as Pershing pursued Villa in Chihuahua.

It is sometimes said of this expedition that it the US Army gained experience from it, but I guess you can say that about any military operation. It gave an opportunity to find out what trucks and

airplanes can do for an army, and it certainly made Black Jack Pershing the most famous member of the US military.

Meanwhile, the Mexican Congress in Querétaro continued to debate the new constitution even as Villa began his latest comeback. Two articles of the proposed new constitution were especially controversial: the ones on education and on the role of the Catholic Church. On February 5, 1917, as General Pershing was on his way home, the Congress approved the final draft. On education, it included an article setting out a right to a free and secular education. With regard to the Catholic Church, there was a strong anticlerical strain to the Congress—much more than Carranza himself was comfortable with. The Church was seen as having supported the dictators Díaz and Huerta, so the new constitution asserted not only separation of church and state, but the supremacy of the state over the church, allowing limits on the number of clergy, barring foreign clergy, and claiming church property for the state.

It was a much more radical document than Carranza had wanted, and it was perhaps not everything the revolutionaries had dreamed of when they took up arms against, first, Díaz, and then Huerta. But it represented a decisive shift in the trajectory of Mexican politics. It was not the product merely of liberal elites; it had broad support and created an enduring framework for real reforms. It reached far beyond the usual constitutional concerns of how the President and the Congress would be elected, and who would have what powers. It asserted the right of the state to seize the haciendas and redistribute the land to the landless. It asserted that the land and resources of Mexico were for Mexicans, and set out limits on foreign economic interests. It guaranteed equal rights, but also education and minimum wages, becoming the first constitution in the world not only to limit the power of government but assign to it affirmative duties to work on behalf of the people.

On the other hand, the adoption of the constitution did not mean the end of the fighting. Zapata was still out there. Villa was still out there. And there were other resisters. Many more years would pass before the fighting died away.

The first Presidential election under the new constitution was held in May, and to no one's surprise, the winner was Venustiano Carranza, who was elected without significant opposition. One of the first foreign governments to recognize the new Mexican government was Imperial Germany.

[music: Wagner, *Siegfried Idyll*]

On November 22, 1916, Arthur Zimmerman, or Arthur Zimmermann replaced Gottlieb von Jagow as the German foreign secretary. Zimmerman was a commoner, someone who had earned a law degree and become a career civil servant in the German Foreign Office. He'd served as a consul in China for a time, and afterward returned to Germany via a route that included a transcontinental train trip across the United States. Because of this experience, Zimmerman

regarded himself as an expert on the USA, and most of his colleagues in the Foreign Office went along with that.

Zimmerman was the first commoner to become foreign secretary of Imperial Germany. All of his predecessors had been stuffy Prussian aristocrats with “von” in front of their names. The US government welcomed his appointment. The increasing control Hindenburg and Ludendorff exerted over Germany was worrisome to Washington; to the Americans, Zimmerman represented a turn toward a more liberal and democratic Germany, one that might be easier for the US State Department to work with, perhaps someone who could lobby within the German government for peace.

Sadly, this was a misreading of what was actually going on in Berlin. The Imperial Navy had spent the past year building up its fleet of U-boats, hoping for a second chance to impose an underwater blockade on Britain. The Navy had their tables and charts and projections that showed that unrestricted warfare would force British capitulation in a matter of months.

But what about the United States? The Wilson Administration had put diplomatic pressure on Germany repeatedly over the past two years over the issue of submarine warfare. If Germany broke all the promises she had made to the Americans, they would likely declare war. Germany was barely holding her own against three major powers. Against four, was there any hope?

The hawks in Germany thought so. Even if Woodrow Wilson could bring himself to get down off his high horse and declare war, the US would not be in a position to send substantial ground forces to Europe for a year or more. The U-boats could end the war in less time than that. Whether the hawks truly believed that the U-boats were the secret weapon that could win the war for them, even after the US entered the fight, or whether the U-boat escalation was a “Hail Mary” play, as in, “We’re losing anyway, so we might as well give it a shot,” is an open question. I suspect there was some of both in the thinking in the upper echelons of the German government.

But despite American assumptions to the contrary, Zimmerman was in the hawk camp. He was ready to unleash the U-boats. It was the German ambassador to the US, Johann Heinrich von Bernstorff, and the Chancellor, Bethman-Hollweg, who most feared the wrath of the Americans. They had no faith in the Navy’s confident projections and believed Germany needed to do everything it possibly could to keep the US out of the war. To them, the end of US neutrality meant defeat for Germany. Period. End of paragraph.

So when Bernstorff got the news in late 1916 that Germany was poised to restart unrestricted submarine warfare, he argued against it. After the US Presidential election, when Woodrow Wilson announced his final attempt to work out a peace agreement, Bernstorff prevailed upon his superiors in Berlin to wait and see what Wilson came up with. Perhaps Wilson could persuade the Allies to accept peace. But if Germany went ahead with unrestricted U-boat attacks, an aggrieved Wilson would certainly end his peace efforts, and probably lead his nation into the

conflict. That would be a disaster for Germany, Bernstorff warned, since America's resources, even her military resources, were nearly inexhaustible.

He was quite right about that, but Foreign Secretary Zimmerman wasn't buying it. Zimmerman had this reputation at the Foreign Office for being an expert in US affairs, as I mentioned, but that was based on one train trip through the United States. Count Bernstorff, who has been Germany's ambassador in Washington nine years now, really understood the country a lot more than Zimmerman did. But Zimmerman was the Foreign Secretary, and that's what counts.

Zimmerman had a much more skeptical take on the military potential of the United States. In a meeting with the American ambassador in Berlin, James Gerard, Zimmerman had shown Gerard data collected from the 1910 US Census and analyzed by German officials. Zimmerman pointed out that there were millions of US citizens and residents who had been born in Germany or were children of parents born in Germany, and warned the American ambassador that if the United States went to war against Germany, she would discover that she had as many as half a million revolutionaries within her own borders ready to take up arms against her government.

Gerard calmly replied that, well, in that event, the United States also had half a million lampposts.

The bottom line here is that Arthur Zimmerman was perhaps a little overoptimistic in evaluating Germany's options for winning the war. The idea that an all-out German U-boat campaign could force Britain to capitulate was way overoptimistic. The idea that the United States would be unable to declare war on Germany because doing so would lead to an internal revolution was incredibly overoptimistic.

But we have not yet plumbed the depths of Zimmerman's optimism, because there's still Mexico. We've already seen how the German government hoped to see the United States get sucked into a military adventure in Mexico. For Germany, it would have the advantage of consuming a lot of US arms and ammunition that would otherwise find its way to the Allies.

And then there was Japan. Germany has also been wooing Japan, hoping to tempt her into switching sides and opening up a second front against Russia and, who knows, maybe even the United States.

And so Zimmerman hatched a plan and communicated it in a telegram to Bernstorff in Washington. In the telegram—and I read an excerpt from it to you at the beginning of the episode—Zimmerman informed Bernstorff that Germany would begin unrestricted submarine warfare on February 1, 1917. He advised Bernstorff that Germany hoped the United States would remain neutral, but in the event of war, the German ambassador in Mexico was instructed to approach Venustiano Carranza and invite Mexico into an alliance with Germany and to make war on the United States. In exchange for this assistance, Germany would aid Mexico financially

during the war, and arrange for Mexico to receive Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona as part of the peace settlement.

The Germans had a lot of faith in their ability to induce other countries into allying with them in exchange for new territory in the peace agreement. I hadn't mentioned it before, but during the July Crisis, Helmuth von Moltke suggested the United States might be induced to enter the war against Britain in exchange for Canada.

Zimmerman's cable also proposed that the Mexicans reach out to the Japanese, given the occasional Japanese flirtations toward Mexico. The Japanese might be willing to join in the war against the US. The German ambassador should also ask the Mexicans to act as mediators between Germany and Japan in the hope of ending the state of war between them.

Zimmerman's message will become known to history as the Zimmerman Telegram, and it would be sent first to Bernstorff in Washington, who would then forward instructions to the German ambassador in Mexico City. Bernstorff was not only Germany's ambassador to the US, he was also the chief of all Foreign Office operations in the Western Hemisphere.

The message was originally intended to be sent on paper aboard *Deutschland*. *Deutschland* was a new kind of sea vessel, a merchant submarine. It had been constructed privately by the Norddeutscher Lloyd shipping company as a way of evading the British blockade. *Deutschland* was unarmed and could carry 700 tons of cargo, a modest amount by merchant shipping standards. Still, she was something of a technological marvel for her day. In 1916, she successfully completed two round trip voyages between Germany and the United States and carried tens of millions of dollars' worth of cargo.

Deutschland would have been the ideal vessel for carrying such a secret and sensitive document as the Zimmerman Telegram. The odds of *Deutschland* being captured were slim. Unfortunately for Zimmerman and the Foreign Office, *Deutschland's* third voyage to the US, scheduled for January 1917 had to be cancelled, owing to the deteriorating relations between Germany and America.

Not to worry. There was an alternative. Even as Zimmerman was preparing his message to Bernstorff, Bernstorff and the Foreign Office were in discussions with Woodrow Wilson and the US over a possible peace agreement. To facilitate these discussions, the Americans were allowing the German Foreign Office to use the US diplomatic cable between Berlin and Washington, and they were allowing the Germans to send coded messages in codes the US could not read.

Now, technically a neutral country shouldn't be allowing a belligerent to send coded messages on its telegraph lines unless they also provide the code to the neutral. This is to insure the messages aren't being used for military purposes. On the other hand, neutral nations are supposed to honor the diplomatic privileges of diplomats from belligerent nations, so maybe

we're in a gray area here, but it was a limited privilege intended specifically to facilitate German negotiations with Washington on the shape of a possible peace agreement to end the Great War. So it was a noble enough purpose.

The German Foreign Office sent the cable on January 16, 1917. I'm sure you already know what happened next. The US diplomatic cables from Berlin passed along a telegraph line to Denmark and from there underwater to the UK and then on to the United States. In Room 40 of the Old Admiralty Building in London, they got their hands on the coded cable the same time Bernstorff did. Apparently, it hadn't occurred to Zimmerman or anyone else at the German Foreign Office that a) the British might have broken the German diplomatic code, or b) that the cable was going to pass through British-controlled relay stations on its way to Washington.

Room 40 finished decoding the message the next day, and the British knew at once that they had a bombshell on their hands, something that could potentially push the United States at long last into declaring war on Germany. But to release it would also tip the Germans off that the British had their diplomatic code. It would also tip off the Americans that British intelligence was monitoring American diplomatic cables. So what to do?

We'll have to stop there for today. Thanks for listening, and I'd like to offer a special thanks to Patrick, for becoming a patron of the podcast. Patrons get access to special secret cables in which I talk about topics in upcoming episodes, so if you'd like to become a patron and help support the podcast, visit the website, historyofthetwentiethcentury.com and click on the Patreon button. And while you're there, leave a comment and let me know what you thought of today's episode.

And I hope you'll join me next week, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*, as we shift the spotlight to Russia. Even as the Zimmerman Telegram is roiling the United States, Russia's failures in the war are roiling politics in Russia. Is it stupidity or treason? Find out next week on *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

Oh, and one more thing. The reaction to the Zimmerman Telegram in Washington, Berlin, and Mexico City is a topic we'll have to save for a future episode, but often overlooked is the reaction in Tokyo. The Japanese government was as surprised by the telegram as was the US government. The Japanese Prime Minister, Terauchi, responded to the publication of the Zimmerman Telegram by releasing a statement that said:

The revelation of Germany's latest plot, looking to an alliance between Japan and Mexico against the United States, is interesting in many ways.

We are surprised not so much by the persistent efforts of the Germans to cause an estrangement between Japan and the United States as by their complete failure of appreciating the aims and ideals of other nations.

Nothing is more repugnant to our sense of honor and to the lasting welfare of this country than to betray our allies and friends in time of trial and to become a party to a alliance directed against the United States, to whom we are bound not only by the sentiments of true friendship, but also by material interests of vast and far-reaching importance.

The proposal which is now reported to have been planned by the German Foreign Office has not been communicated to the Japanese Government up to this moment, either directly or indirectly, officially or unofficially, but should it ever come to hand I can conceive no other form of reply than that of indignant and categorical refusal.

[music: Closing War Theme]