

U.S. Neutrality Proclamation, August 6, 1914

US Neutrality Proclamation

“I Woodrow Wilson, president of the United States, in order to preserve the neutrality of the United States and of its citizens and of persons within its territory and jurisdiction, and to enforce its laws and treaties, and in order that all persons, being warned of the general tenor of the laws and treaties of the United States in this behalf, and of the law of nations, may thus be prevented from any violation of the same, do hereby declare and proclaim, that by certain provisions of the act approved on the fourth day of March, A.D., 1909, commonly known as the penal code of the United States, the following acts are forbidden to be done, under severe penalties, within the territory and jurisdiction of the United States to-wit:

- “1. — Accepting and exercising a commission to serve or aid belligerents by land or sea against the other belligerents.
- “2. — Enlisting or entering into service of the said belligerents either as a soldier or a sail marine, or seaman on board of any vessel of war, letter of marque, or privateer.
- “3.— Hiring or retaining another person to enlist or enter himself in the service of either of the said belligerents as a soldier, or as a marine, or seaman on board of any vessel of war letter of marque, or privateer.
- “4. — Hiring another person to go beyond the limits or jurisdiction of the United States with intent to be enlisted as aforesaid.
- “5. — Hiring another person to go beyond the limits of the United States with intent to be entered into serve as aforesaid.
- “6. — Retaining another person to go beyond the limits of the United States with intent to the enlisted as aforesaid.
- “7. — Retaining another person to go beyond the limits of the United States with intent to be enlisted into serve as aforesaid.
- “8.— Fitting out and arming, or attempting to fit out and arm, or procuring to be fitted out and armed or knowingly being concerned in the furnishing, fitting out, or arming of any ship or vessel shall be employed in the service of either of the said belligerents.
- “9.— Issuing or delivering a commission within the territory or jurisdiction of the United States for any ship or vessel to the intent that such shall be employed as aforesaid.
- “10.— Increasing or augmenting, or procuring to increase or augment or knowingly being concerned in

increasing or augmenting, the force of any ship of war, cruiser or other armed vessel which at the time of her arrival within the United States was a ship of war, cruiser or armed vessel in the service of either of the said belligerents or belonging to the subjects of either, by adding to the number of guns, of such vessels, or by changing those on board of her for guns of larger caliber, or by the addition thereto of any equipment solely applicable to war.

“11. — Beginning or settling on foot or providing or preparing the means for any military expedition or enterprise to be carried on from the territory or jurisdiction of the United States against territories or dominions of either of the said belligerents.”

The president’s proclamation then declares that any use of waters within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States by armed vessels of belligerents for the purpose of preparing for hostile operations must be regarded as unfriendly and offensive and in violation of neutrality, and that if from and after the fifth day of August, instant, and during the continuance of the present hostilities in Europe, any ship of war or privateer of a belligerent shall enter any port, harbor, roadstead or waters of the United States such vessel shall be required to depart and to put to sea within twenty-four hours, except in case of stress of weather or of her requiring provisions or things necessary for their subsistence of her crew for repairs: and in such cases they shall put to sea as soon as possible. And if there are several vessels of opposing belligerents in the same port the order of their departure shall be so arranged as to afford the opportunity of leaving alternately and of causing the least possible detention.

No such vessel shall be permitted to take in any supplies except provisions, coal and things requisite for subsistence. The proclamation concludes as follows:

“And I do further declare and proclaim that the statutes and treaties of the United States and the law of nations alike require that no person, within the territory and jurisdiction of the United States, shall take part in the said wars, but shall remain at peace with all of the said belligerents, and shall maintain a strict and impartial neutrality.

“And I do hereby enjoin all citizens of the United States and all persons residing or being within the territory or the jurisdiction of the United States to observe the laws and to commit no act contrary to the provisions of the said statutes or treaties or in violation of the law of the nations in that behalf.

“And I do hereby warn all citizens of the United States and all persons residing within the territory or jurisdiction, that while the free and full expression of sympathies in public and private is not restricted by the laws of the United States, military forces in aid of a belligerent cannot lawfully be originated or organized within its jurisdiction: and that while all persons may lawfully and without restriction by reason of aforesaid statute, manufacture or sell within the United States arms and ammunition and other articles ordinarily known as contraband of war, yet they cannot carry such articles on the high seas or ship to any of the nations engaged in the aforesaid war any of the said articles.

“And I do hereby give notice to all citizens who may claim the protection of this government, who may misconduct themselves in the premises will do so at their peril, and that they can in no wise obtain any protection from the government of United States against the consequences of misconduct.”