

GERMAN PLOT LETTER STIRS CAPITAL

Japan and Carranza Exonerated

In confirming the plot by Germany against the United States, Secretary of State Lansing took pains to exonerate from knowledge or complicity both the Imperial Japanese Government and the present de facto Government in Mexico. The Secretary indicated that he did not believe that General Carranza had actual knowledge of the plot. That knowledge was conveyed to certain other leading Mexicans by the German Minister to Mexico, and the details of who these men actually are or of what they intended to do are withheld.

The State Department made it plain that it has had the facts in the plot in its possession only a very brief time, but that it has had a straight suspicion that this plot was in progress for some four months. The Zimmermann note, it was learned, passed through Count von Bernstorff's hands and was delivered to the German Minister in Mexico City. The latter, according to certain information which leaked out here, decided that it would not be advisable to communicate the plot to Carranza. Instead, certain Mexicans, who were known to be unfriendly to Carranza, were let into the secret. They agreed to the plot, it is understood, and decided that in the event that war between the United States and Germany took place they would arrange for a new revolution to seize the Government and depose Carranza.

The details of what transpired are withheld by this Government because of the danger that would come to certain informants. And in this connection Secretary of State Lansing today said he was not prepared to say whether there would be additional revelations.

Wilson Expected to Reveal Facts

All of the facts were placed in the possession of the Japanese Ambassador by Counselor Polk, of the State Department. He cabled them at once to Tokio. It is expected here that a statement dealing with the facts will be shortly forthcoming from the Japanese Government itself.

The entire international situation, so far as the relations between the United States and Germany are concerned, was extremely serious today. This latest manifestation of unfriendliness, complete proof of which has been gathered by the agents of the United States, reveals a plot of such widespread ramifications and serious enmity toward the United States as to be almost unbelievable. It is thought here that within a very short time the President will let all the facts become known, either through a direct statement to Congress from the White House or a communication to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Senate by Secretary of State Lansing.

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The text of the note written by German Foreign Minister Zimmermann to Count von Eckhardt, which was dated January 19 and sent to Mexico through Count von Bernstorff, the German Ambassador here at that time, has been in the hands of President Wilson for several days. It is not stated where it came from, but it is known that its existence was first reported to the United States by Ambassador Flecher when he reached Mexico City to take over his duties there as the new American Ambassador to Mexico.

It has been an open secret in official circles here that German influence and German money have been utilized to a very great extent in anti-American plotting in Cuba, Mexico and certain Central and South American countries. The agents of Germany have been financed from this city. Until he left Count von Bernstorff sent large quantities of gold south at stated periods. In addition, German fiscal agents in New York City were doing the same thing. Many of these particular shipments are known to the United States through reports of its secret service agents.

Not alone the amounts sent, but where they were sent, is a matter of record here. One of the last acts of the retiring German Ambassador was to furnish a large quantity of money to Baron von Schoen, who was transferred from the position of Embassy secretary here to Mexico City.

What action has been taken by Germany in its endeavor to draw Japan away from its alliance with the Entente and to throw its influence toward the Central Powers is not known. The State Department and Administration officials refused point-blank to discuss that phase of the general situation today. It was stated unofficially that Japan has within a very brief time reaffirmed to the Entente her complete allegiance to their joint cause. And officials believe that if the German campaign to involve the United States has hinged entirely on Japanese support that it is certain to fail.

At Work on Japan.

Only a very short time ago reports reached the State Department from authentic sources showing that German agents had been endeavoring to reconcile the differences existing between Germany and Japan. It was stated at the time that there was a renewal of the peace efforts which were set on foot by German representatives following the fall of Kiaochau and that representations had met with no more welcome reception than they had when originally presented.

One evidence of the depth of feeling stirred in Administration circles here today over the German plotting developments was the flat announcement from sources close to the President that he will refuse to accept the bill authorizing armed neutrality as framed in the House.