

WHY THE UNITED STATES

ADDRESS

OF THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

DELIVERED AT A JOINT SESSION OF THE

TWO HOUSES OF CONGRESS,

APRIL 2, 1917.

GENTLEMEN OF THE CONGRESS :—

I have called the Congress into extraordinary session because there are serious, very serious, choices of policy to be made, and made immediately, which it was neither right nor constitutionally permissible that I should assume the responsibility of making.

On the third of February last I officially laid before you the extraordinary announcement of the Imperial German Government that on and after the first day of February it was its purpose to put aside all restraints of law or of humanity and use its submarines to sink every vessel that sought to approach either the ports of Great Britain and Ireland or the western coasts of Europe, or any of the ports controlled by the enemies of Germany within the Mediterranean.

That had seemed to be the object of the German submarine warfare earlier in the war, but since April of last year the Imperial Government had somewhat restrained the commanders of its under-sea craft in conformity with its promise then given to us that passenger boats should not be sunk, and that due warning would be given to all other vessels