America and the Great War

I. Wilson and foreign affairs
   A. Idealistic diplomacy
      1. Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan
      2. God expected America to advance democracy and moral progress
   B. Mexico
      1. General Victoriano Huerta established military dictatorship
      2. Incident at Tampico allowed Wilson to intervene
      3. The downfall of Huerta
      4. Mexican bandits
      5. Carranza’s more liberal Mexican government
      6. “Pancho” Villa’s raids and Pershing
   C. In Caribbean, U.S. Marines helped put down disorders

II. An uneasy neutrality
   A. The beginning of the war
      1. Assassination of Austrian archduke Franz Ferdinand
      2. The European system of alliances
         a. Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy)
         b. Triple Entente (France, Great Britain, Russia)
      3. Trench warfare
   B. America’s initial reaction
      1. Wilson urged Americans to be neutral
      2. Many immigrants for the Central Powers
      3. Old-line Americans for the Allies
      4. Role of propaganda
   C. American neutrality strained
      1. Financial assistance to Allies
2. Freedom of the seas
   a. Importance of sea power in European war
   b. British ordered ships carrying German goods via neutral ports to be stopped

3. German submarine warfare
   a. Germans declared a war zone around the British Isles and threatened to sink any ships there
   b. German sinking of two ships divided the administration on a course of action
   c. Lusitania sunk; among 1,198 dead were 128 Americans
   d. America protested through series of notes
   e. Unwilling to risk war, Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan resigned (June 1915)

4. Arabic Pledge

5. Mediation efforts

6. Sussex Pledge

D. The debate over preparedness
   1. Peace advocated in Congress
   2. Sinking of the Lusitania contributed to demands for a stronger army and navy
      a. National Security League organized
      b. Wilson’s war preparation plans announced
      c. Some were against preparedness
   3. The army strengthened
   4. The navy strengthened
   5. Revenue Act of 1916

E. Election of 1916
   1. Republicans nominated Charles Evans Hughes
   2. Democrats nominated Wilson again
   3. Wilson campaigned on peace and a progressive platform
   4. Hughes was ambiguous on foreign policy and behind Wilson on social issues
   5. Wilson won in close race

F. Wilson’s last efforts for peace
   1. Wilson said that America should share in laying the foundations for lasting peace
2. Germany announced its new policy of unrestricted submarine warfare
3. Wilson broke diplomatic relations with Germany
4. Wilson decided to arm U.S. merchant ships
5. The Zimmermann telegram

III. America’s entry into the war
A. Declaration of war
B. Reasons for war
C. America’s early role in the war
   1. American contributions to Allied naval strategy
      a. Convoy system
      b. Minefield across North Sea
   2. Liberty Loan Act helped finance British and French war efforts
   3. Token army of under 15,000 men under John J. Pershing sent to France
   4. Selective Service Act

IV. The home front
A. Regulation of industry and the economy
   1. Lever Food and Fuel Control Act of 1917
   2. War Industries Board
      a. Most important of all mobilization agencies
      b. Under direction of Bernard Baruch, directed almost all of America’s economy
B. A new labor force
   1. African Americans
      a. The Great Migration
      b. Northern race riots
   2. Women
      a. Types of war work
      b. Effects temporary
   3. Organized labor
C. Mobilizing public opinion—the Committee on Public Information
1. Headed by George Creel

D. Civil liberties

1. Public opinion, aroused to promote war, turned to "Americanism" and witch-hunting

2. Espionage and Sedition Acts

   a. More than 1,000 convictions

   b. In Schenck v. United States and Abrams v. United States, Supreme Court upheld acts

V. America in the war

A. Until 1918, American troops played only a token role

B. The "race for France"

1. By November 1918, over 2 million men in Europe

2. Allied victories kept Germans out of France

3. Second Battle of the Marne (July 15)

4. By November, Germany was retreating all along the front

C. The Bolsheviks and intervention in Russia

D. Wilson’s plan for peace

1. The Fourteen Points

   a. Open diplomacy

   b. Freedom of the seas

   c. Removal of trade barriers

   d. Reduction of armaments

   e. Impartial adjustment of colonial claims

   f. Evacuation of occupied lands

   g. National self-determination

   h. Polish access to the sea

   i. A League of Nations

2. Allies accepted Fourteen Points as basis for peace but demanded reparations for war damages

3. Armistice signed on November 11, 1918

VI. The fight for peace at home and abroad

A. Wilson’s domestic strength was declining
1. The unraveling of his progressive coalition

2. Democrats lose in the elections of 1918

3. Wilson fails to invite any prominent Republicans to assist in the negotiations

B. The negotiations in Paris

C. The League of Nations
   1. For Wilson, the most important point
   2. Article X pledged members to consult on military and economic sanctions against aggressors
   3. Organization of the League

D. Territory and reparations
   1. France pushed for several harsh measures against Germany
      a. Territorial concessions
      b. Reparations
   2. Problems with Wilson’s principle of national self-determination
   3. Methods for resolving issues
      a. Use of committees of experts
      b. Use of plebiscites
   4. The issue of reparations
      a. France wanted to use demands for reparations to cripple Germany
      b. Wilson agreed to clause where Germany accepted responsibility for war and thus for its costs

VII. Wilson’s fight for the treaty

A. Opposition in Senate
   1. The “irreconcilables”
   2. The “reservationists”

B. Henry Cabot Lodge began his attack on the treaty

C. Wilson took his case to the American people
   1. Delivered thirty-two addresses in twenty-two days
   2. Suffered stroke on October 2
   3. Refused to compromise on treaty

D. The Senate vote on the Versailles Treaty
1. On the treaty with reservations, Wilsonians and irreconcilables combined to defeat ratification

2. On the treaty without reservations, reservationists and irreconcilables combined to defeat ratification

E. The official end of the war by joint resolution of Congress

VIII. Lurching from war to peace

A. The Spanish flu

B. Economic transition

1. Labor unrest
   a. In 1919, 4 million workers on strike
   b. Strike at U.S. Steel
   c. Boston police strike

C. Racial friction

1. The Red Summer of 1919

2. Twenty-five race riots, with many deaths and injuries

D. The Red Scare

1. Fear of a social revolution (like Russia’s)

2. Most violence was the work of the lunatic fringe, but many Americans saw it all as Bolshevism

3. Role of A. Mitchell Palmer, attorney general, in promoting the Red Scare

4. The Red Scare began to evaporate by the summer of 1920