

Essay Question #5

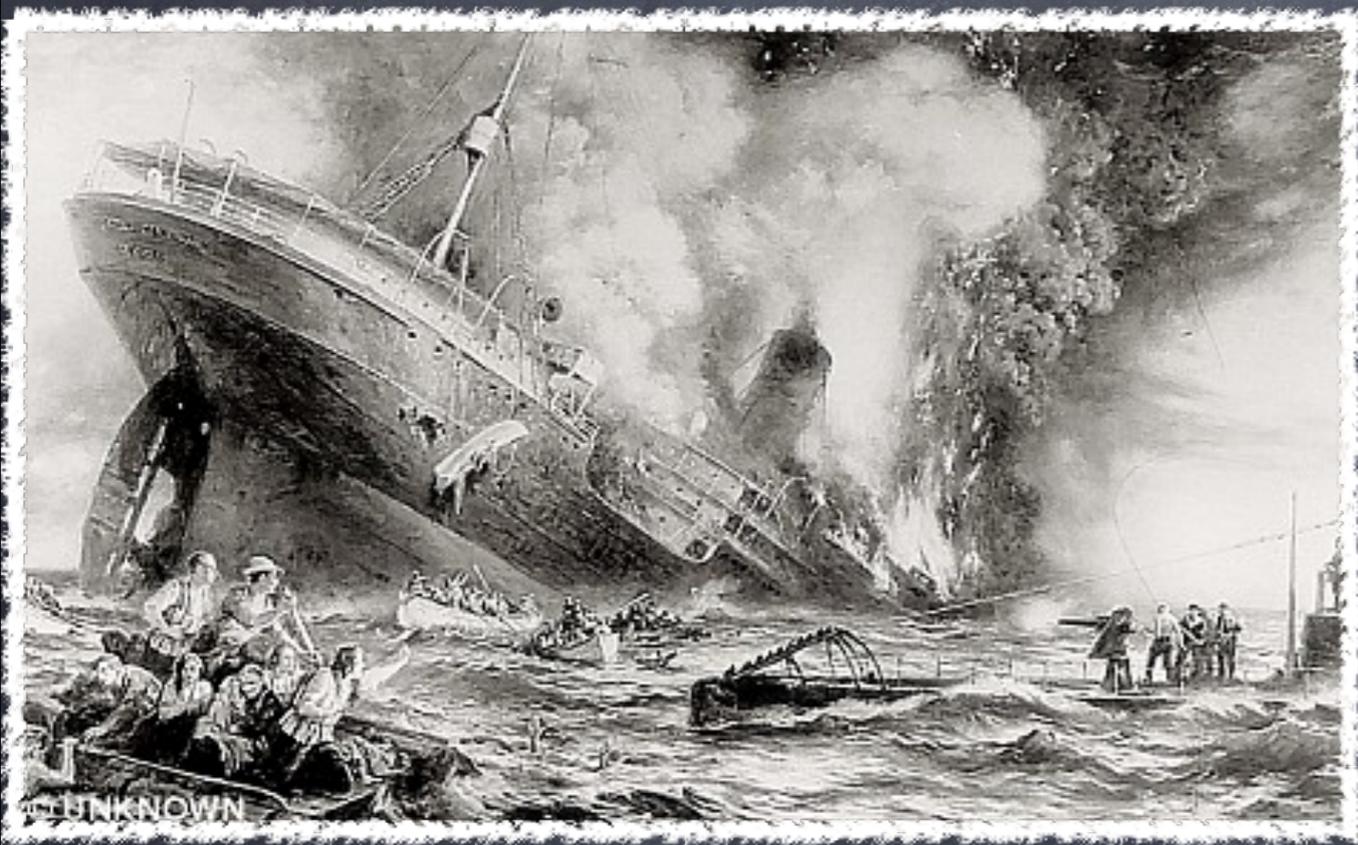
"Woodrow Wilson's refusal to compromise was chiefly responsible for the defeat of the Treaty of Versailles."

Assess the validity of this statement.

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From 1914 to 1917, Woodrow Wilson observed a strict neutrality in the Great War but the activities of German U-boats forced his hand especially with the sinking of the 'Lusitania' in 1915 which killed 128 American citizens. On April 6th 1917, America entered the war as an "associated power" rather than as an ally of France and Britain.

Ironically, Woodrow Wilson had won the 1916 national election on the slogan "He kept us out of war".



"All the News That's
Fit to Print."

The New York Times.

EXTRA
8:30 A. M.

VOL. LXXIV., NO. 5585. NEW YORK, SATURDAY, MAY 8, 1918.—TWENTY-FOUR PAGES. ONE CENT.

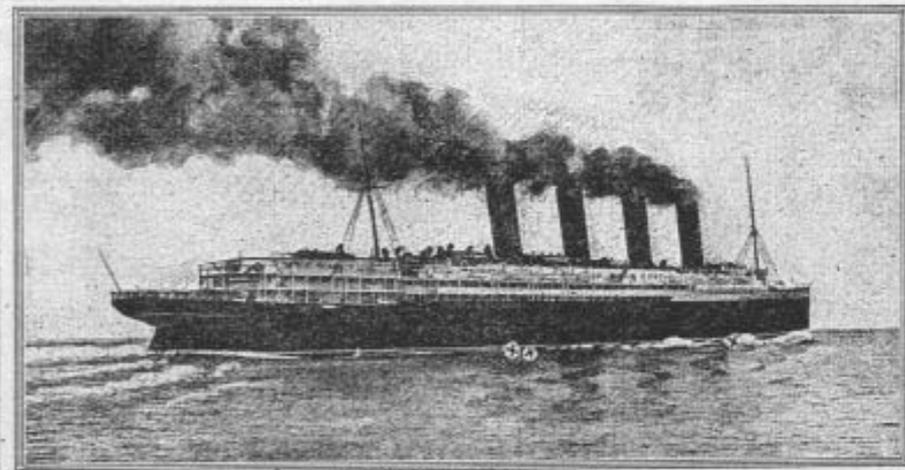
LUSITANIA SUNK BY A SUBMARINE, PROBABLY 1,260 DEAD; TWICE TORPEDOED OFF IRISH COAST; SINKS IN 15 MINUTES; CAPT. TURNER SAVED, FROHMAN AND VANDERBILT MISSING; WASHINGTON BELIEVES THAT A GRAVE CRISIS IS AT HAND

SHOCKS THE PRESIDENT
Washington Deeply Stunned by the Loss of American Lives.

BULLETINS AT WHITE HOUSE
White House Then Quietly, but is Silent on the Nation's Course.

SENATE OF CONGRESS CALL
Loss of Lusitania Revivifies First Step of Our First Warning to Germany.

CAPITAL FULL OF GUMMERS
Reports That Lines Will be Broken Within Hours Before Return Home.



The Lost Cunard Steamship Lusitania
X Where the First Torpedo Struck. — Y Where the Second Torpedo Struck.

SOME DEAD TAKEN ASHORE
Several Hundred Survivors at Queenstown and Kinsale.

STEWARDS TELL OF HORRORS
One Torpedo Crashes Into the Divided Liner's Bow, Another Into the Engine Room.

SHIP LISTS GIER TO FISH
Matters It Impossible to Load Many Boxes, the Passengers Must Have Gone Down.

ATTACKED IN BROAD DAY
Passengers at Queenstown Had Been Given by Germans to Have the Ship Sunk.

Only 659 Were Saved, Few Cabin Passengers
QUEENSTOWN, Sept. 8th, May 8, 4:28 A. M. Survivors of the Lusitania who were rescued here are estimated to be about 659. Those who were rescued at Kinsale are about 100.

UNKNOWN

During the peace talks at Versailles, Woodrow Wilson presented a moderate voice. He had no doubts that Germany should be punished, but he wanted those in power punished - not the people. On January 1918, Woodrow Wilson had issued his 'Fourteen Points' as a basis for peace. He also had an idea for a League of Nations to maintain world peace. In international affairs, Woodrow Wilson proved somewhat naïve. He wanted to place the trust for future world peace in the hands of the League of Nations, yet America refused to join it. By refusing to join the League, the American political structure had seriously weakened the forerunner of the United Nations. Woodrow Wilson spent time after 1919 criss-crossing America trying to 'sell' the idea of the League. On September 26th 1919, he collapsed and his political career ended suddenly. He was an invalid for the rest of his life and died in 1924.

Woodrow Wilson was an idealist whose plan for a League was permanently weakened by America's refusal to join it. His Fourteen Points were fine on paper but no nation was willing to substantially support them. As a Democrat, he had to deal with a Senate that had a Republican majority in it after the end of the war - and party loyalty meant that his ideas for a world that would be peaceful would be killed off at a political level.