

JE KINDLE-NOTITIES VOOR:

Colonel House: A Biography of Woodrow Wilson's Silent Partner

door Charles E. Neu

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34 Highlights

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 1318

> After over a decade of waiting for “the man and the opportunity,” House had, at long last, found a presidential candidate he believed he could influence and who also seemed likely to win the Democratic nomination.20 At the end of their first meeting, both men simultaneously suggested a second, and on the evening of November 29, House and Wilson dined together at the Gotham Hotel.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 1330

> Whatever embellishments House later added to his memories of these early encounters with Wilson, the two men were unquestionably strongly drawn to one another. In late 1911, however, they had little time for further conversations; on December 9 House left New York for Texas. Two days before his departure he arranged a dinner with Wilson at the Gotham, where Houston discussed economic issues, particularly the tariff and currency reform. Reflecting on the evening, Houston concluded that “Wilson is the straightest thinking man in public life, and can say what he thinks better than any other man.”23 Prior to his departure, House continued to play a useful if minor role in the Wilson campaign. He urged Wilson to abandon his opposition to the plan of Senator Nelson W. Aldrich (Republican, Rhode Island), for a centralized banking system and not to take a position on any specific measure, explaining to William Garrett Brown, an editorial writer for Harper’s Weekly, that Wilson was sound on financial issues and once in office would give them the highest priority.24 At the urging of McCombs, House also continued to, as he put it, “nurse Bryan.” In late November, Bryan had left for Jamaica, leaving House with the task of sending him newspaper clippings on the campaign. All the information that House forwarded emphasized the opposition of newspaper mogul William Randolph Hearst and Wall Street to Wilson’s presidential ambitions.25 By early December, House felt that he had “the situation well in hand at this end.” “I have been able,” he confided to his Texas farm manager, “to do him [Wilson] considerable service and he seems to appreciate it.”26

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 1547

> Like many domestic reformers, House became a “cosmopolitan progressive,” part of the movement, as one historian notes, “of politics and ideas throughout the North Atlantic world that trade and capitalism had tied together.” He traveled to England and the continent of Europe, observing the ways in which the various governments confronted urban-industrial problems. House was particularly fascinated by developments in England, where the Liberal Party that came to power in late 1905 pledged to enact a program of advanced social

> legislation. Old age pensions came in 1908, and medical insurance for most wage earners and unemployment insurance for some in 1911. And House followed closely the extraordinary measures of Chancellor of the Exchequer David Lloyd George to modernize the British tax structure.2

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 1577

> At the end of March, House left Austin for New York, traveling via St. Louis so that he could confer with Houston about revisions to Philip Dru, named for its hero and principal character. Although Houston agreed with House's views and thought the book was "economically sound," he still wanted a serious work rather than a novel filled with romance, and urged House to deemphasize the role of Philip Dru and to make the revolution that Dru called for in this futuristic work "bloodless." Displeased with his suggestions, House decided, when he reached New York, to seek the advice of Harry P. Steger, the literary adviser of Doubleday, Page, and Company. Houston concurred, urging House to "get somebody that has much more aptitude as a novelist and as a popular writer than you or I have, to give the document the finishing touches."8

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 1591

> After returning from Europe, House continued to follow the progress of his manuscript, but, absorbed in the Wilson campaign, he had no taste for further revisions, admitting to Houston that "it is not what it should be but I had no time to do it better."11 Despite his other commitments, House rushed the manuscript through the press. On September 26 he made final revisions and mailed the completed text to the publisher. On October 27 he reviewed advertising with Steger and on October 31 received fifteen copies of Philip Dru: Administrator, A Story of Tomorrow, 1920–1935.12 Like most of the political, utopian novels that emerged in the decade and a half before the outbreak of World War I, Philip Dru: Administrator was a crudely written effort. Filled with clichés and wooden characters, it portrayed a dull, static utopia, one that emerged out of the violence that followed after social conditions had become intolerable. Utopian novels of the period offered varied visions of the future, but all contained a young hero who arose from obscurity to vanquish a great enemy. This "Young Knight" was idealistic and prophetic, and usually had at his side a rich young woman, a spiritual guide willing to carry out demeaning assignments. Both dedicated their lives to the overthrow of a political boss and to the cleansing of society. Once sweeping reforms were implemented, the young hero relinquished his dictatorial power and restored free elections.13 Aside from expressing House's ideas, Philip Dru: Administrator also served as a means of expressing his anxieties about the problems of industrial society. It revealed his yearnings for efficiency and control, and his belief that inspired leadership could solve the nation's problems. His utopia sought to allay fears about old age, death, aggression, and class conflict, and to portray a future filled with comfort and reconciliation.14 The novel begins a little ahead in the

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Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 1622

> Although Dru has no desire to kill others, he has always wanted to be a soldier, for within him lurked a "lust for action and battle." Physically he is a "lithe young Kentuckian," a man of "medium height, slender but toughly knit, and with a strong, but homely face." His eyes are "bright and hard," his voice "tense and vibrant," like a "deep-toned bell." Dru combines astonishing intellectual powers with remarkable discipline and self-control. Far-sighted, compassionate, ever-vigilant, with a "remarkable insight into character," Dru is a flawless leader, totally dedicated to the welfare of the nation.16

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 1647

> Writing in the New York Times, Walter Lippmann, at the beginning of his journalistic career, described Philip Dru as “didactic,” and claimed that “the author was quite incapable of producing a character or sustaining a plot.” “Now, if the author,” Lippmann continued, “is really a man of affairs, this is an extraordinarily interesting book. It shows how utterly juvenile a great man can be. If he is really an ‘insider,’ then we who are on the outside have very little to learn. If he is really an example of the far-seeing public man, then, in all sincerity, I say, God help this sunny land. The imagination is that of a romantic boy of 14 who dreams of what he would do if he had supreme power and nobody objected. But if Philip Dru is a projection of an anonymous great man, the only adequate comment is that of the girl whom Dru marries: ‘How you do enthuse one, Philip.’”

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 1912

> In Philip Dru House had expressed his concern with the spiritual regeneration of the nation and his belief that inspired leadership could solve the nation’s problems. Now he found in Wilson a leader who embodied his moral values and who could move the American people toward this larger goal. Thus House wanted the dominant theme in the president’s public addresses to be that the “strong should help the weak, that the fortunate should aid the unfortunate, and that business should be conducted upon a higher and more humane plane.” On February 13, when Wilson read to House his inaugural address, House thought it a “masterpiece of its kind. It is off the beaten track and is full of spirituality.” At the close of the month, defending Wilson at a dinner with skeptical financial leaders, House claimed that he was a leader of exceptional moral and physical courage, one who sought “to raise the moral stamina of the Nation.”42

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 2140

> On his first trip abroad as the president’s emissary, the vagueness of House’s thoughts on international affairs, his misrepresentation of Wilson’s position on Mexico, and his inability to follow through on his ideas, were all ominous portents for the future.40

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 2149

> Most Americans now realized that only the federal government could deal with the problems of a continental nation.1 Or, as Wilson declared in his inaugural address, the nation’s mighty industrial achievements had come at a high human cost. The federal government, he promised, would now, under his leadership, “be put at the service of humanity, in safeguarding the health of the nation, the health of its men and its women and its children, as well as their rights in the struggle for existence.”2

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 2154

> Soon after taking office, however, Wilson had to deal with a bitter controversy over race relations. Southern Democrats, who were in a majority in the cabinet and now in control of Congress, moved toward the segregation of African Americans in federal bureaus and agencies. Although the president had reached out to them during the campaign, he now allowed Burleson and McAdoo, who were in charge of the departments with the most black employees, to begin to segregate their workers and to remove black political appointees in the South. The

segregation of federal departments brought strong protests from some northern Democrats, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the reformer Oswald Garrison Villard, the publisher of The Nation and the New York Evening Post. These protests, however, were ineffective, and during the Wilson years, as one historian remarks, civil servants were channeled “into a racially tiered system with less mobility and less money for black Washingtonians.”

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 2161

On this issue House offered no help to his friend in the White House. He had traditionally southern and paternalistic attitudes toward African Americans and in 1913 largely ignored the controversy, noting only that he and McAdoo discussed the “negro segregating question, about which Oswald Villard is raising so much foolish talk.” House believed, as Philip Dru explains in the novel, that “we have placed his [the black man’s] feet upon firm ground, and are leading him with helping hands along the road of opportunity.”3

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 2166

Nonetheless, Wilson fit House’s model of an inspired progressive national leader. He was imperious and in command of the facts, with keen political instincts and an almost mystical identification with the American people; and he realized that the time was ripe to push through an ambitious agenda of domestic legislation. The Democratic Party, out of power for sixteen years, had a large majority in the House and a narrow one in the Senate; Democrats in the Congress were determined to prove that they could govern effectively, and most supported economic, political, and regulatory reform. In the years prior to Wilson’s election, the party’s tradition of states’ rights and limited government had faded and Democrats had become what one historian terms “the party of reform.”4 Now, most Democrats were suspicious of great concentrations of wealth and power and had long supported tariff reduction, an income tax, banking and currency legislation, and stronger forms of corporate regulation. But their concept of change was limited; the New Freedom called for a restoration of conditions of equality and economic competition without the creation of a large federal government. The president’s task was to work with Democrats in Congress, agree on an agenda, and then use party discipline and patronage to push through legislation. As he noted, members of his party followed him “because they see that I am attempting only to mediate their own thoughts and purposes . . . . They are using me; I am not driving them.”5

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 2202

individual enterprise and initiative.”9 During the winter of 1912–1913, House followed closely the currents of domestic reform. He strongly supported tariff reduction, congratulating the president on his tariff address to the Congress and urging him to push the Underwood Bill swiftly through the House and Senate.10 House was far more concerned, however, about banking and currency legislation, talking with Wilson even before the November election and, after his triumph, sifting through proposals about the path to be taken. He conferred with prominent bankers, especially Paul Warburg, a partner in the investment firm of Kuhn, Loeb & Company; with Samuel Untermeyer, a New York lawyer who had been special counsel for the Pujo Committee (a House committee that probed the so-called money trust formed by Arsène Pujo of Louisiana); and with Democratic leaders in the House and Senate. By the end of November 1912, House decided that a powerful central bank largely under the control of bankers and businessmen provided the best solution.11 House soon realized, however, that bankers could not be left in control of the new Federal Reserve Board, and that the president

would have to accept a more decentralized system.12 In meetings with New York bankers he defended the president's concessions to progressive Democrats, but on May 11, in his last meeting with Wilson before departing for Europe, he remained critical of Bryan. House believed that the government should "keep out of the banking business."13

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 2233

On December 23 Wilson signed the bill, one which struck a delicate balance between private management and public supervision and which turned out to be the most enduring legislative achievement of his presidency. House was lavish in his praise, telegraphing the president that he had "carried to a successful conclusion the greatest measure of beneficent legislation that has been enacted during our generation and I need not tell you how happy I am to-day."18 But House's role in this legislative drama, if measured by the standard set in Philip Dru: Administrator, had been disappointing. He had sided with conservative bankers, not with progressive reformers, and had therefore lagged behind the president and the more far-sighted members of his own party. Or perhaps, when writing his novel of the future, he had not carefully thought out his positions. In the first year of the New Freedom, House had emerged as a timid reformer.19

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 2342

In the meanwhile, throughout 1913 the bloody civil war in Mexico continued. Despite Wilson's and Bryan's efforts, Huerta desperately clung to power. For a time the United States pursued a policy of watchful waiting, but by late October Wilson contemplated more forceful measures, such as recognizing the Constitutionalists as belligerents so that they could obtain arms and ammunition, and possibly blocking Mexico's ports, cutting off revenues to Huerta's government. House encouraged Wilson's belligerency, praising him because "he was not only unafraid, but he did not look upon war in the same spirit as our Secretary of State, and he was not a man to be trifled with."

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 2538

House continued to formulate his foreign policy ambitions. In early July 1913, during his stay in London, House had talked with British Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey, seeking to lay the groundwork for a future understanding between England and Germany. House's conversations with Grey were vague, but after his return to the United States in mid-July he began preparations for another trip to Europe. He cultivated German Ambassador Johann von Bernstorff and Austro-Hungarian Ambassador Constantin Dumba, and urged the new American ambassador to Germany, James W. Gerard, to "do something more than walk through the part."29 House also drew closer to Walter Hines Page, the American ambassador to London, whose cooperation was essential if he was to form a special relationship with British leaders. House listened to Page's complaints about Bryan and the State Department, encouraged the president to read Page's long letters, and shared with Page his plans for a grand disarmament scheme in Europe and "a sympathetic alliance between the two great English speaking countries."30 House's grandiose vision excited Page, who believed that "the English speaking fold must rule the world." "You have," he wrote House in early January 1914, "set my imagination on fire." Page helped House with housing in London, arranged for Loulie to be presented at Court, and prepared the way with British leaders for his next European mission. It was an odd partnership—Page, loud and assertive; House, quiet and unobtrusive—but in 1913 and 1914 the two seemed to share similar goals and joined together to reshape the international system.31 In early 1914, House accelerated his preparations

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Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 2848

> After landing in Boston, House drove to Prides Crossing on the North Shore, where he planned to spend the rest of the summer. The day after his arrival, however, the Austrian declaration of war against Serbia led House to write Wilson a long letter, defending his accomplishments in Europe and claiming that, if war came, he would be in a unique position to undertake another mission to Europe.50 House's self-serving letter underscored both the strengths and weaknesses of his approach to the crisis in Europe. As early as 1913 he had, alone among Wilson's advisers, recognized the gathering storm clouds and through his two trips in 1913 and 1914 had sought to learn about the rivalries among the great powers, gotten to know their leaders, and tried to figure out how he and Wilson might ease the tension between Germany and Great Britain. But his preparations for high-level diplomacy had been careless, and during his "great adventure" he overemphasized person-to-person contacts, exaggerated his accomplishments, and engaged in wishful thinking rather than analyze the larger historical forces that shaped the behavior of British and German leaders. By late July 1914, on the eve of war, House had only begun his education in European politics and diplomacy.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 3180

> With the outbreak of war, Foreign Secretary Grey had become, his biographer writes, "a symbol of the nation's probity and purpose." Convinced of the importance of American friendship, Grey patiently negotiated with Washington over the Declaration of London and resisted French and Russian demands for a more aggressive use of British naval power to sever Germany's supply lines. So long as Grey's position in the cabinet remained strong and the Asquith government retained the confidence of the country, the British government was sensitive to the needs of the American economy.

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 3643

> Before arriving in Berlin, House had decided that, rather than push for peace, he needed to build trust between German and American leaders and find some formula to break the Anglo-German impasse. He reassured Zimmermann that he "had no intention of pushing peace negotiations upon anyone," while the undersecretary confirmed the fact that "it was impossible for them [Germany] to make any peace overtures." House believed that he would have to wait for a decisive military victory by one side or another that would break the stalemate and open the door to peace.43 During

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Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 3984

> The sinking of the Lusitania and the ensuing crisis with Germany had dramatically increased anti-war sentiment in the United States and brought widespread appeals for some sort of reasonable settlement. A few days after his return from England, House sensed the shift of opinion. An old Texas friend confirmed his judgment, writing that he was certain that "there is an overwhelming desire for peace, not perhaps at any price, but at most prices, which is altogether unprecedented in the history of this country." He warned that Wilson could win reelection in 1916 only with "the whole-hearted support of Mr. Bryan."13 As Wilson and House pondered the U-boat impasse with Germany, they received discouraging news about the course of the war in Europe. Ambassador Gerard believed that Germany was winning the war, an American diplomat in France noted the general "feeling of pessimism" in Paris, and Ambassador Page wrote of the "distinct wave of depression" in England. He found

> London a sad and lonely place, as people left the city and as the wounded returned from the Western Front.14 Even some of House's British friends seemed discouraged. Lord Loreburn saw no hope for peace, despite the growing realization "that the war must end or Western Civilization may be submerged." Foreign Secretary Grey, back at work by the middle of July, did not believe the belligerents could agree on terms. He missed House's "presence in London," and already seemed nostalgic about his vacation in Northumberland. He found "the indifference of Nature to the war" reassuring, and on his return to the burdens of office in London felt as he imagined "wounded or invalided soldiers feel when the time comes for them to return to the trenches."15 In Berlin, Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg

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Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 4029

> In June, Wilson had suggested that House confer with Secretary of State Lansing, but it was not until July 24 that Lansing and his wife arrived in Manchester for a two-day stay. The new secretary of state, fifty years old, was a compact, handsome man, formal in his dress and manners, with a carefully trimmed grey mustache. Lansing had married the daughter of John W. Foster, a distinguished American diplomat who had served as President Benjamin Harrison's secretary of state. Helped by his father-in-law's connections, he had turned to the practice of international law, spending more and more time in Washington and serving on more international arbitration cases than any other American lawyer. In April 1914, he had been an obvious choice to replace John Bassett Moore as counselor of the State Department.21 Given Bryan's frequent absences, Lansing,

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Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 4202

> The sinking of the Lusitania and the ensuing crisis in German-American relations had given new life to the preparedness movement. At the end of 1914, Wilson had dismissed advocates of preparedness, including House, but by late May of 1915, impressed with the growing demand for greater military strength, the president called for a larger navy. Later in the summer he endorsed the War Department's training program at Plattsburg, New York, and elsewhere, and directed Secretary of the Navy Daniels and Secretary of War Garrison to work out plans for increases in both services. By early September, Wilson confirmed that when Congress convened in December, he would lead the fight for military expansion. He did not intend to advocate massive preparations for war; however, he would pursue "reasonable" preparedness, a program that was "very self-restrained and judicial."50 Despite Wilson's shift, House remained concerned about the weaknesses of the nation's military, and on August 7 he met with General Leonard Wood. The next day he conveyed Wood's thoughts to the president, urging him immediately to increase the size of the army, spread munitions factories across the country, begin a military training program for all young men, and send Wood to Europe to study the way the Allies conducted the war. "New conditions have arisen," House warned, "that seem to me to make it the part of wisdom to heed." The president's counselor also worried about "a possible outbreak" in the United States, one in which German agents would attempt "to blow up waterworks, electric light and gas plants, subways and bridges in cities like New York." Wilson shared this concern but, conscious of the powerful anti-war sentiment among many Americans, planned to move cautiously toward increases in the nation's military strength.51

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 4337

> The third day of his stay, October 15, Ambassador Spring-Rice handed House a letter from Foreign Secretary Grey assessing the prospects for peace. While Grey was careful to convey only his personal impressions to

House—a more formal response would require consultation with the cabinet and Allies—he doubted that either side was ready for a peace proposal based on the elimination of militarism and navalism and a return to the status quo ante bellum. Britain would fight on, he asserted, until Belgium was restored, Alsace and Lorraine were returned to France, and Russia received an outlet to the sea. Grey was, however, hopeful that after the war the nations of the world would "band together to treat the maker of war as an enemy of the human race." Would the United States, he asked, support a postwar league of nations?20 Both Wilson and House were excited by the foreign secretary's ambiguous letter, concluding that "it gave much ground for hope." Wilson quickly assented to House's suggestion that he send his scheme for American intervention to Grey. That afternoon he returned to New York, where he dictated a letter and mailed it to the president for his approval. In his draft House outlined his plan for an Allied-approved American mediation effort that would either bring the war to an end or pave the way for American intervention. At a time selected by the Allies, House would go to London and, after reaching an understanding with British leaders, move on to Berlin, where he would try to convince the German government to accept the American peace proposal (concealing his agreement with the Allies). If Germany acquiesced, the war would end on favorable terms. "If the Central Powers were still obdurate, it would [Wilson added probably here] be necessary for us to join the Allies and force the issue."21 House's

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Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 4428

Many Republicans were dissatisfied with the president's program; they favored larger increases in the army and universal military training. The strongest reaction to the president's speech, however, came from reformers, who were concerned about economic and social justice at home and who denounced any attempt to turn the United States into a heavily armed nation. By mid-November Democrats from the South and West had rallied behind the House majority leader, Claude Kitchin of North Carolina; they were convinced that the Unites States had no stake in the quarrels of Europe and were passionately opposed to even the president's modest measures. Bryan led the attack, denouncing Wilson's program as "not only a menace to our peace and safety, but a challenge to the spirit of Christianity which teaches us to influence others by example rather than by exciting fear."34 On December 7, the day after Congress convened, Wilson delivered his third annual message, once again insisting that it was "absolutely imperative now" to expand the army and navy. The president sought to rally his forces in the Congress, but it was clear that Wilson's program faced massive opposition within his own party.35 While House approved the president's advocacy of preparedness, his mind was now jumping ahead to the 1916 election. He urged Wilson to make "Americanism" the main theme of the campaign, worried about Bryan's attitude toward the administration, and fretted over the "lagging" organizational efforts of the Democratic National Committee. The political situation, he noted in early December, "is not encouraging because it lacks a certain cohesiveness, that is always dangerous."

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 4638

House found Undersecretary of State Zimmermann more reasonable than the chancellor and foreign secretary. Zimmermann, House declared, was "one of the statesmen who might lead his country into better paths," and House urged him to join idealistic leaders in America, France, and Great Britain to move civilization forward. It was "the most earnest talk" he had made to any German official.24 He hoped for support not from the powers that were, but from those that might be. On the evening of January 29, House left Berlin by train for Switzerland "after four strenuous and not altogether happy days." He had made no progress in his quest for peace but wrote Auchincloss that he was "having an extraordinarily interesting and valuable visit to Berlin." He knew that "these are fateful days."25 Once back in Paris, on February 1, House

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Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 4875

> Carranza's triumph, however, was incomplete; the first chief controlled little more than half of the country.9 In early 1916, Villa began to retaliate, creating incidents along the border that would inflame American Mexican relations and reveal Carranza's subservience to the Colossus of the North. On March 9 his troops rode into the American town of Columbus, looting stores and burning houses. Yielding to the widespread outrage among Americans, Wilson felt he had no choice but to send a military expedition into Mexico in pursuit of Villa, and on March 15 a force of 4,000 American troops, under the command of General John J. Pershing, crossed the border. The president did not want war with Mexico; he hoped that an American expeditionary force could defeat Villa and resolve the crisis.10 As the Punitive Expedition—as it was called—moved deep into northern Mexico in search of Villa's guerrilla bands, tension mounted with Carranza, who had not formally approved the entry of American troops. Throughout Mexico resentment toward the United States grew; Villa became the symbol of national resistance against foreign invaders.11

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 4890

> In mid-March, after news of the Columbus raid reached him, House had urged Wilson to take "positive action" and send Pershing into Mexico.13 As Pershing's forces moved south and as tension mounted, House was impressed with "the hopelessness of that situation [in Mexico]," but also grew impatient with the lack of a solution, advising the president at the end of May to use "a firm hand and firm tone with Mexico." He seemed resigned that all of Wilson's efforts would end in war. But as the crisis over the Carrizal incident eased and as he noticed the strong anti-war sentiment in the nation, House swung the other way, praising Wilson for sensing "the feeling of the country concerning Mexico. The people do not want war with Mexico. They do not want war with anybody, but least of all a country like that." House seemed uncertain how to deal with revolutionary chaos in Mexico; for him it was an unwelcome distraction from the war in Europe.14 In the early weeks of March, House was optimistic about the prospects for peace and felt that, with the exception of the Mexican crisis, "everything has quieted down since my return." He "eagerly await[ed] the summons" from British leaders and predicted that "great things will happen during the spring and summer."15 Whatever

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Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 5752

> On March 1, four days after this message, Secretary of State Lansing released a telegram from German Foreign Secretary Zimmermann to the German minister in Mexico City, offering Carranza's government, in the event of war, an alliance in which Mexico would receive territory it had lost to the United States. Zimmermann's telegram, which had been handed by Foreign Secretary Balfour to Ambassador Page on the evening of February 24 (the British had broken the German diplomatic code), shocked and angered the president, who now lost all faith in the rulers of Germany. House seemed less surprised over this "astounding dispatch," since he had concluded that if war came, Germany had "laid plans to stir up all the trouble they could." But the American public, like the president, was stunned by the news of Germany's machinations; for the first time editorial writers across the nation called for war with Germany.28

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 5895

> Wilson's decision had been slow and full of anguish, for he sensed the terrible cost of American participation, both at home and abroad. Each of his diplomatic victories, however, since August 1914 had committed the

> United States more deeply, and he concluded in late March 1917 that only a declaration of war could bind the nation together and protect its position as a great power. He had lost all confidence in the militarists who controlled the German government and had concluded that America's entry into the war would bring an early end to the conflict and effect, under his leadership, a just peace and the transformation of the international community. As one historian remarks, Wilson's dream of peace "finally led him paradoxically to a decision for war." House, who had often disagreed with Wilson during the long period of American neutrality, could stand firm behind his inspired leadership. The two men had been partners in power for slightly over four years; now their sweeping aspirations for America's role in world affairs would test both their friendship and their political and diplomatic skills.51

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 7116

> As the summer progressed the pressure on the president grew. In early July, after receiving a copy of the Phillimore Report, he concluded that the time had come to devise a more detailed plan for a postwar league. On July 8 he asked his counselor to undertake this task, in effect to rewrite the Phillimore Report along the lines of his letter to Cecil. Wiseman reported that Wilson told him "quite frankly that he was not able to give much thought to the matter now."23 On July 13, when David Hunter Miller, the Inquiry's (the group of experts led by House to study the nature of the peace settlement) specialist on international law, arrived from Washington, House set to work. For the next two days the two men worked on a draft for what they termed the "covenant" of the League of Nations. On July 15, House rewrote some sections of the draft and wrote a letter to the president explaining each part of the document. Anticipating his approval, he urged him "to take some means of giving it to the world and as quickly as possible in order to let thought crystallize around your plan instead of some other." House also explained that this was to be a league of great powers; "if the smaller nations are taken in the question of equal voting power is an almost insurmountable obstacle."

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 8466

> House quickly settled into a familiar routine, making Greenwood Gate his base but traveling often to London, mingling with the nation's social and political elite. He "took tea" with the novelist H. G. Wells; enjoyed dinner at the Reform Club, where he met "the editors and writers of liberal opinion in England"; and especially treasured a visit to Grey's "fishing lodge" near Winchester, "a primitive place, nothing more than a 'shack' but covered with roses and surrounded by beautiful lime trees." There House and the former foreign secretary "had many long and intimate talks." He hoped to return to the United States around the middle of September.2

Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 8791

> House relished the "mad rush" of his days in England. "The strenuous life," he wrote Auchincloss, "is still going on with us." He and Loulie had dinner with the reformers Sidney and Beatrice Webb, but House agreed with only some of their socialist doctrines and found that he liked Beatrice more than her husband (while she dismissed Loulie as a "typical American society woman, eager to be in the centre of the picture, with an ugly voice and fussy egotistical intelligence"). He listened to the playwright George Bernard Shaw talk brilliantly over lunch, dined with Liberal editors at the Reform Club, and attended a garden party at Buckingham Palace, where George V reminded him of their many wartime conversations. House "was surprised at the number [of people] I knew," and felt that he was "on the inside of everything that is going on."11

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Highlight (Geel) | Locatie 10151

> In domestic affairs House was content to help implement Wilson’s vision of reform; in foreign affairs he was the most cosmopolitan of Wilson’s advisers, having traveled extensively in Western Europe in the years before the outbreak of the war. House followed great power politics closely, and during his wartime trips to Europe he tried to assess the complex currents of the struggle. He understood, earlier than most Americans, that the United States could not stand apart from events in Europe, that it must find a way to end the war and to rebuild the international