

Document A: Diary

General John Pershing led the United States military forces during World War I. In this diary entry, Pershing recounts a meeting with French General Maxime Weygand. Weygand served as the chief of staff to Marshal Ferdinand Foch, the Supreme Allied Commander during World War I.

At the table [French] General Weygand told about the visit of the German **emissaries** . . . [Foch] asked them what was the object of their visit. They replied that they had come to discuss terms of armistice. Marshal Foch made it clear that he himself was not asking for an armistice and did not care to have one. He then asked the Germans if they wished an armistice. They said that they did. The Marshal said if they wished an armistice, here were the terms upon which they might have it, and handed them the terms. General Weygand said that the members were apparently very much depressed by the **severity** of the terms. . . . A wireless message from the German Government authorizing the delegates to sign the armistice was received at about 2 a.m. on the 10th. . . . In their hurry to stop the bloodshed, the last page of the conditions was written first, on which the signatures were placed at five minutes after five a.m. on the 11th, and word was sent out immediately to the troops to stop hostilities at 11 a.m.

General Weygand said that the delegates left soon after. Just before they left, Mr. Oberndorff [of the German Foreign Ministry] stated that he would like to speak to General Weygand. . . . The German stated that he . . . wished to ask General Weygand if it would not be possible to have started in France in some of the French newspapers a little propaganda in favor of sending food to the German population. He called attention to the fact that no one wanted to let the German people starve and that it was not in the interest of France to let them do so. General Weygand replied . . . that as for the propaganda, it would be impossible to consider the matter. In the first place, he said that the German evidently had not any conception of the feeling in France toward Germany; that it was deepest rooted hatred because of the suffering and injustice which Germany had brought to France; that no paper would publish such propaganda and any paper which did would rightly be burned. The German stated that General Weygand did not fully understand the situation; that some day he would see that the fault was not entirely against the Germans.

Source: Diary of General John Pershing, November 12, 1918.

Vocabulary

emissary: a person sent as a diplomatic representative.

severity: the extent to which something is strict or harsh

Document B: Armistice (excerpt)

This is an excerpt from a note by the German representatives that appears at the end of the armistice.

Declaration of German **Plenipotentiaries**

The German Government will naturally **endeavor** with all its power to take care that the duties imposed upon it shall be carried out.

The undersigned **plenipotentiaries** recognize that in certain points regard has been paid to their suggestions. . . .

They must, however, allow no doubt to exist on the point that in particular the short time allowed for evacuation, as well as the surrender of **indispensable** means of transport, threatens to bring about a state of things which, without its being the fault of the German Government and the German people, may **render** impossible the further fulfillment of the conditions.

The undersigned **plenipotentiaries** further regard it as their duty with reference to their repeated oral and written declaration once more to point out with all possible emphasis that the carrying out of this agreement must throw the German people into **anarchy** and famine. According to the declarations which preceded the armistice, conditions were to be expected which, while completely insuring the military situation of our opponents, would have ended the sufferings of women and children who took no part in the war.

The German people, which has held its own for 50 months against a world of enemies, will, in spite of any force that may be brought to bear upon it, preserve its freedom and unity.

A people of 70,000,000 suffers but does not die.

Erzberger, Oberndorff, Winterfeldt, Vanselow

Vocabulary

plenipotentiary: a diplomat authorized to represent a government.

endeavor: try hard to do something.

indispensable: absolutely necessary

render: make

anarchy: chaos; lawlessness

Document C: *Washington Herald* Article

Revolutionists Denounce Armistice; World Goes Wild Over Allied Victory

German Baltic Forces Called out to Resist Terms of Armistice

London, Nov. 11 (8:39 p.m.) – The German revolutionary council in command of the German fleet, denouncing the armistice terms as “unjust,” particularly the continuation of the blockade, has summoned all sailors to “defend the country.” It has ordered all submarines in the Baltic to assemble immediately in the harbor Sassnitz, on the east coast of the Island of Ruegen. . . .

Dr. Solf Pleads for Mercy: Former Foreign Minister Begs Wilson to Provide Food for Starving Women and Children in Germany

Amsterdam, via London, Nov. 11. – Dr. W.S. Solf, who was German foreign minister under Prince Max’s chancellorship . . . today issued a signed appeal to President Wilson, in the name of the German people, “to use his influence with the allies to mitigate these fearful conditions” (meaning the armistice terms). Dr. Solf says: “After a blockade of Germany lasting fifty months, and still in force, armistice contents . . . make it an impossibility to provide Germany with food, and would cause the starvation of millions of German women, children and men. The enforcement of these terms would produce a feeling among the German people contrary to the reconstruction of the community of nations. The German people appeal to President Wilson to influence the allies to **mitigate** these fearful conditions. . . . Convinced of the common aims of democracy, the German government requests President Wilson to re-establish the peace principles which he has always maintained.”

“War Thus Comes To End,” And Unleashed Capital Celebrates Accordingly Estimate 350,000 Celebrators Throng Streets, With Enthusiasm Running Riot — Thrills and Scenes to Be Seen Everywhere.

Succinctly, yet with a dignity that matched perfectly the full import of the words, Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States, made the above comment yesterday afternoon following his reading of the terms of armistice that reduced the German empire to military and naval **impotency**. The streets of the Nation’s Capital last night were jammed and running over with a singing, roaring, cheering, seething carnival crowd. For fifteen hours they have been celebrating their sudden freedom from the gnawing anxiety that war alone can create.

Source: *The Washington (D.C.) Herald*, November 12, 1918, p. 1.

Vocabulary

mitigate: to make less severe

impotency: weakness

Document D: *Norwich Bulletin* Article

LONDON CELEBRATED SIGNING OF ARMISTICE

London, Nov. 11—(British Wireless Service). – The lord mayor of London, who in response to calls from the crowds, came to the front of the mansion house, said: “Citizens of London: Let us congratulate ourselves on the great news that our four years of strenuous work has now come to an end and that we see before us the result of the strenuous labor of Great Britain and her allies. Let us not forget that there is still work for every loyal and patriotic citizen in the re-construction and many other problems which must arise. I will only say now let us give three cheers for His Majesty.” To this there was great response.

At the admiralty there were calls for a speech from Sir Eric Geddes, the **First Lord**. The crowds had collected there and hastily improvised platforms were erected for the First Lord and members of the board of admiralty. Sir Eric Geddes called for three cheers for Vice Admiral Beatty (commander of the grand fleet) and these having been given with great fervor the crowds again asked for a speech, but the cheering drowned all else. The First Lord called for cheers for the **British bluejackets**.

Source: *Norwich Bulletin* (Norwich, Connecticut), November 12, 1918, p. 1.

Vocabulary

First Lord: the political head of the British navy

British bluejackets: British sailors

Document	Evidence What evidence does this document provide to answer the central historical question?	Corroboration How does this document confirm or contradict the other documents?	Limitations What are possible limitations of this document as evidence of attitudes toward the armistice?
A			
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C			
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