

Letter from Domicio da Gama, Brazilian Ambassador to the United States, to Robert Lansing, U.S. Secretary of State  
*4 June 1917*

Being a major Atlantic trading nation, Brazil found itself threatened by Germany's declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare, and on April 5, 1917, Germany sank a Brazilian ship. Having already severed diplomatic relations with Germany on April 10, here the Brazilian Ambassador describes Brazilian plans to revoke their neutrality and declare war on Germany.

Mr. Secretary of State:

The President of the republic has just instructed me to inform your Excellency's Government that he has approved the law which revokes Brazil's neutrality in the war between the United States of America and the German Empire.

The republic thus recognized the fact that one of the belligerents is a constituent portion of the American Continent and that we are bound to that belligerent by traditional friendship and the same sentiment in the defence of the vital interests of America and the accepted principles of law.

Brazil ever was and is now free from warlike ambitions, and, while it always refrained from showing any partiality in the European conflict, it could no longer stand unconcerned when the struggle involved the United States, actuated by no interest whatever but solely for the sake of international judicial order, and when Germany included us and the other neutral powers in the most violent acts of war.

While the comparative lack of reciprocity on the part of the American republics divested until now the Monroe Doctrine of its true character, by permitting of an interpretation based on the prerogatives of their sovereignty, the present events which brought Brazil even now to the side of the United States at a critical moment in the history of the world are still imparting to our foreign policy a practical shape of continental solidarity, a policy, however, that was also that of the former regime whenever any of the other sister friendly nations of the American Continent was concerned.

The republic strictly observed our political and diplomatic traditions and remained true to the liberal principles in which the nation was nurtured.

Thus understanding our duty and Brazil taking the position to which its antecedents and the conscience of a free people pointed, whatever fate the morrow may have in store for us, we shall conserve the Constitution which governs us and which has not yet been surpassed in the guarantees due to the rights, lives, and property of foreigners.

In bringing the above-stated resolution to your Excellency's knowledge, I beg you to be pleased to convey to your Government the sentiments of unalterable friendship of the Brazilian people and Government.

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