

WOODROW WILSON'S FOREIGN POLICY WITH MEXICO, 1913-1921

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty
of the College Department of St. Meinrad
Seminary in partial fulfillment of the re-
quirements for a Bachelor of Arts Degree.

Bernard A. Kokocinski

May, 1962

St. Meinrad College
St. Meinrad, Indiana

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|------|
| INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| Causes of the Mexican Revolution. | |
| The Revolution | |
| United States Attitudes Toward the Revolution | |
| Wilson Inherits the Mexican Problem | |
| Chapter | |
| I. "I WILL NOT RECOGNIZE A GOVERNMENT OF BUTCHERS." | 8 |
| Wilson's Mexican Policy During Huerta's regime | |
| Influences Which Helped Shape Wilson's Policy | |
| Wilson's Personal Agents in Mexico | |
| The British Problem | |
| Wilson Aids Villa and Carranza against Huerta | |
| Tampico and Vera Cruz Affairs | |
| A. B. C. Mediation | |
| Huerta is forced to resign. | |
| II. "A SHREWD OPPORTUNIST" VS. WILSON..... | 32 |
| Carranza Assumes Power | |
| Period of Anarchy | |
| The United States Smiles at Villa | |
| Carranza's Government Recognized - October 19, 1915 | |
| Villa Campaigns Against the United States | |
| Pershing's Expedition | |
| Germany Activity in Mexico | |
| A New Mexican Constitution | |
| III. OIL + POLITICS = TROUBLE..... | 50 |
| Article 27 of the 1917 Mexican Constitution | |
| Presidential Decrees of 1918 | |
| Carranza's Downfall | |
| Obregon Takes Power | |
| Non-Recognition of Obregon's Government | |
| Continuation of Wilson's Policy by Harding | |
| Final Tribute | |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY..... | 58 |



INTRODUCTION

One of President Woodrow Wilson's most thorny foreign relations problems concerned Mexico. The question was which of the various revolutionary governments of that country to recognize.

Relations between the United States and Mexico between 1865 and 1912 were generally good. This was especially true during the reign of Porfirio Díaz, the nominally elected dictator who ruled Mexico from 1876 to 1911. He encouraged European and American investments in capital and technical training in an effort to raise the Mexican standard of living, which, despite his efforts, remained in a state of semi-feudalism for the majority of the population. United States investments totaled over one billion dollars, half of which were in railroads. Yet, this amount does not include the investments in oil made after its discovery in 1911. This plus the 40,000 foreigners living and working in Mexico were contributing factors in the opposition to Díaz. To the Mexican creole aristocracy these seemed to constitute the threat of another Texan annexation.

The causes of the revolution, which was to rack the country for ten years, are summarized by Rippey in his book The Historic Evolution of Hispanic America as follows:

The fundamental causes of the revolution which began late in 1910 were: (1) the rapid growth of capitalism, largely under foreign control, which resulted in increasing concentration of land, monopolistic developments in trade, and rising prices for food; (2) the slow rise of a Mexican middle class; and (3) a dictatorship which encouraged foreign investments and enterprises, fostered the church and the remnants of the creole aristocracy, denied the middle class political freedom which the revolution of 1855-1857

had promised them. The immediate causes of the uprisings were: (1) the financial depression of 1907; (2) the virtual failure of crops in 1907 and 1908; (3) the bloody suppression of strikes in the Canania Copper Company of Sonora (1906) and in the Grizaba cotton mills (1907); (4) political agitation; (5) increasing fear of Yankee imperialism; and (6), possibly, the competition of foreigners for the oil lands of Mexico.¹

Perhaps the immediate occasion of the revolution which ousted Diaz in 1911 was the agitation of Francisco Madero for political freedom in Mexico. An interview was published in 1908 between James Greelman and Diaz, in which Diaz stated that his country was ready for democracy and that he was ready to step aside for any man legally elected. General Rodolfo Reyes, who was carrying on a secret campaign through Masonic lodges and Reyes clubs to supplant Diaz, now gave new emphasis to his campaign. A few months later Madero published a book, The Presidential Succession in 1910, in which he mildly criticized the Diaz government. But the political freedom was short lived, for it soon became apparent that Diaz had no intention of giving up the government. Reyes was quickly sent on a diplomatic mission to Europe and Madero was imprisoned during the electoral campaign of 1910. When Madero was released, shortly after the "re-election" of Diaz, he fled to the United States where he declared the "re-election" a fraud. In October he issued a call to revolt and a program of reform.² This move, plus the fame from his book, helped to make him the rallying figure for the intellectuals and all dissatisfied factions.

Madero was not the only rebel. Soon after Diaz's re-election other revolutionary leaders began to appear: in Chihuahua, a former cattle rus-

¹James Fred Rippey, Historical Evolution of Hispanic America (2d ed.; New York: F. S. Crofts and Company, 1941), 296.

²Ibid., 297.

tlar, Pancho Villa, began his escapades; Emiliano Zapata began raids on sugar plantations in Morelos. Up-risings seemed to be general: in Yucatan, Vera Cruz, Tabasco, Durango, Sonora, Sinaloa, Puebla, Oaxaca, and Guerrero.

Díaz could take a hint. He abdicated in 1911 setting up a regime under Francisco de la Barra which lasted until Madero was elected in November of that year. Madero's government was promptly recognized by President Taft whose chief desire was to avoid intervention.

Although Madero was now in command of the Mexican State, insurrectionists were still causing trouble and buying ammunition from the United States. Madero, in an effort to suppress the rebels, asked the United States to stop this selling. Taft, in response, had Congress pass a joint resolution whereby the president was given authority to regulate the flow of arms and munitions to any American country in which domestic violence might exist. In 1912 Congress formally gave the executive this discretionary power which was to become most significant in molding our foreign policy with Latin America under Woodrow Wilson. With this power the United States president could make or break those revolutions and governments depending on United States military supplies. Besides the insurrections, there were many other forces which opposed Madero, one of the most powerful ones being the business elements, especially the foreign ones, for whom the American Ambassador, Henry Lane Wilson, was spokesman.³

Fifteen months after Madero became president, Mexico City became the scene of a bloody coup d'état. Bernardo Reyes and Félix Díaz, nephew of Porfirio Díaz, were being held as political prisoners at Mexico City, but

³William Weber Johnson and others, Mexico (New York: Time Incorporated, 1961), 59.

were allowed visitors. From their cells they plotted an up-rising with Manuel Mondragon who visited them at the prison, and who assumed the leadership of the conspiracy. The up-rising began on February 9, 1913, when the prison was attacked by cadets of the Military Academy of Tlalpon and two regiments of Tacubaya. Díaz and Reyes were liberated, assumed leadership of these forces and staged an unsuccessful assault on the National Palace in which Reyes and many innocent people were killed. When the attack failed, the rebel forces took refuge in the citadel. For the next ten days there was a cannonading between the citadel and the National Palace in which the mile area between them suffered the bulk of the damage.

In the absence of his trusted general, Ángeles, Madero appointed Huerta to compel the rebels' surrender; instead of doing this, Huerta began to look for a way to take over the government for himself. When General Ángeles finally arrived to bombard the citadel, Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson refused to allow him to place his guns in a strategic point, on the excuse that this would cause too much noise in the Embassy.⁴ Besides this, the American ambassador used other means to undermine the Madero government. He had a secret meeting at the American embassy with representatives of Huerta and Díaz in which it was decided that Madero must resign and that Huerta would become president until the elections when Díaz was to be elected. Ambassador Wilson, who for sometime had openly shown hostility toward the Madero administration, now led a large group of the diplomatic corps to the National Palace where they demanded Madero's resignation. In the meantime, the United States stationed battleships at Vera Cruz and Tampico.

⁴James Algysius Wagner, Men of Mexico (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1943), 488.

On February 18, Huerta invited Gustavo Madero, the brother of Francisco and the virtual ruler of Mexico, out to dinner, thus giving himself the opportunity of sending General Blanquet to arrest General Angeles and the president at the palace. As soon as this was done, Huerta moved into the palace and had the rebels eliminate Gustavo. That same day, after Madero's arrest, Ambassador Wilson proudly announced to the diplomatic corps that "Mexico has been saved. From now on we shall have peace, progress and prosperity. I have known about the plans to imprison Madero for three days. It was slated to occur this morning."⁵ That evening, Wilson and member of the government and diplomatic corps applauded the conspirators and saw the ratification of the "Fact of the Citadel," an agreement between Huerta and Diaz.

Due to this turn of events, Madero and Pino Suárez, his vice-president, were forced to resign. Thus, according to constitutional procedure, the presidency passed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pedro Lascurain, who was obliged to appoint Huerta to his former post and immediately resign. In this way, Huerta became president and was later confirmed in office by an almost unanimous vote of Congress.

Although Huerta swore, before Lascurain would resign, that Madero would have safe conduct from the country, neither Madero or Suárez reached the train they were to take for Vera Cruz. On the evening of February 22, while being transferred from the National Palace by auto, they were ordered out of the car by Major Francisca Cardenas and assassinated.

Despite a Reign of Terror initiated by Huerta in an attempt to estab-

⁵Hubert Herring, A History of Latin America from the Beginnings to the Present (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), 356.

lish himself in power, there were constant and violent counter rebellions: Emiliano Zapata in the south fought for land and liberty; in Coahuila, Venustiano Carranza, described as "a shrew opportunist who had grown rich as a senator under Diaz,"⁶ held power; the colorful bandit Doroteo Arango, popularly known as Pancho Villa, roamed northern Chihuahua and Durango; and in northwestern Sonora, the opposition was lead by Álvaro Obregón.

Despite all these conditions, especially the murder of Madero, which caused a great stir in the United States newspapers, Ambassador Wilson advised Washington to forget the murders of Madero and his vice-president and to recognize Huerta's government immediately, thereby enabling a settlement of all disagreements between the two governments which Huerta promised to do upon recognition. But Taft was not willing to take this advise for two reasons: first, because the State Department planed to use this question of recognition as a tool in settling various outstanding disputes with Mexico, and second, because the murders of Madero and Suárez so shocked the American public that it was wiser to leave this problem to the new Democratic administration which would take office on March 4. On the other hand, the European governments, China, and Japan, all, in the traditional way, recognized Huerta's government de facto by the spring and summer of 1913.

Prior to 1907, it was common practice to recognize governments which gained undeniable authority over a country, without inquiry into its constitutionality or the justice of its cause. To do otherwise might be construed as "diplomatic intervention." But in the Central American regional peace structure set-up in 1907, the signatories pledged themselves not to recognize governments gaining power by revolutionary means in the treaty region until

⁶Herring, A History of Latin America, 356.

they have been sanctioned and regularized by popular election. This is often referred to as the Tobar Doctrine, after Dr. Carlos R. Tobar. Possibly for this reason the Latin American States, except for Guatemala, followed the lead of the United States and withheld recognition. This, in brief, was the situation which Wilson inherited from the Taft administration.

CHAPTER I

"I will not recognize a government of butchers."⁷

As early as March 7, there were reports to the effect that Ambassador Wilson had aided and abetted the Huerta coup d'état. Secretary of State Philander Knox during the recent coup had advised him to use "circumspection" in his dealings with Huerta. But, the fact of his failure to inform the constitutional authorities of the plot to overthrow the legal government which he admitted knowing of well in advance, and his action of bringing together Huerta and Félix Díaz in the American embassy on February 18 to persuade them to sign the "Pacto de la Ciudadela," by which the provisional government was reached, did not put him in a very good light with Woodrow Wilson and the new administration.

As soon as Woodrow Wilson took office, he was besieged from various sources to recognize the Huerta government. Not only the specialists in the State Department, who argued that Huerta had observed the constitutional requirements in assuming power, but also the American colony in Mexico City and the powerful financial interests in the United States, such as E. N. Brown, president of the National railways of Mexico, and James Speyer, of Speyer and Company, New York bankers with large interests in Mexican bonds, urged and put pressure on the Wilson administration to recognize Huerta. It was argued that previously, the United States always extended to revolution-

⁷Arthur Stanley Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 1910-1917 (1st ed.; New York: Harper, 1954), 109.

ary governments de facto recognition. Besides, Huerta's was the only government left in Mexico. But Wilson, naturally suspicious of their motives and the morality of recognizing the overthrow of constitutional self-government, refused. The insistence and actions of Ambassador Wilson did not help matters any.

Perhaps the whole tone of President Wilson's Latin American policy can be seen in two of his public statements made during the first year of his administration: "A Declaration of Policy with Regard to Latin America" of March 11 and his Mobile Address of October 27. The former was his first candid stand on the Mexican situation. References to Mexico can be clearly seen throughout it, especially if the word "Mexico" is substituted for the various Americas mentioned. This document, which proved to be extremely disappointing for the American ambassador in Mexico who saw that the "sick" Mexican situation would grow worse if the United States persisted in this new policy, reads as follows:

One of the chief objects of my administration will be to cultivate the friendship and deserve the confidence of our sister republics of Central and South America, and to promote in every way the interests which are common to the peoples of the two continents. I earnestly desire the most cordial understanding and cooperation between the peoples and leaders of America and, therefore, deem it my duty to make this brief statement.

Cooperation is possible only when supported at every turn by the orderly processes of just government based upon law, and not upon arbitrary or irregular force. We hold, as I am sure all thoughtful leaders of republican government everywhere hold, that just government rests always upon the consent of the governed, and that there can be no freedom without the order based upon law and upon the public conscience and approval. We shall look to make these principles the basis of mutual intercourse, respect and helpfulness between our sister republics and ourselves. We shall lend our influence of every kind to the realization of these in fact and practice, knowing that disorder, personal intrigues, and defiance of constitutional rights weaken and discredit government and injure none so much as the people

who are unfortunate enough to have their common life and their common affairs so tainted and disturbed. We can have no sympathy with those who seek to seize the power of government to advance their own personal interests or ambition. We are the friends of peace, but we know that there can be no lasting or stable peace in such circumstances. As friends, therefore, we shall prefer those who act in the interests of peace and honor, who protect private rights, and respect the restraints of constitutional provision. Mutual respect seems to us the indispensable foundation of friendship between individuals.

The United States has nothing to seek in Central or South America except the lasting interests of the peoples of the two continents, the security of governments intended for the people and for no special group or interest, and the development of personal and trade relationships between the two continents which shall redound to the profit and advantage of both and interfere with the rights and liberties of neither.

From these principles may be read so much of the future policy of this government as it is necessary now to forecast, and in the spirit of these principles, I may, I hope, be permitted with as much confidence as earnestness to extend to the governments of all the republics of America the hand of genuine disinterested friendship, and to pledge my own name and the honor of my colleagues to every enterprise of peace and amity that a fortunate future may disclose.⁸

What confidence the president may have had in the American ambassador to Mexico was completely lost by early April when he chose William Bayard Hale to be his observer in the Central and South American States, especially Mexico. Hale was one of the president's trusted friends, a former Episcopal clergyman, and a leading journalist of his day. Once in Mexico the theme of his reports centered on the near collapse of the Huerta regime, and the advisability of using United States military intervention to put Huerta out of office and clean up the mess. It was also largely due to his reports about the suspicious relationship between Huerta and Henry Lane Wilson that the latter was removed from his post.

⁸Samuel Flagg Bemis, The Latin American Policy of the United States (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1943), 175-76.

In June, a \$10,000,000 loan to Mexico from United States bankers was due to mature. The possibility of the government collapsing because of inability to get loans without United States recognition caused the "Big Business Interests" to submit, in early May, a plan to the president regarding the Mexican situation. The following extracts from this proposal show the complexity of the situation, especially the internal and external forces at work trying to get what they could from the situation and a possible plan of action for the United States. The proposal read, in part:

The Constitutionalsists steadfastly refuse to recognize Huerta or to treat with him. The United States Government, therefore, has a great opportunity, by acting quickly, of presenting a plan to Huerta agreeing to recognize him on condition that he call an election at an early date, October 26th being to remote, and that he guarantee a fair election in all those states of which he has control, the Constitutionalsists to do the same and to participate in the election, The Constitutionalsists, on the other hand, to agree that in consideration of this election being called and being fairly held, hostilities shall be suspended, and that they will loyally support the president who shall be chosen as a result of such election.

We do not think it necessary to insist that Huerta shall resign and some other interim president be appointed in his stead... He is the de facto president at the present time, and is a man of energy and executive ability, is in command of the army and is, better than any other person able to carry out such an agreement; and we feel certain, from our knowledge of the situation on both sides and the temper of both sides, that both the Federalists and the Constitutionalsists would welcome the friendly intervention of ... our government.... If this is not done, war will continue until the country is absolutely exhausted, banditism will grow and increase until there will be no security for human life and private property whatever.... The losses now amount to millions of dollars per day and the situation cannot much longer be sustained.

In addition to that fact foreign nations are becoming restive and are seeking to undermine the influence of the United States in Mexico. The British government has already recognized Huerta in a most marked manner by autographed letters from the King due to the efforts of Lord Cowdray... who has the largest interests in the Mexican republic. He is using his efforts to obtain a large loan in England, and we are informed that he has succeeded on condition that the

English government would recognize Huerta, which has been done. If Mexico is helped out of her troubles by British and German influence, the American prestige will be destroyed in that country and Americans and the commerce of the United States will suffer untold loss and damage. On the other hand, if Huerta's government falls as the result of the hostility of the American government or its inactivity in the present crisis, it will make us morally responsible for consequences too frightful to contemplate....

Our ambassador in Mexico is, in my opinion, the man to attempt this work. It might be found necessary to send a special envoy to treat with the Constitutionalists, while entrusting our ambassador in Mexico to treat with the Huerta government.⁹

On or about May 8, Wilson drafted a plan embodying many of these ideas. But this plan was never formally offered to Huerta's government which was becoming increasingly arrogant with European recognition. Nevertheless, this document and Wilson's failure to send it, does give us an idea of his state of mind toward Mexico at this time. The document, directed to Ambassador Wilson, went as follows:

Please represent to Huerta that our understanding was that he was to seek an early constitutional settlement of affairs in Mexico by means of a free popular election, and that our delay and hesitation about recognition has been due to the apparent doubt and uncertainty as to what his plans and purposes really were. Our sincere wish is to serve Mexico. We stand ready to assist in any way we can in a speedy and promising settlement which will bring peace and the restoration of order. The further continuation of the present state of affairs will be fatal to Mexico and is likely to disturb most dangerously all her international relations. We are ready to recognize him now on condition that all hostilities cease, that he call an election at an early date, the twenty-sixth of October now mentioned being, in our judgement, too remote, and that he absolutely pledge himself as a condition of our action in his behalf that free and fair election be secured by all proper machinery and safeguards. Upon this understanding this government will undertake the friendly

⁹Ray Stannard Baker, Woodrow Wilson, Life and Letters (8 vols. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1927-37), Vol. IV, 246-47. This statement was drawn up by Judge Haff of Kansas City, attorney for American interests in Mexico.

office of securing from the officials of the states which are now refusing to acknowledge the authority of Huerta's government an agreement to cease hostilities, maintain the status quo until the election shall have been held, and abide by arbitrary interference of any kind as we have suggested. It should be intimated to Huerta that the government of the United States is not likely to assent to any method of settlement secured by the government of Mexico making interest with European governments to lend their countenance and assistance in consideration of special advantages accorded their citizens or subjects.¹⁰

When Huerta arrogantly announced, on May 9, his intention of refusing diplomatic recognition to the American representative in Mexico, Wilson hesitated to send the above message, doubting that Huerta could be trusted to keep his word even if he did accept the terms. But this doubt was quickly resolved at a cabinet meeting in the latter part of May, and the message was definitely set aside. This occasioned the Big Interests to try another approach. On May 26, Big Business, namely, representatives of the Southern Pacific-Phelps, Dodge and Company, submitted a revised plan for settling the Mexican Civil War. They suggested only that the State Department mediate between the Constitutionalists and the provisional government for a fair and nationwide election. Finally, on June 14, the Wilson administration, in a message marked "Confidential" to Ambassador Wilson in Mexico, made its first formal declaration of policy toward Mexico. It avoided any promise of recognition, but rather, contained ideas of earlier proposed messages. It also expressed a profound distrust of the United States for the present Mexican government. The United States, it said:

is convinced that within Mexico itself there is a fundamental lack of confidence in the good faith of those in control of Mexico City and in their intention to safeguard constitutional rights and methods of action....

⁹Baker, Woodrow Wilson, Life and Letters, 248-49.

If the present provisional government of Mexico will give the government of the United States satisfactory assurances that an early election will be held, free from coercion or restraint, that Huerta will observe his original promise and not be a candidate at that election and that an absolute amnesty will follow, the government of the United States will be glad to exercise its good offices to secure a genuine armistice and an acquiescence of all parties in the program. It would be glad, also, to be instrumental in bringing about any sort of conference among the leaders of the several parties in Mexico that might promise peace and accomodation.¹¹

It is interesting to note that although President Wilson assumed that Huerta had promised not to be a candidate for president, this was not true. Yet, Wilson in future negotiations worked on this assumption.

As early as July 3, the president had suggested the possibility of recalling Ambassador Wilson to the United States due to the very unfavorable reports, mostly from Hale, which he received concerning the ambassador. In answer to the call of the president, Ambassador Wilson arrived in Washington on July 25 for consultation on the Mexican situation. On the forth of August, he was informed by Bryan that the president would accept his resignation due to their wide differences in view on the Mexican situation.

In order to avoid a tacit recognition of Huerta's government, President Wilson refused to appoint a successor to Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson. It seems that the president's main qualms about recognizing Huerta's coup d'état were that it would be a sort of encouragement of government by assassination in the Americas and the condoning of the actions of a military usurper who overthrew a constitutional and popular government by murdering its rightful rulers. As he said in a private letter, "I will not recognize a

¹¹Baker, Woodrow Wilson, Life and Letters, 254.

government of butchers."¹²

With the recall of the Mexican ambassador, the president felt the need for a personal representative in Mexico to set forth his views for a satisfactory settlement. The man chosen for the job was John Lind, a friend of Bryan, a former Congressman and governor of Minnesota, honest and sensible but lacking knowledge of the Spanish language and Mexican affairs. On August 2, he received his letter of credentials and a statement of the president's views for a settlement of the Mexican affair. Wilson urged him:

Press very earnestly upon the attention of those who are now exercising authority or wielding influence in Mexico the following considerations and advice:

The government of the United States does not feel at liberty any longer to stand inactively by while it becomes daily more and more evident that no real progress is being made towards the establishment of a government at the City of Mexico which the country will obey and respect.

The government of the United States does not stand in the same case with the other great governments of the world in respect of what is happening or what is likely to happen in Mexico. We offer our good offices, not only because of our genuine desire to play the part of a friend, but also because we are expected by the powers of the world to act as Mexico's nearest friend.

We wish to act in these circumstances in the spirit of the most earnest and disinterested friendship. It is our purpose in whatever we do or propose in this perplexing and distressing situation not only to pay the most scrupulous regard to the sovereignty and independence of Mexico - that we take as a matter of course to which we are bound by every obligation of right and honor - but also to give every possible evidence that we act in the interest of Mexico alone, and not in the interest of any person or body of persons who may have personal or property claims in Mexico which they may feel that they have the right to press. We are seeking to counsel Mexico for her own good, and in the interest of her own peace, and not for any other purpose whatever. The government of the United States would deem itself discredited if it had any selfish or ulterior purpose in transactions where the peace, happiness, and prosperity of a whole people are involved. It is acting as its friendship for Mexico, not any selfish interest, dictates.

¹²Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 109.

The present situation in Mexico is incompatible with the fulfillment of international obligations on the part of Mexico, with the civilized development of Mexico herself, and with the maintenance of tolerable political and economic conditions in Central America. It is upon no common occasion, therefore, that the United States offers her counsel and assistance. All America cries out for a settlement.

A satisfactory settlement seems to us to be conditioned on -

(a) An immediate cessation of fighting throughout Mexico, a definite solemnly entered into and scrupulously observed;

(b) Security given for an early and free election in which all will agree to take part;

(c) The consent of Gen. Huerta to bind himself not to be a candidate for election as president of the Republic at this election; and

(d) The agreement of all parties to abide by the results of the election and co-operate in the most loyal way in organizing and supporting the new administration.

The government of the United States will be glad to play any part in this settlement or in its carrying out which it can play honorably and consistently with international right. It pledges itself to recognize and in every way possible and proper to assist the administration chosen and set up in Mexico in the way and on the conditions suggested.

Taking all the existing conditions into consideration, the government of the United States can conceive of no reasons sufficient to justify those who are now attempting to shape the policy or exercise the authority of Mexico in declining the offices of friendship thus offered. Can Mexico give the civilized world a satisfactory reason for rejecting our good offices?¹³

Prior to Lind's arrival, Huerta had informed the American Chargé, Nelson O'Shaughnessy, that unless Lind was properly accredited, he would not be welcome in Mexico. For that matter no faction in Mexico asked for or wanted the kind of interference Wilson wanted to give. Huerta himself said "I will resist with arms any attempt by the United States to interfere in the affairs of Mexico."¹⁴ The resentment of the Mexican people of being

¹³The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson. Vol. II: The New Democracy, edited by Ray Stannard Baker and William E. Dodd (New York: Harper and brothers, 1927), I, 47-48.

¹⁴Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, 113.

told by Wilson who should or should not be their president was only increased by Wilson's action of sending an unofficial agent to a government which he would not recognize.

Lind arrived without incident in Mexico City on August 11, and the following day presented the president's plan to Frederico Gamboa, the Foreign Minister of the de facto government. Negotiations continued through most of August between Lind and Gamboa but to no avail. Lind promised that the United States State Department would help the Mexican government obtain a United States loan, if they accepted Wilson's proposals. But Gamboa, in reply to Lind's negotiations, repudiated the right of a United States president to determine Mexican affairs. Moreover, he stated that Huerta, under the Mexican Constitution could not succeed himself, and such a suspicion on the part of the United States was uncalled. He further rejected the United States "bribe" or "loan". Lind, when he saw that he was getting no where with Gamboa or Huerta, broke off negotiations and left for Vera Cruz.

With Lind's failure in these negotiations, Wilson, in an effort to get the British to withdraw their recognition of the Huerta government, informed Britain that he would "urge Congress to repeal the Panama tolls act" which favored United States shipping contrary to the Hay-Pauncefote treaty of 1901. Shortly thereafter, the British Ambassador in Mexico, instructed from London and leading a corps of European diplomats, asked Huerta to go along with United States demands. But, Huerta refused.

On August 27, Wilson appeared before a joint session of Congress and outlined the Lind mission and its outcome, after which he urged United States citizens to leave Mexico if possible, and using his authority (by reason of the Law of March 4, 1912) instituted a complete embargo on the exportation

of arms and munitions to either side of the Civil War. Surprisingly enough, for four or five weeks after this, there existed good relations, after a ~~far~~ fashion, between the United States and Mexico, and things began to look brighter. Huerta expressed a desire to send a confidential agent to the United States and, on September 16, announced to the Mexican Congress that he wished to turn the government over to a constitutional successor. Eight days latter the Catholic Party nominated Gamboa, whom the United States expressed readiness to support if elected. But as the election, which was set for October 26 approached, things began to look worse. It was becoming evident that Huerta intended to retain power. The final proof came on October 10, when in retaliation to criticism of his administration, he purged the Chamber of Deputies of 110 members and began a complete military dictatorship. On this same day, the new British Minister, Sir Lionel Carden,¹⁶ arrived in Mexico City, presenting his credentials the following day to Huerta at the Presidential Palace. Now, Britian was interested in Mexico mainly because her navy had recently converted from coal to oil and was practically wholly dependent on Mexico for it. This open approval by Britian shocked Wilson and forced him to take up a new plan of action with regard to Mexico and England.

While Wilson accused Huerta of personal bad faith because of his recent purge, and warned him that the United States would not approve of any election he would hold, Huerta repeatedly insisted that he was not and could not legally be a candidate or retain the presidency, even if elected. On

¹⁶Sir Lionel was the mouthpiece of Lord Cowdray, otherwise known as S. Weetman Pearson. Lord Cowdray had some of the largest oil interests in Mexico and through his agents exercised great control on the Huerta government. It is believed that the British Foreign Office allowed Cowdray to determine its Mexican policy for a time. See Link, 116.

October 23, he even assembled the whole diplomatic corps to tell them so. But, in spite of this, he was elected. This caused Wilson to send a circular note to the governments with representatives in Mexico requesting them to withhold recognition of Huerta's government.

In an address delivered before the Southern Commercial Congress at Mobile, Alabama on October 27, Wilson, under the guise of speaking on United States friendship with Latin America, really stated his policy with regards to Mexico. Some excerpts are as follows:

We must show ourselves friends by comprehending their interests whether it squares with our own interests or not....

I want to take this occasion to say that the United States will never again seek one additional foot of territory by conquest. She will devote herself to showing that she knows how to make honorable and fruitful use of the territory she has, and she must regard it as one of the duties of friendship to see that from no quarter are material interests made superior to human liberty and national opportunity.

We dare not turn from the principle that morality and not expediency is the thing that must guide us and that we never condone iniquity because it is most convenient to do so.¹⁷

On November 1, Wilson in a virtual ultimatum to Huerta and in a note to the foreign governments with representatives in Mexico, finally stated openly his determination to oust Huerta. He said that in -

...his clear judgement...it is his immediate duty to require Huerta's retirement from the Mexican government, and that the government of the United States must now proceed to employ such means as may be necessary to secure this result; that, further more, the government of the United States will not regard as binding upon the people of Mexico anything done by Huerta since his assumption of dictatorial powers, nor anything that may be done by the fraudulent legislature which he is about to convoke.¹⁸

¹⁷Public Papers of Wilson. Vol. II: New Democracy. I, 67-69.

¹⁸Baker, Woodrow Wilson, Life and Letters, 286-87.

In Wilson's original outline for this note he accused (a) the European powers of keeping Huerta in power regardless of purposes and concerns of the United States, (b) Carden of unnecessary interference when things were going right for the United States, (c) foreign countries of encouraging or allowing their citizens to help Huerta in return for concessions. This last point was strongly brought home in his Mobile Address. He, finally, wanted to ask the foreign powers to withdraw their recognition of Huerta's government. Bryan, after writing the note from Wilson's outline, gave it for polishing to Counselor John Basset Moore, who after reading it, told the president off for the imprudence expressed in this note. After some substantial changes it was sent.

In response to this note, Germany expressed a willingness to follow the United States' lead. Britain, on the other hand, was slower, and thus, was pressured by the United States. In mid-November, the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, sent his secretary, Sir William Tyrrell, to Washington for talks with Wilson and Colonel House. These centered on United States responsibility for the protection of British property in Mexico. Sir William promised that Britain would withdraw its recognition, while Wilson assured him that the United States would establish a safe government in Mexico, protect foreign property during the civil war, and teach South America to elect good men. Soon after these talks, Britain withdrew recognition of Huerta and followed the foreign policy of the United States with regards to Mexico. A possible motive for this might have been that in case of a European war, it would be better to be friends of the United States than of Huerta.

At about this same time, Wilson sent his agent, William Bayard Hale, to see Carranza at Nogales, Mexico in an effort to find out if Carranza could

really control and govern Mexico. Since October 17, Carranza had claimed control of most of the northern states and had set up a provisional government at Hermosillo, Sonora. His Constitutionals seemed to be fighting for the masses and the things Madero had stood for. Therefore, Hale proposed joint United States - Constitutionalist cooperation in a war against Huerta. He presented Wilson's promise to aid the Constitutionals, if he, Wilson, were given the power to guide "the revolution into orderly and democratic channels by obtaining Carranza's promise that the rebels would participate in new elections, provided a provisional government of elder statesmen were established."¹⁹ But Carranza made it undisputably clear that all he wanted from the United States was recognition of their belligerent status, plus the privilege of buying arms and munitions from the United States. He did not want her advice or support and would fight her if her troops entered Mexico. He also refused to compromise with the old regime and made it clear that he was after a thorough revolution in which constitutional elections would be held after he gained power. The conference broke-up on November 18, six days after it began, when Carranza demanded diplomatic recognition and refused to see Hale again.

Soon after this, on the twenty-fourth of that month, Wilson made a public announcement of "Our Purposes in Mexico" in a circular letter to the various legations and embassies in Mexico including the Mexican Foreign Office (Huerta). In this note, Wilson made his attitude toward Mexico rather plain when he said:

The purpose of the United States is solely and singly to secure peace and order in Central America by seeing to it that the processes of self-government there are not interrupted or set aside.

¹⁹Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, 121.

Usurpations like that of General Huerta menace the peace and development of America as nothing else could. They not only render the development of ordered self-government impossible; they also tend to set law entirely aside, to put the lives and fortunes of citizens and foreigners alike in constant jeopardy, to invalidate contracts and concessions in any way the usurper may devise for his own profit, and to impair both the national credit and all the foundations of business, domestic or foreign.

It is the purpose of the United States, therefore, to discredit and defeat such usurpations whenever they occur. The present policy of the government of the United States is to isolate General Huerta entirely; to cut him off from foreign sympathy and aid and from domestic credit, whether moral or material and so to force him out.

It hopes and believes that isolation will accomplish this end, and shall await the results without irritation or impatience. If General Huerta does not retire by force of circumstances, it will become the duty of the United States to use less peaceful means to put him out. It will give other governments notice in advance of each affirmative or aggressive step it has in contemplation, should it unhappily become necessary to move actively against the usurper; but no such step seems immediately necessary.

Its fixed resolve is, that no such interruptions of civil order shall be tolerated so far as it is concerned. Each conspicuous instance in which usurpations of this kind are prevented will be secured in Mexico and elsewhere upon this continent which will assure the peace of America and the untrammelled development of its economic and social relations with the rest of the world.

Beyond this fixed purpose the government of the United States will not go. It will not permit itself to seek any special or exclusive advantages in Mexico or elsewhere for its own citizens, but will seek, here as elsewhere, to show itself the consistent champion of the open door.

In the meantime it is making every effort as the circumstances permit to safeguard foreign lives and property in Mexico and is making the lives and fortunes of the subjects of other governments as much its concern as the lives and fortunes of its own citizens.²⁰

Again on December 2, we find Wilson, in his State of the Union Message to Congress, re-enforcing his stand on the Mexican question, particularly stating that Huerta must go. He said:

There is but one cloud upon our horizon. That has shown

²⁰Arthur Stanley Link, Wilson. Vol. II: The New Freedom (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), 386-87.

itself to the south of us, and hangs over Mexico. There can be no certain prospect of peace in America until General Huerta has surrendered his usurped authority in Mexico; until it is understood on all hands, indeed, that such pretended governments will not be countenanced or dealt with by the government of the United States. We are the friends of constitutional government in America; we are more than its friends; we are its champions; because in no other way can our neighbors, to whom we would wish in every way to make proof of our friendship, work out their own development in peace and liberty. Mexico has no government. The attempt to maintain one at the City of Mexico has broken down, and a mere military despotism has been set up which has hardly more than the semblance of national authority. It originated in the usurpation of Victoriano Huerta, who after a brief attempt to play the part of constitutional president, has at last cast aside even the pretense of legal right and declared himself dictator. As a consequence, a condition of affairs now exists in Mexico which has made it doubtful whether even the most elementary and fundamental rights either of her own people or of the citizens of other countries resident within her territory can long be successfully safeguarded, and which threatens, if long continued, to imperil the interests of peace, order, and tolerable life in the lands immediately to the south of us. Even if the usurper had succeeded in his purposes, in despite of the Constitution of the Republic and the rights of its people, he would have set up nothing but a precarious and hateful power, which could have lasted but a little while, and whose eventual downfall would have left the country in a more deplorable condition than ever. But he has not succeeded. He has forfeited the respect and the moral support even of those who were at one time willing to see him succeed. Little by little he has been completely isolated. By a little everyday his power and prestige are crumbling and the collapse is not far away. We shall not, I believe, be obliged to alter our policy of watchful waiting. And then, when the end comes, we shall hope to see constitutional order restored in distressed Mexico by the concert and energy of such of her leaders as prefer the liberty of their people to their own ambitions.²¹

In the latter part of December, Wilson was cheered by the news of the impending recall of Sir Lionel Carden, who appeared to be Huerta's chief diplomatic supporter.²² The British government made the official announcement

²¹Public Papers of Wilson. Vol. II: New Democracy. I, 71-2.

²²Baker, Wilson, Life and Letters, IV, 301.

in January of 1914, but it wasn't until February that Carden left Mexico.

By January, pressure both at home and abroad was such that if Wilson was to keep his promise of getting rid of Huerta, he was forced to act soon either by lifting the embargo or by putting troops in Mexico. Wilson had, for over two months now, withheld all support from the Constitutionalists. In late January, the State Department and Carranza's agent in Washington, Luis Cabrera, began official negotiations in which the provisional Constitutional government pledged itself to respect just and equitable concessions and property rights. These favorable and friendly negotiations, coupled with a feeling that the Constitutionalists would give Mexico a responsible government, persuaded Wilson to choose the aiding of these rebels as the lesser of two evils. On February 3, he lifted the embargo on arms to Mexico and began aiding Carranza and Villa.

The lifting of the embargo had an effect that was not expected. For the first time the landed aristocracy, the business and banking elements, and the Church gave their full support to Huerta. It spurred his government on, and by the end of March, Huerta was still entrenched, stronger than ever.

In early April, shortly after Lind returned home from Mexico, the Mexican situation erupted into the Tampico affair. Perhaps this affair is best and most succinctly narrated by the president himself as he described it to Congress on April 20, in the following words:

On April 9 a Paymaster of the U. S. S. Dolphin landed at the Iturbide bridge landing at Tampico with a whaleboat and boat's crew to take off certain supplies needed by his ship, and while engaged in loading the boat was arrested by an officer and squad of men of the army of General Huerta. Neither the Paymaster nor any one of the crew was armed. Two of the men were in the boat when the arrest took place, and were obliged to leave it and submit to be taken into custody, notwithstanding that the boat carried, both at her bow and at her stern, the flag of the United States. The

officer who made the arrest was proceeding up one of the streets of the town with his prisoners when met by an officer of higher authority, who ordered him to return to the landing and await orders, and within an hour and a half from the time of the arrest, orders were received from the commander of the Huertista forces at Tampico for the release of the Paymaster and his men. The release was followed by apologies from the commander and also by an expression of regret by General Huerta himself. General Huerta urged that martial law obtained at the time at Tampico, that the orders had been issued that no one should be allowed to land at the Iturbide bridge, and that our sailors had no right to land there. Our naval commanders at the port had not been notified of any such prohibition, and, even if they had been, the only justifiable course open to the local authorities would have been to request the Paymaster and his crew to withdraw and to lodge a protest with the commanding officer of the fleet. Admiral Mayo regarded the arrest as so serious an affront that he was not satisfied with the apologies offered, but demanded that the flag of the United States be saluted with special ceremony by the military commander of the port.²³

The president went on to say that this incident was clearly an affront to the honor of the United States, for the United States was plainly the only power getting this kind of treatment. To illustrate this point, Wilson proceeded to recount two other incidents, saying:

A few days after the incident at Tampico an orderly from the U. S. S. Minnesota was arrested at Vera Cruz while ashore in uniform to obtain the ship's mail, and was for a time thrown into jail. An official dispatch from this government to its embassy at Mexico City was withheld by the authorities of the telegraphic service until peremptorily demanded by our Charge d'affairs in person.²⁴

It seems clear that the Tampico incident would have ended with General Morelos Zaragoza's personal apology had not Wilson been looking for an excuse for a fight. On April 18, an ultimatum was issued to Huerta, demanding him to salute the United States flag or take the consequences. Along with this, Wilson also sent more war ships to the coasts of Mexico. But,

²³Public Papers of Wilson. Vol. II: New Democracy. I, 99-100.

²⁴Ibid., 100.

Huerta refused to comply with the ultimatum. The events for the next few days came fast. On April 20, Wilson asked Congress for authority to use armed force "to obtain from General Huerta and his adherents the fullest recognition of the rights and dignity of the United States...."²⁵ But, Wilson made it clear that there was not going to be a war with Mexico in the following statements which he made before the press that morning:

In no conceivable circumstances will we fight the people of Mexico....

It is only an issue between the government and a person calling himself the provisional president of Mexico, whose right to call himself such we have never recognized in any way.²⁶

Congress did not vote its approval of the president's request until April 22. But before this was done, events leading to United States armed intervention in Mexico began to take shape. In the early morning of April 21, news reached Wilson that the German steamer Ypiranga loaded with arms and ammunitions was headed for Vera Cruz and Huerta. The report about the Ypiranga was confirmed on April 21, at about 2:30 a.m. Shortly after this, Wilson ordered Admiral Fletcher, commanding the squadron off Vera Cruz, to seize the custom-house at the Port. A good picture of the magnitude of this invasion can be seen in Commodore Knox's A History of the United States Navy, when he describes the invasion as follows:

Complying with these instructions, Fletcher landed a force of 787 men under Captain Rush of the Florida on the morning of April 21st. It comprised a regiment of marines under Colonel Neville from the Prairie, Commander Stickney, Utah, Captain Gibbons and Florida, together with a seamen battalion from the latter ship under Lieutenant Wainwright. An engagement of considerable magnitude developing, the sea-

²⁵Public Papers of Wilson. Vol. II: New Democracy. I, 102.

²⁶Woodrow Wilson's Own Story, selected and edited by Donald Day (1st ed.; Boston: Little Brown, 1952), 161.

men battalion from the Utah was also landed at about 12:30 P.M. These forces seized the custom-house, cable office, power plant and other large buildings near the waterfront in a gallant advance involving street fighting, in which they were subjected to much sniping. Mexican sharpshooters kept up a galling fire upon the boat landing from the shelter of the naval school building, and the latter was therefore attacked by American picket launches under Chief Boatswain McCloy and the Prairies's guns.

After dark the San Francisco, commander Harrison, and Chester, commander Moffett, entered the harbor and landed battalions of seamen and marines. Before daylight on the 22d Rear Admiral Badger, Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet, arrived with the battleships Arkansas, Captain R. O. Smith, New Hampshire, Captain Anderson, South Carolina, Captain Russell, Michigan, Captain Niblack, and New Jersey, Captain Jayne, and at about 4:00 A.M. battalions of seamen and marines were landed from each of the ships.

With this greatly augmented force the attack was resumed at 8 A.M., and by eleven the complete possession of the city had been gained despite determined resistance.²⁷

The casualties numbered 126 Mexicans killed, 195 wounded; 19 Americans dead, 71 wounded.

Immediately following this action, more troops were ordered to our border, the embargo on arms to Mexico was restored, and public sentiment in the United States was aroused. The Vera Cruz incident caused a complete break in relations between the two governments, and the return to the United States of the American Chargé d'affaires, who had been in friendly and informal contact with Huerta.²⁸ Wilson's intervention in Vera Cruz seemed to contradict everything that he said he stood for in his Latin American policy, and no faction in Mexico favored it. Carranza threatened to join forces with Huerta, and broke off all diplomatic connection with the United States. On the following day, April 23, he sent a letter to Wilson and Bryan, letting

²⁷Ludley W. Knox, A History of the United States Navy (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1948), 379-80.

²⁸Samuel Flagg Bemis, The United States as a World Power, A Diplomatic History, 1900-1950 (New York: Holt, 1950), 78.

them know in no uncertain terms that he objected to the action of the United States. He said:

The invasion of our territory and the permanency of your forces in the Port of Vera Cruz are a violation of the rights that constitute our existence as a free and independent sovereignty and will drag us into an unequal war which until today we desired to avoid.²⁹

He added emphatically that the United States must evacuate Vera Cruz at once. But, Wilson could not now withdraw with honor or prestige, unless Huerta were ousted. Now Huerta, at this time, controlled the central region of Mexico with the Capital and area around Vera Cruz, while Villa, Zapata, Carranza, and Obregón controlled three fourths of the country.

Francisco Villa, one of Carranza's generals, already eyeing the control of the Constitutionalist movement, made a public declaration on April 24, that he would not join Carranza in a war with the United States. And the following day, he privately let Wilson know that he approved of the United States seizure of Vera Cruz and that Carranza had spoken only for himself.

With these events, Wilson and Bryan began to panic. They hastened to assure Carranza and the other factions that our intentions in Mexico were friendly and only directed against Huerta. They went on to ask the Constitutionalist not to resist United States efforts against Huerta. The Constitutionalist supporters in the United States brought pressure on Carranza to go along with this attitude. And on April 28, both Villa and Carranza met at Chihuahua City and agreed that they would not oppose United States forces unless they invaded Constitutionalist territory. This agreement could very likely have only been reached when it looked like the threat of a Mexican-United States war was over.

²⁹ Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, 125.

Prior to this agreement, when war looked like a certainty and protests ran the highest, Argentina, Brazil, and Chile offered to mediate the Mexican affair. Wilson, eager to get out of this situation, accepted their offer on April 25 saying publicly that he hoped the mediators might find "those who spoke for the several elements of the Mexican people willing to discuss terms of satisfactory and therefore, permanent settlement."³⁰ But, privately he made it clear to the mediators that he would not change his position. Mediation for Wilson was a convenient way out of a difficult situation in which our prestige in the Americas was nil, of getting rid of Huerta peacefully, and of establishing a Constitutionalist provisional government. If all else failed, it was at least a good stall until the Constitutionalist forces could take Mexico City.

Shortly after Huerta accepted the A.B.C. offer of mediation Wilson in an interview with Samuel G. Blythe made the following statement with regards to Mexico: "My ideal is an orderly and righteous government in Mexico; but my passion is for the submerged 85 per cent of the people of that republic who are now struggling toward liberty."³¹ Mr. Blythe then goes on to summarize that regardless of the outcome of the mediation talks,

The settled policy of the president in regard to Mexico will be as follows:

First. The United States, so long as Mr. Wilson is president, will not seek to gain a foot of Mexican territory in any way or under any pretext. When we have finished with Mexico, Mexico will be territorially intact.

Second. No personal aggrandizement by American investors or adventurers or capitalists, or exploitation of that country, will be permitted. Legitimate business interests that seek to develop rather than exploit will be encouraged.

Third. A settlement of the agrarian land question by constitutional means - such as that followed in New Zealand,

³⁰ Bemis, The Latin American Policy of the United States, 178.

³¹ Public Papers of Wilson. Vol. II: New Democracy. I, 111.

for example- will be insisted on....³²

Every phase of the Mexican situation,...is based on the condition that those in de facto control of the government must be relieved of that control before Mexico can realize her manifest destiny.³³

In pursuing this policy, Wilson hoped to accomplish two things:

First, we hope to show the world that our friendship for Mexico is a disinterested friendship, so far as our own aggrandizement goes; and, second we hope to prove to the world that the Monroe Doctrine is not what the rest of the world, including some of the countries in this hemisphere, contends - merely an excuse for the gaining of territory for ourselves.

I hold this to be a wonderful opportunity to prove to the world that the United States of America is not only human but humane; that we are actuated by no other motives than the betterment of the conditions of our unfortunate neighbor, and by the sincere desire to advance the cause of human liberty.³⁴

Regarding the mediation, Wilson commented: "I hope they may be successful.

In any event, we shall deem it our duty to help the Mexican people and we shall continue until we have satisfactory knowledge that peace has been restored, that a constitutional government is reorganized, and that the way is open for the peaceful reorganization of that harassed country."³⁵

The mediation with Huerta, Carranza, and the United States began on May 20 at Niagara Fall, Ontario. The United States insisted on Huerta's resignation and the turning of power over to the Constitutionalists. Huerta, although finally showing a willingness to resign, would not give his power over to the Constitutionalists. Carranza, in his turn, opposed any compromise measure in which he had to cooperate with Huerta in setting up a freely elected government. Carranza was still fighting Huerta in Mexico and expected to take over the government by defeating him. One thing the Carran-

³²Public Papers of Wilson. Vol. II: New Democracy. I, 113.

³³Ibid., 115.

³⁴Ibid., 118.

³⁵Ibid., 119.

zistas and the Huertistas did agree on and that was the immediate withdrawal of United States troops from Mexico. Finally on July 15, Huerta appointed his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Francisco S. Carvajal, as provisional president and resigned, fleeing the country five days later.

CHAPTER II

"A shrewd opportunist" vs. Wilson

Carranza did not make his "triumphal entry" into Mexico City until the morning of August 20, although he took over power in July, shortly after Huerta resigned. Thereupon, Wilson sent him "abundant advice, warned him that he would be held strictly accountable for damage to Americans, urged him to make peace with Zapata, and sent another special agent with pure intentions and slight comprehension of Mexican realities."³⁷ The note, sent by Wilson on the twenty-third of July, to be presented to Generals Villa and Carranza, advising them on matters which should occupy their careful attention, reads in par as follows:

In the most earnest spirit of friendship, therefore, this government wishes to call attention to the following matters of critical consequences:

First. The treatment of foreigners, foreign lives, foreign property, foreign rights, and particularly the delicate matters of the financial obligations, the legitimate financial obligations, of the government now superseded. Unless the utmost care, fairness and liberality are shown in these matters the most dangerous complications may arise.

Second. The treatment of political and military opponents. Unless there is to be a most generous amnesty it is certain that the sympathy of the whole world, including the people of the United States, now the real friends of the Constitutionalists, will be hopelessly alienated and the situation become impossible.

Third. The treatment of the Roman Catholic Church and of those who represent it. Nothing will shock the civilized world more than punitive or vindictive action towards priests or ministers of any church, whether Catholic or Protestant; and the government of the United States ventures most respectfully to caution the leaders of the Mexican people on

³⁶Herring, A History of Latin America, 358.

this delicate and vital matter. The treatment already said to have been accorded priests has had a most unfortunate affect upon opinion outside of Mexico.³⁷

It was earlier mentioned that there was a personal rivalry between Carranza and Villa. This nearly caused a complete break between them in April of this same year but was patched up by American diplomatic officers. However, once Carranza was in power, Villa rebelliously began to build up his forces. Although Washington knew for some time that a break was coming, Wilson and Bryan saw it as a possible occasion for getting rid of the unco-operative Carranza, and replacing him with Villa, who had been careful to exhibit an eager willingness to follow Washington's dictates, giving them the impression that he would allow them to control the government he would set up. Villa's position was further enhanced by his stand against Carranza in the Vera Cruz affair, by a pro-Villa clique in the administration which played on the president's feelings against Carranza, by a friendly United States Press which made him a natural leader of the oppressed masses of Mexico, and by the common assumption that he would effect land reforms faster than Carranza. Beginning in August, this new policy of putting Villa into power "became the chief objective of the American government."³⁸

One of the first steps in this new policy was the removal of John Lind, too anti-Catholic and too friendly with Carranza, as adviser to the State Department, and his replacement by Paul Fuller, a New York lawyer, a Roman Catholic, and an authority on Latin American affairs. The next step was to send Fuller on a secret mission to Villa's headquarters, and to Mexico City; proposing a convention composed of representatives from the

³⁹Public Papers of Wilson. Vol. II: New Democracy, I, 403.

³⁸Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, 129.

various armies for the purpose of creating a new provisional government. On August 16, at Santa Rosalia, Fuller obtained from Villa both written and oral promises that he would retire from public life, after helping to establish a constitutional government. Fuller then went to Mexico City where he met with Carranza on the fifth of September. He found the president now ready for a convention and agreeable with Wilson's proposals. It is doubtless that Carranza became agreeable because of the forces against him; Villa, and recently, his chief lieutenant, Álvaro Obregón who supported Wilson's plan. Fuller had his last meeting with Carranza on the eighth of that same month at which time it was agreed to have a convention followed by a speedy set up of a government representing all factions.

Despite Villa's declaration of war on Carranza in late September, the convention which Carranza had agreed to with Fuller was held from October 12 to November 12 at Aguascalientes. At the convention Obregón and Pablo González tried to obtain the retirement of Villa and Carranza in order to obtain a government by the reconciliation of all factions. While this failed, the Villistas obtained the admittance to the convention of the Zapatistas, who immediately sided with them. Together, they dominated the convention deposing Carranza, establishing a new government, and electing a Villa follower, General Guiterrez, president. Even though Wilson and Bryan gave moral and diplomatic support to this convention, thus to the new Villa government, it was evident that Carranza still had the greatest power. For when Carranza declared war on the usurpers of Aguascalientes, Obregón and González who had cooperated with the action taken at the convention and had tried to get Carranza to resign, rejoined Carranza, repudiated the convention, and went with Carranza, on November 21, to Vera Cruz where he set up

his capital, leaving Mexico City to Zapata and Villa. A full fledged civil war was on again.

From November 23, the date on which the United States forces were finally withdrawn from Vera Cruz, until October 19, 1915, the United States could not decide with of the factions to recognize as the official government in Mexico. The bloody civil war continued with the Carranzistas, Villistas, and Zapatistas battling among themselves for power, taking, losing and re-taking Mexico City. Meanwhile, there was a growing cry in the United States for the protection of United States citizens lives and property rights. The hierarchy and laymen of the Roman Catholic Church, in particular, raised quite a storm over the Church's persecution in Mexico and Wilson's inactivity in protecting it.

During the five months that Villa and Zapata took turns governing Mexico City, Carranza issued decrees from Vera Cruz and governed the northern eastern coastal third of the country with the revenue producing custom house at Vera Cruz. Obregón and Cabrera were on his side and provided him with ideas for social reform which the people wanted and got. Obregón, Carranza's most capable general, also from January to September, 1915 proceeded to recapture central Mexico, first by crippling Villa's forces, and after a decisive victory at Celaya in mid-April, by forcing Villa's retreat to Chihuahua. By July, Carranza was back, governing from Mexico City.

Meanwhile, in February, Wilson sent Duval West to Mexico to report on conditions there. He returned painting a grim picture of the situation, and stating erroneously that no faction was strong enough to rule. On the contrary, the truth of the matter was that Carranza was gaining strength every day. But, acting on West's information, the administration concluded that the United States must establish and maintain a government capable of

restoring order. Wilson, on June 2, took the first step in pursuing this aim by issuing the following warning to the Mexican leaders in a statement to the press:

...Mexico is apparently no nearer a solution of her tragical troubles than she was when the revolution was first kindled.

...I, therefore, publicly and very solemnly call upon the leaders of factions in Mexico to act, to act together, and to act promptly for the relief and redemption of their prostrate country. I feel it to be my duty to tell them that, if they cannot accommodate their differences and unite for this great purpose within a very short time, this government will be constrained to decide what means should be employed by the United States in order to help Mexico save herself and serve her people.³⁹

In response to this warning, Villa offered to make peace with Carranza, but Carranza emphatically repudiated the president's right to interfere.⁴⁰ It became increasingly evident during the summer of 1915 that West's estimate of the Mexican situation was wrong. Carranza had power, and war might result with Mexico, if the United States tried to intervene. But no one wanted war, least of all the United States, who at the time was in a diplomatic crisis with Germany over the use of submarines against merchant shipping. Besides this Germany was attempting to provoke a war between the United States and Mexico. Thus, in case of a European conflict, the United States did not want its hands tied in a war with a sister republic.

In June of this same summer, Robert Lansing became the new Secretary of State. He was more of an initiator of ideas than a follower of Wilson as was Bryan. He, on the fifth of August, with Paul Fuller began a series of conferences with six diplomatic ministers of South and Central America that lasted until October. The first few meetings were held in Washington, but

³⁹Public Papers of Wilson. Vol. II: New Democracy. I, 339-40.

⁴⁰Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, 133.

were latter moved to New York due to the heat. At first the ministers favored getting rid of Carranza and establishing a government representative of all factions. This plan was similar to an earlier one which Robert Lansing had proposed to the president on July 5 when he outlined what the United States' attitude should be in the Mexican crisis.⁴¹

While the conferences were in progress, Lansing did something which seemed quite strange. On August 6, he urged that Mexican meat be allowed entrance into the United States from Juarez. This would allow Villa, who was in financial straits, relief and a legal opportunity of getting rid of the cattle he had. Lansing explained to the president that:

the reason for furnishing Villa an opportunity to obtain funds is this: We do not wish the Carranza faction to be the only one to deal with in Mexico. Carranza seems so impossible that an appearance, at least, of opposition to him will give us an opportunity to invite compromise of factions. I think, therefore, it is politic, for the time, to allow Villa to obtain sufficient financial resources to allow his faction to remain in arms until a compromise can be effected.⁴²

On August 11, the conference urged the Mexican leaders to meet to exchange ideas and to determine the fate of the country. They urged the establishment of a provisional government and an immediate general election. The diplomats went on to say that "in order to bring about a conference of this nature the undersigned, or any of them, will willingly, upon invitation, act as intermediaries to arrange the time, place, and other details of such conference, if this action can in any way aid the Mexican people."⁴³

⁴¹Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, The Lansing Papers, 1914-1920, (Washington, 1940), 538-39.

⁴²Ibid., 548.

⁴³Public Papers of Wilson. Vol. II: New Democracy. I, 360.

Villa immediately agreed to the proposal, but the Carranzistas said no. Later, on September 10, on the same day his forces were capturing Torreon, the northern strong hold of Villa's forces, Carranza also said no. With Carranza also said no. With Carranza's capture of Torreon and the German intrigues in Mexico, Lansing and Wilson saw no alternative but to recognize Carranza. In a letter to Wilson on September 12, Lansing said:

The Carranzistas are undoubtedly stronger and more cohesive than they have been. In fact I have almost reached the conclusion that they are so dominant that they are entitled to recognition. If they are not recognized, I cannot see what will be gained by recognizing any other government, since the present war would continue and be prolonged by strengthening the opposition to Carranza, who, I feel certain, would win in the end.⁴⁴

Lansing then set out to convince the other American governments of this idea. However, in mid-September before this was accomplished, the conference broke-up agreeing only to recommend that the representatives' governments recognize a de facto government in Mexico as soon as possible.⁴⁵

On October 19 all those governments which were represented at the conferences recognized Carranza's government de facto. On this same day, Wilson proclaimed an embargo on arms to Mexico, but allowed for arms to be sent on the sly to Carranza. These actions occasioned one of the worst attacks on the administration since it took power in 1913. It was staged by the Catholic hierarchy who disapproved of Carranza's anti-clerical regime and Wilson's refusal to pressure the Constitutionalists to repeal the Reform Laws of the Juarez era. Although attacked from many sides, Wilson continued to hold to his policy and in his Third Annual Address to Congress, delivered on December 7, 1915, had this to say about his action in the Mexican situation

⁴⁴Foreign Relations, Lansing Papers, Vol. II, 551.

⁴⁵Ibid., 553.

which he seemed to have felt was now settled: "We have at least proved that we will not take advantage of her in her distress and undertake to impose upon her an order and government of our own choosing." He then went on to state his principles in dealing with Mexico:

Every American who has drunk at the true fountains of principle and tradition must subscribe without reservation to the high doctrine of the Virginia Bill of Rights, which in the great days in which our government was set up was everywhere amongst us accepted as the creed of free men. That doctrine is "that government is, or ought to be, instituted for the common benefit, protection, and security of the people, nation, or community;" that "of all the various modes and forms of government, that is the best which is capable of producing the greatest degree of happiness and safety, and is most effectually secured against the danger of maladministration; and that, when any government shall be found inadequate or contrary to these purposes, a majority of the community hath an inubitable, inalienable, and indefensible right to reform, alter, or abolish it, in such manner as shall be judged most conducive to the public weal." We have unhesitatingly applied that heroic principle to the case of Mexico, and now hopefully await the rebirth of the troubled republic....⁴⁶

Wilson's policy seemed to be justified by the almost friendly relations which existed between the United States and Mexico for nearly three months from the date of recognition. Formal diplomatic relations between the two countries were restored in December, with Henry P. Fletcher as the American and Eliseo Arredondo as the Mexican representatives. But in January, 1916, Villa began a campaign against Americans in northern Mexico: first, out of protest for United States recognition of Carranza after the United States had favored him, second, in an effort to provoke United States armed intervention in Mexico in order to discredit Carranza, and third, in hopes of uniting a force behind him to seize power. He began on January 11 at Santa Ysabel, 50 miles west of Chihuahua City by stopping a train and kil-

⁴⁶Public Papers of Wilson. Vol. II: New Democracy. I, 408.

ling 16 of the 17 Americans passengers. Now this group was composed of graduate engineers, who had entered the state of Chihuahua for the purpose of operating the American owned mines, after Carranza had invited the American mine owners to resume operations. With the "Santa Ysabel Massacre" feeling ran high for intervention in the United States and Congress on March 7 passed a resolution allowing armed intervention if necessary to protect American lives. But Wilson hesitated to use the armed forces. European trouble seemed to threaten more seriously, and the troops might be needed elsewhere at any time.

Again on March 9, Villa set on fire a war craze in the United States by invading and attacking Columbus, New Mexico, shooting up the town, and killing 17 United States citizens. Public clamor grew so great now, that Wilson sent orders to the military commanders in Texas to organize for a punitive expedition after Villa. But before sending troops into Mexico, he wanted the approval of the Mexican authorities, which he obtained orally from the Mexican Secretaries for Foreign Relations, War, and Marine on March 15.

Now prior to these oral approvals but shortly after the Columbus raid, at Carranza's suggestion, Lansing began negotiations with Eliseo Arredondo, the Mexican ambassador-designate in Washington, for a protocol whereby each country would have the right to pursue bandits across the border. It seems that this was signed on or about March 13, for on this day the State Department sent Mr. Arredondo a note which read in part as follows:

The government of the United States understands that in view of its agreement to this reciprocal arrangement proposed by the de facto government, the arrangement is now completed and in force and the reciprocal privileges there under may accordingly be exercised by either government without further interchange of views.⁴⁷

⁴⁷Foreign Relations, Lansing Papers, Vol. II, 555.

In view of these oral approvals and this agreement, Pershing was sent into Mexico on March 15.

President Wilson, on March 25, in an effort to combat war rumors, made these statements to the press regarding the Pershing expedition:

the expedition in Mexico was ordered under an agreement with the de facto government of Mexico for the single purpose of taking the bandit Villa, whose forces had actually invaded the territory of the United States, and is in no sense intended as an invasion of that republic or as an infringement of its sovereignty.

It is the purpose of our commanders to co-operate in every possible way with the forces of General Carranza in removing this cause of irritation to both governments, and retire from Mexican territory as soon as that object is accomplished.⁴⁸

However, when Carranza saw how large Pershing's forces were, he immediately began a diplomatic campaign to get rid of them. When the Mexican government ratified the Protocol on March 24, it ratified an agreement which authorized only temporary crossings in the future - Carranza interpreted as a few days for a small force. For the first few weeks nothing much was done by Carranza. But, in April, the alarm was sounded. Pershing, at this time was 300 miles in Mexico and proceeding south with an army of 6,675 men that was constantly being reinforced and looked more like an army of occupation. Now, Carranza had never agreed to the expedition's entry and through Arredondo on the twelfth of April virtually demanded that Pershing's forces be withdrawn from Mexico. He then suspended all discussions and negotiations for any agreement along the lines of protocols.⁴⁹

Carranza's position was a difficult one. He was trying to hang on to

⁴⁸Public Papers of Wilson. Vol. II: New Democracy. P. 130-31.

⁴⁹America, Great Crisis in Our History Told by its Makers. Vol. XII: 1916-1925 (Chicago: Americanization Department, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, 1925), 20.

power and unite all Mexico behind him. He needed every bit of prestige he could get and therefore, didn't want the United States in Mexico posing as the Liberator. Furthermore, he was suspicious of Wilson's motives and regarded Pershing's troops in Mexico as an invasion.

Generals Hugh L. Scott and Frederick Funston, instructed by the War Department that all the United States wanted was protection of the border and suppression of the Villa raiders, met with the Mexican War Minister, General Álvaro Obregón at Juarez and El Paso. While Obregón demanded the withdrawal of the expedition, Wilson, through the Generals, insisted that his demands could only be carried out on Mexican soil if both governments cooperated. Scott and Funston, in a secret conference, got Obregón to sign an agreement specifying the gradual withdrawal of the expedition and a campaign by the Carranza government against Villa. Wilson liked this plan, but Carranza turned it down because of the lack of a specified date for the completion of the expedition's withdrawal. Carranza then proposed a cooperation plan for policing the border, but this plan didn't get very far either. The conferences finally ended with Scott and Funston accepting Obregón's promise that they (the Mexicans) would try to clean up the mess.

On the fifth of May, the same day that this promise was made, Villa staged another invasion of the United States attacking Glenn Spring and Boquillas, Texas - killing three troopers and a child, and kidnapping two men. Needless to say, this added more fuel in the United States to the already increasing movement for armed intervention. On the other hand in Mexico, tension was rising due to the failure of the United States to withdraw its troops. On May 22, Carranza wrote a bitter note to the United States Secretary of State, accusing the United States of bad faith, and stating that if

the United States didn't want war, it would withdraw from Mexico. He charged that General Scott in the Memorandum signed on May 2 declared that the destruction and dispersion of the Villa band "had been accomplished." This was clearly a misstatement, for Lansing in his answer to Carranza's letter states that the Memorandum which is in English does not state this, but rather that the expedition was then "carrying on a vigorous pursuit of such small numbers of bandits of lawless elements as may have escaped."⁵⁰

The situation was rapidly growing worse. War seemed imminent but neither side could see its way out of this difficulty. United States military leaders began to plan a Mexican campaign. Carranza ordered the repulsion of any new troops entering Mexico and the resistance of Pershing's force if he went any direction but north. On June 18, the president called out nearly all the national guard, 100,000 men, to protect the border, and sent more warships to the east and west coasts of Mexico. The next day, at the port of Mazatlan, on the Mexican west coast, there was a clash between Mexican and United States soldiers, but still no war.

On the following day, Secretary of State Lansing finally made the United States' reply to Carranza's Aguilar note of May 22. In an extremely blunt fashion, it reviewed the diplomatic exchanges since the expedition began, emphasizing the destruction of American lives and property, and accused Carranza of being unwilling and unable to do anything about it. Lansing made a special point of recounting the state of turmoil existing in the bandit-infested territory continuous with the United States and listing in particular, the attacks suffered by United States citizens both in their own country and in Mexico. He began with those in September of 1915 on Brownsville, Red

⁵⁰America, Great Crisis in Our History, 21.

House Ferry, Progreso Post Office and Les Pelades. Lansing even charged that Carranzista soldiers participated in the Les Pelades incident. He then went on to mention a train wreck caused by Villa bandits, seven miles north of Brownsville, in which several people were killed; and that several days later at this same place, United States troops were attacked. This was followed by the "Santa Ysabel Massacre" in January and the Columbus attack in March, just to mention a few.

The day after this reply was made, there was yet another United States - Mexican clash. Captain Hoyd, heading one of the cavalry troops sent by Pershing to investigate reported concentrations of de facto troops which were supposedly amassing against Pershing who had been camped at Dublan since June 15, had a clash with a detachment of 250 Mexicans near Carrizal. The Mexican commander, General Félix G. Gómez would not allow the United States captain pass through the town, but said he'd ask for permission. The United States captain thought the General wouldn't stop them and tried an attack. A fight resulted in which the Mexicans were the victors. Twenty-nine Mexicans and twelve United States soldiers were killed, and seventeen American troopers were taken prisoner. Wilson, thinking that the United States troops had been ambushed, asked Congress for power to clear the northern part of Mexico of bandits, and on June 25, demanded the release of the prisoners. This could have brought on war except for three factors: public opinion was against this kind of war, the military services (though in favor of it) were under Wilson's tight control, and neither Wilson nor Carranza favored one. War feelings were quickly squelched on June 26 when a report by Captain Morey was published in which it was proven that the United States was the aggressor. With this report, good sense returned to the White House. Two days later tension was considerably eased by the release of the American

solders, captured at Carrizal.

On June 30, Wilson in an address before the press club made a plea for peace declaring that force never achieved anything permanent, but only the opinion of mankind when brought to bear on an issue. In answer to the president's plea for peace, Carranza, on July 4, suggested direct and friendly negotiations to end the causes of the Mexican - United States tension. The United States accepted the suggestion, and it was agreed that a Mexican-American Joint High Commission should be appointed to investigate and recommend. This provided Wilson with a relief from Republican attacks and gave Carranza a chance to hold elections, the first move toward constitutional government.

On September 2, Wilson in his renomination speech, again restated his stand in the Mexican situation and attempted to justify his use of the punitive expedition by saying:

We have professed to believe, and we do believe, that the people of small and weak states have the right to expect to be dealt with exactly as the people of big and powerful states would be. We have acted upon that principle in dealing with the people of Mexico.

Our recent pursuit of bandits into Mexican territory was no violation of that principle. It was a plain case of the violation of our own sovereignty which could not wait to be vindicated by damages and for which there was no other remedy. The authorities of Mexico were powerless to prevent it.

Many serious wrongs against the property, many irreparable wrongs against the persons of Americans have been committed within the territory of Mexico herself during this confused revolution, wrongs which could not be effectually checked so long as there was no constituted power in Mexico which was in a position to check them....

I here again vow it. I am more interested in the fortunes of oppressed men and pitiful women and children than in any property rights whatever. Mistakes I have no doubt made in this perplexing business, but not in purpose or object.

More is involved than the immediate destinies of Mexico and the relations of the United States with a distressed and distracted people.

All America looks on. Test is now being made of us whether we be sincere lovers of popular liberty or not and are indeed to be trusted to respect national sovereignty among our weaker neighbors.⁵¹

Four days latter, the commission composed of the Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane, the Reverend Doctor John R. Mott, former judge George Gray, Luis Cabrera, Ignacio Bonillas, and Alberto J. Pani, began to hold a series of futile conferences at New London, Atlantic City, Philadelphia, and New York. Mexico demanded the withdrawal of the punitive expedition. The United States on the other hand, pressed for discussion on internal Mexican conditions, taxes on United States mining properties, and protection of British and American oil interests in Mexico. On November 24, an agreement was reached when the Mexican commissioners "signed a protocol for the withdrawal of the expedition within forty days, only provided conditions in the northern states warranted such action."⁵² But, Carranza, on the twenty-seventh of December, rejected this saying he would recognize no agreement which did not first provide for the immediate withdrawal of United States troops. Since no agreement could be reached on this point, the conferences broke up on January 15, 1917.

Now, the United States either had to withdraw its forces, or break relations with Mexico and occupy the northern states. To top matters off, war with Germany seemed to be certain. This coupled with the repercussions that a Mexican - United States war would have in Central and South America convinced the administration that evacuation of United States troops from Mexico was the only sensible solution. It began on January 27.

In the meantime, Germany was unsuccessfully attempting to entice

⁵¹Woodrow Wilson's Own Story, 225-27.

⁵²Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, 143.

Mexico into an alliance against the United States. The telegram, dated January 19, from the German Foreign Secretary, Dr. Alfred Zimmerman, to the German Minister in Mexico, Herr von Eckhardt, outlining this plan ran as follows:

On February 1st we intend to begin submarine warfare unrestricted. In spite of this, it is our intention to endeavor to keep neutral the United States of America. If this attempt is not successful, we propose an alliance on the following basis with Mexico: that we shall make war together and together make peace. We shall give general financial support, and it is understood that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona. The details are left to you for settlement.

You are instructed to inform the President of Mexico of the above in the greatest confidence as soon as it is certain that there shall be an outbreak of war with the United States, and suggest that the President of Mexico, on his own initiative, should communicate with Japan suggesting adherence at one to this plan. At the same time, offer to mediate between Germany and Japan.

Please call to the attention of the President of Mexico that the employment of ruthless submarine warfare now promises to compel England to make peace in a few months.⁵³

Although the promises looked tempting, Mexico remained cold to the proposal, perhaps in part because she was getting her way with the United States in the withdrawal of the United States troops and because of her exhausted condition after so much civil war.

On February 5, the same day that Pershing and the last of the United States troops moved out of Mexico, Carranza promulgated by decree the Fifth Mexican constitution in less than a centitution in less than a century, and the one that is still in force today. It is a sort of "ex post facto formulation of the basic aims of the revolution."⁵⁴ Johnson, in describing it, says:

This document contains many advanced - even radical - conceptions regarding labor legislation, such as the eight-hour day, the protection of women and children in industry, a minimum wage, profit sharing, workmen's compensation,

⁵³America, Great Crisis in Our History, 23-4.

⁵⁴Johnson, Mexico, 61.

housing, social insurance, protection of health and morals, safety of the workers, the right to strike, and arbitration and conciliation boards. It also contains detailed provisions with reference to agrarian reforms, the nationalization of petroleum and other subsoil treasures, the property, and religious educational matters. In brief, it was the most elaborate social program ever issued in Mexico.⁵⁵

It should be noted though, that many of the provisions of the Constitution of 1917 were placed in that document in defiance of Carranza's wishes, and that

after its promulgation he made little attempt to put in force any of its stipulations save those which related to the nationalization of the deposits of the subsoil. It soon became evident not only that he was tyrannical, stubborn, and inefficient, not to say corrupt.⁵⁶

In early March, Wilson sent to Mexico as the new United States ambassador, Henry P. Fletcher. Whether or not this constituted a de jure recognition of the Carranza government is a matter for discussion. Arthur S. Link thinks it does⁵⁷, but the contrary seems to be true. For after Carranza was constitutionally elected in March, the question of whether or not Ambassador Fletcher should attend Carranza's inauguration festivities in May came up. The Secretary of State advised Mr. Fletcher in a telegram dated April 28 that he might attend, but: "in felicitating General Carranza, you will be careful to say or do nothing that would indicate a recognition of his government as de jure in character."⁵⁸ Furthermore, Lansing in a letter to Wilson, dated April 25, attempted to answer the question, if "Fletcher's presence at the ceremony will be a recognition of the de jure character of the government and an acceptance of the constitution,"⁵⁹ by saying:

⁵⁶Rippy, Historical Evolution of Hispanic America, 298.

⁵⁶Ibid., 298-99.

⁵⁷Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, 144.

⁵⁸Foreign Relations, Lansing Papers, 567.

⁵⁹Ibid., 566.

As to whether Fletcher's presence would be a formal recognition of the de jure character of the government, I think that the words "de facto" may be employed before and after the inauguration in such a way as to indicate that we consider the character of the government has not changed by the ceremony of inauguration but only the title of the head of the government who will be "the de facto president" instead of "the Chief of the Constitutionalist Army."

Of course the advantage to be gained in preserving the de facto status is that the obligation to obey any mandate relating to neutrality issued by such a government is far less than if it is de jure. Against an obligation of that sort we should endeavor to guard ourselves as far as possible. Furthermore, it would be consistent with the reservation of rights improperly impaired by the new constitution.⁶⁰

Although all was not peaceful within Mexico or between her and the United States, the new reform constitution and the constitutional election of Carranza seemed to satisfy the two basic objectives of Wilson's foreign policy with Mexico. The threat of war with that country was over. United States attention now became fixed on Europe, for on April 6, 1917, the United States declared war on Germany.

⁶⁰Foreign Relations, Lansing Papers, 565.

CHAPTER III

OIL + POLITICS = TROUBLE

Although soft peddled at first because of the European war, the whole of the diplomatic relations of the United States with Mexico from February 5 (the declaration of the new reform constitution of Mexico) on, centered around the oil controversy. The crux of the disputes can be found in the following paragraphs of article 27 of the 1917 Mexican Constitution:

In the nation is vested direct ownership of all minerals or substances which in veins, layers, masses or beds constitute deposits whose nature is different from the components of the land, such as minerals from which metals and metalloids used for industrial purposes are extracted; beds of precious stones, rock salt and salt lakes formed directly by marine waters, products derived from the decomposition of rocks, when their exploitation requires underground work; phosphates which may be used for fertilizers; solid mineral fuels; petroleum and all hydrocarbons, liquid, solid or gaseous.

Legal capacity to acquire ownership of lands and waters of the nation shall be governed by the following provisions:

1. Only Mexicans by birth or naturalization and Mexican companies have the right to acquire ownership in lands, waters and their appurtenances, or to obtain concessions to develop mines, water or mineral fuels in the Republic of Mexico. The nation may grant the same right to foreigners, provided they agree before the Department of Foreign Affairs, to be considered Mexicans in respect to such property, and accordingly not to invoke the protection of their governments in respect to same, under penalty, in case of breach, of forfeiture to the nation of property so acquired.⁶¹

To clarify the constitution, Carranza, in a series of provisional decrees in 1918 let it be known that those who were formerly outright owners

⁶¹Frank Bohn, "Mexico and the United States," Current History Magazine of the New York Times, XIV (September, 1921), 971.

could now continue exploiting their holdings for terms to exceed no more than fifty years, but only under license and confirmatory concessions which had to be registered within two years under penalty of lapse of title. The new registration provided for: "New taxation, Mexicanization of corporations and of foreign individuals to one life after which the holdings must be liquidated to Mexican citizens or corporations; exploitation by some "positive act" of all land held...."⁶²

The United States government in the diplomatic disputes which followed took the position that Mexico could not make laws ex post facto in regard to property rights or contracts even if it could reform its constitution and laws. The United States further held that a foreign national, even by his own will, could not give up, without the consent of his government, the right to its protection.

Besides the United States government protests, many of the foreign oil companies expressed an unwillingness to abide by article 27, claiming "exemption according to the provisions of article XIV of the Constitution of 1857, which is rewritten in principle in the new constitution. Article XVII states that 'no law shall be given retroactive effect in the prejudice of any person whatsoever.'"⁶³ Over \$300,000,000 dollars worth of American oil interests were endangered by the constitution and the presidential decrees, along with possible further profit. The appeals made to the Mexican Supreme Court on this matter were still in the hands of the court when Wilson left office. To implement their protests the oil interests, mainly foreign, began to undermine Carranza's government.

⁶²Bemis, The United States as a World Power, 86.

⁶³Bohn, "Mexico and the United States," 973.

In response to Carranza's decrees of 1918, Ambassador Fletcher on April 2 of that year, on behalf of the State Department, presented a note to the Mexican government which contained in part the following statements:

While the United States government is not disposed to request for its citizens exemption from the payment of their ordinary and just share of the burdens of taxation so long as the tax is uniform and not discriminatory in its operation, and can fairly be considered a tax and not a confiscation or unfair imposition, and while the United States government is not inclined to interpose in behalf of its citizens in case of expropriation of private property for sound reasons of public welfare, and upon just compensation and legal proceedings before tribunals, allowing fair and equal opportunity to be heard and giving due consideration to American rights, nevertheless the United States cannot acquiesce in any procedure ostensibly or nominally in the form of taxation or the exercise of eminent domain, but really resulting in the confiscation of private property and arbitrary deprivation of vested rights.

The amounts of taxes to be levied by this decree are in themselves confiscatory in effect - and as to this my government reserves opinion - they at least indicate a trend in that direction.

Moreover, there appears not the slightest indication that the separation of mineral rights from the surface rights is a matter of public utility upon which the right of expropriation depends, according to the terms of the constitution itself. In the absence of the establishment of any procedure looking to the prevention of spoliation of American citizens and in the absence of any assurance, were such procedure established, that it would not uphold in defiance of international law and justice the arbitrary confiscations of Mexican authorities, it becomes the function of the United States most earnestly and respectfully to call the attention of the Mexican government to the necessity which may arise to impel it to protect the property of its citizens in Mexico divested or injuriously affected by the decree above cited.⁶⁴

Carranza in answer stated that article 27 was merely a restatement of an old and well known Spanish-American principle of law; Every kind of mineral wealth was, in colonial times, reserved to the King.

The following year saw Carranza's down fall and Obregón's rise to power. The Carranza government and army were corrupt. Banditry was general,

⁶⁴Bohn, "Mexico and the United States," 971-72.

rebel activities were widespread, and the needed land reforms and law of the constitution were not being enforced. In reaction to this, General Álvaro Obregón, who resigned as Minister of War in May of 1917, announced his candidacy for president in June of 1919. When he was beaten in the July election by Carranza due to the latter's superior military strength, he immediately began to organize resistences to Carranza throughout the country. During July, the United States instituted an embargo on the exportation of arms to Mexico except with the sanction of the United States authorities.

On September 1, Carranza defended himself and his government, in an address to the National Congress, against the many accusations of the United States that Mexico took no concern in or was unable to safeguard the lives and property of United States and foreign citizens in Mexico. He began by stating that -

Unfortunately, the government of Mexico frequently receives representations, more or less energetic, from the government of the United States, in the cases in which we desire to introduce innovations which injure the interests of some citizens of that country; these representations tend to restrict our liberty of legislation, and invade the right which we possess of self-government in accordance with our own ideas.

The government of Mexico hopes that the republic of the north will respect the sovereignty and independence of Mexico, because to violate them on the plea of lack of guarantees for its citizens or of legislation injurious to their interests would constitute an unpardonable transgression of the principles of international law and morality, and would give proof that the greatest misfortune of a people is that of being weak.⁶⁵

Carranza then threw back at the United States a list of over twenty-two incidents within the past year in which Mexican citizens had been killed or outraged by Americans both in the United States and the Mexican border

⁶⁵Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1919 (Washington, 1934), Vol. II, 533-34.

towns, and where the United States government did nothing to punish the guilty. This was accompanied with the charge that although under the pretense of pursuing bandits, "whenever the authorities of that country have deemed it necessary or expedient to invade our territory, they have done so, thus violating the rights of a friendly people."⁶⁶ He followed this up by recounting four American invasions within the month of August alone. To disprove the charge that Mexico was not willing or able to protect the lives or property of foreigners in that country, Carranza listed twelve cases during the preceding year in which the Mexican government successfully protected American lives and property and brought the criminals to justice. To show the Mexican government's further concern for the protection of Americans, he suggested:

the expediency of their remaining in populous districts where complete protection can be accorded them, and that they request escorts when they find it necessary to travel or remain in dangerous zones; and lastly, that a palpable proof of Mexico's good will in protecting the lives and interests of citizens of the United States is the offer made of escorts for paymasters of petroleum companies, which offer has been rejected; the government has also promised to reimburse the sums of money which may be taken from the paymasters, notwithstanding that they are accompanied by escorts; and that, in view of all the foregoing, the government of Mexico was surprised at the menace contained in the last part of the note.⁶⁷

By January of 1920 things were ripe for another revolt. It looked as though Carranza was attempting to perpetuate himself in office by backing Bonillas for president. This in itself was enough to start the fires of revolt, but two incidents helped to explode the situation. First, Obregón was

⁶⁶ Foreign Relations, 1919, Vol. II, 537.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 540-41. The note referred to above was from the United States Embassy, dated July 22, regarding the assassination of an American in which it was threatened that unless Mexico do something about protecting American lives, a radical change in policy toward Mexico would follow.

accused of plotting rebellion, when he appeared by summons in Mexico City as a witness in a trial. He was kept under close surveillance and forbidden to leave the city. The second incident, began when Carranza under the pretense of restoring peace in Sonora, sent General Diequez from Guadalajara with federal troops to take military command in that state. The state, however, decided, on April 9, that the president was violating the constitution by sending troops into the state without the request or consent of the Sonora Congressor governor and that as a consequence relations with the federal government would be broken off. But Carranza stubbornly reasserted his determination and warned the authorities of Sonora that any act of theirs not in accord with the constitution would be considered as rebellion. Sonora met this attitude by a coup d'etat which completely separated Sonora from the central government. The federal troops in that state thereupon deserted and supported Governor Adolfo de la Huerta.

While this was going on in Sonora, the Obregonista senators and deputies in the federal Congress issued a public manifesto which declared the presidential candidacy of Bonillas as an "imposition" of the Carranza administration and "predicted a destructive revolution if the executive should persist in refusing to change his attitude."⁶⁸ The revolt seemed well on its way when, a day or two after the coup d'etat in Sonora, Generals Obregon and Hill escaped from Mexico City. One by one the states followed Sonora's lead, and, by May 7, Carranza, accompanied by his cabinet and preceded by troop trains, was forced to abandon the Capital and head for Vera Cruz. Carranza and his party never got there. The train was attacked. He escaped only to be killed fourteen days latter. Adolfo de la Huerta then became the new pro-

⁶⁸ Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1920 (Washington, 1936), Vol. III, 138.

visional president of Mexico. Soon after this, General Obregón was elected president and took office in December of 1920. He was the tenth president since Madero and the first since Díaz to have a full term, the shortest being 46 minutes.

Both during de la Huerta's reign and at the beginning of Obregón's administration, Washington was careful not to give any indication of even de facto recognition until there was some specific understanding for the payment and justification of United States claims and the protection of United States citizens and property in that country. This was the Mexican policy of both political parties in the 1920 United States presidential elections, and seems to have been Wilson's policy for the rest of his term.

During these troubled times, 1919-1920, there were forces working in the United States stirring up public opinion in favor of positive action in Mexico. The main force was a subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Relations, headed by Senator Albert B. Fall, the spokesman for the Doheny oil interests, which eagerly gathered all the evidence it could on a multitude of outrages against Americans in Mexico, and then published them in a 3,000 page report. When Carranza had been ousted and Obregon in power, the Fall committee which had been eager for full armed intervention, "limited its recommendations to - diplomatic pressure for the security of American property and citizens in Mexico; no recognition of Obregon without a specific agreement to that effect and a settlement of all claims for damages; and in case of failure ought intervention to be considered."⁶⁹

Although the United States oil companies were charging that article 27 of the Mexican constitution was confiscatory, it is interesting to note

⁶⁹Bemis, The United States as a World Power, 83.

a Mexican citizen's question on this United States attitude:

If the American people can place in their constitution an amendment which destroys the value outright of billions of property, including enormous investments by foreigners, how, then, can Americans, at the very time the Nineteenth Amendment was promulgated criticize Mexicans for seeking to enforce article XXVII of their own fundamental law?⁷⁰

The question was well put, and difficult, if possible to answer at all. The oil question and the many other ones, raised by the Mexican revolution were never settled during Wilson's administration, but by his diplomacy and far-sight, war was avoided between the two countries, and Mexico did finally get a constitutional government which made provisions for the relief and betterment of the 85% of the country who lived in dire poverty. The Harding administration, which followed Wilson's in 1921, carried out and continued Wilson's policy of no formal recognition of Obregon's government without a treaty guaranteeing the full protection of American lives, liberties, and properties.

A few years after Wilson had died J. W. Gerard in an article on Wilson's statesmanship paid this tribute to the man and his Mexican policy -

Woodrow Wilson was a statesman - never surrendering ideals or ideas or even prejudices for the mere political advantage of the moment.

Mexico no longer favors election by revolution. The ideals of Woodrow Wilson have prevailed. His much criticized Mexican policy has been vindicated.⁷¹

Time has yet to disprove him.

⁷⁰Bohn, "Mexico and the United States," 975.

⁷¹J. W. Gerard, "Statesmanship of Woodrow Wilson," Current History Magazine of the New York Times, XIX (March, 1924), 895-96.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. PRIMARY SOURCES

America, Great Crisis in Our History Told by its Makers. Chicago: Americanization Department, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, 1925- .

Department of State. Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, the Lansing Papers, 1914-1920. 2 vols. Washington, 1940.

Department of State. Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1919. 2 vols. Washington, 1934.

Department of State. Papers Relating To the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1920. 3 vols. Washington, 1936.

The Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson. 6 vols. in 3. Edited by Ray Stannard Baker and William E. Dodd. New York: Harper and brothers, 1925-27.

Woodrow Wilson's Own Story. Selected and edited by Donald Day. 1st ed.; Boston: Little Brown, 1952.

II. SECONDARY SOURCES

Books

Baker, Ray Stannard. Woodrow Wilson, Life and Letters. 8 vols. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1927-39.

Bemis, Samuel Flagg. The United States as a World Power, A Diplomatic History, 1900-1950. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1950.

. The Latin American Policy of the United States. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1943.

Elum, John Morton. Joe Tumulty and the Wilson Era. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1951.

Dulles, Foster Rhea. The United States since 1865. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1959.

Herring, Hubert. A History of Latin America from the Beginnings to the Present. 2d ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961.

Hugh-Jones, Edward Maurice. Woodrow Wilson and American Liberalism. London: English Universities Press, 1951.

Johnson, William Weber and others. Mexico. New York: Time Incorporated, 1961.

Knox, Dudley W. A History of the United States Navy. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1948.

Link, Arthur Stanley, Wilson. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947-.
Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 1910-1917. 1st ed. New York: Harper and brothers, 1954.

Morison, Samuel Eliot and Henry Steele Commager. The Growth of the American Republic. 2 vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 1942.

Magner, James Aloysius. Men of Mexico. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1943.

Rippy, James Fred. Historical Evolution of Hispanic America. New York: F. S. Crofts and Company, 1941.

Williams, Mary Wihelmine. The People and Politics of Latin America. New York: Gen and Company, 1943.

Periodicals

"Better Understanding With Mexico," Literary Digest, LXXIII (April 8, 1922), 16.

Bohn, Frank. "Mexico and the United States," Current History Magazine of the New York Times, XLIV (September, 1921), 969-76.

"General Alvaro Obregon, the New Hope of Mexico," Literary Digest, LXV (June 26, 1920), 48-53.

Gerard, J. W. "Statesmanship of Woodrow Wilson," Current History Magazine of the New York Times, XIX (March, 1924), 895-98.

"Mexican Recognition Delayed," Current History Magazine of the New York Times, XLIV (April, 1921), 145-46.

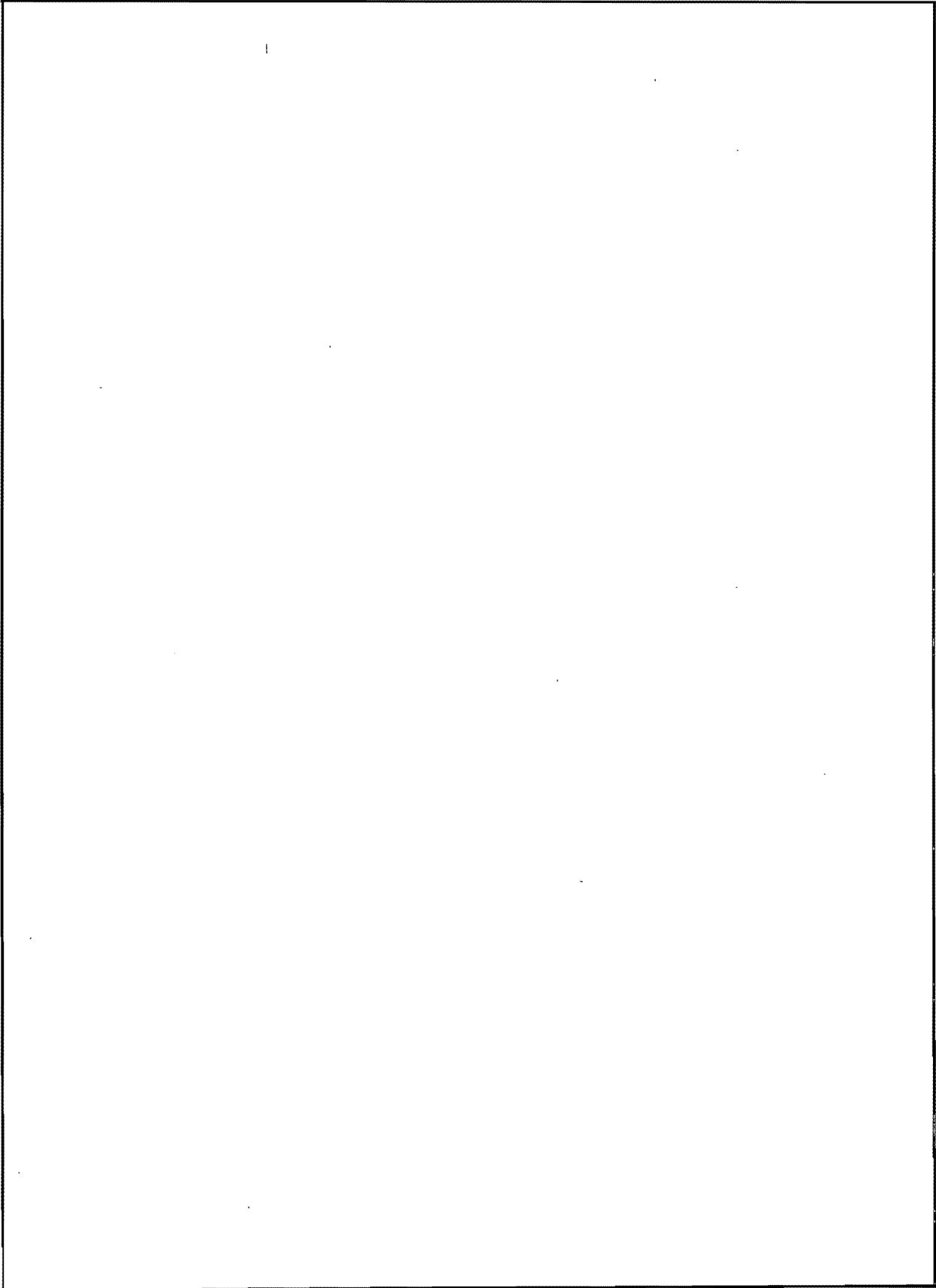
"New Attitude Toward Mexico," Literary Digest, LXI (June 28, 1919), 13-14.

O'Shaughnessy, E. "Diplomatic Days in Mexico," Harper CXXXV (September, 1917), 518-27.

"Our New Grievance Against Mexico," Literary Digest, LXIII (December 13, 1919), 11-13.

"Plot Against Mexico," Literary Digest, LXII (August 9, 1919), 14-16.

Trowbridge, E. D. "United States and Mexican Finance," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, LXXIII (May, 1919), 155-66.



ARCHABEY LIBRARY



3 0764 1002 9959 8