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Wilson and Huerta

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WILSON AND HUERTA

By

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VITA

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Relations between Mexico and the United States were quite satisfactory during the major part of the Díaz regime. Porfirio Díaz was in power from 1876 until 1910. He had been elected on a platform advocating non-reelection, so in 1880 his friend, General González, was placed in office and ruled for a term, after which Díaz returned to the presidency and there remained for twenty-six years. His chief objective was to make Mexico a prosperous nation. He aimed to increase industrial and commercial profits. In following this program he swept aside what, to him, were irrelevant matters. He ignored social, spiritual and cultural problems of which there was an abundance. The industrialization and commercial expansion of the nation he effected; but it was of little benefit to the masses.

Díaz followed the principle of expediency, that "the end justifies the means." He accomplished many things which were beneficial to the nation. Peace was established in Mexico. But peace was not without its price. Opposition

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1 For a brief statement of these see W. S. Robertson, History of the Latin American Nations, D. Appleton, New York, 1943, 465-466.
newspapers were suppressed. One of his policies for stifling opposition "was that of playing his supporters off against one another before they could develop sufficient strength to oppose him." Material prosperity was greatly increased. In 1893, Díaz appointed José Ives Limantour, a French creole, Secretary of the Treasury. Most of the financial reforms which were initiated under the Díaz regime can be credited to Limantour. The latter established the monetary system on a gold basis. He also abolished the hated alcabala, a sales tax inherited from Spanish times. Another of his accomplishments was consolidation of the railway system. Railroads and telegraph lines were greatly expanded. In 1876 there had been 691 kilometers of railroad; by 1911 there were 24,717 kilometers. Imports and exports were increased. They were valued at 51,760,000 pesos in 1873; by 1910 it was 87,916,000 pesos. The national income was increased from $19,776,638 to nearly $100,000,000 by the end of the Díaz regime. In order to achieve this commercial expansion, Díaz pawned his country's resources to foreign capitalists.

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3 Ibid., 383.
4 Ibid., 391.
5 Ibid., 391.
In 1884 he sponsored a mining code which decreed that the surface proprietor was entitled to subsoil rights. Foreign investors eagerly seized this opportunity to exploit Mexico's vast mineral resources. Unfortunately this process tended to increase the concentration of land into the hands of a few and to increase the material poverty of the larger part of the people. Any discontent on their part was smothered by the capable hands of the local officials and police.

Foreigners benefited greatly under the administration of Díaz. Not only were they offered lucrative economic opportunity, but they were given security, protection and precedence in local dealings. Americans were not the only ones to benefit by these favors; but the bulk of the investors were Americans. "Nor were the concessions generally such as would yield returns without expense, effort or ingenuity." By 1913 about 75,000 Americans were living in Mexico as miners, engineers, merchants and agriculturalists. American investments totaled about $1,500,000,000 -- a sum larger than that of other foreigners combined. Americans owned 78% of the mines, 72% of the smelters, 58% of the oil, and 68% of the rubber.

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7 J. Fred Rippy, The United States and Mexico, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1926, 311, 312.
8 House Doc. No. 305, 57 Cong. 2 sess., I, 503. Fall Committee Report II, 3322.
business of Mexico. American investments in mining were valued at $95,000,000, investments in agriculture at $28,000,000 and in manufacturing at $10,000,000. The total investments of Mexicans were valued at $792,187,242.

Foreigners looked upon Díaz with approval. Elihu Root, Theodore Roosevelt's Secretary of State had said: "I look on Porfirio Díaz, the President of Mexico, as one of the great men to hold up for the worship of mankind."  

However, after the turn of the century, Díaz began to meet with increasing criticism in Mexico. Díaz could stop this but he could not stop the encroachment of age. It was not the masses, so long pressed down, that began to foment the opposition but the landed educated Mexicans who felt that they were being "sold out" to foreign interests. Various organs of the press conducted anti-Yankee campaigns. These included Correo de Español, El Nacional, El Tiempo, La Patria, El Debate, El País, and El Diario del Hogar. Díaz soon clamped a censorship on these papers.

President Taft, 1909, wrote to his wife:

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9 Ibid., 3322.
10 James Morton Callahan, American Foreign Policy in Mexico, Macmillan Company, New York, 1932, 511.
11 Congressional Record, 63 Cong., 1st sess., 2232.
13 Rippy, 323.
14 Ibid., 324.
It is inevitable, that in case of a revolution or internecine strife, we should interfere and I sincerely hope that the old man's [Díaz] official life will extend beyond mine, for that trouble would present a problem of the utmost difficulty.  

It was during the Taft years that American capital was seeking foreign outlets. Dollar diplomacy was in vogue. Mexico provided an outlet for surplus capital as well as a market for American manufacturers. Taft's fears of a revolution were to be justified two years later.

In March, 1908, Díaz in an interview with James Creelman of Pearson's Magazine, stated:

...he would welcome the formation of a political party which should put forward an opposition candidate; that he would surrender the power to such a candidate if legally elected.  

This announcement precipitated a storm of political activity in the form of opposition parties. In the fall of 1908, a pamphlet entitled The Presidential Succession of 1910 was published by Francisco I. Madero. It embodied a political reform program, one point of which stressed no reelections for the presidency. The author, Madero, was a member of the privileged classes. His family owned large tracts of land and

16 Priestley, 396.
held vast mining and banking interests. As his book became increasingly popular, he was hailed as the leader of the opposition.

The following April, 1909, Madero and Francisco Vásquez Gómez were nominated for president and vice-president by the anti-reelectionist party. The anti-reelectionist party planned to restore the Constitution, grant freedom of the press, create elective suffrage and stimulate education. As the time for elections drew near, "the old Chief had let it be known that he would again respond to pressure and go through the form of another election in spite of the Creelman interview." Díaz suppressed the party meetings and on July 6, 1910, Madero was jailed on the charge of plotting a rebellion.

On October 4, 1910, the government declared Díaz reelected. But it was clear to many that age had caused him to lose his grip on public affairs. Three days later, Madero, by this time free on bail, jumped his bond, disguised himself as a workman, and crossed the border into the United States. He declared the recent elections null and void and began revolutionary plans. He issued his plan of San Luis Potosí, restating his program and announcing his provisional presi-
dency. He set November 20th as the date for the rebellion. When he recrossed the border, only a small band of armed men joined him; since this was insufficient he returned to San Antonio. A few days later, Francisco Villa, a Mexican bandit defeated state troops in Chihuahua. Villa declared himself a leader of the Madero revolution. Madero reentered Mexico, joined the "Army of the North" and the revolution gained momentum.

On the 9th of May, 1911, Ciudad Juárez was taken and this marked an important victory. Emiliano Zapata, the leader of the peons in the south, took Morelos. Federal troops met everywhere with increasing resistance. May 21, Díaz signed a treaty in which he agreed to resign. On May 25 his resignation was given. Francisco de La Barra, foreign minister, became interim President. His cabinet was a coalition one, containing some Maderistas. He was pledged to hold elections.

In October, elections were held and Madero was elected President. Taft immediately recognized his government. Mexico was in need of many reforms, political, economic, and social. The many malcontents, who had supported Madero, expected him to carry out their various programs. Madero, however, was not primarily a man of action. Priestley states,

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\[20 \text{Tbid., } 401.\]
"The executive authority for which he was temperamentally unadapted was destroying to his nerves." He was unable to please the diverse groups which supported him. The atmosphere was full of criticism. The newspapers urged rebellion. Military leaders conspired against the government:

The successes of the revolution had aroused all the military ambition put under an anaesthetic by the vigor of Díaz. Now, however, all wanted with share of the spoils.

Revolutionists in the south were discontented because no immediate land restoration was made. Madero had promised the peasants land and this he was not able to deliver. It would take time to create a land commission and more time for the commission to work out an acceptable plan. Madero had also stressed the need of improving educational facilities; but there were few teachers to be found. The foreign element was discontented because it was no longer granted concessions with the free hand that characterized the Díaz regime. The científicos and wealthy classes who had benefited by Díaz favoritism were discontent. Many who had joined Madero for mercenary reasons were disappointed at his idealistic administration. Extreme reformers felt that Madero was being too

21 Ibid., 405.
22 Ibid., 408.
23 Callicott, 201.
conciliatory to partisans of Diaz. They wished him to administer 'justice' to the supporters of Diaz. Madero could satisfy no one. "All he had was a sound theory of government, as judged by the constitution, which, as was plain, Mexico was not yet ready to use."  

Madero was not a tyrant; he attempted to give the people democratic rule. This made it easier for the opposition to organize without interference. The newspapers, given freedom from censorship, proceeded to attack Madero. As a result, Madero attempted to introduce a bill to the Chamber of Deputies which would curtail freedom of the press. Such a furor was aroused that the bill was withdrawn.  

In the south, the agrarians of Zapata, impatient for land reforms, took action for themselves. In the north, Orozco, who had been one of Madero's military leaders in the revolution, led a rebellion for landowners. He accused Madero of failing to carry out the Plan of San Luis Potosí. Priestley mentions that "Leaders of the revolution such as Orozco felt snubbed in the matter of appointments." Mexico needed many reforms but Madero had not the strength of

25 Robertson, 467.  
26 Kelley, 219.  
27 Callcott, 204.  
28 Gruening, 95.  
29 Callcott, 202.  
30 Ibid., 206.  
31 Priestley, 406.
character necessary to impose these reforms. Rebellions in both the north and the south continued to harass the administration. 32

On February 9, 1913, General Bernardo Reyes attempted a coup d'etat which was thwarted by Gustavo Madero, brother of the President, and Reyes met his death. "Ten bloody days followed; the capital city was bombarded by revolutionists; thousands of innocent people were slaughtered in the streets." 33

Now the leadership of the rebellious forces fell to Felix Díaz, nephew of the former dictator. While the Díaz forces swelled, General Victoriano Huerta was placed in charge of the palace guard. This was done by García Pena, Minister of War, "rather against the wish of Madero who had no great confidence in the man." 34 Huerta, on the morning of the eleventh, made a pact with Felix Díaz and arranged for the overthrow of the Madero government. 35 They informed the United States Ambassador, Henry Lane Wilson, of their intentions. Then came the ten bloody days of revolution. February 17, 1913, Wilson wired the State Department: "Huerta notifies me to expect some action that will remove Madero from power at any

32 Ibid., 407.
33 Robertson, 469.
34 Priestley, 411.
35 Ibid., 412.
The following day, February 18, Huerta seized the government. During the day, Gustavo Madero was arrested and killed; in the evening, Huerta and Felix Diaz met at the American embassy and drew up plans for the government to be headed by Huerta. Ambassador Wilson wired Washington advising President Taft to recognize the Huerta government. The Taft government was somewhat wary of the Ambassador's part in the proceedings as is evidenced by the message sent from Secretary of State Knox to Henry Lane Wilson on February 20, "General Huerta's consulting you as to the treatment of Madero, tends to give you a certain responsibility in the matter." Madero's removal was hardly distasteful to Ambassador Wilson and the foreign capitalists residing in Mexico. The civil strife and ensuing results had been a matter of great concern to the entire Diplomatic Corps. Madero's inability to control rebellious movements, some of which were anti-American, prevented him from granting the security and protection the foreigners had previously enjoyed. Furthermore, industrial

36 Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1913, 8120. (Hereafter this work will be referred to as Foreign Relations.)
37 Ibid., 1913, 8121.
38 Priestley, 414.
39 Ibid., 407.
operations were seriously hampered by the civil disorders which were taking place. United States capital had employed 1,800,000 Mexicans in 1910. In 1913, 500,000 Mexicans formerly hired by United States capital were unemployed. 40 "Of the 40,000 Americans, ... disclosed as permanent residents, possibly 20,000 were in Mexico at the beginning of March, 1913." 41 The foreign colony looked to Huerta to reestablish order.

Madero's place was taken by a very different type of man. Huerta was decisive, a man of action. His background was very different from that of Madero. Huerta was born of Aztec parentage at Colotlán, Jalisco in 1854. 42 He was discovered in his native town by a General who needed someone for secretarial work. Huerta came to the attention of Díaz and through his influence entered the National Military School from which he graduated in 1891. At one time he headed the Geodetic Survey and at another time was Inspector of the National Railways. 43 He was made a Brigadier General in 1896. His decisive victory over the Orozco forces, who rebelled against Madero, won him military acclaim. He was a Porfirista and knew no other than

40 Callcott, 220.
42 Robertson, 470.
Porfirian methods in suppressing all opposition. However, he was to meet with his strongest opposition in a man beyond his realm, beyond his power of suppression. This man was Woodrow Wilson.

The situation was well described by Edward Bell, who was in Mexico at the time:

Two strong and resourceful men had taken the highest seats in two countries -- strong in different ways, contrasted rather than similar in acumen, widely unlike in experience, and as far apart as possible in their morality.

Thomas Woodrow Wilson was a scholarly, unmilitaristic man. Idealistic theories rather than hard realities governed his actions. He was born, the son of a minister, at Staunton, Virginia in 1856. He studied and practiced law but soon gave it up to become a professor of history at Bryn Mawr. In 1902, Wilson became President of Princeton University. He was elected Governor of New Jersey in 1910. In 1913 he became President of the United States.

His was the first Democratic administration in 16 years. It was up to him, an amateur in politics, to interpret the foreign policy of the party to the world at large. His slight experience in politics had been confined to domestic and local

44 Bell, 211.
issues. He was a man with fixed ideas and, as will be shown later, refused to avail himself of the opinions of authorities.

Only three of the ten men in his cabinet were experienced in the work they were to perform. William Jennings Bryan was made Secretary of State as a gesture to the large faction of the party which he controlled. According to the historian, John Spencer Bassett:

> The Secretary of State was very weak in international law and he never showed that he grasped the foreign situation; but he brought the president a powerful political support at a time when it was needed.\(^4\)

Henry Stoddard, the Washington journalist, writes:

> It is a mercy to Bryan to say little of his career as Secretary of State. That Wilson tolerated him so long is the best tribute I know to Wilson's self-control and patience. Of course, Bryan in the cabinet was politics, but even politics has its limits.\(^5\)

Bryan was decidedly no asset to Wilson in conducting foreign affairs. But Bryan was not responsible for the foreign policy of the Wilson administration. Ray Stannard Baker, friend and biographer of the president, states that:


it was difficult for him [Wilson] to delegate authority, especially in matters which profoundly engaged his interest or awakened his emotions; and he suffered in foreign affairs especially by the weakness of those upon whom a President should have depended with confidence. The devotion, the loyalty and the ideals of Bryan were beyond doubt; but the fact remained that Wilson never allowed any thread of the complicated Mexican situation to escape his own attention.48

Evidently the Mexican policy of the Wilson administration was directly that of Woodrow Wilson himself. His attempt to force democratic principles on Mexico's government was to change the course of Mexican politics for many years.

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEM OF RECOGNITION

The United States, shortly after its establishment, instituted a policy of recognition distinct from that practiced by Europe. This policy, novel though it was, became increasingly important.

"Recognition is the assurance given to a new state that it will be permitted to hold its place and rank in the character of an independent political organism in the society of nations."¹ It is therefore of prime importance to a new government that it be accorded recognition. Should a state fail to be recognized, it would have great difficulty maintaining a position among the nations of the world. Recognition itself devolves on nations other than the state concerned and as such is subject to their attitudes and practices.

European nations in the eighteenth century recognized governments on a de jure basis. Only governments which were established on the basis of legal succession were recognized. Revolutionary governments were denied recognition in favor of

legal claiments. This de jure policy was consistent with monarchical principles underlying European governments. According to monarchical theory, legal authority proceeds from the crown and is transmitted by succession. Thus revolutionary governments would have no authority.

The government of the United States was founded on an entirely different set of principles. The government rests upon the consent of the governed. Legal authority proceeds from the people. The recognition policy of the United States is consistent with these principles. Governments which represent the will of the people possess legal authority and therefore are entitled to recognition.

George Washington, the first president of the United States, expressed his attitude as follows:

...My politics are plain and simple. I think every nation has the Right to establish that form of government under which it conceives. It shall live most happy, provided it infracts no right or is not dangerous to others. And that no governments ought to interfere with the internal concerns of Another, except for the security of what is due to themselves.²


The French Republic, in 1792, gave the United States its first opportunity to express its foreign policy in regard to
recognition. Thomas Jefferson instructed Grouveneur Morris, our minister to France:

It accords with our principles to acknowledge any government to be rightful, which is formed by the will of the nation substantially declared.  

Again, in a letter to Morris, Jefferson wrote:

We surely cannot deny to any nation that right whereon our government is founded, that everyone may govern itself according to whatever form it pleases, and change these forms at its own will... The will of the nation is the only essential thing to be regarded. 

Jefferson followed the logical assumption that this government being established by revolution, it was rightful for the United States to acknowledge other governments so formed by the will of the people.

So the de facto policy of recognition was inaugurated. A government's right to existence and recognition was predicated on the fact that it existed and represented the popular will. Once the nation had committed itself to the use of the de facto policy, this policy was put into frequent practice. The republican governments of South America were recognized as one by one they shook off the Spanish yoke.

4 Ibid., 143.
This was at first in the face of strong disapproval from the Central European powers. They continued, in Europe, to follow the de jure policy and discouraged the formation of new governments, by putting down insurrections in Spain (1823), Naples (1820), Piedmont (1821).

Our attitude is clearly stated in a letter from Van Buren, then Secretary of State, to Mr. Moore, minister to Colombia:

Your business is solely concerned with the actual government of the country where you are to reside, and you should sedulously endeavor, by a frank and courteous deportment to conciliate its esteem and secure its confidence. So far as we are concerned, that which is the government de facto is equally so de jure. 5

The policy was further amplified by Buchanan in 1848:

In its intercourse with foreign nations, the government of the United States, has, from its origin, always recognized de facto governments. We recognize the right of all nations to create and re-form their political institutions according to their own will and pleasure. We do not go behind the existing government to involve ourselves in the question of legitimacy. It is sufficient to know that a government exists capable of maintaining itself; and then its recognition on our part inevitably follows. 6

5 Moore, I, 137.
6 Mr. Buchanan, Secretary of State, to Mr. Rush, March 31, 1848.
Eventually, the European powers began to see possibilities in the de facto policy. In 1861, Britain recognized the belligerency of the Confederate government. William Seward, Secretary of State, was disconcerted by this use of our recognition policy:

Revolutions in Republican States ought not to be accepted until the people have adopted them by organic law with the solemnities which would seem sufficient to guarantee them stability and permanency.\(^7\)

Had Seward's interpretation been applied to cases involving recognition of Latin American Governments, our policy would have been greatly altered. It did have its effect though, in a few instances. The United States refused recognition to the government of Maximilian in Mexico, on the grounds that the government did not represent the will of the people and that it violated the Monroe Doctrine. Another break in the traditional policy occurred in 1885 in regard to Nicaragua which had just been victimized by William Walker and his associates. Mr. Marcy, Secretary of State, wrote to Mr. Wheeler:

It appears that a band of foreign adventurers has invaded that happy country...and now

pretends to be in possession of
the sovereign authority. The know-
ledge we have of the proceedings
does not authorize the President
to recognize it as the de facto
government of Nicaragua, and he
cannot hold, or permit to hold, in
your official character, any politi-
cal intercourse with the persons now
claiming to exercise the sovereign
authority of that State.

Unfortunately, Mr. Wheeler had already implied recognition and
was compelled to retract that implication.

The various Mexican governments, from the monarchy of
Iturbide through the Republican administrations up to the
time of Maximilian, had been recognized by the United States.
As has been mentioned, Maximilian's administration was not
recognized. The following Presidents, Juárez and Lerdo de
Tejada, had been recognized. In 1876, Porfirio Díaz became
Chief Executive. The United States, under the administration
of President Hayes, denied him recognition for two years,
until April, 1878, because of turbulent border conditions.

The United States recognition policy fell under a shadow
when the hastily organized Republic of Panama was recognized
by Theodore Roosevelt in 1904. The fact that the United States
immediately signed a treaty with the newly proclaimed republic

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8 Mr. Marcy to Mr. Wheeler, United States Minister to
Nicaragua, November 8, 1885. House Doc. 103, 34 Cong. 1 sess. 35.
9 Rippy, 298.
indicated its approval if not its complicity in the establishment of the state. This incident brought about distrust of the Yankee Colossus.

In February, 1904, the Hague Tribunal handed down a decision regarding the collection of foreign debts from Venezuela which had defaulted. It set down the principle that a nation had the right to use force to collect debts from another nation. As the Latin American nations frequently defaulted on their financial obligations the western hemisphere could expect European intervention in the future. Rather than let this happen, for such an event would violate the spirit of the Monroe Doctrine, the United States resolved to intervene itself and see that such debts were paid. This was the famous Roosevelt corollary. Theodore Roosevelt, in a message to the Senate, February 15, 1905, said that if an aggrieved nation undertook to collect its debts it would be necessary to effect a blockade, a bombardment, or seize the customs houses of the defaulting nation. This would actually be temporary possession of the latter nation.

The United States then becomes a party in interest, because under the Monroe Doctrine, it cannot see

any European power seize and permanently occupy the territory of one of these republics; and yet such seizure of territory, disguised or undisguised, may eventually offer the only way in which the power in question can collect any debts, unless there is interference on the part of the United States. 12

Thus intervention in case of financial emergency was made part of United States Latin American foreign policy.

In 1907 eight Peace Conventions between the Central American Republics were signed at Washington. These were drawn up under the good offices of the United States and Mexico. Though neither of these parties signed the agreements they were morally bound, because of their sponsorship, to live up to the principles set forth. 13 One of these principles was an agreement not to recognize revolutionary governments until they became legalized by free elections. This would constitute a restraining influence on the United States recognition policy.

That the above principle was not adhered to may be seen in the following incident which occurred during the administration of President Taft who succeeded Theodore Roosevelt. In 1909 President Zelaya of Nicaragua attempted to cancel a United States mining concession. Shortly afterwards a

12 Foreign Relations, 1905, 334.
13 Bemis, 161.
rebellion against President Zelaya broke out. It had the sympathy of the said United States mining concession.14 Zelaya's army captured two citizens of the United States who held commissions in the revolutionary army. They were court-martialed and executed. President Taft sent the marines to Nicaragua to protect American interests there. Zelaya was overthrown and the succeeding government was recognized by the United States. Taft's intervention was not calculated to inspire trust in the Latin American policy of the United States nor undue respect for its recognition party.

Recognition of a foreign power is a prerogative of the executive branch of the government. The Constitution of the United States does not explicitly mention this power. It is inferred from the following statements in the Constitution relating to the powers of the President: "...he shall receive ambassadors and other public ministers"15 and "...he shall nominate and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate shall appoint ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls..."16 If the President does not appoint representatives to a foreign government nor receive ambassadors from that government, it is not recognized according to international law.17

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14 Ibid., 162.
15 The Constitution of the United States, Article I, section 3.
16 Ibid., Article II, section 2.
17 Moore, I, 72.
From the foregoing, it can be seen that the de facto recognition policy suffered from time to time according to the interpretation of the men who were charged with executing the policy. Recognition depended on two things; existence of the government and acceptance of it by the people. Prior to the Civil War, little attention was paid to the origin or nature of new governments. After the Civil War, a little more caution was employed with regard to recognizing governments of unsavory origins and undesirable natures. However, political facts and not morality dictated the policy. By the twentieth century, Europe too, followed the de facto policy, especially in regard to the turbulent South American republics.

The de facto policy was to undergo further changes under the administration of President Woodrow Wilson. He was intensely serious in his assumption of official responsibilities. He believed public morality as important as private morality. As a public servant, he intended to raise the level of public morality. He believed that morality should govern international principles. Several years earlier, in his book, The State, he had written of international law:

> It is simply the body of rules, developed out of the common moral judgements of the race which ought to govern nations in their dealings with each other.\(^{18}\)

The Huerta government of Mexico presented President Wilson with an early opportunity to put his theory into practice.

Victoriano Huerta assumed power in Mexico on February 18, 1913, following the overthrow of the constitutional government of Francisco I. Madero. Three days later, Henry Lane Wilson, the United States Ambassador to Mexico, urged the government at Washington to grant immediate recognition to the new government. On February 23, Madero, then in custody of General Huerta, was shot. President Taft declined to take any action which might possibly prove embarrassing to his successor. Philander Knox, Secretary of State, wrote to President-elect Wilson:

Any formal act of recognition is to be avoided just at present. In the meantime, this government is considering the question in the light of the usual tests applied to such cases, important among which is the question of degree to which the population assents to the new regime and the question of disposition and ability to protect foreigners and their interests and to respond to all international obligations.19

It is probable that the Taft administration felt that Huerta would be recognized eventually. This is true especially in view of the fact that the American colony in Mexico City seemed to approve of him. At the moment, it was better to let

19 Foreign Relations, 1913, 748.
things rest until the scandal of Madero's death had died down.

Woodrow Wilson assumed the presidency in March, 1913. His was the first Democratic administration since that of Cleveland. He sounded the keynote of his foreign policy in a statement given out a few days after his inauguration.

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...

We hold...that just government rests always upon the consent of the governed, and that there can be no freedom without order based upon law and upon the public conscience and approval...We shall lend our influence of every kind to the realization of these principles in fact and practice...We can have no sympathy with those who seek to seize the power of government to advance their own personal interests or ambition...

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...21

20 See page 13.
21 Foreign Relations, 1913, 7.
This message presaged many things. It sounded the death knell of dollar diplomacy. It indicated that the United States would oppose any Latin American government which did not represent the will of the people. The mention of those who "seize the power of government to advance their own personal interests" seemed to be a veiled indictment of Huerta.

The Huerta issue was pressing to be settled. Henry Lane Wilson, the Ambassador appointed by the previous administration and representative of Republican policies, sent dispatches urging recognition. He prepared a statement advising recognition which would embody the following terms: that international questions such as those regarding the Chamazel and the Colorado River be settled; that an international claims commission be appointed to deal with affairs caused by the revolution; that there be a guarantee that presidential elections be held; that order and peace be restored to the 26th parallel; and finally that American troops be allowed to cross the 26th parallel to establish order.22

Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson further supported his requests for recognition of the Huerta government on the basis of its legality. Huerta's government was legal. President Madero and Vice-President Suárez had resigned. Pedro

22 Congressional Record, 63 Cong., 2 sess., Sen. Doc. 6975.
Lascurain, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, then succeeded to the presidency as provided for under the constitution. He assumed office, appointed General Huerta Minister of the Interior and then resigned. Thus Huerta, as far as the Mexicans were concerned, succeeded to the presidency in a constitutional manner.

President Wilson, however, was unimpressed by what he considered Huerta's technical pretentions to legality. He referred to Huerta as a usurper: "Usurpations like that of General Huerta menace the peace and development of America as nothing else could."23 According to the peace Conventions of 1907, by which the United States was morally bound, revolutionary governments were not to be recognized until they were legalized by free elections. Josephus Daniels, Wilson's Secretary of the Navy, stated:

Wilson and Bryan had come to the firm conviction that it would be wrong from every consideration to recognize the usurper. They were confident that the masses of Mexicans were opposed to him.24

Wilson disapproved of Huerta's method of obtaining power and held him responsible for Madero's death. Priestley states:

In spite of all his [Huerta's] protestations, it is recognized

23 Foreign Relations, 1914, 443.
that the moral responsibility for the occurrence rested upon him. It formed the basis of the determination of the Democratic administration of the United States not to recognize him...

On the other hand, Colonel House, the President's advisor, Huntington Wilson, the Assistant Secretary of State, in charge of Latin American Affairs, and John Bassett Moore, Counselor for the State Department, urged de facto recognition. 26

The European nations, after waiting vainly for a sign from Washington, took the initiative themselves. Great Britain recognized Huerta's government with an autographed letter from the king. Sir Lionel Carden was named British Minister to Mexico. Recognition followed by Spain, China, Italy, Germany, Portugal, Belgium, Norway, Russia, Japan and most of the Latin American countries. Sir Lionel Carden represented an active British colony in Mexico City. The lion of this colony was Lord Cowdray, the oil magnate. 27 He and his associates ardently supported the Huerta administration. 28

Still the United States refused to grant its approval to the Mexican government. The world waited for action on the

25 Priestley, 418.
26 Bemis, 175. Daniels, 180.
27 Bell, 344.
28 Ibid., 348.
part of the Wilson administration but none was forthcoming. President Wilson was exercising his belief that international principles should be based on morality and he considered the Huerta government deeply immoral. Wilson defended his stand on the grounds that the Huerta government was not constitutional; that it did not represent the wishes of the people. In an address to Congress, August 27, 1913, he said:

The territory in some sort controlled by the provisional authorities at Mexico City has grown smaller, not larger. The prospect of the pacification of the country, even by arms, has seemed to grow more and more remote; and its pacification by the authorities at the capital is evidently impossible by any other means than force.

Ray Baker writes that Wilson decided that Huerta must be removed:

No real peace, or order, or stability was possible so long as the control rested in the hands of a tyrant who was in no way responsible to the people and against whom a large portion of the people were in actual rebellion.

That Huerta did not control the country, he felt, was evidenced by the presence of rebel leaders such as Villa and

30 Address to Joint Session of Congress, August 27, 1913.
31 Baker, IV, 263.
Carranza in the northern part of the country and Zapata in the south.

The issue between Wilson and Huerta took on a personal aspect. Baker, Wilson’s confidant, said:

While Wilson fought on principles -- his conviction of the ultimate rightness of his cause added immeasurably to his power -- it is also true that some of his greatest struggles tended to become personal encounters...In the present struggle it was Huerta. Huerta must go.32

Pancho Villa had become prominent when he took Chihuahua in support of Madero’s revolution in 1911. He and Madero had joined forces. Now he and Venustiano Carranza joined forces against Huerta. Carranza had been governor of Coahuila. During the Díaz regime he had regularly received money from the federal treasury to maintain local troops. By use of a device known as the padded army list, whereby non-existent men are placed on the payroll, Carranza netted a tidy little sum. When Madero came into power he discontinued these payments. At the time of Huerta’s assumption of power, Carranza agreed to recognize Huerta if the army payments would be resumed. When Huerta did not make these payments, Carranza seized 50,000 pesos from the State Banks. Huerta demanded an

32 Ibid., 311.
explanation, though the banks were not under his jurisdiction, and Carranza revolted. The Carranza forces called themselves the Constitutionalists. The leader of the agrarian movement in the south was a peón, Emiliano Zapata.

President Wilson held a firm opinion with regard to revolutions. He believed that, "Revolution was only righteous when it was necessary to establish liberty and self-government; it had no place in a democracy; it was deeply wrong when it was resorted to against constitutional government." Evidently Wilson did not see anything wrong with Carranza's rebellion against Huerta whom the Mexicans considered their President. Wilson seemed to apply his definition to selected people. He believed that Madero's revolution had been necessary to overthrow the tyranny of Díaz and to establish self-government for the people. He believed that Madero had established self-government and that Huerta's seizure of the government was unjust. It was unjustified because it overthrew the constitutional government. He felt that Madero's revolution was justifiable and therefore morally right; the Huerta revolution was unjustifiable and therefore morally wrong.

33 Kelley, 227-229.
34 Notter, 228.
35 Ibid., 228.
Wilson believed that governments purporting to be democratic should choose their executives by elections. He apparently did not understand that an election, in the North American sense of the term, was almost impossible in Mexico. The people were not educated to a democratic form of government. No democratic elections had ever taken place. Samuel Flagg Bemis, authority on diplomatic relations, states:

In many Latin American countries, not to mention the rest of the world, governments have been republican only in form and letter. Once ensconced in constitutional authority, a government, that is to say a strong man, by control of electoral machinery, the police and the army, can extend his power under color of the constitution. To deny the right of revolution against such a regime would be to frustrate real self-government.

The usual method of ascending to the presidency was by revolution. President Wilson was judging Latin American politics by Anglo-American standards.

Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson was greatly disturbed by the attitude of the administration. The ambassador was a Republican appointee. He was experienced in Latin American politics and could see no resemblance between the policy of the administration and the practical aspects of the case. He later wrote:

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36 Bemis, 173.
37 Ibid., 173.
It is not an easy matter to interpret or define the attitude or policy of the Wilson administration toward Mexico... That policy transmitted into effect meant simply that no government established in Mexico by a revolution would be recognized by the American government if, according to our own estimate, the revolution were unjustified... the dictum amounted to a subversion of the sovereignty of Mexico.38

Ambassador Wilson's attitude was shared by many others who felt that the policy of withholding recognition could be of no possible benefit to either Mexico or the United States, especially as the other powers had already granted recognition.39

President Wilson believed that the British government in granting recognition had been influenced by commercial interests. This suspicion was based on the fact that Sir Lionel Carden, the British Ambassador, was connected with oil interests which had Mexican concessions. Wilson was determined to terminate "dollar diplomacy."40 Ray Baker explains Wilson's attitude:

What Wilson saw... when the unexpected foreign problems confronted him, was that the same

38 Henry Lane Wilson, Diplomatic Episodes in Mexico, Belgium and Chile, Doubleday, Page and Company, New York, 1927, 304.
39 Bell, 137.
40 Bell, 137.
forces were arrayed against him in the foreign field as at home. The very same men! He had attacked in his campaign the 'interlocking directorates' of powerful bankers and capitalists which controlled the trusts, the railroads, public utilities. He had only to scratch the surface of the situation in Mexico and China to discover the same force at work.41

Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson represented the very faction that Wilson hated. The Ambassador was known to be an advocate of "dollar diplomacy." He had been appointed by William Howard Taft, who practiced the theory of "dollar diplomacy." The duty of the Ambassador was to protect American interests in Mexico. Henry Lane Wilson felt that a strong ruler in Mexico was better than none at all. Order was necessary to protect American nationals and investments. Henry Lane Wilson's brother, former Senator John Wilson, was intimate with Ballinger, who was a close friend of the Guggenheims.42 The Guggenheims had commercial interests in Mexico.43 The Ambassador was known to be a spokesman for the commercial interests in Mexico. He continually urged the recognition of the Huerta government. He had, on at least one occasion, urged Madero to resign and had championed Huerta's assumption of power.44 Rippy states that:

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41 Baker, IV, 60.
42 Bell, 137.
43 Gruening, 561.
44 Priestley, 412.
Wilson pressed his demands for claims upon a bankrupt government, urged Madero to resign and apparently sought to terrorize him by the menace of armed intervention. He felt that an orderly government would better protect United States interests and investments.

The non-recognition policy of the United States had the effect of retarding economic transactions in Mexico. The government itself was in need of a loan, which other nations refused to grant, pending the uncertainty of United States recognition. Such a loan was necessary to finance army action against the insurgents in the north of the country. Likewise, industry was suffering from lack of fresh foreign investments. Advocates of recognition accused the United States of deliberately contributing to economic hardship in Mexico. The President's supporters countered with the reply that if Huerta's government was as strong as purported to be and if it really represented the will of the people it would not be of prime importance whether it was recognized or not.

David Houston, a member of Wilson's cabinet, wrote:

There was much uproar among certain elements of the United States over this policy of watchful waiting. There were many who were anxious

45 Rippy, 345.
to see Huerta recognized. They thought that if he were supported he might sustain himself, restore order, and become a second Díaz. 46

While American commercial interests might welcome a "second Díaz," such a regime could hardly solve the problems of the Mexicans.

Early in May, 1913, Jonas Spreyer, a New York banker, called on the State Department regarding a $10,000,000 loan to Mexico which was to mature in June. Mr. Spreyer feared that without United States recognition, Huerta would be unable to borrow the money to repay the loans; that serious trouble might result, the Huerta government might collapse and the United States would have to intervene. 47

Also in May, the President received a communication representing American business interests in Mexico. Some of these interests were Phelps, Dodge and Company (mining), Greene Cananea Copper Company, the Southern Pacific Railway, and the American Petroleum Company. 48 These interests suggested that the United States recognize Huerta in return for which Huerta would agree to hold a fair election sooner than October, the time Huerta had set for the next elections. This would ensure stability. Huerta was already de facto

47 Baker, 349.
48 Baker, IV, 253.
authority and as such was capable of carrying out the agreement. This would put an end to the civil war which was destroying the country. The communication also stated that other nations were undermining the influence of the United States in Mexico while it withheld recognition. For a while, Wilson toyed with the idea of assenting to this plan. He went so far as to draw up a recommendation embodying its features, but for some reason never submitted it to his cabinet.

The question of Madero's death was also discussed at great length. Huerta disclaimed all responsibility for Madero's death. However, most of the American public felt that he was implicated by the facts. Madero was shot while in custody of Huerta; and Huerta stood to profit most by Madero's death. Huerta issued a statement explaining the incident:

...Madero and Pino Suárez... were taken to the penitentiary... When the automobiles had traversed about two-thirds of the way to the penitentiary, they were attacked by an armed group and the escort descended from the machines to offer resistance.

Suddenly the group grew

49 Ibid., IV, 246.
50 Ibid., IV, 247.
51 Priestley, 417.
52 Ibid., 318.
larger and the prisoners tried to escape. An exchange of shots then took place in which one of the attacking party was killed, two were wounded and both prisoners were killed. 53

Ambassador Wilson accepted Huerta's version of the tragedy. 54

He pointed to a case of bloodshed in which Madero had been involved.

The American Ambassador, and the British, Spanish, and German Ministers urged Madero to resign when they learned that his officers were disloyal. The Mexican Senate made a similar request. Madero ignored these and had two of his officers, Colonels Riverol and Izquierdo, killed. 55 It may be noted that Madero executed men who had plotted against the constitutional government. There is no similarity between the deaths of Colonels Riverol and Izquierdo and the death of Madero.

In an interview with a reporter, ex-president Taft spoke with regard to the personal guilt of the Mexican administration:

Wilson ought to have recognized Huerta in the first place. Of course, it wouldn't do any good now. It's all very noble and

53 Bell, 318.
55 Ibid, 148.
altruistic to say that you won't shake a blood stained hand, but where in Mexico, right now, is he going to find any other kind of hand to shake? 56

Ambassador Wilson pointed out that citizens of the United States were lending aid to the revolutionary elements in the northern Mexican states. There were also radical elements in the United States who advocated intervention and would assist the northern states to become independent so that in time they could become incorporated in the United States. The Ambassador further stated that while such elements were in the minority, the fact of our withholding recognition gave weight to the rumor that the administration supported such a group. 57

In the House of Representatives, the President met with opposition, especially, on the part of the Republican party, to his recognition policy. Representative Ainey, Republican from Pennsylvania, attacked the new policy on the grounds that it departed from the traditional practice as set forth in the message of President Pierce to Congress, May 15, 1856:

It is the established policy of the United States to recognize all governments without question of their source or organization, or of

56 Charles Willis Thompson, Presidents I've Known and Two Near Presidents, Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis, 1929, 245.
the means by which the governing persons obtain their power provided there by a government de facto accepted by the people of the country. 58

Representative Ainey charged that it was more necessary to apply that rule to the Spanish American people in consideration of the frequent and "not seldom anomalous changes of organization or administration which they undergo and the revolutionary character of most of the changes." 59 However, Representative Ainey took no notice of the final clause which stated that the government should "be accepted by the people." On the other hand, it is true that little attention has been paid to that particular sentiment in recognizing Latin American governments which had been set up since. This was probably due to the difficulty of ascertaining public opinion in the Latin American nations which are composed of rural populations lacking adequate communications and publicity facilities.

On one occasion Representative Ainey denounced Wilson's recognition policy in the following terms:

Starting with a false promise which has led him to run counter to approved diplomatic precedents in refusing to recognize the de facto government of General Huerta

58 Quoted in Congressional Record, 63 Cong. 2 sess. Febr. 25, 1914, 3927.
59 Ibid., 3927.
and in making demands so drastic in character and contrary to the announced and longstanding policy of non-interference of this government as to be in themselves under the law of nations acts of war, the President has found himself unsupported by a single nation other than the negative support which may be implied by the obedience of three South American Republics to the request of the United States to withhold for the present their recognition of General Huerta.60

Another critic of Wilson's Mexican policy in the House of Representatives was Representative Mondell of Wyoming, also a Republican. He charged the administration's foreign policy with lack of integrity. International policy, he said, was not consistent with Mexican policy:

We maintain the friendliest relations with a man in power in China...who recently dismissed a parliament.

We have recently recognized as President of Peru a man who has not half the constitutional claim or right to authority that Huerta has in Mexico.61

The London Times declared:

The only thing that seems certain is that neither Gen. Huerta nor any other president will be recognized until there has been a regular election.

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60 Ibid., March 25, 1914, 5494.
61 Ibid., February 27, 1914, 4050.
The determination of the administration in this regard is bitterly regretted by those who know Mexico. 62

Thus the policy of President Wilson remained incomprehensible to men who were used to dealing with hard facts and not the interpretation of principles. Nevertheless, Wilson remained steadfast. How Walter Hines Page defended the policy to Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary, is mentioned in a letter to Woodrow Wilson:

I have explained to him how the policy that we all too easily have followed for a long time of recognizing any sort of adventurer in Latin America had, of course, simply encouraged revolutions; that you had found something better than any mere policy, namely, a principle; that policies change but principles do not. 63

So passed the first phase of Wilson's recognition policy in Mexico. Wilson had seized this opportunity to uphold morality in international principles. Unfortunately, he chose to exercise his policy in regard to a country which had not yet achieved democracy. The principles and institutions which had formulated Wilson's political theories, were alien to the conditions and institutions characteristic of Mexico. When President Wilson recognized the revolutionary government

62 London Daily Times; July 14, 1913, 8.
of Peru in February, 1914 his critics accused him of inconsistency. However, Wilson evidently classed the situation in Peru on a par with that which had taken place when Madero overthrew Díaz; for Bryan had written him:

It appears that the President of Peru was ousted, not only by an ambitious despot, but by members of the Congress, supported by the army against the president who wished to be the dictator. The coup d'état met the approval of congress, judiciary, clergy and people. Order was restored under the de facto government. 64

64 William Jennings Bryan to Woodrow Wilson, February 11, 1914, Baker, IV, 251.
CHAPTER III
AUGUST 1913-JULY 1914

After five months, President Wilson's policy of non-recognition had produced no tangible results. In August, 1913, he resolved to take a more positive course of action. He told Ray Baker, his friend and biographer, that:

His [Wilson's] Mexican policy was based upon two of the most deeply rooted convictions of his life. First, his shame as an American over the first Mexican War, and his resolution that there should never be another such predatory enterprise. Second, upon his belief in the principle laid down in the Virginia Bill of Rights, that a people has the right to do as they damn please with their own affairs. He wanted to give the Mexicans a chance to try.

'It may prove,' he said, 'that we shall have to go in finally and make peace.' He... said, that the greatest trouble was not with Mexico, but with people here in America who wanted the oil and metals in Mexico and were seeking intervention in order to get them. 1

Wilson had indicated his disapproval of the Mexican War many years earlier when he referred to it as a "war of ruthless

1 Baker, IV, 74.
aggrandizement." Yet at that very moment the United States Marines occupied Nicaragua. Later in his administration, United States troops would occupy Santo Domingo, Haiti, and Mexico itself.

In Nicaragua the customs were administered by a United States agent and marines had been there since the Taft administration. Santo Domingo was in a state of insurrection. Secretary of State Bryan announced, March 1913, that the United States would intervene if an unconstitutional group should seize power. Evidently the Wilson administration considered itself the sole judge of whether or not a government was constitutional. The United States sent troops to Santo Domingo in 1914. Wilson's administration was also to intervene in Haiti in 1915 after a bloody revolution against President Villbrun Sam, who had been recognized by the European powers but not by the United States. In spite of Wilson's avowals to let nations settle their own affairs, the United States intervened frequently in Latin American politics during his administration.

His statement that the Mexicans had a right to do as they

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3 Bemis, 190.
4 Ibid., 192.
pleased in Mexico was contradicted by his action, taken that same month, August 1913, of sending John Lind to Mexico with proposals pertinent to reorganizing its government.

Wilson had a peculiar method of dealing with problems which were unfamiliar to him. He did not desire advice or guidance or even information. He was himself an amateur in politics and knew little about foreign affairs; yet he refused to take the advice of authorities or even listen to them. Henry Stoddard, a Washington journalist, stated that Wilson hated to listen to suggestions and gave as his reason that he did not want his actions nor his mind swayed by personalities. Charles Thompson, another Washington journalist, wrote:

Nobody who was competent to tell him the truth could get his ear, could even get to his presence. It soon became a stock joke among people who came to Washington eager to lay their knowledge of Mexican conditions before him that the only way to get to him was to tell Tumulty [his secretary] that you had never been in Mexico.

Thompson further asserts that once Wilson made up his mind to something he did not want to hear any information which might upset his decision. "Consequently he refused to consult the Ambassador to Mexico or take information from a lesser official. Instead he sent unofficial emissaries as

5 Thompson, 253.
6 Stoddard, 483.
7 Thompson, 681.
inexperienced as himself."\(^8\)

He had decided to send a personal representative to Mexico, someone who would see the situation at first hand and report to him. His first choice was William Bayard Hale, a prominent journalist. Ray Baker says of him, "...a brilliant journalist who was, however, temperamentally unfitted for such a task."\(^9\) Hale felt that there was some connection between Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson and General Huerta. He recommended that the Ambassador be withdrawn.\(^10\) It was a peculiar situation, a personal representative of the President criticizing and judging a duly appointed Ambassador. As a result the Ambassador was recalled. The presence, in Mexico, of William Hale can hardly have been a pleasure to Ambassador Wilson and other accredited officials. Hale was very unpopular with the Mexicans. "Violent denunciations [of him] filled the Mexican newspapers for several days."\(^11\) William Bayard Hale further recommended that the United States intervene to establish order in Mexico, as it had in Cuba, Nicaragua, and Santo Domingo.

Woodrow Wilson considered himself an advocate of non-intervention and so rather than accede to Hale's plan he sent

\(^8\) Ibid., 681.
\(^9\) Baker, IV, 243.
\(^10\) Ibid., IV, 255.
\(^11\) Chicago Daily Tribune, August 18, 1913, 2.
yet another envoy to Mexico. There was no precedent for sending personal representatives to transact state business; yet Wilson did not consult congress nor inform it of his plans. 12

After Wilson had been in office a short time it was suggested that he establish better relations with congress by discussing policies with them. He stated:

I can make better headway by giving consideration to my own ideas, whipping them into shape, testing them out in my own way, and insuring their adoption by their own fairness and merit. I waste no time while I am engaged in such a work. 13

The egotism expressed in such works is undeniable. It explains why he did not consult congress in selecting his newest envoy to Mexico. The man chosen was John Lind, former Governor of Minnesota and a Bryan man. Lind was a man with no diplomatic experience, no familiarity with Latin American affairs, and no ability to converse in Spanish. He lacked the obvious qualities necessary for his extraordinary mission. Edith O'Shaughnessy, wife of the Mexican Charge d'affairs, puts it very aptly: Lind's "entry on the Mexican stage was certainly abrupt, and the setting completely unfamiliar, so some very natural barking of shins was the result." 14

Charles Thompson

12 Thompson, 261.
13 Stoddard, 481.
14 O'Shaughnessy, 3.
writes of Lind:

A more unfit person could not have been sent, nor one mentally and constitutionally less capable of understanding Mexicans or treating with them, than this honest Minnesota Scandinavian.15

Lind was sent with a set of proposals to present to General Huerta. These proposals were placed in Huerta's hands August 14. A preface stated that the United States could no longer stand inactive while conditions continued to get worse in Mexico; that Huerta did not represent the people; and finally, that Mexico was no longer in a position to fulfill her foreign obligations. The proposal itself stated that an armistice between the revolutionary parties in Mexico must be effected; Huerta must pledge himself not to be a candidate and agree to abide by the result of the election.16 It did not explain how an election could be considered free when one of the candidates was not allowed to run; and it took a great deal upon itself in stating that Huerta did not represent the will of the people. Woodrow Wilson was hardly qualified to judge the unexpressed will of the Mexican people.

Two days later, Lind received a reply from the Mexican Foreign Minister, Gamboa. The reply was couched in diplomatic terms which pointedly revealed the lack of logic embodied in

15 Thompson, 261.
16 Congressional Record, 63 Cong., 1 sess., 3803.
the Wilsonian proposals. In answer to the avowal of friendship and peace, Gamboa pointed out that the nations were not at war. It is not customary for one nation to send to another nation an unofficial envoy avowing peace and then proceeding to lay down terms for the latter nation to follow in regard to domestic policies.

Answering the charge that Huerta did not represent the people, the Mexican minister pointed out that Huerta controlled 18 out of 27 states, the three territories and the Federal District. As for fulfilling international obligations, no complaints had been registered by any other nation. Mexico was meeting all creditors. The domestic trouble affected only itself. An armistice, Gamboa stated, could be applied only to warring factions not to bandits such as were troubling Mexico. Gamboa also mentioned that evidently the United States regarded Huerta as de facto President since it asked him to exercise the prerogative of holding an election. As for Huerta's candidacy, it could be determined only at the polls. Gamboa's message said:

Inasmuch as the government of the United States is willing to act in the most disinterested friendship, it will be difficult for it to find a more propitious opportunity than the following: if it would only watch that no material and monetary assistance is given to rebels who find refuge, conspire and provide themselves
with arms and food on the other side of the border; if it would demand from its minor and local authorities strictest observance of the neutrality laws, I assure you, Mr. Confidential Agent, that the complete pacification of this republic would be accomplished within a relatively short time. 17

Wilson had professed his interest in abating civil strife in Mexico and yet much of that strife was initiated within the border of the United States where he had the power to stop such action.

On the 25th of August, Lind sent another note to Gamboa asking for only two concessions; that an election be held, as previously announced, on October 26th, in accordance with the constitution and that Huerta would not run for office. The note further implied that if these proposals were accepted it would be made relatively easy for Mexico to obtain a much needed loan from the United States. 18

If Mexico acts immediately and favorably upon the foregoing suggestions, President Wilson will express to American bankers the assurances that the Government of the United States will look with favor upon an immediate loan to Mexico. 19

17 Foreign Relations, 1913, 825.
19 Bell, 361.
Wilson who had such high ideals in regard to government was insulting the Mexicans by assuming that they would sell their sovereignty for a much needed loan. It is interesting to note that when President Wilson revealed the contents of his notes to Mexico, before the United States Congress, he omitted to mention this offer of a loan. To this latest note, Gamboa replied by pointing out that under the constitution Huerta was forbidden to run for office and furthermore that the Mexican government could get along without any such tainted loans. He responded:

...the United States of America insinuates that it will recommend to American bankers the immediate extension of a loan...to the end that, moved by petty interests we should renounce a right which incontrovertably upholds us at a period when the dignity of a nation is at stake.

The right Gamboa spoke of was Mexico's right to choose its own government without interference. Wilson's proposal was considered a publicly offered bribe.

Lind's mission had served to do nothing more than increase the friction between the Mexican and United States governments. Huerta was incensed because Wilson sent down a man who was an unaccredited representative of the United States to do business

20 Ibid., 361.
21 Bell, 362.
22 Priestley, 422.
with the Mexican government, which the United States government did not recognize as existing. Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson wrote that John Lind was an insult to authorities in his demands upon Huerta to step from office. He was further incensed by the nature of the proposals Lind conveyed to him. To Huerta, these proposals seemed to be a mere interference in the domestic concerns of the Mexican nation.

The American public mistrusted Lind because of his lack of qualifications and the secrecy involved in his mission. One of the papers wrote:

...Mr. Lind is an able and high-minded man but no other government would dream of selecting a representative upon grounds of a mere political favor or private merit...24

Meanwhile Congress was protesting the secrecy of the Mexican negotiations. While it was the Chief Executive's right to deal with foreign states the Senate felt that it had a right to be informed. The Foreign Relations Committee felt it should have some part in advising the President or at least some knowledge of his activities in regard to Mexico. Senator Gallinger, Republican from New Hampshire, protested:

I have sometimes wondered...
if it might not be well for the President to take the Senate into

23 Henry Lane Wilson, Errors With Reference to Mexico, 148.
24 Chicago Daily Tribune, August 11, 1913, 14.
his confidence and communicate to this body through some source — properly the Committee on Foreign Relations in executive session — precisely what the instructions were that were given to Mr. Lind.\(^{25}\)

Senator Fall remarked:

> I realize as everyone else does, that the details of negotiations of a diplomatic character must necessarily be kept from the public.

> It will be very much better (in my opinion) to follow the advice of one of the men who said...that it was the duty and much the best policy that the President take into confidence...the Senate of the United States in such matters as this Mexican problem.\(^{26}\)

President Wilson addressed Congress on August 27, 1913, answering their demands for information concerning Lind's activities. He disclosed the instructions he had given to Lind and also stated that the proposals had been rejected. The only course left was to urge all Americans to leave Mexico and to protect those who refused to leave. In this message he first mentions his policy of "watchful waiting":

> We have waited many months, months full of peril and anxiety, for the conditions there to improve, and they have not improved...the prospect of the pacification of the country, even by arms, has seemed to

\(^{25}\) Congressional Record, 63 Cong., 1 sess., 3570.

\(^{26}\) Ibid., 3570.
grow more and more remote... It was our duty to volunteer our good offices — to offer to assist... in effecting some arrangement which would bring relief and peace and set up a universally acknowledged political authority there.27

Wilson ignored the Mexican charges that the United States was not enforcing the neutrality laws. He told the Congress that he had volunteered the good offices of the United States. The fact that an unofficial envoy, a personal representative of the President, rather than an accredited official was sent seems to belie the "good offices." His good offices seemed to consist in laying down conditions for the authorities in Mexico to follow. Except for the United States and a few satellite Latin American states, the Huerta government was the universally acknowledged authority in Mexico.

Senator Works of California criticized the President's actions as follows:

Now why should these propositions be made to Huerta? According to the position we had taken, he was only a private citizen of a foreign country without any official standing or authority... first was a demand for a cessation of fighting throughout Mexico... Did the President really think a few private citizens in Mexico could declare an armistice or stop

27 Ibid., 3803.
the fighting that was going on all over Mexico?... The next, that a free election be held, in which all will agree to take a part... the President was calling for an election such as was never held in Mexico and probably never will be... The next demand, namely, that Huerta should bind himself not to be a candidate for President of his own country was nothing less than preposterous. What right had the President of the United States to insist that a citizen of a foreign country should not be a candidate at a "free election"... it was further demanded that all parties... should abide by the result of the election... It must have been a public-spirited people that would allow the head of a foreign nation to dictate how they should hold an election. 28

In early October, John Lind sent word that Huerta was attempting to manipulate the coming election so he would remain in power. Belisario Domínguez had delivered an anti-Huerta speech to the Mexican Senate in the latter part of September. Shortly thereafter, Domínguez disappeared. Rumour reported him dead and the congress felt that the administration had something to do with his disappearance. The administration denied any knowledge of his whereabouts. October 10th, the Mexican Chamber of Deputies passed resolutions to investigate the mysterious disappearance of Domínguez. The following day, 

28 Ibid., 63 Cong., 2 sess., 4405.
the Minister of Gobernación appeared in the Chamber of Deputies and demanded reconsideration of these resolutions. The President of the Chamber adjourned the session, whereupon 110 deputies were arrested and sent to the penitentiary. 29 Congress was then dissolved. Huerta announced that elections would be held and a new Chamber of Deputies would assemble in November. Two days later, Huerta issued a decree taking upon himself the legislative functions of Congress until the new Congress should be elected.

As the date of the presidential election approached, Huerta attempted to rally his forces by urging them to present a united front against their aggressive neighbor to the north. In a typical Mexican election, Huerta was proclaimed President. The usual procedure was for a strong man to seize the government and then to hold elections which would ratify his government. Polls were supervised by the authorities in power. Ballots differed for the various parties so the balloting was not secret. 30 Woodrow Wilson was now determined that Victoriano Huerta must go. The United States notified the major powers of Europe and Latin America of the attitude of the administration and invited foreign cooperation to secure Huerta's voluntary retirement. 31

29 Foreign Relations, 1913, 836.
30 Gruening, 394.
31 Baker, IV, 289.
Shortly thereafter, President Wilson sent William Bayard Hale to Mexico to interview Venustiano Carranza. This was the first open indication that Wilson was seeking a successor for General Huerta. About this time, Sir William Tyrell, in an interview with President Wilson, mentioned that he could not see much difference among Huerta, Carranza and Villa. Wilson replied that Carranza was the best of the three and Villa was not as bad as he was painted.32 It was later said that "between the grafting governor, the bandit, and the government of the United States, Huerta was crushed."33 Carranza and sixty-four of his officers had signed the Plan of Guadalupe, March 26, 1913. This document declared that Carranza was Chief of the Constitutionalist Army, and executive power was to be vested in him when Mexico City was taken. Carranza promised to hold elections as soon as peace and order had been restored. Villa and Carranza had entered an agreement on July 8, 1913, by which Carranza was acknowledged Commander-in-Chief of the Constitutionalist Army. His background was superior to that of Francisco Villa, who had been a notorious bandit in the northern Mexican states. Villa, with his Army of the North and its alliance with Carranza achieved for the time being an aspect of respectability.

32 Ibid., 289.
33 Kelley, 209.
The United States did not take kindly to the idea of a Mexican administration headed by Villa; this attitude was reflected by the press. The Philadelphia Inquirer, a Republican paper, stated that to reject Huerta and accept Villa "would be to invite the contempt of all civilized nations."

The New York Evening Mail, a Progressive paper, wrote:

If Mr. Wilson succeeds in substituting Villa for Huerta, he will find that he has progressed from the frying pan into the fire.

The Philadelphia Public Ledger, an Independent organ, wrote:

Having refused recognition to Huerta on high moral grounds, are we now to become partners in crime with a man so brutal that the City of Mexico is panic-stricken at the mere threat of his advance? 34

President Wilson reiterated his confidence in "watchful waiting" in a statement to Congress, December 2, 1913:

There can be no prospect of peace 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... Mexico has no government. The attempt to maintain one at Mexico City has broken down and a

34 Quoted in the Literary Digest, May 23, 1914, 1237.
mere military despotism has been
set up which has hardly more than
the semblance of national authority... 
Every day 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 watch-
ful waiting. 35

While the President followed the policy of "watchful waiting,"
he was carefully determining which of the insurgent leaders
was best qualified to succeed Huerta. His policy was not as
negative as his speech would lead one to believe.

Great Britain had given its support to Huerta from the
time of his accession to power. Relations between
Britain and Mexico had been very amicable with Sir Lionel
Carden, British Ambassador, making the most of Mexico's break
with the United States. President Wilson directed Walter
Hines Page, the American Ambassador to London, to inform the
British Foreign Minister that if Huerta did not retire by
force of circumstance, it would be the duty of the United
States to use less peaceful means to put him out. 36 It was in
November, 1913 that Sir Lionel Carden led a procession of
diplomats in advising Huerta to yield to President Wilson's
demands. This about face on the part of the British
Ambassador's actions was caused by a directive from the
British Office of Foreign Affairs stating that he must not

35 Congressional Record, 63 Cong., 2 sess., 4343.
36 Daniels, 208.
interfere with Wilson's anti-Huerta policy.\textsuperscript{37}

Great Britain's reversal of her Mexican policy seems to have been connected with her desire for the repeal of the Panama Canal tolls. American coastwise shipping was exempt from paying tolls. Britain contended that this was unfair. It was charged that the Panama Tolls Act violated the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty of 1901. Colonel House met Sir Edward Grey, British Foreign Minister, and intimated that if Britain would change its Mexican policy, Wilson would do his best to repeal the tolls exemptions.\textsuperscript{38} The American Congress was not enthusiastic about repealing the exemption but Colonel House met members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and explained the situation. In his own words:

\begin{quote}
We decided...to call the Senate Foreign Relations Committee...and explain the situation to them; that it would be well to tell them how important it was at this particular time that our relations with Great Britain should be undisturbed; that it was better to make concessions in regard to Panama than lose the support of England, in our Mexican, Central and South American policy.\textsuperscript{39}
\end{quote}

It was necessary for Wilson to reveal his plans to the Senate, otherwise it would not have repealed the Panama Canal Tolls Act. In November, Britain reversed its Mexican policy and in

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 194.
\textsuperscript{39} Daniels, 182.
January the United States repealed the tolls exemption. Colonel House believed that the withdrawal of British support caused Huerta's downfall; Britain's support had been Huerta's strongest international asset. John Lind felt that the differences between the contending factions would have been settled but for the support Huerta received from European governments. This support enabled him to sustain himself.40

Lind had by this time become an advocate of intervention. Secretary of State Bryan strongly opposed intervention. A biographer of Bryan states that Wilson and Bryan did not always get along well because they both had fixed ideas. In regard to intervention, "It was felt at the time, that had it not been for Bryan, who declared he would stand for peace until the bitter end, the Mexican situation might have been summarily settled."41 However, contrary to the above assumption, Bryan himself states in his memoirs:

I was gratified to find the President resolutely opposed to intervention except as a last resort, and I regarded his refusal to yield to pressure on this subject as one of the most meritorious acts of his administration.42

40 Ibid., 182.
Joseph Tumulty, President Wilson's secretary, also states that the President had two considerations; they were:

The firm conviction that all nations, both the weak and the powerful, have the inviolable right to control their international affairs.

The belief, established from the history of the world, that Mexico will never become a peaceful and law-abiding neighbor of the United States until she had been permitted to achieve a permanent and basic settlement of her troubles without outside interference.43

Therefore Wilson and Bryan were in accord on the Mexican policy. They professed intervention as evil and yet their policy eventually led them to intervene.

John Lind sent dispatches to Washington urging that United States forces occupy Tampico or even Mexico City. Wilson refused to consider these. He was now thinking of lifting the arms embargo.44 Huerta was getting arms from

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44 Ray Baker in Life and Letters of Woodrow Wilson, IV, 298, suggests that Nelson O'Shaughnessy, the Charge d'affairs of the American Embassy from the time of Henry Lane Wilson's recall to the fall of Vera Cruz, had first suggested the repeal of the arms embargo. This seems unlikely in the face of remarks made by Mrs. O'Shaughnessy in her book A Diplomat's Wife in Mexico. She disapproved of the action. "This act will not establish the rebels in Mexico City or anywhere else, but will indefinitely prolong the civil war." page 175. Nowhere does she mention that her husband recommended or even approved of the act.
45 Baker, IV, 298.
46 Foreign Relations, 1914, 444.
Europe, while the rebels were able to smuggle only small quantities across the border. While Wilson pondered the idea, he was approached by a group of men representing various European nations. They proposed to ask Huerta to resign on the condition that the United States give an assurance of pacification afterwards. Wilson refused. He decided to lift the arms embargo and let Mexico fight out its civil war. This step is difficult to reconcile with his theory of political morality. By this action he was made responsible for much of the ensuing bloodshed in Mexico. He had resolved to avoid direct intervention and yet the repeal of the arms embargo amounted to interference in a negative sense. He could have avoided this by agreeing to the proposal of the European powers. Evidently his determination to oust Huerta had reached the point where he refused to consider any course of action which was tantamount to compromise. He had opposed Huerta, calling him a murderer, yet by this action he was multiplying murderers. He had objected to Huerta taking power by force; now he was promoting the idea of civil strife.

The arms embargo was removed February 3, 1914. Even before that time munitions had been allowed to go through to Villa and Carranza. John Lind was counseling direct

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47 Bemis, 177.
financial aid to the Constitutionalist forces.\textsuperscript{48} The removal of the arms embargo served to reassert Wilson's policy to the world. It affirmed his support of the Constitutionalist armies. And it led to immediate consequences.

Acts of violence shortly occurred. One of the first cases involved a British mining man named Benton, who was killed by Villa. Benton's property in Chihuahua had been confiscated. Villa announced that Benton was shot after a court martial had found him guilty of making an attempt on Villa's life. The incident was prolonged by Villa's refusal to give up the body to Benton's wife. The British government issued a protest backed up by the other European nations; and pointed out that the responsibility rested with the United States. Edward Bell points out:

\begin{quote}
...the formidable reputation of the British government for protecting its citizens seemed to make some action necessary on the part of the United States, which was the guardian of Mexico, and in a very special sense the guardian of the Constitutionists whose nominal chief was Carranza.\textsuperscript{49}
\end{quote}

By giving support to the Constitutionists Wilson stood behind their actions. Villa was one of the Constitutionalist leaders. Britain asked that the United States investigate the

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{48} O'Shaughnessy, 200.
\textsuperscript{49} Bell, 380.
\end{flushright}
death. The United States accepted the responsibility.

In March, 1914, a proposal was made by Oscar S. Straus of New York, who had a plan to send a commission of inquiry to Mexico. Men such as John Bassett Moore, Richard Olney, and Judge Gray were suggested. Wilson replied that under the circumstances it seemed impossible for such a commission to visit Mexico. Huerta and Carranza had been sounded on the proposal and had been favorably disposed. Wilson did not act on the proposal.

Gunboats were patrolling the coast of Mexico for the protection of Americans and their interests and also in anticipation of a possible blockade. On April 9, 1914, Paymaster Conn of the Dolphin and seven unarmed men landed at Iturbide Bridge, Tampico. While they were loading the tender with supplies an officer with a squadron of Huerta's men arrested them. Two of the crew were taken off the boat which flew the United States flag. While the Americans were being taken through the streets they were met by a superior officer of Huerta's army who told the officer to take them back to the dock. After an hour and a half they were released. General Zaragoza of Huerta's army said that the officer who had arrested them was ignorant of the laws of war and was carrying

50 Baker, IV, 311.
out instructions not to let any boat land at the dock. Huerta, himself, joined with the Commander in charge of the forces in expressing his regret.51

Admiral Mayo however, took it upon himself to send an ultimatum to the Huerta forces asking for a formal apology and assurance that the officer in charge would be punished. His demand stated that Huerta should

...publicly hoist the American flag in a prominent position on shore and salute it with twenty-one guns, which salute will be duly returned by this ship.52

To this Huerta sent his expression of regret and assurance that the officer who had arrested the men would be punished. He asked that the ultimatum regarding the salute be withdrawn. General Huerta justified his officer's action on the grounds that Tampico was under martial law and orders had been issued that no one had the right to land at Iturbide Bridge.

The incident itself received attention entirely out of proportion to its actual nature. Washington temporized and extended the time given to Huerta to make the salute. This gave the American and Mexican public time to become aware of the incident and to become inflamed about it. Had the ultimatum demanded immediate response the issue might have failed

52 Daniels, 186.
to attract so much attention. A few men had been arrested; released after a short period of time and the Mexican officials had apologized. But the United States chose to emphasize the incident and magnify the details. The American sailors denied knowledge of the state of martial law in Tampico. The very fact that they landed unarmed proves their lack of warlike intentions. It is possible that Huerta's officer thought the Americans were deliberately showing contempt for Huerta's declaration of martial law. But the fact that the Americans were released after such a short time indicated that the event was not considered in such a light.

Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy, felt that the incident was receiving undue emphasis, he said:

I found that in the State and Navy Departments I was almost alone in feeling that Mayo, when apologies were promptly offered should have accepted them.54

President Wilson and the other officials backed up Mayo in his demand for a salute. Secretary Daniels also questioned Mayo's right to deliver an ultimatum without first consulting his government; he wrote:

When the news of the arrest and the ultimatum for the salute reached the Navy Department it seriously disturbed me. I felt

53 Bell, 389.
54 Daniels, 191.
strongly that, inasmuch as the admiral was in easy reach of Washington by wireless and telegraph, he should not have issued the ultimatum without the authority of the government. He acted upon the old time Naval practice which guided Perry in Japan and other Naval officers in foreign waters. Of necessity, without cable or wireless, a naval officer is sometimes compelled to act upon his judgement, being unable to get direction from the Secretary of the Navy. But when the wireless and cable enable him to get into quick communication with his government, there is an indisposition on the part of some officers to surrender their diplomatic decisions. There is still adherence to a theory that 'strength of the Naval forces determines diplomatic policy.' 55

Daniels obviously was not in sympathy with Admiral Mayo's activity in regard to Tampico. He mentions that a precedent for such action had been set first by Stephen Decatur in Tripoli, 1815; and later by Commodore Kearney in China, 1842; and Commodore Perry in Japan, 1854. These Naval Commanders had conducted diplomatic negotiations with the aid of a strong show of naval force and without direct or immediate instructions from their government. However, communication facilities had improved vastly since then and Daniels felt he should have been consulted. Only the President has the authority to issue ultimatums. To do this he must have the consent of

55 Ibid., 188.
Congress except in an emergency.

Admiral Mayo, acting on some unknown perogative, did not withdraw his ultimatum but insisted that the Mexican government salute the United States flag. Huerta made some counter-proposals none of which was acceptable to the United States. He offered to salute the flag under the proviso that the salute be returned gun for gun. He offered to refer the matter to the Hague Court. He also suggested that the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo provided for arbitration of disputes between the United States and Mexico. The United States did not accept these proposals because their operation would imply recognition of Huerta.

President Wilson spoke to Congress on April 20, 1914. He pointed out that the incident itself was not so important as the fact that it was one of a series of such incidents which showed disrespect for the United States. He evidently did not feel it was disrespectful to the Mexican nation in not recognizing its government; nor in failing to observe strict neutrality; nor in violating Mexican laws; nor in ignoring the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. He cited a case in which an orderly from a ship at Vera Cruz had been thrown into jail and the telegram asking for his release had been held up by the

56 Priestley, 423.
authorities. Wilson felt that the frequent conflicts would inevitably lead to war. He said:

I therefore felt it my duty to sustain Admiral Mayo in the whole of his demand and to insist that the flag of the United States should be saluted in such a way as to indicate a new spirit on the part of the Huertistas. Mexico is torn by civil strife. If we are to accept the tests of its own constitution it has no government. General Huerta has set his power up in the City of Mexico, such as it is, without right and by methods for which there can be no justification. Only part of the territory is under his control. If armed conflict should unhappily come as a result of his attitude of personal resentment toward this government we should be fighting only General Huerta and those who adhere to him; and our object would be only to restore to the people of the distracted republic the opportunity to set up their own laws and own government. Our feeling for Mexico is one of friendship. They are entitled to settle their own government. I ask for approval to use armed forces to obtain from Huerta recognition of our dignity and rights.57

In spite of the fact that war had not been declared, President Wilson was assuming authority over Congress to speak for the United States. He was upholding an unconstitutional act of one of the Admirals. He could hardly expect a new 57 Congressional Record, 63 Cong., 2 sess., 6908.
attitude on the part of the Huertistas after he had just removed the arms embargo, an action which encouraged their opponents. He set himself up as a judge of Mexican politics when he stated that Huerta assumed power "without right." And in stating that Huerta did not control all of Mexico he ignored the Mexican tradition which considers the man in authority at Mexico City the head of the federal government. Wilson mentioned "restoring" to the Mexican people the right to set up their own government and laws. This right they had never, in practice, exercised. Wilson had said they were entitled to settle their own government, yet he himself, was infringing on that right.

President Wilson attempted to reduce the conflict to a personal one, "We should be fighting only General Huerta." No doubt this was to emphasize the fact that in spite of demands for respect on the part of Huerta's government, Huerta was by no means recognized. Thus, by his own definition, the President of the United States was using force to obtain respect from an individual who was not a citizen nor an inhabitant of the United States. It was an awkward situation which stamped Wilson as neither logical nor diplomatic.

The question of supplying armed forces to back up Admiral Mayo's demands occasioned sharp debate in the House of Representatives. Those opposing the administration agreed that
the Tampico incident was too trivial for such drastic measures. Many felt that should Huerta be removed from power a devastating civil war would be carried on between the remaining factions. Representative Mondell of Wyoming said:

*I am persuaded that the acts and attitudes of our government have had the effect of prolonging and extending the lamentable conditions of appalling disorder and distress which prevail in Mexico.*\(^{58}\)

Most of the Congressmen felt that the honor of the United States must be maintained and that Huerta must show the respect due to his northern neighbor. The House of Representatives passed a resolution approving of use of armed force in obtaining Huerta's compliance with the demands made by the United States. Naturally there were some extremists in the opposition. Senator William Borah, a member of the progressive wing of the Republican party, stated:

*If our flag is run up in Mexico it will never come down. This is the beginning of the march of the United States to the Panama Canal.*\(^{59}\)

Since Huerta refused to order a salute to the American flag, Admiral Mayo acted. On April 21, the day after the President's message and the same day Congress agreed to give

\(^{58}\) *Ibid.*, 4049.
\(^{59}\) Daniels, 190.
Wilson permission to use armed force in Mexico, the American Navy seized the Customs House at Vera Cruz and the Marines occupied the port. Congress also passed a joint resolution on April 21 disclaiming any intention of making war on the Mexican Republic. The occupation of the port was considered necessary as a German shipment of arms was said to be approaching. It was felt, by those who so wished to feel, that Huerta would use these arms against the United States. Much bloodshed ensued. Several American and many Mexican lives were lost. In view of the fact that Mexico and the United States were not at war, the action is hard to justify. The port was seized even before Congress had granted Wilson the power to use armed force. The power was granted after it had been exercised. The Constitution states that:

The President shall be Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the militia of the United States when called into the actual service of the United States.

By virtue of this right he called out the armed forces in what he deemed an emergency measure. In spite of his frequent avowals of non-intervention the President had intervened in Mexico.

Within Mexico, the seizure of the port had the effect of

60 Robertson, 471.
61 The Constitution of the United States, Article II, section 2.
unifying the country. Americans were everywhere insulted. There were violent demonstrations against the Americans in Tampico. Even the insurrectionists disapproved. They considered the act an invasion of their country. General Carranza declared that he was the authority in Mexico and that the American demand for a salute should have been addressed to him. Secretary Bryan sent, April 22, 1914, a note to Carranza to explain the President's motive in taking Vera Cruz. Carranza replied by threatening that if the United States did not withdraw from Vera Cruz the Constitutionalists would join an attempt to expel them! This may have been bluster or perhaps it was an attempt to win the favor of the Mexicans by showing that he, Carranza, was not merely President Wilson's tool. Wilson can hardly have been pleased with Carranza's reaction.

Things were rapidly approaching the point where the United States would be compelled to take further action. Fortunately, a few days later, representatives of Argentina, Brazil and Chile offered joint mediation. This offered President Wilson an opportunity to show his good will toward Latin America, a sentiment which had been cast under a cloud by his attitude toward Mexico. The ABC diplomats met, May,

62 Bell, 349.
63 Rippy, 352.
1914, at Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada. When Wilson accepted their offer to mediate he stated that he hoped Mexicans who spoke for the masses of the people would be consulted. His recommendation was of its nature difficult as most of the people had allied themselves with one or another of the contending factions.

General Huerta accepted mediation shortly after President Wilson did. The first plan suggested by the mediators was that Huerta appoint as foreign minister a man acceptable to Constitutionalist, neutrals and the United States; Pedro Lascurain was suggested. Huerta would then resign and the foreign minister would then be head of the provisional government and hold an election for the Presidency. This plan did not please President Wilson. He seemed bent upon staying in hot water. He now felt that it looked too much as though the foreign minister was succeeding Huerta with the constitutional right of succession which in turn seemed to validate Huerta's legal status. Wilson, still bound to see to it that Mexicans should manage their own affairs, suggested that Lascurain, a Huertista and a third man should take over the provisional government until elections could be held. This plan was not held in much favor by the A B C delegates. They felt that

64 Foreign Relations, 1914, 945.
Mexico in its tumultuous condition was in need of a strong provisional government and three men representing different factions would tend to disagree and thereby constitute a weak authority.

President Wilson for some inexplicable reason desired the Carranza forces to succeed the Huertistas in the administration of Mexico. Secretary Bryan sent a notice to the Special Commissioners:

The object of our conference now is to find a method by which the inevitable can be accomplished without further bloodshed. By the inevitable we mean not only the elimination of Huerta but the completion of the revolution by the transfer of political power from Huerta to those who represent the interests and aspirations of the people whose forces are now in the ascendancy. 65

Wilson felt that the mediators should insist on a Constitutionalist president. The Huertistas were willing to settle for a neutral president. But Wilson contended that the Constitutionalists were dominant and a neutral man could not be found. 66 Wilson was anxious that the plan designated by the mediators be acceptable to the Carranza forces. He kept urging the latter to confer with the mediators but the Constitutionalists refused to cooperate in any way. They denied the right of other nations to impose a government upon

65 Ibid., 1914, 506.
66 Literary Digest, July 4, 1914, 7.
Finally the mediators recommended that the opposing parties agree on a provisional government. Huerta was to resign and the ABC powers would recognize the temporary regime. The ABC mediation was both a failure and a success. It successfully got the President of the United States out of an immediate difficulty. It solved temporarily the international problem between the United States and Mexico. But it left a progeny of other problems.

The plan failed because the opposing parties in Mexico refused to treat with one another. July 15, Huerta resigned after appointing Francisco Carbajal, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, his foreign minister, as Provisional President. The United States forces were withdrawn from Vera Cruz the following November. Carranza and Villa were leading their armies on Mexico City from the north, Zapata from the south.

Wilson had believed that Huerta’s removal from the presidency would bring peace to Mexico. It did not. From July 15, 1914, until October 19, 1915, there was no recognized government in Mexico nor was there peace. Carranza, Villa and Zapata occupied Mexico City in rapid succession. During this period Wilson continued to stand behind the Constitutionalists; but their position was such that not even de facto recognition could be accorded. During this period of turmoil Secretary of
State Bryan wrote regarding the Constitutionalists:

It is evident that the United States is the only first class power that can be expected to take the initiative in recognizing the new government. Every step taken by the Constitutionalist leaders from this moment on and everything which indicate the spirit in which they mean to proceed and to consummate their triumph must of necessity, therefore, play a very important part in determining whether it will be possible for the United States to recognize the government now being planned for. 67

Finally the A B C nations in conjunction with the United States extended recognition to Carranza, October 19, 1915, in hopes that international support of his government would enable him to restore peace.

But bloodshed continued. In a spirit of revenge Villa made punitive expeditions into the United States, slaying American citizens. The United States protested but nothing was done by the favored Constitutionalists. Carranza could not or would not stop these expeditions and Wilson was forced to intervene again. Joseph Tumulty, the President's secretary writes:

With Villa carrying on his raids and Carranza always misunderstanding the purpose and attitude of our government and spurning its offer of helpful cooperation,

67 Kelley, 240.
difficulties of various sorts arose with each day, until popular opinion became insistent in its demand for vigorous action on the part of the American President. 68

Carranza's apparent indifference to the United States demands was part of his effort to silence his opponents who accused him of being "Wilson's man." Wilson sent American troops under General Pershing into Mexico to pursue Villa. Carranza demanded that they be withdrawn. Again relations between the United States and Mexico were strained to the breaking point. While Pershing's army was in Mexico bands of Villa's men continued to make raids in United States territory. June 22, 1916 there was a brief skirmish between the American army under Pershing and some Mexican troops at Carrizal. Several men were killed. Carranza and Wilson finally agreed to let a joint commission settle the dispute. The commission decided that each nation should patrol its own border. The United States insisted on adding a provision that it should have the right to cross the border if Mexico failed to keep order. Carranza refused to agree to this. The commission was dissolved.

In March, 1917, the United States recognized Carranza de jure President of Mexico. American interest was focused on the world war and the United States was anxious to be rid

68 Tumulty, 154.
of hemispheric strife.

To cap the climax, Carranza called a Constitutional Convention in 1917 to get rid of the confusion. A new constitution was drawn up and adopted. This constitution was hardly in line with the democratic principles Woodrow Wilson expected Carranza to establish.

The Convention by its First Article restricted the rights of the Mexican citizen to those "which are granted him by this Constitution;" thereby reversing the democratic order that makes the people the source of rights and the constitution the declaration of the peoples sovereignty.69

The constitution was not democratic. It was based on the principle that authority proceeds from the state and not from the people. Wilson had rid Mexico of Huerta but not of absolutism. The government now made absolutism official.

In December, 1918, Carranza went before the Mexican Congress and asked that certain provisions of the Constitution be modified. President Wilson had been protesting against the violent religious persecution taking place in Mexico.70 Carranza mentioned to the Congress the fact that religious persecution violated liberty of conscience. The Mexican Congress and the leaders of the Constitutionalist party, who

69 Kelley, 237.
70 Ibid., 241.
had been leading the anti-clerical movement became inflamed. Carranza was ousted. He fled to the coast and on May 20, 1920 was killed.

The Constitution of 1917 had declared all subsoil deposits the property of the national government. Lands which had been leased to United States firms for many years and which represented heavy investments were confiscated. This caused a certain amount of strife with the United States and prevented the recognition of Alvaro Obregón, the man who was elected after Carranza's death, (there was an interim president Adolfo de la Huerta). Obregón had led the rebellion against Carranza. He ruled in the traditional strong-handed fashion. He put down rebellions and kept peace.

In 1924 Plutarco Calles was elected President. He carried on the anti-clerical persecutions of Obregón. He ruled in the dictatorial fashion. The quality of Mexico's presidents was not improved by the elimination of Huerta.
CHAPTER IV
CONCLUSION

Wilson's triumph over Huerta was inevitable; the might and unity of the United States was arrayed against the weakness and disunity of Mexico. However, Wilson considered his policy as primarily directed toward removing Huerta. Its essential purpose, he thought, was to enable Mexico to attain a democratic representative government. Any means toward accomplishing his primary and secondary aims were justifiable in his eyes. His policy did not enable Mexico to attain democracy; essentially then it was a failure.

Huerta, Wilson thought, did not represent the will of the people. It would have been difficult for a national of one country to determine the will of nationals of another country, especially a country such as Mexico. The people of Mexico as a whole lacked education to the point where they could not be said to possess a will in the national sense. Public opinion cannot be said to exist in a country such as Mexico.

Wilson would recognize Carranza because he chose to think that a man crying "Constitution" represented the will of the people. And Carranza did not represent the will of the people. José Vasconcelos, a Mexican, writes:

85
Finally, Mr. Wilson decided to recognize Carranza. We never criticized Mr. Wilson's choice of Carranza instead of Villa...what we did criticize was that any recognition had been granted... One General was recognized as a government, exactly as in the old days, exactly as Porfirio Díaz, one man, had been recognized for many years, not only as the head but as the body and soul of the Mexican nation. This decision of Mr. Wilson was for many of us one of the most regrettable failures of his idealism.¹

Mexico needed many reforms. These reforms would have to be administered by a strong government. The many warring factions in Mexico could only be united by the force of a strong man. Such a man had been Díaz. Madero had not been such a man. Huerta had been a strong administrator able to keep the various factions in line until they were encouraged by the United States. Huerta had been eliminated because he did not represent popular will. However, none of his successors—Carranza, Obregón, Calles, or later Presidents—were at all representative of the popular will. These men received less interference from the United States because by then Washington had profitted by Wilson's mistake and it could be seen that absolutism was the only practical means of government in Mexico.

¹ Fred Rippy, José Vasconcelos, and Guy Stevens, *Mexico*, University of Chicago Press, 1928, 126.
It is possible that Huerta might have accomplished a great many beneficial reforms in Mexico. But he was given no opportunity to do so. He stepped into power with an empty treasury. His hands were tied by the failure of the United States to recognize him and by the effects of non-recognition. These were lack of foreign funds and encouragement of oppositional political groups. Had Huerta obtained recognition he might have obtained funds. Had he obtained funds he might have been able to crush the insurgent forces and maintained peace. As it was, Huerta's fall was followed by years of civil strife. Chief Justice Hughes of the Supreme Court said, "By destroying the Government of Huerta, we left Mexico a prey to the horrors of revolution."  

The period preceding Carranza's recognition was one of bloody turmoil. The expeditions of Villa proved Carranza did not possess complete control of Mexico after his recognition. In this respect he was no improvement on Huerta. Huerta's removal was not, as President Wilson thought, the answer to the problem of civil strife in Mexico. Instead it seemed to ignite a conflagration which raged for many years.

Down to 1920, the country was little more than a revolutionary

2 Quoted in Red Mexico by Francis McCullagh, Brentano's Ltd., London, 1928, 56.
shambles... Even after that date, civil war was always a possibility, being avoided more often from strong handed exercise of power than from any unwillingness of opposition groups to engage in it. 3

President Theodore Roosevelt, shortly before he died, wrote:

Mexico is our Balkan Peninsula, and during the last five years, thanks largely to Mr. Wilson's able assistance, it has been reduced to a condition as hideous as that of the Balkan Peninsula under Turkish rule. 4

Wilson's Mexican policy solved no Mexican problems.

Nor did Wilson's policy bring democracy to the Mexican people. Huerta had not taken democracy from the Mexican people for they never possessed it. Nor did Carranza and his successors bring democracy to Mexico. The people did not acquire suffrage. Elections did not change in form. In 1928, Francis McCullagh wrote, "Democratic Government does not of course exist; votes cast at Presidential elections are not counted." 5 Nor did the people acquire prosperity, there was too much warfare going on. The material condition of the people did not change in the years following Huerta's expulsion.

The policy of the United States in Mexico inspired

4 Quoted in Red Mexico by McCullagh, 55.
5 Ibid., 61.
suspicion on the part of the Latin American nations. Mexico itself showed no gratitude to the United States. During the first World War, Mexico proposed to the Latin American Republics that they prohibit the shipment of munitions to belligerent European nations. This was not in conformity with the interests of the United States.

Wilson's policy in Mexico gave the rest of the world an idea of what to expect in regard to his foreign policy. Henry Stoddard writes:

The response from Mexico in 1914 to our demand to salute our flag was a pattern later for the response of both England and Germany to our notes of protest. Mexico never saluted, England continued to search our ships and Germany submarined more ruthlessly than ever. Toward all three countries we adopted a policy of 'watchful waiting' for something that never came—and that everybody but Wilson knew would never come.6

In spite of Wilson's frequent avowals of non-interference he did not allow Mexico to work out its political problems in its own way. By his meddling he did not contribute anything to the welfare of Mexico or its people. Rather he added to the discontent and confusion already existing in Mexico.

6 Stoddard, 490.
Woodrow Wilson's policy was no doubt sincere but based on emotions rather than knowledge. He wanted to reform Mexico but failed to realize that reform must come from within a country not from an outside force. Wilson was governed by idealistic theories. That his ideals were in advance of his own countrymen was proved by their attitude toward the League of Nations. How could a country like Mexico be expected to appreciate them?
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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Miss Inez L. Thomas has been read and approved by three members of the Department of History.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

May 24, 1945
Date

Signature of Adviser