

TAFT AND MEXICO: NEUTRALITY, INTERVENTION
AND RECOGNITION, 1910 - 1913

by

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ABSTRACT

United States-Mexican relations between 1910 and 1913 were of a chaotic and changing nature. From friendly relations during the declining years of the dictatorship under Porfirio Díaz, relations gradually diminished from one of friendship to almost complete chaos. The years 1910 to 1913 are important in United States-Mexican relations because these were the years when many of the basic policies were laid down which carried over from the Taft administration to that of Woodrow Wilson.

The year 1910 marks the beginning of a change in United States policy in its interpretation of the neutrality laws. Previous to the Madero revolution, no revolution had succeeded in Mexico since 1876. This was in part due to the neutrality laws of the United States and the interpretation of these laws. Madero's revolution was successful partly due to the interpretation of the neutrality laws, and so the question of neutrality looms very large in United States policy toward Mexico.

The question of neutrality soon turned to the question of intervention, as conditions in Mexico went from bad to worse. The inability of Madero to successfully cope with the many difficulties caused officials in Washington to

carefully consider the possibility of intervention. To some extent there was intervention without actually moving troops across the border--the mobilization of the army and the activities of Henry Lane Wilson.

The third question of this chaotic period deals with recognition, or non-recognition. The overthrow of Madero in the closing weeks of the Taft administration caused great concern and created a new problem of whether to recognize the new government or not.

Thus the United States was confronted with these three problems--neutrality, intervention, and recognition, and each had their problems and ramifications.

CHAPTER I

DÍAZ AND THE UNITED STATES, A SUMMARY

During the administration of William Howard Taft, 1909-13, policy toward Mexico may be viewed in two distinct periods. The first period may be considered between the years 1909 to 1910, and the second period from 1910 to 1913. The period 1909-10 was the declining years of the Díaz regime. Porfirio Díaz had sat on top of Mexican politics since 1876. In fact he had sat on the lid so long, that the pot inside began to boil and finally erupted into the explosion of the Mexican Revolution. At the same time, relations with the United States were cordial and friendly. American investors had invested heavily in Mexico, and had a vested interest in seeing the Díaz regime continue. The exceptional ability displayed by Díaz during his administration of so many years had quelled the spirit of revolt. While the republic owed much to the administration of President Díaz, its unprecedented prosperity no longer depended upon his great personality. As the picture of early twentieth century Mexico was sketched, Díaz became metamorphosed into a constitutional Satan. He had absorbed the judicial, legislative, and administrative functions

until like another, Louis XIV, he might have said "I am the state."¹ With the outbreak of the Madero revolt in November, 1910, United States-Mexican relations entered into their second period. In order to show the transition from one period to the other, it is necessary to examine a few of the problems confronting United States-Mexican relations during the early years of the Taft administration, and in a few cases delve deeper into the past in order to preserve some continuity.

One of the highlights of this era of good feeling between the United States and Mexico was the visit Secretary Elihu Root made to Mexico in October, 1907. As the guest of Mexico, he was welcomed by President Díaz at a banquet at the National Palace. Díaz opened his speech by saying that he was honored by Root's "interesting, transcendental, and very welcome visit." Díaz went on to say that the Mexican people were "honored as well as pleased" to have Root in their midst.² In his reply to Díaz, Root contrasted the prosperous and happy Mexico of 1907 with the distressed Mexico which Seward visited thirty-eight years earlier by saying, ". . . I find a country great in its prosperity,

1. "Díaz and His Influence in Mexico," Current Literature, XLV (August, 1908), p. 135.

2. Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1902, pp. 852-853.

in its wealth, in its activity and enterprise, in the moral strength of its just and equal laws, and unalterable purpose to advance its people steadily along the pathway of progress."³ Root closed by expressing a sincere tribute to Díaz whom he regarded as one of the world's great men for whose achievements Mexicans owed a debt "of the steadfast loyalty of a lifetime."⁴

The growing intimacy of relations during the long presidency of Porfirio Díaz, indicated by many international agreements, culminated in a meeting of President Taft and President Díaz at the International Bridge. This unusual event took place soon after Taft became president and while he was traveling in the Southwest. Arrangements were made for the meeting to take place on October 16, 1909.

Before the meeting Taft wrote that "Díaz has done more for the people of Mexico than any other Latin American has done for any of his people."⁵ This judgment, unfortunately, was not shared by the peons of Mexico. They had benefited little from the capital Díaz had attracted to their country or by the material progress he had made. On the day before the meeting Taft wrote:

The meeting with Díaz is to be a historic one
 . . . I am glad to aid him . . . for the reason

3. Ibid., p. 853.

4. Ibid., p. 854.

5. Henry T. Pringle, Life and Times of William Howard Taft (2 vols., New York: Farrar and Reinhart, Inc.), p. 700.

that we have two billions (of) American capital in Mexico that will be greatly endangered if Diaz were to die and his government go to pieces. It is questionable what will happen if he does die. He has designated a man to succeed him, but that is likely to lead to a revolution. I can only hope and pray that his demise does not come until I am out of office.⁶

At last the long expected meeting of President Taft and Díaz occurred. A private interview between the two men was held which lasted fifteen minutes. It was officially stated that no diplomatic matters were touched.⁷ The banquet followed, at which both presidents toasted each other to the fullest.⁸

Despite all these manifestations of good will and everlasting friendship and no serious disputes, there were, during the years 1900 to about 1911, three serious problems which deserve attention. The three important cases were the Chamizal at El Paso, the proposition for the elimination of the small island bancos formed in bends of the Rio Grande, and the subject of equitable distribution of the waters of the Rio Grande.⁹ It took eight years before the problem of

6. Ibid., p. 462.

7. Arizona Daily Star, October 17, 1909, p. 1.

8. Foreign Relations, 1909, p. 428.

9. James M. Callahan, American Foreign Policy in Mexican Relations (New York: Macmillan Co., 1932), p. 443.

equitable distribution of the waters of the Rio Grande was solved. On May 21, 1906, Secretary Root concluded with Casatus, the Mexican minister at Washington, a convention between the United States and Mexico providing for the equitable distribution of the waters of the Rio Grande for irrigation purposes and to remove all causes of controversy between them.¹⁰ This convention, which was ratified on January 16, 1907, provided for the equitable distribution of the waters of the Rio Grande from the head of the Mexican Canal to Fort Quitman, Texas, for irrigation purposes, after the completion of a proposed storage dam near Eagle Pass, New Mexico.¹¹

Another problem of mutual concern was over the waters of the Colorado River and the attempt to divert its waters into the Imperial Valley for purposes of irrigation. When the first cut was made in June, 1901, the Mexican government requested the American government to consider the question of this diversion of the waters of the Colorado River. When this first cut and then a second became clogged with silt, a third attempt was made which cut across Mexican territory. All went well and good until someone turned on the water in the fall of 1904 before the completion of a control headgate.

10. Foreign Relations, 1906, p. 1128.

11. Callahan, p. 448.

In the winter of 1904-05, this cut overflowed due to an abnormal cloudburst, and the uncontrolled waters rushed to the work of destruction, submerging everything in their path and pouring into the lowest depths of the valley, 287 feet below sea level. By the latter part of June, the river seemed to have diverted all its waters from the Gulf of California to the new Salton Sea. By November 4, though, the company had succeeded in controlling the insurgent waters, but at a cost of three million dollars.¹²

Following a second break on December 7, President Roosevelt, through Secretary Root, promptly directed consultation with the Mexican government with a view to plans for permanent measures to prevent the recurrence of the danger. Díaz, with minor reservations, agreed to American operations on Mexican soil for controlling the river.

The problem of the Colorado now became an international issue. Connected with the question of permanent control of the river were international questions which could only be settled by an international board. Therefore, on June 14, 1912, President Taft recommended further appropriations for protection from the insurgent waters of the Colorado and referred to the need of a free and full agreement with Mexico.¹³ On September 10, the acting Secretary

12. Callahan, p. 463.

13. Ibid., p. 469.

of State, Huntington Wilson, submitted to Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson the draft of a convention providing for a preliminary commission to study and report. In November, however, the Mexican minister of foreign affairs submitted a counter draft. On February 8, 1913, Assistant Secretary Adee, acting for Secretary Knox, forwarded a counter draft of the amended convention with which the Mexican minister announced his practical agreement. But it was General Huerta, newly installed President of Mexico, who upset everything by refusing to consider the Colorado question until the American government had extended formal recognition of his government.¹⁴ And this the new president, Woodrow Wilson, refused to do.¹⁵

The migratory habits of certain small bodies of land inhabiting the Rio Grande and known as bancos had been and continue to be the occasion of protracted diplomatic correspondence and discussion between the United States and Mexico. Mexico and the United States, by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in the year 1848, fixed upon the Rio Grande as the boundary line between the two countries and thereby brought the river under international supervision.

14. Foreign Relations, 1913, p. 977.

15. For further study on the Colorado River question, consult Richard M. Rogers, History of United States-Mexican Negotiations Relative to the Colorado River (Tucson: Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Arizona, 1964).

The boundary was to be in the middle of the river, following the deepest channel.¹⁶ Neither side, however, foresaw that this would not prove broad enough to cover the good intentions of each to the other. In addition to the eroding power of the Rio Grande it could, during flood periods, cut for itself a new channel. Through such alusive action of the river, Texas soil would sometimes become Mexican, and on occasions a plantation occupied by jacals and Mexican citizens would overnight find itself a part of Texas--and behold, a banco!¹⁷

To meet this condition a new convention was negotiated providing that each banco, though unmoored from its mother country, was to be regarded as a part of it, with no change of allegiance or jurisdiction. But so great was the confusion of boundary lines, the disturbances of private and public titles to lands, and so many were the conflicts of jurisdiction between the two governments following the freakish actions of the river, that a new convention, dealing with the questions under dispute, became necessary.

A proposition for elimination of the bancos was made. In Mexico the proposition, though heartily endorsed

16. Mrs. Albert S. Bourleson, "Wandering Islands in the Rio Grande," National Geographic, XXIV (March, 1913), p. 381.

17. Ibid.

by the Mexican commissioner, was held up upon the constitutional ground that the Mexican State Department had no right to cede any portion of Mexico's territory to another country. On January 5, 1900, in order to remove Mexican objections, Secretary Hay again explained that the purpose was to provide a method of deciding ownership of disputed territory and did not involve the constitutional question of ceding territory as Mariscal had thought when he proposed to defer action until he could confer with the Mexican Senate.¹⁸

Legislative action followed slowly. Thus it was several years before Mexico, having in the meantime exhausted its effort to find a different way out of the difficulty, agreed to the elimination of the bancos, and a convention was finally negotiated and sent to the United States Senate for ratification. During the closing days of the Congress, the convention was at last ratified by the United States Senate, and proclaimed on June 5, 1907. Two days later the Mexican Senate confirmed it. By the end of December, 1912, the commission had located, surveyed, and mapped eighty-nine bancos situated in the lower reaches of the river. On each of these bancos a permanent monument was erected, by means of which and the maps which had been

18. Foreign Relations, 1900, p. 790.

prepared, any given banco could now be identified, no matter what the action of the river had been in the meantime.¹⁹

Notable among the problems which came before the International Boundary Commission was the controversy over the location of the boundary around a stretch of borderland in the southern portion of El Paso, Texas. This was the Chamizal tract. The Chamizal tract was located between the old bed of the Rio Grande, as surveyed in 1852, and the bed as it existed in 1898, resulting from changes in the river banks and the consequent progressive migration of the stream southward into Mexican territory extending the area of the American city of El Paso and correspondingly reducing the area of the Mexican city of Juárez.²⁰ The case of the United States as it was presented before the commission described the area as follows: ". . . the Chamizal tract is an area of 600 acres between the present channel of the Rio Grande on the south and the obliterated channel of 1852-53 on the north, which is and during the course of its gradual formation always has been a part of . . . El Paso, Texas."²¹ The American government contended that the changes were the result of a slow and gradual corrosion and

19. Bourleson, p. 386.

20. Callahan, p. 443.

21. Charles A. Timm, International Boundary Commission United States and Mexico (Austin: University of Texas, 1941), p. 132.

accretion which within the meaning of the convention of 1884 determined that the international boundary was in the later channel of the river.²² The Mexican government contended that the convention of 1884 did not affect or govern a title resulting from previous changes; and it also contended that the changes in the channel had not been the result of slow and gradual erosion and deposit.²³

The matter of the Chamizal was first presented to the International Boundary Commission on November 4, 1895.²⁴ The commissioners carefully considered the claims and the evidence but reported disagreement as to their decision. One considered that the changes had resulted from slow erosion, and the other considered that the erosion had been violent and intermittent. No agreement could be reached.

Twelve years of haggling resulted, and it was not until June 24, 1910, that a convention was drawn up; it was proclaimed January 25, 1911, and provided for arbitration of the questions of international differences as to international title to the disputed Chamizal tract. By this convention the case was resubmitted to the Boundary

22. Callahan, p. 443.

23. Ibid.

24. Timm, p. 132.

Commission enlarged by addition of a Canadian jurist as a third commissioner to preside over the deliberations, and the decision, whether by unanimous vote or by majority vote, was to be final and conclusive and without appeal.²⁵ The Canadian jurist, selected as the third commissioner, was Eugene La Fleur of Montreal. On the basis of the votes, an award was announced whereby that portion of the tract to the right or south of the line of the river as it ran prior to the change of 1864 was awarded to Mexico.²⁶ Against the divided award the United States filed a dissenting opinion, and on August 24, 1911, the United States government formally announced rejection of the arbitral award.

Following the arbitration, the United States government, in announcing its rejection of the award, suggested to the Mexican government the negotiation of a new boundary convention at Washington to settle the Chamizal question.²⁷ Further definite action was delayed, however, by disturbed conditions in Mexico and the case remained in status quo.²⁸

On March 11, 1912, Ambassador Wilson submitted the question in an interview with President Madero who replied

25. Callahan, p. 458.

26. Timm, p. 140.

27. Foreign Relations, 1911, pp. 598, 600.

28. Ibid., pp. 508-510.

that any reconsideration involving readjustment of the frontier line at that point should also include adjustment of other points of difference on the frontier.²⁹

In the discussions and suggestions which followed, Secretary Knox learned from the Mexican Ambassador Martínez that the Mexican government was prepared to effect a settlement by exchange of its claim to the Chamizal tract for a guaranteed supply of water for irrigation purposes either from the Rio Grande by increase of the amount provided by the Treaty of 1906, or from the Colorado in connection with the settlement of questions relating to that river.³⁰

Finally, on June 28, 1912, the United States approached the Mexican government with a plan for solving the Chamizal case along lines of practical convenience. Further negotiations at that time were suspended by the absence of the Mexican Ambassador, who assured Secretary Knox that he expected on his return from Mexico to bring two draft treaties--one for settlement of the Chamizal question and the other for settlement of the Colorado River question; but on his return without the drafts or instructions, he vaguely and orally suggested that the Chamizal question could be arranged more advantageously if delayed until the settlement of the Colorado River question.³¹

29. Callahan, p. 460.

30. Foreign Relations, 1912, pp. 506-507; 964-965; 1913, pp. 965, 970.

31. Callahan, p. 461.

On January 3, 1913, Knox, at the Department of State, held a conference with the Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs Lascurain, who at this visit expressed his intention to make a proposal for a prompt adjustment satisfactory to both governments as soon as he could consult the records in the case, and to permit no further delays in the negotiations. A tentative suggestion from the Mexican Embassy at Washington on January 27, 1913, set forth the following points: first, the Chamizal award to be invalidated; second, Mexico to recognize United States sovereignty over the tract in consideration for delivery of an equal area elsewhere along the Rio Grande; third, the governments to negotiate an agreement as to the time from which to consider the arcifinious nature of the river boundary to have dated; fourth, a tribunal including an American, a Mexican, and a neutral member acceptable to both governments to pass on Mexican titles in El Chamizal, and the United States to indemnify the holders of titles found to be valid.³²

A month later, February, 1913, the Mexican Foreign Office of the provisional government of Victoriano Huerta amplified this proposal by tentatively offering relinquishment of claims to El Chamizal in return for the United States' cession to Mexico of San Elizaro and Marteritas

32. Foreign Relations, 1913, pp. 971-972.

Islands.³³ This proposition was regarded as inconsistent with the recent negotiations, and Knox sent a telegram on March third promptly rejecting it as impossible. He again proposed to exchange the Harcón tract, which the new Mexican government of Huerta accepted as a basis for negotiations at Washington, for settlement of the case. The later policy of the new Wilson administration in failing to recognize Emilio Rabasa, whom Huerta had instructed to settle the Chamizal case as the chief object of his mission, and the refusal of the United States to recognize the Huerta government, prevented further negotiations at this time and caused the Mexican government to give notice of its reservation of all rights to its portion of Chamizal covered by the award.³⁴

33. Foreign Relations, 1913, pp. 972-973.

34. Ibid., p. 976.

CHAPTER II

TAFT, NEUTRALITY, AND THE FALL OF DÍAZ

The year 1908 in the Díaz regime marks a turning point. For the first time in years there was a revival of serious political discussion. The stimulus was the interview granted that February by Díaz to James Creelman and published in Pearson's Magazine. After a brief description of the Mexican ruler in his seventy eighth year, and fulsome praise of his reign, Creelman reported the startling news that Díaz had affirmed that he was disposed to retire at the end of his current term and would not again accept reelection.¹ Past performance and subsequent events cast serious doubt on the sincerity of these declarations. Speculation on the intriguing question of the motivation for permitting the interview was inevitable. The fact that the interview was granted to an American and for publication in an American periodical seems to support the view that the statements were intended for foreign consumption, especially

1. Stanley R. Ross, Francisco I. Madero: Apostle of Mexican Democracy (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), p. 46.

to mollify opinion in the northern republic.² In any event, trusting in the loyalty of the army and overly confident of the power and prestige of the government, Díaz committed a political imprudence in the Creelman interview. It would be difficult to overestimate the effect of the Creelman report, which "stimulated a feeling of great expectation in the whole nation."³

The reaction to the statements of Díaz to Creelman proved that the dictator had made a serious political miscalculation. A torrent of political literature and a flurry of political organization rapidly compromised the stability and equilibrium of the dictatorship.⁴ Within six to eight months a series of folios emphasizing political questions had appeared to agitate the public mind. Obviously, Porfirio Díaz had stirred up the proverbial hornet's nest. Díaz tried to retreat, but it was too late. Political discussion and organization had advanced too far. Shortly after the Creelman interview, probably in April, 1908, Francisco Madero began to write a volume which was to represent an important part to the contribution to the political excitement of the succeeding two years. Madero's book, The

2. Ross, p. 46.

3. Miguel Alessio Robles, Historia de la Revolución (México: Ediciones Batas, 1938), p. 10.

4. Ross, p. 47.

Presidential Succession in 1910, was released to the public late in January, 1909. Madero's book came to grips with the political issues of the day and contributed greatly to the current political agitation and to the awakening of the public. It catapulted its author, then little known, into national prominence, making it possible for him to assume leadership of the opposition political movement which he was advocating. Madero assumed the leadership of the Anti-Reelectionist Party and began campaigning with dynamic effort. Madero provided, or seemed to provide, in himself a leader and a symbol for the people he had helped to awaken.

Díaz now seemed to worry a little about the reception Madero was getting. By this time, things were getting out of hand, and Díaz decided he had better stop Madero. The authorities jailed Madero and accused him of fomenting a rebellion and insulting authorities, including the president. However, the arrest of Madero proved to be a political blunder, inopportune and stupid.

In June and July, Díaz, as anticipated, was re-elected. Madero, in prison, was unable to do anything. Upon his release, Madero sought to protest the elections before the federal congress and sought the nullification of the elections. Needless to say, Madero's efforts failed.

Madero now had no other recourse except revolution. A plan for Madero's escape, the necessary prelude to the

revolution, now went forward and Madero crossed the international bridge at Laredo early on October seventh. From Laredo he went to San Antonio where he was met by friends. On all sides Madero's flight was interpreted, logically, as the first step toward revolution. But for the protection of those who remained in Mexico and to avoid an open challenge to the neutrality laws of the United States, Madero hastened to deny any intention of organizing a revolution. Despite the judicious public avowals, he was in reality preparing the financial, military, and ideological foundation of an armed rebellion. Madero's arrival in the United States made the tasks of the federal and state officials more difficult, since it was apparent that he was going to make an armed attempt against a friendly power, but nothing could be done against him until some overt action was taken.⁵

From the official point of view, Madero was not a welcome guest in the United States, since his presence would naturally cause a considerable amount of embarrassment and difficulty. Due to the public position of Madero, though, policy demanded that he be handled more diplomatically. In addition, among the general public in the United States, there appeared to be a growing feeling of disgust with the

5. Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1911 (Washington: Government Printing Office), p. 350.

Díaz regime. Although it was perfectly obvious during the latter part of October and early November that Madero and his organization were planning an armed movement, no effort was made by the authorities, either state or federal, to arrest him; a strict interpretation of our neutrality laws allowed this laxity.⁶

Meantime, there were rumors of the massing of men along the border, on the Texas side, to carry the revolutionary standard into Mexico.⁷ Active recruitment was presumably going on around Eagle Pass, El Paso, Naco, and Presidio;⁸ subsequent events proved that the reports were greatly exaggerated, but there was some justification for alarm. Madero and his friends had been making plans for an attack in force against the Díaz government. A fairly well organized plan was outlined for an attack to take place at Ciudad Porfirio Díaz during the early morning of November twentieth; at the same time there was to be a general uprising all over the nation.⁹ Unfortunately, Madero's forces failed to materialize, and the would-be

6. Charles C. Cumberland, "Mexican Revolutionary Movements from Texas, 1906-1912," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, LII (January, 1949), p. 306.

7. Ibid., p. 309.

8. Foreign Relations, 1910, p. 364.

9. Cumberland, p. 309.

revolutionists sadly retraced their steps into American territory without having fired a shot.¹⁰

This premature debacle, as well as the abortive uprisings in Mexico City and Puebla, and the inadequate organization of the movement resulted in a very unimpressive showing. Certainly the reports of the first week were hardly calculated to raise the spirits of the rebels.¹¹ Observers, accustomed to the forceful effectiveness of Díaz, awaited the vigorous elimination of the rebels. Lord Cowdroy, favored English aid promoter, told the London Times representative that this affair will be forgotten within a month.¹² Henry Lane Wilson, the American Ambassador, reported that the movement had failed, but warned that the uprising, "while apparently unorganized and without responsible leadership, was ramified throughout the republic and was remarkable for its intensity and bitterness showing the deep seated antipathy and antagonism to the government."¹³ In spite of these outbreaks, however, the revolution appeared to be a colossal failure.

10. Ibid.

11. Ross, p. 123.

12. Carleton Beals, Porfirio Díaz, Dictator of Mexico (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1932), p. 423.

13. Foreign Relations, 1911, p. 367.

While Madero was crossing over into Mexico, the United States government was not idly standing by. Washington had already instructed Brigadier General Hoyt, commanding the Department of Texas, to hold troops in readiness for services on the Mexican border. Already four companies were camped on the border near Eagle Pass.¹⁴ Every precaution was taken by American officers to prevent the violation of neutrality laws on United States soil. Governor Campbell of Texas ordered the entire force of Texas Rangers to the Rio Grande.¹⁵ While the United States government was insistent that it was taking no sides in the struggle, it seemed beyond question on what side its sympathies lay. The mere fact that many of the outbreaks against Díaz had also been at the same time demonstrations against the Americans was enough to clinch our friendship for the existing government. Also, the fact that the reports received from our diplomatic and consular agents in Mexico all agreed that the Mexican government was in safe control, made friendliness the part of diplomacy for us.

While Madero was on the move from San Antonio to New Orleans the Mexican government was attempting to induce

14. New York Times, November 22, 1910, p. 3.

15. Ibid.

the American government to take steps to circumscribe Madero's activities and to prevent the spread of the revolution, preferably by effecting Madero's arrest.¹⁶ Continued protests and voluminous correspondence elicited the information from the United States government that since no state of war existed there could be no breach of international law governing neutrality in time of war or armed rebellion, and that proof of an overt act would be necessary to prosecute under the so-called neutrality statutes of the northern country. Oral and written statements did not constitute punishable acts under the existing statutes, but the Mexican government was requested to furnish evidence in its possession of the commission of any punishable acts by either Madero or his supporters.¹⁷ Although the United States Attorney for the district of El Paso was of the opinion that evidence to consummate Madero's arrest was lacking, it is now clear that Madero was guilty of infractions of the American statutes.¹⁸

In the last month of 1910, and in January of the following year, the revolution was gaining momentum in

16. Charles C. Cumberland, Mexican Revolution: Genesis Under Madero (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1952), p. 127.

17. Foreign Relations, 1911, p. 372.

18. Ibid., p. 371.

Mexico and there was desultory fighting along the upper reaches of the Rio Grande border. The Mexican government made continued protests to the effect that arms and ammunition were being taken into Mexico for the use of the revolutionaries. But the Mexican protests were based primarily on rumors, and even in those cases when there was proof that arms were going across, there was nothing the United States government could do.¹⁹ It was pointed out that even when trade in arms and ammunition, and other contraband of war, was not considered illegal, the only punishment involved was confiscation if caught.²⁰

There seemed to be considerable confusion and uncertainty concerning the true state of affairs, with the Mexican officials apparently repeating as truth any rumor of armed movements. In spite of the confusion, however, and in spite of the periodic protests on the part of the Americans that nothing could be done, there was considerable activity along the border, from Brownsville to El Paso.²¹ But while there was much smoke along the border, no one seemed able to find the fire. Most of the attacks were

19. Cumberland, "Mexican Revolutionary Movements," p. 310.

20. Foreign Relations, 1910, p. 374.

21. Cumberland, "Mexican Revolutionary Movements," p. 312.

sporadic and the forces were small in number, but there was continual crossing and recrossing of the river in unguarded areas.

By the end of January, it was apparent that United States officialdom was becoming irked at the continued protests by the Mexicans, since these protests were based on rumor and there was no proof of the assertions forthcoming. It was felt that the Mexicans should be doing some of the patrolling themselves, but it was evident that their actions were limited to protests to the United States.²² It seemed that the government to the south was attempting to place the responsibility for preventing all crossings of the border on the shoulders of the American government, and:

this places the burden wholly upon the wrong side. It seems entirely clear that such matters (are no violation of our statutes) and they must, therefore, if they are illegal on the Mexican side of the border, be there met and overcome. You will . . . appear to shift the responsibility of maintaining peace on the Mexican side of the border from the Mexican government, where it belongs, to this government, where it does not belong.²³

Regardless of the American officials' reluctance, however, there can be no doubt that Madero was guilty of frequent infractions of the federal statutes providing punishment for any person beginning or setting on foot from United

22. Ibid.

23. Foreign Relations, 1911, p. 398.

States soil a military expedition against a friendly power. Madero obviously had set on foot operations against the Mexican government.

In early February, Washington acceded to the oft-repeated requests from Díaz, and the proper orders were given for legal action against Madero, and within a short time a warrant was issued for his arrest. Not only were the federal authorities looking for Madero, but the state officers were also instructed to arrest him on sight for violation of the neutrality laws. Since the arrest of Madero would presumably bring the revolution to an end, the governor of Texas broached the subject of the possibility of crossing the border, if it were needed, with a sufficient force to arrest Madero and three of his men who were wanted for crimes committed in Texas; all four were just across the river in Mexican territory.²⁴ The United States government, however, was not willing to ask the Mexican government for that permission, since it surely would be refused.

Word was received that Madero's hiding place had been discovered and that American authorities had ordered his arrest on the charges that he was preparing a military expedition against a friendly nation and had sent arms and

24. Foreign Relations, 1911, p. 410.

munitions to Mexico in violation of the neutrality laws. Accompanied by 130 men, Madero hurriedly crossed the frontier early on the morning of February fourteenth.²⁵ The circumstances of an American order of arrest combining with Mexican military developments to hasten Madero's entry into Mexico raises the much debated question of the role of the United States in the Madero revolution. No revolution against the Mexican government could have succeeded so long as the United States government maintained a policy of positive support of the existing regime. At the very least an attitude of neutrality would be necessary if a revolutionary group was to be able to organize, operate, and supply its forces from American soil. The attitude of the United States government, which for over twenty years had supported the Díaz regime and dealt summarily with trouble-making exiles, appeared to have changed by December 1909. During that month Henry Lane Wilson took charge of the American Embassy and shortly delivered a speech in which he implied his government's dissatisfaction with the continuing of the dictatorship of Díaz. Against this background of dissatisfaction with the Díaz government and of assurance from the Madero group, the United States followed a seemingly tolerant policy toward the rebels. Little molested were

25. Ross, p. 135.

the revolutionary agencies in San Antonio, El Paso, and Washington. There is no question that American policy toward Madero and his group lacked the ruthless aggressiveness previously employed against rebellious Mexican exiles. In 1910 and 1911, the United States demonstrated a meticulous concern for legal detail. The frontier between the two nations is a long one, and contraband, in the small amounts that were shipped in 1911, was difficult to apprehend, particularly in view of the large numbers of border residents who were sympathetic to the rebels. It was estimated that three-fourths of the large Mexican population of San Antonio approved of the movement.²⁶ Besides, the insurgent cause, with Madero's emphasis on democracy and liberty and his flattering observations on American political institutions, attracted the support of American public opinion and a sizable portion of the American press. Because of the prestige which Madero enjoyed from his candidacy, he seemed to fall into a different category from the earlier Mexican exiles. The Mexican government recognized its unfavorable position and took steps to correct the situation.²⁷ Dr. Fortunato Hernández was commissioned to undertake a vigorous journalistic campaign in the United States. Late in January,

26. Ibid., p. 138.

27. Ibid.

1911, Joaquín Casasus was sent to Washington as special envoy to thank President Taft for American participation in the Centenary celebration. This trip was more than a polite diplomatic visit, for Casasus also requested cooperation in enforcing the neutrality laws. The Mexican government maintained a substantial number of spies and hired American detectives not only to harass the exiles, but also to gather evidence on their movements for submission to American authorities. Officials in Washington were deluged with rumors and reports from the Mexican Ambassador, the Mexican Foreign Office, and even American consuls in border towns about the whereabouts and intentions of Madero. The Mexican government, submitting captured documents and reports of Madero's provisional appointments and appeals to the federal army, complained that the opposition leader was attempting to subvert the government of a friendly nation and requested that he be prosecuted as a violator of the neutrality laws.²⁸ There were other complaints about recruiting in border towns, arms purchases, and shipments, and reported movements of rebels across the border. American officials were asked to take appropriate action and thus the order for the arrest of Madero went out.

28. Foreign Relations, 1911, p. 363.

After Madero himself crossed into Mexico, the tempo of the revolution increased, with conditions along the border becoming more unsettled.²⁹ The mustering of rebel strength created enthusiasm among the Mexicans along the American border, which made it more difficult to prevent the violation of neutrality laws.³⁰ Again in Mexico and at the head of a revolutionary force, Madero made a bid for belligerent status. Before leaving the United States, he had appointed Dr. Francisco Vázquez Gómez to serve as confidential agent and diplomatic representative to Washington in behalf of the provisional government. Madero thus had a diplomatic representative in Washington, and through him a request for recognition was made. Since, according to the note delivered by Vázquez Gómez to the Department of State, the provisional government had given ample evidence of its ability to protect foreigners, prosecute a war, and abide by the recognized rules of warfare, the government had earned and deserved recognition as a belligerent. Madero further agreed to accept the foreign commitments made by the Díaz government previous to November 20, 1910, and to accept full responsibility for damages sustained, to either person

29. Cumberland, p. 313.

30. Edward J. Berbusse, S.J., "Neutrality Diplomacy of the United States and Mexico, 1910-1911," Americas, XII, No. 3, January, 1956, p. 267.

or property, by the nationals of those countries according recognition. The United States made no reply, nor should one have been made, for Madero hardly deserved belligerent status. The revolutionary force was largely concentrated in a small segment of Chihuahua, and even in this, no cities had been captured. Not a single port of entry was yet in the hands of the rebels, the army had been unable to inflict a real defeat on the government forces, and at best the revolutionaries were employing guerilla tactics.³¹

As time passed and the military situation worsened, the notes directed to the State Department revealed, despite diplomatic language, growing Mexican irritation and dissatisfaction. The American Ambassador reported in early April that Mexican authorities had complained "that the rebels continue to receive large supplies of food and ammunition from across the Texas border," and had declared that "military operations could be brought to an end in one month if the source of supplies were rendered unavailable."³² The conduct of the United States government was scrupulously correct in form. American officials chose to insist that the strictest legal conditions be fulfilled before action was instituted. Complaints were courteously acknowledged

31. Cumberland, Mexican Revolution, p. 130.

32. Foreign Relations, 1911, p. 448.

and referred to the War and Justice Departments for study and any warranted action. Despite this legalistic attitude the Mexican complaints did result in some action by the United States. Specific charges were investigated; several shipments of guns and munitions were seized; and a number of armed expeditions were stopped. On two occasions warrants for the arrest of Madero were issued, but the first order was withdrawn for lack of evidence, and the second forced Madero across the border. Sánchez Azcona, Secretary of the Washington agency of the revolution was arrested. However, he was released after a court refused to accede to the extradition request of the Mexican government. Cavalry troops were ordered to the border towns to assist the civilian authorities in enforcing the neutrality laws. In at least one instance the Mexican government obtained positive cooperation from the United States, when General Luque was besieged in Ojinaga, on the northern border of Chihuahua, the Department of State granted permission for the Mexican commander to obtain provisions and fodder from American territory.³³

In spite of temporary reverses the revolutionary bands seemed to be growing in strength and vigor. But even more important to the revolutionists was an action taken by

33. Ross, p. 141.

the United States. This, the most startling and significant action by the American government in connection with the disturbed conditions in Mexico, was the mobilization of 20,000 troops on the Texas-Mexican frontier in March, 1911. On March sixth, President Taft ordered a concentration of army forces along the Mexican border with a full division at San Antonio, a brigade at Galveston, and another brigade in southern California, ostensibly to carry out routine maneuvers.³⁴ In addition, American warships were ordered to proceed to Mexican ports on the Pacific and Gulf Coasts. In large and black headlines the newspapers of March eighth informed a startled country that orders had been issued for the concentration of 20,000 of our regular soldiers on the borders of Mexico.³⁵ This, "the most sensational military movement in our history without warning or explanation," as the New York Evening Post called it, was first explained by the War Department as for the mere purpose of conducting "military maneuvers" and to test the readiness of our army to respond to an emergency call.³⁶ The country was startled, but not alarmed. Although the order for these extensive military movements stated that the troops were being

34. Foreign Relations, 1911, p. 415.

35. "Movement of Troops to Mexico," Current Literature, L (April, 1911), p. 353.

36. Ibid.

mobilized for purposes of field instruction, it was inevitable that the press, in view of the disturbed conditions of things existing in Mexico, should instantly begin to seek other reasons.³⁷

It took just twenty four hours for the president to perceive that this child's tale would not be accepted by anyone at its face value. In a letter to General Leonard Wood, dated March 12, 1911, President Taft explained the mobilization of this country's armed forces was prompted by Ambassador Wilson's report that Mexico was boiling, and that a general explosion was probable at any time, in which case he feared that 40,000 or more Americans would be assailed and American investments of more than \$1,000,000 would be injured or destroyed because of the anti-American spirit of the insurrection.

Taft said that it was his duty as commander-in-chief to place troops where they could enter Mexico to save American lives and property.³⁸ President Taft in another speech said that:

The United States has determined that the revolution in the republic to the south must end. The

37. "United States and Mexico," Outlook, 97 (March 18, 1911), p. 565.

38. John E. MacDonough, Henry Lane Wilson, Ambassador to Mexico, 1909-1913 (Tucson: Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Arizona, 1942), p. 25.

American troops have been sent to form a solid military wall along the Rio Grande to stop filibustering and to see that there is no further smuggling of arms and men across the international boundary.³⁹

Simultaneously with the president's issuing the mobilization order of March seventh, the State Department wired the American Embassy giving notice of the mobilization and instructions to

inform the President of Mexico thru the foreign office that the President (Taft) wishes express his hope that no misapprehension will result from unfounded and sensational newspaper conjectures as to the military maneuvers about to take place in Texas and elsewhere, and begs to give President Díaz assurance that the measures have no significance which should cause concern to our friendly neighbor to the South (!).⁴⁰

A tremendous uproar followed this action, and both the Mexican government and the rebels hastened to proclaim their irrevocable opposition to intervention. President Taft ordered that the vessels only call for coal and then leave promptly, and assured the Mexican government that the mobilization was intended to facilitate enforcement of the neutrality laws and was not a hostile move.⁴¹ President Díaz accepted the American explanation and even declared that he believed that it "would strengthen the hand of the Mexican government."⁴² However, the American troop

39. "Movement of Troops to Mexico," p. 354.

40. Foreign Relations, 1911, p. 563.

41. Ross, p. 141.

42. Foreign Relations, 1911, p. 431.

movement had a most unfavorable effect for the Díaz government because public opinion blamed General Díaz for seeking intervention. Even though the United States attempted to dispel the belief that an intervention was contemplated, the action was a clear indication that the northern government seriously doubted Díaz's ability to protect American nationals and their property.⁴³ The distress was amplified by a United States Navy announcement that part of the Pacific Fleet was to hold maneuvers off the west coast of Mexico; to the Mexican government the two announcements were not a coincidence and constituted a gratuitous insult.⁴⁴ The efforts on the part of the United States officialdom to allay fears in Mexico that the American mobilization was but a prelude to intervention did not succeed. In reporting on conditions on March eighth, the day following the United States mobilization decree, Secretary Dearing stated that "the mobilization is the preponderating topic in all circles, the general opinion being that it has some ulterior purpose."⁴⁵ The mobilization, which had been so strongly and directly urged by Ambassador Wilson, had resulted in a widespread fear of intervention. The State Department in May instructed Wilson "to officially deny through the local

43. Cumberland, p. 133.

44. Foreign Relations, 1911, p. 422.

45. Ibid., p. 416.

press and otherwise all foolish stories of intervention. The government of the United States is not concerned with Mexican internal political affairs (!) and demands nothing but the respect and protection of American life and property."⁴⁶

Denying the slightest intention of intervention, President Taft stated "my determined purpose is to be in a position so that when danger to American lives and property in Mexico threatens, and the existing government is rendered helpless by the insurrection, I can promptly exercise congressional orders to protect them with effect."⁴⁷

The Mexican government, however, was correct in its assumption that the orders reflected a loss of confidence in Mexico's ability to restrain the revolutionary forces and maintain peace.⁴⁸ The "maneuvers" grew out of a conference between President Taft and Ambassador Wilson, in which the ambassador indicated his belief that the collapse of the Díaz government was in its incipient stage, and pointed to the collapse and the inevitable "explosion" which would follow.⁴⁹ The president's orders, then, were purely preventive. He had no desire to give aid and comfort to the revolution; on the contrary, he hoped by his actions to

46. Foreign Relations, 1911, p. 481.

47. Ibid., p. 415.

48. Cumberland, p. 133.

49. Foreign Relations, 1911, p. xi.

eliminate the passage of arms and men across the border, and by so doing to aid Mexico to return to a condition of tranquility--"a result devoutly wished."⁵⁰

The official position concerning the purpose of the concentration of military forces was reiterated by Washington, but Madero could not fail to see the advantages to his cause which would accrue from the action, and the Mexican government could hardly note the situation with equanimity.⁵¹ Even José Limantour, who arrived in New York en route from Paris shortly after the announcement, unconsciously reflected the disturbed state of mind in Mexico when he said, with reference to the movements of warships off the Mexican coast, "It does not appear to me how these ships can cooperate with the troops in the general maneuvers at so great a distance from the natural base."⁵²

It is not clear just what the result of the mobilization was intended to be, other than to make it clear to the Mexican government that something would have to be done about the situation in Mexico. There seems to be no justification for the apparent fears of the American Ambassador that complete chaos was in store for the country, nor does it appear

50. Foreign Relations, 1911, p. xii.

51. Cumberland, p. 134.

52. Times (London), March 13, 1911, p. 5.

that any actions being taken either by the government or the rebels would dictate the necessity of intervention.⁵³

Whether the mobilization order was anti-Díaz or anti-Madero is not clear; the effects, however, are clear. The mobilization was a positive indication of the belief held by the American government that Díaz would not be able to control the situation. Therefore, that action, coupled with the moral victory gained by the rebels at Casas Grandes on the day before the order for mobilization was given, encouraged those anti-government groups which were wavering between action and non-action. Almost immediately the revolutionary forces began an amazing growth which was still accelerating at the time of the capture of Ciudad Juárez and the consequent fall of the dictatorship.

If the mobilization of troops on the frontier by the United States strained Mexican-American relations, the incident near Douglas, Arizona certainly added fuel to the fire and fanned the talk of intervention. Mexico was aflame with revolution. The rebels were making progress in Coahuila and Chihuahua, while in Sonora their forces advanced to the town of Agua Prieta, a frontier town opposite Douglas, Arizona. On April 13, 1911, Agua Prieta was captured by the rebels after a battle in which fire from

53. Cumberland, "Mexican Revolutionary Movements," p. 314.

the contestants fell in the Arizona city.⁵⁴ Two Americans were killed and eleven wounded, creating a serious problem in international relations.⁵⁵

The War Department bulletins based on reports from Colonel Shunk, in command of the United States Cavalry at Douglas, were reported to President Taft, and the substance of these communicated to the Senate. Investigations by authorities from the United States indicated that the bullets crossing the boundary had been from the guns of the Díaz forces, who had been attacked from the direction of the border.⁵⁶ A renewal of the battle on April seventeenth, when again Americans were wounded on American soil,⁵⁷ brought a heated protest from Washington. The federal troops seemed "disposed to keep their agreement not to fire into Douglas,"⁵⁸ but the positions of the contending forces made a recurrence certain if there were any further fighting. For a short time, it was feared that the United States would resort to the occupation of Agua Prieta. Also, on April 17, Senator Stone of Missouri introduced a resolution directing

54. Cumberland, Mexican Revolution, p. 138.

55. Foreign Relations, 1911, p. 456.

56. Ibid., p. 458.

57. Ibid., p. 459.

58. Ibid.

that an investigating committee be appointed because "conditions of turbulence and disorder prevail in the Republic across the Rio Grande. The life of American citizens and the property of Americans are in jeopardy from irresponsible persons roving about Mexico; . . . and Americans on this side of the boundary have been killed and wounded by flying bullets."⁵⁹

Twice during the month of April, President Taft, through the State Department, made representations to the Mexican government to the effect that affairs like those at Douglas and Agua Prieta, involving injury to American life and property, must not be repeated. At the same time formal warnings were issued to the federal and insurrecto commanders that they would be held to a strict observance of the neutrality laws. The president asked for immediate assurances that there would be no more fighting that might endanger Americans in the border towns. Information was also requested as to what measures the federal authorities had already taken to prevent further combat of this kind.

On April eighteenth, President Díaz informed Ambassador Wilson that Mexico would observe a distinct restricting policy for the zone of hostilities along the

59. "Our Course in the Mexican War," Review of Reviews, XLIII (May, 1911), p. 534.

international border.⁶⁰ The official reply of the Mexican government to President Taft's formal note was received at the State Department two days later. From the summary given out at that time it was seen that, while it was friendly in form and substance, the reply laid at the door of American citizens much of the responsibility for the injuries complained of by the president. Of course, it was impossible for fighting to go on close to a boundary line without some damage to life and property on the American side. It may be, as has been claimed, that the insurrectos purposely took positions which forced the federal troops, in attacking them, to fire into American territory. It was undoubtedly true that Americans did not keep away from the line in order to be safe. Nevertheless, United States officials felt that the responsibility laid with the central authorities at Mexico City and they must be held strictly accountable for all damage done to American interests by their own or the insurgent troops.

Also on April eighteenth, after warning the Díaz government to prevent the firing across the border by the combatants near Douglas, Arizona, President Taft recognized that the situation there would justify an order to American troops to fire upon the combatants across the line or to

60. Ibid., p. 534.

cross the border to stop the fighting, but denied any intention of intervention except as a last resort.⁶¹ But Taft refrained from any such action which might be misconstrued and misrepresented and possibly result in resistance and greater bloodshed, increasing the danger to Americans in Mexico and the pressure for general intervention, and therefore he advised the governor of Arizona to direct the people of Douglas to avoid casualty by placing themselves where bullets could not reach them.⁶² While Washington was considering the problem, however, the situation was resolved by the rebels, who exhausted their supply of ammunition and withdrew from the border city.⁶³

The mobilization of the troops on the frontier in March and the incidents near Douglas in April, 1911, brought up the questions of American interests in Mexico and intervention. The interests of the United States were plain enough. For half a century Americans had been investing in Mexico, until by 1911, there was over a billion dollars of American money in railroads, mines, forests, and ranches

61. Foreign Relations, 1911, p. 460.

62. James M. Callahan, American Foreign Policy in Mexican Relations (New York: Macmillan Company, 1932), p. 454.

63. Cumberland, Mexican Revolution, p. 139.

south of the Rio Grande.⁶⁴ American capital had been encouraged by President Díaz, and the lives of American citizens had been protected by the strong government he had maintained. It was felt that the United States owed every assistance in its power to the Mexican government on its arduous task of developing the country and educating the people at the same time. Liberal concessions had been granted, but, while they have encouraged Americans to locate and invest in Mexico, they had also created a condition which tended to increase our problem when Díaz would be no more. The liberality toward Americans had created a hatred of them by the classes which had been kept down and ruled by the iron hand of the dictator-president. They seemed to only await the time when they would have the opportunity, not only to destroy the government which Díaz had built up, but also the Americans whom he had favored. Thus, if the Diaz regime failed, Mexico would no longer be a place of investment for our money or a land of opportunity for our men, but a constant menace along the border.⁶⁵

All these matters received due consideration by the United States government. With Díaz in control, in spite of

64. Arthur W. Dunn, "Uncle Sam on Police Duty," Review of Reviews, XLIII (February, 1911), p. 462.

65. "American Interest in Mexico," World's Week, XXI (February, 1911), p. 13950.

sporadic insurrections, American life and property had been considered safe until very recently, when it seemed clear that the power of the famous old Mexican president was on the wane. It was possible that Díaz might leave a government so strong as to be able to cope with the inevitable revolution that would follow his death, but it was doubtful.

The question of concern to American residents in Mexico was the possible intervention of the United States before the revolution came to an end.⁶⁶ It was known that there had been a great deal of talk about intervention on the border, and that a large army had been mobilized in Texas. Things began to look serious. Intervention would change entirely the question then before the Mexican people. As it was, a very large majority were in sympathy with the revolution, though a great part secretly. The crossing over the border of a foreign army at the invitation of a government already unpopular, and one which the mass of people wished to see come to an end, would have been the signal for the whole Mexican people to rise against the perfidy of their own government and the aggression of a foreign foe.

The revolution had been going on with what could have been called small warfare. It looked for a while as

66. "Mexicans and Americans," Outlook, 97 (April 1, 1911), p. 730.

if the revolutionists would be content with interfering with traffic and embarrassing the government in other ways; but it was felt that should the United States step in, then there would be big warfare. Bloodshed could not be averted, and indeed, would be greatly increased, and the very ends sought defeated by the fact of intervention. Thousands of Americans would be put in great personal danger and everything American would be injured for decades to come. However, the protection of American interests in Mexico did not form even a sensible ground for intervention. The temporary loss to the interests of Mexico and the present inconvenience suffered by letting the revolution run its course could not be compared to the loss of friendly relations and trade in subsequent years.

Despite the incidents in March and April of 1911, traffic in arms and men continued to flow across the border, bringing up the question of neutrality violations. In late April, 1911, the United States Marshal at El Paso stated that arms, ammunition, and men were being moved into Mexico. He found also that more than ninety percent of the citizens of El Paso favored the insurgents; that since the Rio Grande is at most of the year a dry channel, passage was easy; and that large shipments of ammunition and arms were constantly being shipped to local dealers at El Paso.⁶⁷ The fact of

67. Berbusse, p. 273.

shipments of arms and munitions as well as the passage of men over the long border is undeniable. The neutrality obligations of the United States under international law and the domestic statutes of the United States depended in great part on American interpretations of those laws. Whether the United States used "due diligence" in enforcing neutrality was relative to such interpretation.

The official attitude of the United States stood for the Díaz regime, refusing to concede belligerent rights to the Madero revolution. It allowed a "status of insurgency" to the maderistas, only as a humanity measure. In international law, the United States was not bound to neutrality, since no status of belligerency was held to exist.⁶⁸ In its actions, however, the United States government interpreted its neutrality statutes in such a way that the constant help crossing the United States was not interpreted as violating neutrality. It was a reading that definitely favored the forces of rebellion. Whatever may have been the sympathies of top level officials, it is certain that local officers often displayed greater enthusiasm for the cause of the maderistas. Armed expeditions were shielded from United States federal surveillance. Trade in arms and ammunition was always interpreted as mere commerce,

68. Ibid., p. 281.

not as related to armed expeditions. The soliciting of troops in the United States was allowed as part of the freedom of speech under the American Constitution. In a word, official United States policy had become strictly neutral, a condition that implied admission of Maderist belligerency; in practice, border sympathies allowed much aid to pass to the Madero rebels.

On May 8, 1911, there occurred an attack on Ciudad Juárez which resulted in its capture by the forces of Madero. The capture of the border point was of extreme importance to the revolutionaries, for it gave them a customhouse and the right to import materials which their forces badly needed.⁶⁹ After a short study of the situation and the international implications involved, President Taft ruled that the rebels could import anything without fearing United States action. In summary, Taft recognized that the possession of the port of entry would give the Madero forces a great advantage because they could set up a depot of supplies in Ciudad Juárez, but concluded by saying, "This may be, but it grows out of the weakness or the misfortune of the Mexican government, for which we are not responsible, and it does not change our duty or the right of persons in our jurisdiction

69. Cumberland, "Mexican Revolutionary Movements," p. 315.

to carry on legitimate trade."⁷⁰ It is an oversimplification to assert that the surrender of some four hundred soldiers and the fall of the frontier town more than a thousand miles from the capital caused the fall of the Díaz government. The victory at Ciudad Juárez was the drop that overflowed the bucket, the coup de grace for the Díaz regime.⁷¹ The revolutionary flame had spread like a prairie fire throughout the republic. Public opinion had been awakened, creating an atmosphere that was inimical to the dictatorship. Only five of the thirty-one territorial entities were untouched by the revolution, and in most of the others the insurgents dominated the major portions. In many states effective federal control was limited to the capital and a few principal cities which, in most instances, were besieged by the rebels. Ambassador Wilson reported that by the time the definitive treaty of peace was signed, the revolutionists controlled two thirds of the country and the "remaining one third was rapidly tending to the same direction."⁷²

The government did not know where to turn first. The direction of the government campaign revealed startling inadequacies when military and judicial devices proving

70. Foreign Relations, 1911, p. 482.

71. Ross, p. 166.

72. Foreign Relations, 1911, pp. 489-490.

ineffective, Díaz resorted to political means. The final stratagem of the government consisted in trying to defeat the revolution through a series of peace negotiations. Actually the progress of the revolution was remarkable considering the dispersion and disorder with which the revolutionary bands were created and multiplied, and the victory was exceedingly rapid.

On May 24, 1911, crowds gathered in Mexico City shouting adherence to the revolution and demanding the resignation of Díaz.⁷³ A large group gathered near the building of the Chamber anxious to learn the text of the rumored resignation. However, the sending of the message was delayed, and the crowd roared with protest. Elsewhere in the city there were bloody clashes between the police and the citizens. In the main plaza a tremendous mass of people gathered near the National Palace. Four times mounted police tried to disperse the crowd, supported the last time by riflemen in the towers of the cathedral and machine gunners on the roof of the palace. There were many casualties in this final, futile flaying with the Porfirian stick.

The following day, May 25, 1911, a large, apparently peaceful throng gathered near the doors of the Chamber of

73. Ross, p. 171.

Deputies. That afternoon Porfirio Díaz reluctantly submitted his resignation. He explained that he was surrendering his post "respecting, as I have always respected, the will of the people," and avoiding "the continued spilling of blood, the destruction of the credit of the nation, and the (danger) of international conflict would be necessary to retain it."⁷⁴

Thus with the coming of the year 1911, events followed each other with startling rapidity. Taft had hoped very much, and he was probably entirely sincere, that Díaz would hold on until he, Taft, was out of office.⁷⁵ Again it was probably a case of being torn between the sincere desire to avoid complications and the implications of Dollar Diplomacy to which his administration was committed. And in the case of Mexico these complications arose in a fashion for which the administration was not prepared, and which it had not anticipated. With the surprising overthrow and flight of Díaz the situation became critical, and there was a note resembling irritated surprise in the president's letter book when he realized that this problem had been dumped into the lap of his administration

74. Ross, p. 171.

75. Wilfred H. Callcott, Caribbean Policy of the United States, 1890-1920 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1942), p. 295.

at this inconvenient time.⁷⁶ Even so, when Díaz was forced to flee his capital, Taft sent him a personal message of sympathy and of appreciation of his work.

76. Ibid., p. 297.

CHAPTER III

RISE AND DECLINE OF FRANCISCO MADERO

General Porfirio Díaz had been overthrown, and the end of the Díaz regime represents the closing of an era and the opening of a new one; Mexico was now to enter the twentieth century. As has been shown, relations with Mexico during the closing years of the Díaz regime had been friendly, although there was some apprehension on the part of President Taft as to just how long Díaz would last; Taft had stated in his private papers that he hoped to finish his term before Díaz finished his. With the outbreak of the revolution in 1910, the United States officially maintained a position of neutrality, although the interpretation of these laws seemed to favor the Madero rebels. Events in early 1911 showed growing apprehension in the United States as regards to the situation in Mexico, and the danger to American lives and property. Although the position of neutrality was maintained by the United States, there was a growing pressure to intervene to protect American interests. During the short Madero administration tensions became sharper as instability seemed to be running rampant

in Mexico, and the pressure for intervention mounted.

In spite of the supposed end of the revolution, disorders continued throughout the country. The rural security enjoyed under the dictatorship seemed to have disintegrated. Brigandage and the lack of discipline of some revolutionary leaders and troops were only a partial explanation of conditions. In Chihuahua, Durango, Jalisco, and Hidalgo, but particularly in Puebla and Morelos, rural properties were invaded and seized by groups of peasants. These were outcroppings of the rural discontent and warnings of the urgent need for agrarian reform. There were encounters and disturbances in other areas, and American Ambassador Wilson reported that conditions close to anarchy existed in eleven states.¹

The conservative and foreign elements complained bitterly about the violence and the failure to deal with it energetically. Much of this criticism was directed against Madero and the revolution. Wilson advised the United States State Department, in a report that now appears disturbingly prophetic, that if the disorders were allowed to continue, a formidable opposition to Madero might develop, backed by the army, the Catholic Church, and the foreign and commercial elements.² Madero was beginning to find himself

1. Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1911 (Washington: Government Printing Office), pp. 508-510.

Stanley R. Ross, Francisco I. Madero: Apostle of Democracy (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), p. 182.

between two fires which were to harass him to the very end: the revolutionists, angry and disappointed with the compromise and demanding change; and the conservatives, critical of disorders, cynical regarding Madero's political ideas, and fearfully opposed to any change.

In addition to an entrenched reaction, a demanding revolution, an obstreperous Congress, and a virulent press, Madero had to contend with the activities of American Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson. Despite the anti-foreign, and particularly anti-American, sentiment which was part of the Mexican upheaval, Madero continued to proclaim his friendship for the United States. The American government indicated, at least by its conduct in the early months of the Madero regime, its desire to contribute to the stability of the new administration.

Henry Lane Wilson, who had become Ambassador to Mexico in the waning days of the Díaz period, was not unhappy about the change of government. Although he was concerned lest the revolution increase disrespect for authority and was not enthusiastic about the elevation of a reformer to the presidency, his early reports were not unfavorable to Madero. In July, 1911, the American diplomat reported that he had met Madero on several occasions and had endeavored to form some opinion of his character:

He is insignificant in appearance, of diffident manners and hesitating speech, and seems to be

highly nervous and uncertain as to his course in regard to many important public questions. He has, however, one redeeming feature--a pair of excellent eyes, which indicate to me earnestness, truthfulness, and loyalty, and, it may be, reserves of strength and force of character which time may more fully reveal.³

The elections were held on schedule and were among the cleanest, most enthusiastic, and most democratic elections in Mexican history. The people's wishes were well known, and the returns undoubtedly accurately represented them. Ambassador Wilson reported that order prevailed everywhere.⁴ On November 2, 1911, Francisco Madero and Pino Suárez were declared elected. Wilson's opinion with respect to Madero, however, was at times inconsistent. Of Madero's election to the presidency, Wilson reported that Madero was elected by a total vote of 19,989 in a population of 15,000,000.⁵ This, of course, is a gross misrepresentation, since Wilson states the figure of the total population of Mexico, rather than the total voting population. Aside from this apparently deliberate attempt to misrepresent the political support of Madero, Wilson also attempted to discredit the character of the election,

3. Foreign Relations, 1911, pp. 508-510.

4. Ross, p. 216.

5. John E. MacDonough, Henry Lane Wilson, Ambassador to Mexico, 1909-1913 (Tucson: Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Arizona, 1942), p. 44.

and termed it "farcial" and "in a very small degree representative of public opinion."⁶ Furthermore, Wilson's attitude and opinion of Madero was also inconsistent. Wilson, though repelled by the confusion and anarchy which attended the inauguration, nevertheless reported that Madero was an honest and patriotic man, dealing with a most difficult situation. Due to the conditions and the stern necessities of the hour, though, Wilson thought that Madero must change his ideas of government or the people would hang him. Wilson stated that he was of the opinion that Madero would not only change his ideas of government, but as time passed would be compelled by the forces of circumstance to revert more and more to the system of General Díaz.⁷ The ambassador expressed his belief that the new president would protect foreigners and that he and his cabinet would do justice to American interests.⁸ On the other hand, the attitude of Wilson toward Madero was almost one of complete personal antagonism. Wilson had known of Madero as a speaker in the streets, and considered him of little significance. He looked upon Madero as an

6. Foreign Relations, 1911, p. 520.

7. Ross, p. 237.

8. Ibid.

imbecile and had publicly referred to him as such.⁹ Wilson expressed his fears that the Madero movement "might lead to disrespect of constituted authority."¹⁰ Wilson had condemned Madero even before he had assumed the presidency. As early as July 11, 1911, Wilson expressed the possibility of Madero's failure.¹¹

The Ambassador of the United States to Mexico, possessing the confidence of the Washington government, thus became a definite challenge to Mexico's president. Madero had regarded Washington's friendliness to de la Barra as an indication of its attitude toward himself, and was quite unprepared for the contest with Washington's diplomatic agent which awaited him.¹² Ambassador Wilson's crossfire of demands, with the ominous power of the United States behind it, produced a peculiar irritation from which the mind of Madero was rarely free.

At the commencement of the Madero regime, in November, 1911, Wilson's official attitude toward Madero was one of cooperative helpfulness. During the first week

9. Edward I. Bell, Political Shame of Mexico (New York: McBride, Nast and Company, 1914), p. 110.

10. Foreign Relations, 1911, p. 508.

11. Ernest Gruening, Mexico and Its Heritage (New York: Appleton Century Company, 1934), p. 561.

12. Bell, p. 141.

after Madero took office, Wilson recommended that "every possible assistance compatible with our laws be given to the Mexican Government."¹³ This attitude of Wilson's swiftly changed. Wilson's attitude toward Madero progressively became one of dissatisfaction, then one of criticism, and finally one of open opposition.¹⁴

Within a few months, Wilson had become the severest critic, censor, and ultimately, fanatical enemy of the government to which he was accredited. The reasons for this change were inherent in the personalities, backgrounds, and objectives of the two men involved. There was a very real personality conflict between the realistic, practical American diplomat and the idealistic Mexican president. Wilson was disappointed that Madero did not recognize his experience and consult with him. The background of the two men included the economic rivalry between the Madero family and the Guggenheim interests with which friends and relatives of the ambassador were associated. As soon as it was evident that the new government did not propose to grant favors to American capital, and, in Wilson's opinion, could not be trusted to maintain order and to protect American

13. Foreign Relations, 1911, p. 421.

14. MacDonough, p. 52.

property interests, the ambassador became an active opponent of Madero.¹⁵

Wilson's attitude found expression in his complaints to the Mexican government and in his reports to the State Department. The ambassador protested disorders and demanded protection for American life and property. He harassed the Mexican government with real and imaginary grievances and insisted on immediate settlement of claims, including compensation for the deaths of from forty to over one hundred Americans reported murdered. Under careful investigation the number diminished to seventeen, of which only a handful merited consideration.¹⁶ Not content with representing American interests, Wilson pressed the claims of German, Spanish, Belgian, French, and Chinese nationals. He complained, for example, of action against the violently anti-government Mexican Herald; of the discriminatory and confiscatory oil tax, which was scarcely exorbitant (three centavos per barrel), and which applied to all producers; and of the proposal of the Madero government to enforce the Spanish language requirement, which had fallen into disuse under Díaz, for railroad workers.¹⁷ In

15. Ross, p. 237.

16. Ibid., p. 238.

17. Gruening, p. 563.

his reports to the American government, Wilson repeated all the stock criticism of the Madero government, noted optimistically the prospects, and usually wrote flatteringly of the leaders of the revolutionary movements against the Madero administration, and painted a gloomy picture of conditions in Mexico. His dispatches, too often based on rumors and inflammatory newspaper accounts, clearly showed his relentless efforts to discredit the Madero government. Wilson's news of certain districts was, on occasion, at variance with the dispatches of consular agents in the locality. In March, 1912, Wilson felt compelled to submit as evidence that the embassy dispatches were written in a most conservative spirit and with close adherence to established facts clippings from the Mexican Herald.¹⁸

For a few months, shortly after the inauguration of Madero, it appeared that there would be no more serious difficulties. But toward the end of the summer of 1911, Madero's administration was challenged by a series of rebellions, and there were indications that another period of trouble was about to be inaugurated, especially along the border. Bernardo Reyes, one of the old generals of the Díaz regime, had returned to Mexico after the completion of the revolution. Within a short time he announced for the presidency, in August, 1911, but since

18. Ross, p. 239.

he was receiving no popular support he determined to try his hand at revolution; he gave as a reason the dictatorial methods the followers of Madero were using in the campaign.¹⁹ He left Mexico City in September and disappeared from view for a short time, but early in October it was generally known that he was plotting a counter-revolution, and that Texas would be the base of operations. On October 8, 1911, Reyes arrived in San Antonio, denounced the Madero revolution and the men who had taken part in it, claimed that the entire affair had been purely for the personal gain of those involved, and that he would not return to Mexico until personal and political freedom were a fact.²⁰

The following day he stated that he was taking steps to start a revolution against Madero, and that he would not rest until Madero had been overthrown. He quite openly began gathering arms, horses, ammunition, and equipment of all kinds for his invasion. The Mexican government called the attention of the United States authorities to the events and to the dangers existing in any movement against Mexico;²¹ evidently Madero had forgotten the

19. Charles C. Cumberland, "Mexican Revolutionary Movements from Texas, 1906-1912," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, LII (January, 1949), p. 316.

20. Ibid.

21. Foreign Relations, 1912, p. 520.

attitude and actions of the American officials toward his own movement in its early stages. After the inauguration of Madero on November 6, 1911, the activity along the border became general, with a constant movement back and forth across the border but with no actual attacks being made.

Two companies of troops were sent to the border by the United States to guard against any infraction of the so-called neutrality statutes, and the general attitude seemed to be that Reyes was definitely in the wrong.²² The Madero government, unlike the Díaz government earlier, was able to find definite proof of the intentions of the Reyes group and of the activities which they were undertaking; among other things it was discovered that the sheriff of Webb County was involved with the revolutionaries and was giving aid to the movement.²³ As a result of the information furnished in part by the Madero government, and because of strong recommendations by the American Ambassador to Mexico, on November 18, 1911, the federal officials swooped down on Reyes and his group, arrested them, and confiscated the arms and ammunition captured.²⁴ Though

22. Cumberland, p. 317.

23. Foreign Relations, 1912, p. 521.

24. Ibid.

Reyes was soon freed on bail, it was thought that the revolution had been nipped in the bud. But in spite of the close surveillance under which Reyes was kept, he was able to cross the border into Mexico without having stood trial for the violation of the American statutes. He arrived in Mexican territory on December 13, 1911, determined to carry out the revolution despite the fact that he had lost most of his equipment and followers. The Mexicans failed to rally to his cause, however, and each day his minute force became smaller; finally, in desperation and disappointment, he surrendered to the ranking military officer in Linares, Nuevo León, on December 25, 1911. His revolution had come to an inglorious end. Ambassador Wilson disgustedly reported that the Reyes rebellion, "to the relief of all factions," had run its course and had come to a "most ignominious, undignified, and grotesque end." The ambassador hastened to add, however, that the general's failure was not due to "any universal satisfaction with the Madero government."²⁵

While Madero was dealing with the Reyes revolt successfully, he was not dealing very successfully with Ambassador Wilson, which brought Madero face to face with the only possible solution--the Washington government must

25. Foreign Relations, 1912, pp. 713-715.

be asked to effect a change in its representation at Mexico City. Madero conveyed the hint to Washington that all was not well in his relations with its diplomatic representative, and left it for Washington to take such action as it saw fit.²⁶ To Madero's astonishment and chagrin, Washington saw fit to do nothing, and if Madero had required a declaration that the Taft administration was not in sympathy with his attempt to establish democracy in Mexico, he was now in possession of it.

Discontent and sporadic outbreaks spread throughout Mexico. The press, from which Madero had removed the Díaz gag, challenged every act of the government--and then, in the first week of February, 1912, less than three months from the day Madero took office, the government at Washington dealt him a thrust which it is scarcely an exaggeration to number with the wounds that killed him.

Orders were issued by the War Department at Washington, on February 4, 1912, that all troops in the United States be prepared for field service.²⁷ Commanders of the Departments of the Gulf, of the Lakes, of the East, and of California, were directed to hold the forces under their command in readiness for concentration on the

26. Bell, p. 145.

27. Ibid., p. 149.

Mexican border. Though the newspapers of the United States did not give appropriate attention to these proceedings, the importance of them was appreciated in Mexico immediately. Press despatches on the night of February fourth conveyed the menace of war, and on the following day the newspapers of the Mexican capital spread the information far and wide. The resulting sensation was electrical. The effect was cumulative, and it was extremely demoralizing. Madero believed that this unfortunate action and the attitude of the United States toward his government resulted from representations made by Ambassador Wilson. It is easy to say that the disturbed conditions in Mexico had reached a stage where intervention by the United States seemed to be justified; but the difficulty is that with the first step toward intervention the disturbances vastly increased. The warlike order was not in itself remedial, and nothing followed but vain attempts to explain. The threat remained, darkening the air, and in the shadow that it threw on Mexico much evil was done, but no lightning came from the cloud.

Meanwhile, the administration in Washington continued to act in error. Trouble was increasing in northern Mexico, and Texans individually and by delegations called upon Washington to do something. Several regiments were sent to the border; some thousands of soldiers were in San

Antonio and El Paso before the end of February. Various persons, such as those speaking with a strong Guggenheim accent, arose in Congress and elsewhere to declare the inadequacy of the Madero government, and to tell inspired tales of injuries sustained by Americans in Mexico. But neither the threat of military action nor the sending of a few troops to the border, nor the warnings and other messages transmitted through diplomatic channels to Mexico, accomplished the least good. There lay before the United States one plain and simple choice: either by all possible friendly acts and expressions to encourage Madero in his obvious efforts to restore order; or to give up hope of him, announce existing conditions to be intolerable, and acknowledge serious responsibility for them by beginning actively to set them right. Instead, the United States took a third course: antagonized the administration in Mexico City while doing nothing to cure the ills of its imperfect rule; stimulated disorder by a thin show of force; and increased the contempt and hatred of the Mexican people toward Americans, a proceeding whose fruits were to be harvested in a grievous and inevitable day.²⁸

At this point, events became merged and overshadowed by a movement of greater importance which is much

28. Bell, p. 167.

more difficult to analyze, that of Pascual Orozco, the leader of the forces which had captured Ciudad Juárez from the Díaz forces. Exactly when Orozco himself took up the standard of rebellion is not clear, nor is the reason for the revolution clear. On February 1, 1912, there was a barracks revolt in the garrison at Ciudad Juárez, the enlisted men imprisoning the officers and going on a rampage. Even though at the time it was nothing more than a small mutiny, there was a great deal of excitement on the Texas side of the frontier. Governor Colquilt, faced with innumerable telegrams from the people of the El Paso area and fearing a general spread of the difficulty which would endanger American lives, asked President Taft to take steps for the prevention of that disorder, even to the point of active intervention if necessary.²⁹ The difficulty subsided, however, almost as quickly as it had begun; within a few days the city was completely quiet and, with the arrival in the area of Orozco, who at that time was still loyal to the Madero government, on February fourth, conditions quickly returned to normal.

There was some justification for alarm and pessimism, however, for some revolutionary movements were developing in the state of Chihuahua. The civil

29. Cumberland, p. 320.

government was unable to handle the situation, with the state legislature going over to the revolutionary cause. Orozco was designated by that body as the governor of the state, but he in turn made no public pronouncement at the moment concerning the part he would play.³⁰

Confronted with a rapidly deteriorating condition in the northern state, the Mexican government requested from the United States a permit to send, through United States territory, a force of 500 or 600 troops from Eagle Pass to El Paso. The governor of Texas was asked if he had any objection to such a passage, and when he said that he had none,³¹ it appeared that the permit would be granted. A few days later, however, the question of the passage of the troops became a touchy subject when it was learned that these troops would not be used only for the garrisoning of Ciudad Juárez, but would also be used as a striking force against the rebels then beginning to operate in Chihuahua. Since the permission for the passage of troops bound for such actions would indicate that the United States was giving aid to the Mexican government in settling an internal difficulty, it was felt that the entire situation would put our government in a compromising position. As a

30. Foreign Relations, 1912, p. 717.

31. Ibid., p. 888.

consequence, the governor of Texas withdrew his consent to the idea, and he was quickly followed in that stand by the United States government. Accordingly, since the United States government was in an embarrassing position, the Mexican government withdrew its request on February eleventh.³² This decision was based on the fear that the rebels, if they were convinced that the United States was aiding the government of Mexico, would undertake reprisals against American citizens residing in the rebel zone.³³

During the latter part of the month the rebels increased their strength to the point that they were able to take Ciudad Juárez without firing a shot. The government, confronted with the danger of intervention in case of a serious disturbance in the immediate vicinity of the city which would endanger American lives, decided to withdraw without contesting the advance of the rebels.³⁴

In the latter part of February, Orozco succumbed to the wooing of the rebels and threw in his lot with them. The conservative elements recognized that Orozco was their man to lead them, and so the rebel leader received funds from the mining Bank of Chihuahua, reportedly by the

32. Foreign Relations, 1912, pp. 890-892.

33. Cumberland, p. 321.

34. Ibid.

direction of conservative interests.³⁵ Indirect confirmation of these indications of conservative backing was contained in a request by Ambassador Wilson. He related that Oscar Braniff, a conservative, had told him that the movement led by Orozco was financially supported by the best elements in Mexico.³⁶ Consul Letcher in Chihuahua gave unquestioned credence to this view of the Orozco rebellion. He reported that as soon as the movement started, all the members of the old party rushed forward to aid Orozco to save the state. He concluded that the revolution was a result of intrigue pure and simple, and took advantage of the ignorance of the people. It was fostered and backed by the wealthiest men of the state.³⁷

Orozco was extremely popular among the people in Chihuahua and his abilities were well recognized. Consequently, the difficulties along the border became more and more serious.³⁸ It was clear that the revolution was kept going by the importation of arms and ammunition from the United States, but that government could do nothing to prevent the passage of such arms under existing legislation and

35. Ross, p. 259.

36. Ibid., p. 260.

37. Ibid.

38. Cumberland, p. 322.

international law. On the other hand, there was sincere desire on the part of the United States to bring an end to the rebellion, since the spreading movement brought not only increased danger to the citizens of the United States on both sides of the river, but also seriously interfered with business activities. So, on March 14, 1912, the United States Congress passed a joint resolution giving the president greater power in attempting to cope with the problem. The resolution said:

That whenever the President shall find that in any American country conditions of domestic violence exist which are prompted by the use of arms or munitions of war procured from the United States, and shall make proclamation thereof, it shall be unlawful to export except under such limitations and exceptions as the President shall prescribe, any arms or munitions of war from any place in the United States to such country until otherwise ordered by the President or by Congress.³⁹

On the same day the president by proclamation put into effect the resolution, thus effectively cutting off the supplies for the Orozco forces.

Orozco's defection cast a gloom over the Mexican capital, and the depression was deepened by the Washington State Department, which wired Ambassador Wilson, instructing him to use discretion to inform Americans to withdraw from any particular localities where conditions or prospects of lawlessness threaten personal safety.⁴⁰ Probably

39. Foreign Relations, 1912, p. 745.

40. Bell, p. 170.

the most important result of the unsettled conditions occurring from the Orozco rebellion was this attitude which was developed in the United States. Wilson's interpretation of the events in Mexico was that by which the State Department was guided, and stimulated by exaggerated reports from Ambassador Wilson, the United States lost faith in the ability of the Madero government to give protection to Americans in Mexico. Wilson advised all Americans to leave areas threatened by revolution, concluding the announcement in terms as though Washington had advised the action.⁴¹ Ambassador Wilson's conduct tended to magnify the calamities which confronted the harassed administration. He directed a circular to American nationals advising those in areas considered dangerous or isolated to leave. This list, which was published in Mexico City, and contained ten of the twenty-eight states, created considerable excitement. In effect this was stating to the people of Mexico that, in the opinion of the United States government, more than one-half the territory of their country was considered as dangerous to life and property.⁴² Also, at Wilson's insistence, an American troop transport was sent to evacuate the "refugees" which

41. Cumberland, p. 200.

42. MacDonough, p. 61.

were presumably crowding all Pacific ports. The State Department believed that "a ship with a capacity for from five to six hundred persons would . . . be adequate for all needs."⁴³ A ship of that capacity was indeed adequate; for when the Buford arrived at the principal ports of Sinaloa, one of the states reported to be in the grip of anarchy, only eighteen persons took passage.⁴⁴ The correspondent for the London Times admirably summed up the cruise of the Buford:

The Washington Government, . . . alarmed at reports of impending anti-American outbreaks, recently sent a cruiser down the Pacific coast to collect refugees. The only refugees that have so far been collected seem, however, to be people who wanted a free passage to San Diego. Other stories of unrest have proved upon investigation to be equally exaggerated.⁴⁵

Wilson's reports to the department voicing his interpretation of the events in Mexico had one other very definite result. They directly influenced mobilization of the United States troops on the Mexican border,⁴⁶ and stimulated rumors of United States intervention in Mexico. Acting on Wilson's reports, the department asked President Taft to have the War Department strengthen the border

43. Foreign Relations, 1912, p. 803.

44. Cumberland, p. 200.

45. Times (London), May 13, 1912, p. 5.

46. Foreign Relations, 1912, p. 716.

guard, "but that it should be done quietly so as not to arouse unnecessary animosity."⁴⁷ However, a consolidation of American troops on Mexico's northern border cannot pass unnoticed in Mexico. The Mexican press seized upon the situation and sensational reports were widely circulated. The action was freely interpreted as an expression of official United States displeasure with the Madero government.⁴⁸ The effect was demoralizing; the more because the Washington government had shown, thus far, so little concern for its nationals in Mexico. Americans in trouble had formed the habit of appealing first to British influence, and now they glanced instinctively in that direction. The British Minister was calm; no European nation was warning its people to flee, therefore, the danger which Washington had seen must apply to Americans alone. Did this mean that intervention, which the military order had foreshadowed, was now imminent? Was the disturbed condition of the country merely the nominal reason why Americans should leave it, and impending war the secret behind the warning? Though no intervention occurred, the State Department, influenced by Wilson's notes, was so seriously considering intervention that on February twenty-fourth, the department requested Wilson's opinion on a plan for

47. Ibid.

48. MacDonough, p. 62.

United States troops to cross the boundary line as a police measure, and asked what effect it might have on Americans in Mexico.⁴⁹ Wilson sent an immediate reply with detailed recommendations as to the intervention which now appeared about to become a certainty. At this point the Mexican Ambassador in Washington inquired of the State Department as to the credit to be given to United States press reports of intervention in Mexico. The department delayed an immediate answer to the Mexican Ambassador and quickly notified Wilson to renew an emphatic warning to the Mexican government that there must be no firing across the border into American territory. Upon being informed by Wilson that the Mexican government had promised to prevent such an occurrence, the State Department then replied to the Mexican Ambassador that the press rumors were false and without substantiation.⁵⁰

Nevertheless, Wilson continued to report a dangerous anti-Americanism in Mexico. He insisted that Madero was conducting a campaign against American interests in Mexico, and foresaw confiscation, harassment, and dislodgement through suborned judicial decrees unless Mexico was taught in due reason that every American and every American

49. Foreign Relations, 1912, p. 724.

50. Ibid., p. 880.

interest in Mexico was an object of respect.⁵¹ The Mexican Foreign Office was besieged with demands for protection for Americans and their interests; at one point the Department of State presumed to tell the Mexican government the place and size of garrisons needed to protect Americans.⁵² Press reports and diplomatic correspondence indicated that no American was safe in Mexico, that the Madero government was responsible for innumerable American deaths, and that American property was subject to seizure by the government on any or no pretext. And yet, when the American Ambassador presented the government with a harsh note concerning Mexican failure to punish perpetrators of crimes against Americans, he could name only three Americans who had been murdered during the year, and only five more who had lost their lives since the fall of Díaz.⁵³ The Mexican Foreign Office investigation showed, however, that the perpetrators in three cases were serving prison sentences, in two cases the accused had been released, and in two the investigation by police had been barren of results. One victim had been killed by a husband protecting his wife from undesired attentions, three had been

51. Cumberland, p. 201.

52. Foreign Relations, 1912, p. 833.

53. Ibid., p. 846.

executed by federal troops when captured in a filibustering expedition, and others had been killed in mountain areas where law enforcement was difficult and investigation all but impossible. This exchange of correspondence showed that not only were murders of Americans less frequent than generally believed, but also that the American Ambassador was not particularly well informed concerning the disposition of cases which had come to his attention. But there is no denying that anti-American feeling was growing; the increased tension was reflected and enhanced by Ambassador Wilson and other American officials, the nations of other countries were much less disturbed than were Americans.⁵⁴

Meantime, the rebels under Orozco had defeated the federal troops at Corralitas, on March twenty-third, over twenty odd miles from Jiménez. Federal troops began to move northward against the rebels. Near Rellano the insurgents attacked the train of the federal convoy causing confusion and panic. Some federal soldiers rebelled under enemy attack and began to retreat toward Torreón, during which time the defeated commander took his own life. The defeat and the suicide of the federal commander caused a sensation. Although the federals had suffered only 300

54. Cumberland, p. 201.

casualties, the press exaggerated the setback, giving it the proportions of a disaster. Ambassador Wilson reported that it was generally believed that the Madero government would fall.⁵⁵

Ambassador Wilson continued to act in a manner which tended to discredit and disturb the Madero government. On April 13, 1912, he suggested to the State Department the possibility of sending American troops to Chihuahua to protect American lives and property. If the department agreed, Wilson thought that he should be instructed to sound out the Mexican government! The State Department replied that it was inopportune to act on the suggestion. Nonetheless, since President Taft wished to remove the Mexican question as an issue in the American presidential campaign, Wilson, on April fifteenth, was instructed to communicate a note to the Mexican Minister of Foreign Relations. The note, which ran to about a thousand words is of interest as showing the pseudo ultimatum style of diplomatic address. Other demands upon Mexico for protection of Americans and their property had emanated from the State Department of the Taft regime, but none of them had been written in this key:

The enormous destruction, constantly increasing, of American properties in the course of the present

55. Ross, p. 262.

unfortunate disturbances; the taking of American life contrary to the principle governing such matters among all civilized nations; the increasing danger to which all American citizens in Mexico are subjected and the seemingly indefinite continuance of this unfortunate situation, compel the Government of the United States to give notice that it expects and must demand that American life and property within the Republic of Mexico be justly and adequately protected, and that this Government must hold Mexico and the Mexican people responsible for all wanton and illegal acts sacrificing or endangering human life or damaging American property interests there situated.⁵⁶

The communication was resented in Mexico, though it was regarded as weak. American bluff was a phrase often heard in comments. It was difficult to discover justification for its issuance unless the government from which it came had well considered the natural results and was prepared to enforce the demands it made.

To this demand the Mexican government responded on April 17, 1912, in a note of considerable length signed by Lascurain, stating that the Mexican government had a full consciousness of its duties. Lascurain went on to say that the Mexican government did not recognize the right of the United States government to make the admonition which the note contained for the reason that it was not based on any incident that could be chargeable to the Mexican government,

56. Foreign Relations, 1912, pp. 787-788.

which had not departed from the observance of the principles and practices of international law.⁵⁷

Meantime, the Orozco rebellion lost its opportunity, and its unity was shaken. Furthermore, the Orozco rebellion was seriously handicapped by insufficient supplies and equipment for the men available. The closing of the American frontier to shipment of such supplies destroyed any hope of remedying this situation. The military liquidation of the Orozco rebellion had become inevitable. The revolutionaries retreated northward and were forced to do battle at Rellano on May twenty-second and twenty-third. Both sides suffered heavy losses, but the Federals won a decisive victory. An American consular official reported that the battle of Rellano and its results would have a determining effect on the rebellion.⁵⁸ The rebels were entirely dislodged and retired to Jiménez with spirits broken. Even Ambassador Wilson, slow to accept the reports of decisive federal victory, reported that the rebels were badly demoralized. Consistent with his practice of counterbalancing any favorable reports, he added that conditions in Oaxaca were serious.⁵⁹ The efforts of the rebels were

57. Bell, p. 195.

58. Ross, p. 266.

59. Ibid.

now limited to delaying tactics. Early in July the forces of Orozco made a stand in the Canyon of Bachimba, were defeated and dislodged. Orozco was forced to fall back to Ciudad Juárez, on the frontier. At this point, the people of El Paso were alarmed because of reports that Juarez, now in the hands of the insurgents, was about to be attacked by federal forces, which meant that bullets would certainly fly across the border. The president instructed the Secretary of State to acquaint the Madero government with this situation and to caution it against the possibility of injury to Americans.⁶⁰ The campaign, however, was near an end. Just after mid-August, Ciudad Juárez fell to the federal forces. The rebel army had been conquered for all practical purposes, and the remnants scattered into guerilla bands. Ambassador Wilson reported the disintegration of the Orozco movement in characteristic terms: "These victories and this recovery of territory, while lending a temporary prestige to the national government, have apparently produced no other substantial results."⁶¹

The pressure on Taft to intervene or, failing that, to make the strongest representations to Mexico increased

60. Henry T. Pringle, Life and Times of William Howard Taft (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1939, 2 vols.), p. 707.

61. Foreign Relations, 1912, pp. 828-832.

steadily. Undersecretary of State Huntington Wilson informed the president in September that Ambassador Calero of Mexico would call officially and suggested that the diplomat be given the talking to of his life.⁶² The meeting took place on September fourth, and the undersecretary, who was present, described how earnestly and energetically the president portrayed the wrongs inflicted upon American citizens in Mexico and how solemnly he had outlined his duty, as chief executive, to see that they did not continue. The interview was terminated when Taft expressed the hope that the Mexican government did not mistake for weakness the extreme patience which the United States had shown.⁶³ Two days later, Secretary of State Knox dispatched a lengthy rebuke in which murders of American citizens and other outrages were detailed, prejudice against American business interests, described and warning given--in the carefully polite phrases of diplomatic usage, but solemn warning none the less--that the United States would act unless the Madero government exhibited some ability to rule. One course, the note intimated, might be to lift the arms embargo which would mean victory for the insurgents. "I am not going to intervene . . . until no other

62. Pringle, p. 708.

63. Ibid.

course is possible, but I must protect our people . . . and . . . their property in Mexico by having the government understand there is a God in Israel and he is our duty,"⁶⁴ wrote Taft privately. The Mexican government, however, was not afraid to retort to God in Israel when it received Knox's note. It denied that murders remained unpunished, and even if they did, in some cases, asked Lascurain, was this not also true in the United States? He gave a list of Mexican citizens who had been slain in Texas and California. He told stories, too, of inhuman cruelties inflicted upon Mexicans in the land which boasted of its civilization. The perpetrators, he said, had never been punished.

After several months of conditions which the State Department regarded as intolerable, Wilson, the American Ambassador, in a long note of September fifteenth, just after rumors of a possible coup d'etat against Madero and acting on a telegram from his government, notified Lascurain that the Mexican government must either show promptly that it could govern, or confess that it could not. In the latter case, he said, the American government would consider what steps to take.⁶⁵ On November

64. Pringle, p. 709.

65. James M. Callahan, American Foreign Policy in Mexican Relations (New York: Macmillan Company, 1932), p. 456.

twenty-seventh, Mr. Schuyer, the American chargé, forwarded to Secretary Knox the long reply (of November twenty-second) of Lascurain, expressing surprise at the reproaches contained in Wilson's note and the demand for a categorical reply, denying the imputation of hostility to American interests in Mexico and declaring that the Mexican government could not be held responsible for existing conditions, which he intimated were largely the result of the American failure to expel from its territory the leaders of sedition against the Mexican government.⁶⁶ A few days later, on December nineteenth, in reply to Mr. Schuyer's request for instructions on the American policy concerning the Mexican attitude of responsibility toward foreign claims for damages in times of internal disturbances, Secretary Knox declared that the American government could not admit the existence of any unqualified rule of international law excusing a government from all responsibility for damages done to aliens by uncontrolled insurrectionists.⁶⁷

The persistence of Mexican intervention rumors was rather puzzling to those who thought they saw in the dispersal of Orozco's army and the federal occupation of Juárez evidence of Madero's complete mastery of the

66. Foreign Relations, 1912, p. 877.

67. Callahan, p. 456.

situation. But there were certain disquieting facts which others thought would very likely require the presence of United States on Mexican soil. In the populous southern part of Mexico, they pointed out, the bandit-like operations of Zapata and Salgado continued unchecked. In the north, Orozco was perhaps more dangerous and annoying as a guerilla chieftain in the mountains of Sonora than as the commander of a revolutionary army in Chihuahua. News dispatches seemed to indicate that border troubles had not entirely ceased. Our patrolling force was strengthened and several small rebel bands operating near the Rio Grande were watched. There were also stories of raids upon American ranches in Arizona and New Mexico, destruction of railroads and other American property in Mexico, and reports of Americans living in Mexico either fleeing in terror to this country or sending for arms that they may defend themselves against brigands and rebels.

The United States, declared the Minneapolis Journal, "must recognize the truth that disorder, atrocities, destruction can not forever be permitted to run their evil courses unchecked, . . . in Mexico" ⁶⁸
If foreign interests were to call upon the United States

68. "Our Duty in Mexican Disorders," Literary Digest, XLV (September 21, 1912), p. 455.

If foreign interests were to call upon the United States for protection, the Cincinnati Enquirer remarked that it would be "up to us In any event we may as well look the possibility in the face and be ready for it."⁶⁹

Other papers were not so ready for intervention. The Jersey City Journal reported that "in spite of this it is the duty of the Mexican government to govern its own affairs and the United States is not called on to intervene."⁷⁰ The New York Sun believed ". . . that the United States keep its hands off and permit President Madero to use the opportunity that is now within his grasp to save awakened Mexico."⁷¹

President Taft resisted the widespread demands that war with Mexico was the only honorable course. In discussing Mexico, he said the administration had "been conscious that one hostile step in intervention and the passing of the border by one regiment of troops would mean war with Mexico, the expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars, the loss of thousands of lives." No one "with a sense of responsibility," the president said, would involve the American people "in the most unending burden

69. "Our Duty in Mexican Disorders," p. 455.

70. Ibid.

71. Ibid.

and thankless task of enforcing peace upon these 15,000,000 of people fighting among themselves."⁷² President Taft, in his annual message of December third, to Congress, referring to the delicate questions and difficult situations in relations with Mexico in the preceding two years, stated that American policy had been one of patient non-intervention, the recognition of constituted authority, and industrious efforts to safeguard American interests resulting from American investments in Mexico.⁷³

Although the Madero government regarded the ambassador's conduct as intolerable, the election of Woodrow Wilson as President of the United States encouraged Madero to anticipate a change in the American Embassy. He told Vasconcelos that the president elect was his friend and that "the first favor I am going to ask him is that he should change the representative for me."⁷⁴ Madero wrote Lascurain, new Mexican Ambassador to Washington, that he should confer with Woodrow Wilson and advise him that Henry Lane Wilson was persona non grata to the Mexican government. Lascurain apparently made little or no effort in this direction. However, Ambassador Wilson learned of

72. Pringle, p. 709.

73. Foreign Relations, 1912, p. 871.

74. José Vasconcelos, Ulises Criollo (Mexico City: Editiõne Batas, 1946), p. 413.

this letter, and his distaste for the Madero government reached a new peak. He explained Madero's hostility as "due solely to my vigorous and uncompromising attitude on American matters."⁷⁵ The Mexican president looked forward hopefully to March 4, 1913, Inauguration Day for Woodrow Wilson. To Ambassador Wilson that day loomed as a deadline for his activities.

The victories over Orozco, Reyes, and Félix Díaz seemed to give Madero new force of conviction. Actually, the situation was very serious. The army had not betrayed the Madero government, but was its conduct attributed to loyalty or to waiting for the right man and the right moment? On this force the regime was almost completely dependent. The opposition press and leadership continued to harass the administration. One commentator sadly noted that "as a matter of fact, I do not know any large interest in Mexico which was exerting its influence to strengthen the Madero government."⁷⁶ On all sides there was an atmosphere of unrest and apprehension.

The conservative elements intensified their efforts to harass, discredit, and destroy the Madero regime.

75. Henry Lane Wilson, Diplomatic Episodes in Mexico, Belgium and Chile (New York: Doubleday Page, 1927), pp. 234-236.

76. Bell, p. 219.

Ambassador Wilson, returned from a leave, poured forth a flood of words in his reports depicting in the most somber and lurid terms the inadequacy of Madero's government. On January 7, 1913, he reported that the "situation is gloomy, if not hopeless."⁷⁷ About a month later his campaign of pessimism reached a crescendo in a thirteen page letter! Ambassador Wilson felt it necessary to tell his superiors that:

in the foregoing portrayal of the existing political conditions in Mexico, I must beg the Department to believe (!) that I am activated solely by the desire to discharge the obligation incumbent upon me . . . and it would be far more pleasurable to report differently if a due regard for the truth and fidelity to the character of my mission would permit.⁷⁸

Not content with casting aspersions on the Madero government, Ambassador Wilson, through the veil of mounting personal aversion, saw Madero as a callous eccentric and tyrant, capable of the greatest perfidies and infamies. The opponents of the regime, by contrast, appeared to the American diplomat as wise, patriotic, and disinterested gentlemen. In mid-January, Wilson reported, on the basis of a rumor forwarded by Consul Canada in Veracruz, that the Madero government planned a "sham revolutionary uprising in order

77. Foreign Relations, 1913, pp. 692-693.

78. Ibid., pp. 696-699.

to kill Félix Díaz and his companions in prison."⁷⁹ This report was at variance with Madero policy of forgiveness and with the very nature of the Mexican executive. In view of Félix Díaz's role in the subsequent rebellion, the ambassador's agitated concern for his safety was perhaps more than coincidental. Even more suggestive were Wilson's veiled comments to the Cuban Minister, Márquez Sterling. He related his conversation with the American diplomat in a report to his government dated January 20, 1913:

He (Wilson) affirmed, I do not expect that the situation will improve, but I think that it has to get worse

Then, I asked him, you do not have confidence in the constituted government?

Mr. Wilson delayed briefly to organize his ideas.

Those words you have spoken, Minister, are very strong, he answered me slowly. For now all I can say is that I have many doubts

Do you believe, Ambassador, that the fall of President Madero's government is near?

Mr. Wilson hesitated before answering me: Its fall will not be easy, but neither is it impossible!⁸⁰

The conservative opposition talked of when, not whether, Madero would fall. What then followed has been recorded in history as the Tragic Ten Days, and was the beginning of the end for Francisco Madero.

79. Foreign Relations, 1913, pp. 693-694.

80. Manuel Márquez Sterling, Los últimos días del Presidente Madero--mi gestión diplomática en México (México: Editorial Porrúa, 1958), pp. 336-339.

CHAPTER IV

TAFT, INTERVENTION AND RECOGNITION

The preparations for the Cuartelazo had been worked out carefully. The immediate objective was to free Bernardo Reyes and Félix Díaz, who were to serve as leaders of the movement. In the pre-dawn hours of Sunday morning, February ninth, the movement began. Immediately after the insurrection began, Félix Díaz demanded Madero's resignation, requesting the American Ambassador to serve as his messenger, but for the moment Wilson declined to play the part.¹ Henry Lane Wilson, ardent admirer of Porfirio Díaz and strong government, desired above all else Madero's resignation and the negation of all Madero's policies. He feared reform, since reform would inevitably mean a lessening of American influence and fewer special advantages for American interests; he bitterly resented Madero's refusal to be guided by the advice freely rendered by the Embassy; he looked on Madero at first with amused tolerance and then

1. Charles C. Cumberland, Mexican Revolution: Genesis Under Madero (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1952), p. 235.

with utter contempt and finally with a burning personal hatred; and he believed wholeheartedly that the Mexicans were fit only for dictatorship and direction by a greater power. It was not principle, therefore, which prevented Wilson from acting as Díaz's emissary; he merely considered that the time was not auspicious for such a move, and so contented himself with a demand for ample protection for foreigners from both Madero and Díaz.

After the maze of non-official reports of the political disturbances in the city of Mexico which Washington received, came a telegram to the State Department from the American Consul at Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, saying that he heard a report that Madero had been overthrown; that General Reyes and General Díaz had been released from prison by a mob, and that Reyes had been killed.² On receiving this information, Secretary Knox sent telegraphic instructions to Ambassador Wilson at Mexico City to make a detailed report immediately of everything that had occurred in the capital. Shortly before midnight, February tenth, the State Department received a dispatch saying that a rumor was current in Mexico City that the arsenal had surrendered to Félix Díaz; that mounted police artillery, and rurales from Tacubaya had declared for Díaz, and the

2. New York Times, February 10, 1913, p. 1.

National Palace was the only place still loyal to Madero.³ Ambassador Wilson added that it was impossible to obtain details. Despite the statement of Wilson's that details were impossible to obtain, Wilson supplied his own details during those trying times, as his reports were dominated by criticisms of the government and contained errors or distortions of facts favorable to the rebellion.⁴ He also asked Washington to dispatch war vessels to Mexican waters to impress upon the Madero government the gravity of the situation--and incidentally to force the government's capitulation to rebel demands.⁵

The news of the rebellion made the last days of Taft's administration busy and anxious ones. After sleeping on Ambassador Wilson's note concerning the warships, and after giving further consideration to the subject at a cabinet conference, President Taft and his official advisors decided that military intervention in Mexico would not be justified by the political disturbances in the Mexican capital. To be prepared, however, for any

3. New York Times, February 10, 1913, p. 1.

4. Stanley R. Ross, Francisco I. Madero: Apostle of Mexican Democracy (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), p. 288.

5. Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1913 (Washington: Government Printing Office), p. 701.

emergency due to the new revolutionary disturbances, it was decided by the president and several of his counselors to send a strong force of American warships to Mexican waters. The cruiser Denver, then at Acapulco, and under orders to proceed to Central America, was instructed to remain in Acapulco, and later, after further consultation between President Taft, Secretary of State Knox, and Secretary of the Navy Meyer, orders were sent to Rear Admiral Badger, commanding the Atlantic Fleet at Guantánamo, Cuba, to dispatch a battleship to Vera Cruz and another to Tampico.⁶ Orders were also sent to Rear Admiral Southerland, commanding the Pacific Fleet at San Diego, California, to send the armored cruiser Colorado to Mazatlán. Instructions for the guidance of officers commanding the vessels to be sent to Mexico were transmitted by Secretary Meyer to Admirals Badger and Southerland. The ship commanders were directed to keep railroad communication open between Mexico City and the coast, provide means of escape for Americans who might be in peril, or for other reasons desired to leave the country.⁷ Thus, these battleships

6. New York Times, February 11, 1913, p. 8.

7. Ibid.

were ordered with all haste to Vera Cruz and to Tampico to wait for further developments.⁸

Despite the disquieting conditions which all reports indicated, President Taft had no intention of directing military intervention in Mexican affairs, no matter what happened in the capital city. President Taft, for one reason, had no desire to embarrass his successor in office in connection with the Mexican situation. Taft resisted the strongest kind of pressure from many influential quarters to deal with the situation with an iron hand. He also believed that the military invasion of Mexican territory might be practically synchronous with the massacre of many innocent American citizens in the perturbed country, and possibly result in war between the two republics. All his efforts were directed toward bringing about better conditions and lessening the problems with which President Wilson would probably have to deal. If President Taft desired to take actions which would lessen tensions, Ambassador Wilson had other plans, as the ambassador's activities were not confined to such laudable efforts. His conduct during the Tragic Ten Days prompted Márquez Sterling

8. "Battle of Mexico City," Current Opinion, LIV (March, 1913), p. 180.

to label the American Embassy a "center of conspiracy."⁹

The city awakened on Monday morning to a profound silence. February tenth was the second day of waiting, of expectancy. That day a meeting occurred between Félix Díaz and a commissioner for General Huerta in which, apparently, an interview between the principals was arranged for the following day. In his messages that day Ambassador Wilson indicated that "negotiations (are) being carried on with General Huerta,"¹⁰ and reported the fantastic claim that practically all of the local state authorities, police, and rurales had revolted to Díaz.¹¹ The day ended with the streets deserted and an attack against the rebels anticipated momentarily. Ambassador Wilson, in unofficial notes to Minister Lascurain and to Félix Díaz, requested that bombardment be conducted so as to cause as little damage as possible to the residential area of the city.¹²

9. Manuel Márquez Sterling, Los últimos días del presidente Madero: mi gestión diplomática en México (México: Editorial Parrua, 1958), pp. 379-380.

10. Foreign Relations, 1913, p. 701.

11. Ross, p. 289.

12. Henry Lane Wilson, Diplomatic Episodes in Mexico, Belgium, and Chile (New York: Doubleday Page, 1927), p. 255.

At 10:30 A. M. on Tuesday morning, February eleventh, barely a quarter of an hour after the federal offensive began, General Huerta and Felix Díaz conferred in the home of Enrique Cepada. Cepada served during the Decena Trágica as the emissary between Huerta and the American Embassy and between Huerta and the rebels in the Ciudadela. At this conference the downfall of Madero was sealed, the decision as to when it would occur being reserved by Huerta.¹³ Also, on the third day of the rebellion, Henry Lane Wilson reported that "public opinion both native and foreign, as far as I can estimate, seems overwhelmingly in favor of Díaz (!)."¹⁴ But Wilson underestimated federal strength, exaggerated the size of the rebel force, and complained of indiscriminate firing doing extensive damage to property. Because of the possibility that the turbulent conditions might continue, the ambassador offered a startling proposal:

I am convinced that the Government of the United States in the interest of humanity and in the discharge of its political obligations should send either instructions of a firm, drastic and perhaps menacing character to be transmitted personally to the Government of President Madero and to the leaders of the revolutionary movement.

If I were in possession of instructions of this character or . . . with general powers in the name of the President (!) I might be able to induce a cessation of hostilities and the initiation of negotiations having for their object definite peace arrangements.¹⁵

13. Ross, p. 291.

14. Foreign Relations, 1913, p. 702.

15. Ibid., p. 704.

Wilson did not bother to indicate the source of authority by which the government of the United States could instruct the president of the sovereign state of Mexico. Secretary Knox replied that the president was not convinced of the desirability of such instruction "at the present time," because it might precipitate intervention and because "drastic representations might radically affect the issue of military supremacy," for which the United States government did not wish to become in any degree responsible.¹⁶ That effect was precisely what Wilson, under the guise of humanitarian considerations, apparently desired to accomplish. As the fighting continued and the losses mounted, other pleas for intervention reached Washington. Governor O. B. Colquilt of Texas was particularly insistent, demanding intervention because it was the "obligation of the United States . . . under the Monroe Doctrine."¹⁷

Meantime in Washington, preparation for the instant dispatch of United States troops to Mexico City in case the situation there should grow any worse were made. Washington also decided to send three additional battleships at once to the east coast of Mexico. Orders were issued immediately to place in commission two army transports to carry troops to

16. Foreign Relations, 1913, p. 709.

17. Ibid., p. 705.

Mexico City for the protection of the lives of Americans and foreigners.¹⁸ Orders for a more general movement of troops and warships to Mexico were also prepared by the military and naval officers. Everything done was in the direction for military intervention.¹⁹ When the United States dispatched these warships and marines to Mexican waters, Wilson requested that he be given complete authority over the naval officers so that he might have full discretion in using them as a threat to the Mexican Government.²⁰ Officials in Washington, however, were more concerned than the ambassador with questions of propriety and protocol; Secretary Knox failed to see the necessity for granting Wilson either plenary powers or authority over the armed forces, and consistently counseled against intervention except in case of vital necessity to protect American lives. Knox fully recognized the possible dangers to American nationals in the city, but he further recognized the right of the Mexican government to protect itself against the rebels; he recommended removal of Americans into safer zones if imminent danger threatened.²¹

18. New York Times, February 12, 1913, p. 1.

19. Ibid.

20. Cumberland, p. 236.

21. Foreign Relations, 1913, p. 710.

On the fourth day, February twelfth, there was additional circumstantial evidence of the underlying plot to depose Madero. Rubio Gavarette, after conferring with Huerta on the preceding evening, told Madero that he wanted to modify his optimistic predictions. Now he said that the walls of the fortress were so thick that he would be able to do very little with the equipment at hand.²² Ambassador Wilson was active on Wednesday making similar representations both to the government and to the rebels. According to his report, Wilson, in the name of the diplomats who accompanied him, protested against the continuance of hostilities and the loss of American life and property and indicated that since the President of the United States was concerned, "vessels have been ordered to various ports . . . (and) marines would be landed if necessary and brought to this city to maintain order and to afford protection to the lives and properties of foreigners."²³ Despite his instructions, the ambassador was employing an approach of a menacing character as leverage against the government. His interpretation of the reaction to his statement was again characteristic of his biased perspective. He had visited the National Palace about 11 A.M. with the German

22. Ross, p. 295.

23. Foreign Relations, 1913, pp. 706-707.

and Spanish ministers. After he had made his statement, Wilson felt that the president was visibly embarrassed. Wilson reported that Madero tried to fix the responsibility of Díaz and informed them that the government was taking steps which would end the rebellion by the following night. "These statements made no impression on me or my colleagues."²⁴

Day after day, the question of military intervention by the United States came up for discussion, and day after day came the announcement that President Taft was determined not to intervene unless Mexico reverted to general anarchy, or unless Congress took the responsibility of ordering him to do so. Nevertheless, it was felt that if Mexico was thrown into chaos, if no real government existed, and if foreigners were being slaughtered, the Taft administration would not wait for Congress to urge action, but would take the initiative in calling on the war-making power to authorize armed intervention.²⁵ Therefore, four transports were hurriedly provisioned at Newport News and made ready to carry troops at a moment's notice, in case of a general assault upon foreign residents in Mexico.²⁶ The belief in

24. Foreign Relations, 1913, pp. 706-707.

25. New York Times, February 14, 1913, p. 1.

26. "Battle of Mexico City," p. 180.

Washington was general, according to the Washington correspondent of the New York Evening Post, that, as an army officer put it, intervention in Mexico now would "be the beginning of a 100 Years' War."²⁷

If we put our hands to this thing, it will be impossible to draw back. We could march with ease to the city of Mexico, and for a few months win an unbroken series of minor victories. Then we should have to settle down to a long and exhausting campaign against guerrilla warfare, which would go on for years, for decades. The appearance of an American armed force in Mexico would cement all classes against us.²⁸

President Taft and his advisors did not maintain a waiting attitude. They held that everything had been done up to this time that circumstances justified. Even if conditions became worse, the government's first action would be rather to send more warships to Mexican ports or to dispatch a strong force of marines and bluejackets to Mexico City to provide safe conduct for Americans and foreigners out of the country.²⁹ Taft's opposition to anything that might lead to a war in the last weeks of his term of office seemed to be matched by the same feeling on the part of men in control of Congress. Senator Bacon declared himself

27. "Battle of Mexico City," p. 180.

28. Ibid.

29. New York Times, February 14, 1913, p. 1.

unalterably opposed to armed intervention. He is reported to have said:

The greatest calamity that could befall us in this connection would be for a condition to arise that would require or provoke us to intervene and endeavor to take charge of affairs in Mexico.

The greatest danger to a Republican form of government comes from foreign wars, which subordinate the civil to military influences and power, and exalt the executive power over the legislative and judicial power of the country. If we went into Mexico it is very doubtful if should ever come out of it. If we were to attempt thereafter to hold Mexico and govern that country, it could only be by making it a subject colony, as it could never become a part of our representative Government.³⁰

In Mexico City the battle raged on. The main events of Friday, February fourteenth, were in the diplomatic rather than in the military realm. The government was concerned about the prolongation of hostilities and the threat of international complications. Therefore, Madero agreed to accept the mediatory services of the Spanish ministers, Cologán and de la Barra. The peace emissary pointed out to the rebel chiefs the difficult situation and the international danger. After the hour long interview, de la Barra reported the result of his mission to Madero, who indicated to him that for no reason was he disposed to give up. The president discussed the situation with members of his cabinet. The majority present, excepting Bonilla and

30. "Battle of Mexico City," p. 180.

Jaime Gurza, favored resignation to avoid the foreign intervention in Ambassador Wilson's remarks.³¹ After a week of battle, during which Díaz persisted in demanding Madero's resignation and in urging that his own belligerent status be recognized by the world powers, the toll began to have its effect. At Wilson's suggestion and with the agreement of representatives of England and Germany, on February fifteenth, the Spanish Minister requested Madero's resignation.³² Madero, indignant at the breach of diplomatic etiquette inherent in the action, denied that the representatives of foreign powers had any right to make such a request; he stated categorically that he would die at his post rather than be subject to foreign pressure.³³ Even though Madero's attitude did much to convince Wilson that under the circumstances the president would have to be displaced, most of the members of the diplomatic corps agreed with the beleaguered president.³⁴ In commenting on the situation, the Cuban Minister to Mexico said:

The intervention of the United States or the underhanded overthrow of Madero would explain

31. Ross, p. 297.

32. Cumberland, p. 237.

33. Foreign Relations, 1913, p. 711.

34. Sterling, p. 405.

the tortuous conduct and obscure words of the Ambassador. The revolution is no longer in the Ciudadela, but in the spirit of Wilson. Madero did not have to fear Félix Díaz, but the representative of President Taft.³⁵

In Washington there was growing apprehension, but the White House announced that the policy of non-intervention in the Mexican situation would be adhered to by the United States government. Mr. Hilles, the secretary to the president, gave out the following statement: "At a meeting of the cabinet . . . various dispatches from Mexico were considered, and it was decided that the information so far gained afforded no basis for a change in the policy of the government of the United States already indicated many times in the last two years."³⁶ Although this statement was of a reassuring character, it was evident that the president and his advisors considered taking a more drastic course with regard to those responsible for the crisis in Mexico City. Disquieting dispatches from the Mexican capital caused President Taft and Secretary Know to determine that conditions had assumed such a critical state that it would be well to consider the adoption of measures for the better protection of lives and property of Americans and other foreigners. There was renewed activity at the War

35. Sterling, p. 405.

36. New York Times, February 16, 1913, p. 1.

Department and additional preparations for landing United States forces on Mexican soil were made. There was also a conference between President Taft, Secretary Stimson, and Brigadier General Crozier, President of the Army War College, who were called together to go over once more the plans that would be put into effect in case intervention became necessary.³⁷

Madero, on hearing reports of possible American intervention, decided to telegraph President Taft to obtain the truth. President Madero was anxious to obtain first-hand knowledge as to the truth of this report, and he asked President Taft to inform him whether his government had decided to intervene or was considering a policy of intervention. President Madero referred to the news of the sending of American warships to Mexican ports, and asked Taft to order their commanders not to disembark troops in Mexico, as he feared that such a step would result in more terrible consequences than those with which Mexico was then contending.³⁸ In his message Madero also indicated that Americans would be in no danger if they left the firing zone for other parts of the capital, as its suburbs; that the government accepted full responsibility for property

37. New York Times, February 16, 1913, p. 1.

38. Ibid., February 17, 1913, p. 1.

damage; and that the administration was taking all measures to insure the least possible damage and the early termination of the situation.³⁹

It is true that my country is experiencing at present a terrible trial. The disembarcation of American forces would only make the situation worse. Thru a lamentable error the United States would do a horrible wrong to a nation which always has been a loyal friend. (It) would tend to make more difficult the re-establishment in Mexico of a democratic government similar to that of the great American nation. I appeal to the sentiments of equity and justice which have been the rule of your government and which undoubtedly represent the feeling of the great American people.⁴⁰

This message dispatched, Madero told his cabinet that he would not resign for any reason. Referring to the telegram to President Taft, he optimistically remarked, "Now you will see how the intrigues of this evil Ambassador are dealt with."⁴¹

However, the activities of Ambassador Wilson continued. The American diplomat gave full play to his obsessions and fears: that Madero was incompetent; that sacking by mobs imminent; and that the hordes from Morelos would enter the city.⁴² Although the country was reasonably calm

39. Ross, pp. 297-298.

40. Foreign Relations, 1913, pp. 713-714.

41. Manuel Bonilla, Jr., El régimen Maderista (Mexico City: Talleres Linotipos de El Universal, 1922), p. 71.

42. Ross, p. 299.

while the capital was enveloped by fighting, Wilson tried to make it appear that the nation was aflame with rebellion. He also expressed his conviction that the federal army was disloyal to Madero. Madero showed Wilson the telegram which he had sent to President Taft. In it the Mexican executive had charged that the American Ambassador had instigated the resignation suggested and had expressed concern lest the diplomat disembark troops. Madero then tried to modify the diplomat's attitude through logic and considerateness, but was unsuccessful in his attempt to convince Wilson that conditions in the country were at variance with the diplomat's information. Later, through Lascurain, he offered the American representative the safety of a residence in the suburb of Tacubaya. Wilson declined to accept the offer and reported that "the removal of the Embassy would be a calamity to the entire American colony. Americans cannot be advised to go to a safer place because there is none."⁴³

On Sunday, February sixteenth, Wilson had reported confidentially to Washington that "General Huerta has indicated a desire to talk with me and I shall see him some time during the day . . . I hope for good results (from) this."⁴⁴ At midnight, Huerta sent Wilson a message

43. Foreign Relations, 1913, pp. 709-710.

44. Ibid., p. 714.

indicating that it would be impossible to keep the appointment, but that he expected to take steps that night towards terminating the situation. Also in the message, Huerta told Wilson that he might anticipate some action which would force Madero from power at any moment and that plans were fully matured. The diplomat reported that he asked no questions and made no suggestions "beyond requesting that no lives be taken except by due process of law (1)."⁴⁵ Plans were indeed maturing. With good reason the ambassador expected imminent developments. He confided to the representative of Cuba that "tomorrow all will be over, Mr. Minister."⁴⁶ Years later, Henry Lane Wilson had the audacity to claim that "I did not for a moment suppose that a violent coup d'etat would occur or that Madero would be subjected to more than the pressure of overwhelming circumstances."⁴⁷

Meantime, Washington was taking no chances. Although there had been no change in the policy of the Taft administration to avoid intervention in Mexico, the New York Times reported that the "significant event of the day here was a renewal of active preparations for possible

45. Foreign Relations, 1913, p. 718.

46. Sterling, p. 488.

47. Wilson, pp. 274-275.

serious contingencies."⁴⁸ Two thousand marines, gathered from navy yards along the Atlantic Coast, were assembled without delay at Philadelphia and Norfolk and were readied for sailing. Besides the dispatching of the marines, two transports were ordered to proceed at once to Galveston, where they would be ready for the movement of troops from the border should any new emergency arise. Also, Taft replied to the telegram Madero had sent. In this reply, President Taft told Madero that the reports that his government had decided to intervene were inaccurate. But at the same time this otherwise extremely diplomatic communication had a deeper significance in the light of the knowledge that 2,000 marines had been ordered southward in connection with conditions in Mexico. President Taft informed President Madero that the present most dangerous situation had created extreme pessimism in the United States and the conviction that the present paramount duty was the prompt relief of the situation.⁴⁹

In spite of these striking developments, there was still every reason to believe that the president and his advisors were still of the opinion that conditions in Mexico had not reached the point where intervention would

48. New York Times, February 18, 1913, p. 1.

49. Ibid.

be justified. The arrangements to meet an emergency were merely precautionary. It could have been possible to twist them into a semblance of decision to begin hostilities, but to do so would be to misrepresent the administration's desire to prevent what everybody admitted would be a long and sanguinary struggle. The situation was delicate, but it was felt that the conditions that produced it could end as suddenly as they came. It was with that hope in mind that President Taft and his cabinet sought to preserve the status quo. They felt that an end of the fierce conflict in Mexico City, regardless of which side won, would bring an adjustment that would restore Mexico to a normal state.

The web of treachery now closed in on Madero. On February eighteenth, General Blanquet arrested Madero and all but two of the cabinet members. Shortly thereafter, General Huerta assumed command and so notified the American Embassy and President Taft. "I have the honor to inform you that I have overthrown this Government. The armed forces support me, and from now on peace and prosperity will reign."⁵⁰ Still to be formalized were the relations between Huerta and the rebels, and Ambassador Wilson was ready to assist in this matter. Earlier that day the American diplomat had exposed his familiarity with the plan.

50. Foreign Relations, 1913, p. 721.

At noon he reported to Washington that "the supposition now is that the Federal Generals are in control of the situation."⁵¹ The arrest of Madero, unexpectedly delayed, did not occur until an hour and a half later!

That evening the American representative invited Generals Huerta and Díaz to the embassy. Protracted discussions followed, and, finally, after thirty minutes of private exchange between the principals, the Pact of Ciudadela was signed, on the basis that it was neutral ground.⁵² After agreement was achieved, Wilson told several colleagues, who were gathered outside the conference room, that everything was arranged. When Félix Díaz reentered the room, the ambassador cried out, "Long live General Díaz, savior of Mexico!"⁵³ After introductions and a reading of part of the agreement, the generals were ushered out. In subsequent years Wilson repeatedly denied any responsibility for the overthrow of Madero, but the evidence proved conclusively that the diplomat was aware of and encouraged and abetted its promoters, even to the point of providing embassy facilities for their agreement. One observer, considering how narrowly

51. Ross, p. 310.

52. Ibid.

53. Sterling, p. 473.

Madero missed winning, concluded that "the least value which can be assigned to the unfortunate influence of the American Ambassador is still sufficient to have turned the scale."⁵⁴ After Huerta and Díaz had left the embassy, one of the diplomats inquired what would be the fate of Madero. "Oh," allegedly answered Wilson, "they will put Señor Madero in a madhouse where he should always be kept. As for the other (Pino Suárez), he is nothing but a scoundrel. So, if they kill him, it will be no great loss." The Chilean representative protested that "we must not allow it," but Wilson declared that "we must not meddle in the domestic affairs of Mexico (!)."⁵⁵

Wilson candidly informed the State Department that:

I have been assuming considerable responsibility in proceeding without instructions in many important matters, but no harm has been done (!) and I believe (that) great benefits have been achieved for our country and especially for our countrymen in Mexico . . . (whose) interests will receive just consideration Our position here is stronger than it has ever been.⁵⁶

President Taft and his cabinet appeared to be much relieved when they learned that President Madero of Mexico was out

54. Edward I. Bell, Political Scheme of Mexico (New York: McBride, Nast and Company, 1914), p. 416.

55. Ernest Gruening, Mexico and Its Heritage (New York: Appleton Century, 1934), p. 568.

56. Foreign Relations, 1913, pp. 722-723.

of power, and that there was a possibility that the Mexican government was in the grip of a man able to control affairs in that republic, at least so far as the safety of American residents was concerned. They were inclined to credit General Huerta with the ability to keep his countrymen from endangering foreigners, and they were glad Madero was no longer President of Mexico, because they had reason to believe that his recent policy was menacing to the lives and property of United States citizens dwelling in his country. Mr. Taft and his advisors had information that Madero had used the possibility of American intervention as a means of stirring Mexican sympathy in his behalf, and perhaps of arousing Mexican fury to a point where a massacre of Americans would have resulted.⁵⁷ The United States government officially announced that it would take no concern in the choice of a successor to President Madero save that such a successor would have to demonstrate his ability to maintain a stable government before political recognition could be given to him by the United States. As the outcome of conditions in Mexico was involved in too much uncertainty to justify a prediction by the Taft administration as to what the future would bring forth, President Taft and his executive officers decided to mark time.

57. New York Times, February 19, 1913, p. 1.

In Mexico, the final act was played concerning the fall of Madero. First to fall was Gustavo Madero, Francisco's brother. The first day of the new regime had dawned stained with blood. Ambassador Wilson, more concerned with such matters as Huerta's satisfactory assurances regarding guarantees of public order, unconcernedly accepted Huerta's explanation that Gustavo Madero had been killed by soldiers without orders. The following day Wilson noted that "so far no other executions than those reported . . . have come to the knowledge of the Embassy," and added that Huerta had assured him that every precaution was being taken to guard Madero and Pino Suárez.⁵⁸ Secretary Knox informed Wilson that the shooting of Gustavo had "caused a most unfavorable impression here. The President is gratified to believe that there is no prospect of injury to the deposed President or Vice-President."⁵⁹

Henry Lane Wilson was the key figure in the minds of those who desired to protect the prisoners. But Wilson failed to perform the role that was intended for him. On February nineteenth, he reported that General Huerta had asked his advice about whether it was best to send the

58. Foreign Relations, 1913, pp. 724-725.

59. Ibid., p. 726.

ex-president out of the country or place him in a lunatic asylum. Wilson replied that he ought to do that which was best for the country.⁶⁰ It was the following day that Wilson, accompanied by the German Minister, visited Huerta and unofficially requested that the utmost precaution be taken to prevent the taking of his (Madero's) life or the life of the vice-president except by due process of law. The State Department, apparently startled by these dispatches, promptly sent the following message, marked confidential and urgent:

General Huerta's consulting you as to the treatment of Madero tends to give you a certain responsibility in the matter. It moreover goes without saying that cruel treatment of the ex-president would injure, in the eyes of the world, the reputation of Mexican civilization, and this Government earnestly hopes to hear of no such treatment and hopes to hear that he has been dealt with in a manner consistent with peace and humanity.

Without assuming responsibility you may in your discretion make use of these ideas in conversations with General Huerta.⁶¹

Meantime, the American representative was busy condemning the old government, praising the new one, and urging its recognition. Wilson seemed to be more concerned about recognition than about humanity. On February twentieth, he noted that a wicked depotism had fallen and that the

60. Ross, p. 322.

61. Foreign Relations, 1913, pp. 725-726.

installation of the new government had taken place amid great popular demonstrations of approval.⁶² Later that evening he reported that the new government was evidently secure and requested that the Department provide him with immediate instructions regarding recognition. He recommended that the Department take into consideration that the provisional government took office in accordance with the constitution and precedents.⁶³ A further justification for recognition, and a good example of the criteria guiding the ambassador, was reported two days later: "The atmosphere here is now entirely friendly and Americans are receiving more consideration than ever in the history of Mexico."⁶⁴ The impatient Wilson did not wait for instructions. On the evening of February twentieth, in view of what he termed the extreme urgency of the situation and in the absence of instructions, he assembled the diplomatic corps to discuss recognition. Wilson reported that his colleagues agreed with him that recognition was imperative to enable the new government to impose its authority and to reestablish order. The following day, Wilson read a statement as dean of the corps, noting that he had been

62. Foreign Relations, 1913, pp. 724-725.

63. Ibid., p. 725.

64. Ibid., p. 731.

informed that Huerta had assumed the position of interim president, and offered the corps sincere congratulations. Huerta expressed his appreciation with appropriate phrases. That evening, February twenty-first, Wilson sent a circular telegram to all American consular officials advising them "in the interests of Mexico (to) urge general submission and adhesion to the new government, which will be recognized by all foreign states today."⁶⁵ There was no foundation for this last assertion!

On the night of February 22, 1913, the last act of the Madero drama was played. It was on this dark night that Madero and Pino Suárez were roused from their sleep, pushed into a waiting car, and driven off, never to be seen alive again. Madero, who refused to murder, was the first Mexican president to be assassinated. Although the ultimate responsibility is difficult to place, the deaths tended to discredit the Huerta administration and the Ciudadela movement. The government released an official version of the death of the prisoners--shot while trying to escape. Although the administration promised action, no official investigation was undertaken and no punishments were meted out. However, the assassinations shocked Mexico City, and resentment because of them was reported from other sections

65. Foreign Relations, 1913, p. 734.

of the country. A wave of indignation swept the United States. Only Ambassador Wilson, lacking in sensitivity and political acumen, remained unruffled and indifferent.⁶⁶

When President Taft heard of the double tragedy, he expressed deep regret over the affair, but indicated that there seemed to be no ground for action by the United States, as the incident involved only citizens of Mexico. It was Mr. Taft's opinion and that of his advisors, that the killing of Madero and Suárez, while deplorable from a humanitarian standpoint, was a matter of Mexican domestic concern, and did not justify action by the United States that might be considered as a step toward intervention.⁶⁷

It is useless to pile up words about the deep damnation of Madero's death. The official explanation of that murder, as the whole civilized world regarded it, was so muddled and self-inculpatory that they only heightened the barbarity, while intensifying the shock. But all the surroundings of the affair were suspicious and bloody. From the moment it was known that the deposed president was not to be allowed to leave the country, the worst was to be feared for him. He was felt to be a doomed man.

Yet the monstrous crime, considered not in its personal but its international aspects, called for no change

66. Ross, p. 331.

67. New York Times, February 24, 1913, p. 1.

of policy on the part of the United States government. It did not, in the closing days of the Taft administration, essentially alter the nature of the relations between Mexico and the United States, though it undoubtedly called for even more careful study of what our course ought to be in the future. On Saturday night, almost at the very time when Madero was being done to death, President Taft reaffirmed his determination not to intervene in Mexico unless absolutely compelled to do so.⁶⁸ The shocking events in Mexico City did not affect Taft's decision. It was simply added proof that brute passions had been let loose in Mexico, and that our dealings with that country must be marked by the extreme of caution and vigilance, yet with the unremitting purpose to do what was wise and just for the people of both lands, never forgetting that the Mexican nation as a whole must not be confounded with the military adventurers who may temporarily get their clutch upon its throat. President Taft disclaimed any interference, grieved and depressed as he was by the news of the death of Madero. In a speech Taft stated that it took far more courage to resist an insensate clamor for warlike measures than to bluster at the head of the crowd. With the death of Madero and the

68. "Our Duty to Mexico," Nation, 96 (February 27, 1913), p. 196.

rise of Huerta to power, the United States now faced another problem, that of recognition. Also, the death of Madero complicated matters, as his death cast a dark shadow on the new Huerta regime.

On February twenty-third, de la Barra gave the diplomatic corps the official version of the deaths. Wilson reported that the tragedy had produced no effect and that he was disposed to accept the government's account.⁶⁹ In the United States there was much surprise over the statements made in Mexico City by Ambassador Wilson. Mr. Wilson's positive statement that the two men were killed without the government's approval and his display of friendliness toward the Huerta regime seemed to officials a swift reversal of the position he and his diplomatic colleagues had assumed before. At the State Department, it was stated that Ambassador Wilson was acting on his own responsibility and doubtless for consideration best known to him.⁷⁰ The purpose of the statement, it was urged, was to allay any feeling of hostility toward this country, possibly endangered by news of the mobilization of the army at Galveston, despite the declaration made by President Taft directly to Madero on February seventeenth that the United States

69. Ross, p. 331.

70. New York Times, February 26, 1913, p. 2.

government had no intention to intervene. The State Department denied that any instructions were sent to Wilson to take the position assumed by him in his statement.

Having thus disposed of the issue of Madero's death to his own satisfaction, the ambassador urged that the State Department inform the American public of the friendly disposition of the Huerta government toward the United States and of the activity it was displaying in restoring order.⁷¹ What the American representative most desired was to obtain recognition of the Huerta regime. As early as February 21, 1913, Henry Lane Wilson urged the Taft administration to grant recognition to the Huerta government in order that the new government be able to impose its authority and re-establish order.⁷² The United States Ambassador also sent a reassuring message to Washington about the situation in Mexico. Wilson stated his disbelief in the story that the existing government planned the murder of ex-President Madero, and declared that the government "is acting with firmness and prudence."⁷³ It was sincerely hoped that he was not mistaken in any respect, but it was feared that

71. Foreign Relations, 1913, pp. 731-732.

72. Stuart A. MacCorkle, American Policy of Recognition Towards Mexico (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1933), p. 80.

73. "Mexico and the United States," Living Age, LIX (April 5, 1913), p. 57.

Wilson stated what he ardently desired to believe.

However, Secretary Knox informed Wilson on February twenty-fifth, that for the present formal recognition was not to be accorded except upon specific instructions from the Department to do so.⁷⁴ Within a few hours a nettled Wilson asked the Department to be more specific, and warned of embarrassment in our transactions and perhaps the loss of some vantage ground already taken.⁷⁵

Apparently Wilson considered it necessary to explain his conduct and justify his policy. He submitted the following information for consideration of the President and the Secretary of State:

That the government of Madero during its entire existence was anti-American and that neither appeals nor veiled threats affected it in its incomprehensible attitude; that during the last three and perhaps six months of its existence it presented the aspect of a despotism infinitely worse than that which existed under General Díaz; that tho the new government resulted from an armed revolution . . . it nevertheless assumed office according to the usual constitutional precedents . . .; that the new administration is evidently approved and accepted by Mexican public opinion and especially by the more respectable part thereof . . . and . . . by the foreign elements . . .; that anti-American sentiment has almost entirely disappeared; and that the new government is showing decided pro-American proclivities

Moved by these considerations . . . I am endeavoring in all possible ways and frequently on

74. Foreign Relations, 1913, p. 738.

75. Ibid., pp. 738-739.

my own responsibility to aid this government to establish itself firmly and to procure the submission and adhesion to all elements.⁷⁶

Among the steps Wilson took was another message directing American consuls to exert themselves ceaselessly to obtain the general submission the ambassador desired. However, American public opinion, aroused by the shocking crime, could not be ignored, and Secretary Knox advised Wilson that practically the entire American press was distressed by the tragedy and treated as inadequate the explanations of the Huerta regime which could not expect to escape public suspicion.⁷⁷ The Secretary of State urged a policy of circumspection and suggested the propriety of some modification of the ambassador's telegram to all consular officials.

Wilson was not to be discouraged or deterred from his purpose. He discounted disturbances and spoke of general adhesion to the new regime and of peace being general throughout the republic. On March first, Wilson precipitously reported that Carranza had submitted to the provisional government and concluded that the "outlook is for greater peace in the Republic than has been known for years."⁷⁸ Four days later he confidentially predicted that

76. Foreign Relations, 1913, pp. 741-742.

77. Ibid., pp. 747-748.

78. Ibid., pp. 750-751.

Carranza's rebellion would be put down. These optimistic reports were intended to encourage a favorable decision on the question of recognition.

But the strange notion that the establishment of peace and order in Mexico merely waited upon American recognition of Huerta would not bear examination. Our full recognition of Díaz did not prevent the rebellion which overthrew him. The fact that Madero was recognized by the American government as President of Mexico did not save him from siege in his own capital or from assassination. It was possible that Huerta might have extracted some personal satisfaction, and even moral assistance, out of recognition by the United States, but that it would yield him material aid was not to be thought of for a moment. Muddy ideas may argue that recognition implies active help; that we should be bound to call upon the rebels to quit fighting, or even to supply Huerta with funds and guns; but this was preposterous. As long as the revolutionists continued determined to fight the man whom they regarded as a murderer as well as usurper, and as long as roving bands found it possible to defy the federal troops and to burn and rob and destroy, mere recognition by the United States of the provisional government would not essentially alter his military difficulties. It could not, that is, unless recognition meant intervention. The fact that some would like to

have it mean this was undoubtedly one of the reasons why President Taft went so slow.⁷⁹

But President Taft, being near the close of his term, was unwilling to bring possible embarrassment upon his successor, and preferred to maintain a status quo attitude toward the Mexican situation. Another possible reason why Taft did not heed the advice of his ambassador, Henry Lane Wilson, regarding recognition, was that the State Department planned to use recognition as a bargaining weapon in obtaining favorable settlement of certain outstanding disputes with Mexico.⁸⁰ Former Secretary of State Knox told Chandler P. Anderson that if he and Taft had realized that Wilson would not recognize Huerta, they would have done so themselves.⁸¹

It cannot be doubted that the attitude of the United States embarrassed General Huerta in his relations with other foreign governments, and tended to aid his enemies at home as well as abroad.⁸² Still, our State Department refused to perform the much desired act. Secretary Knox's

79. "Fallacies About Recognition," Nations, 97 (July 24, 1913), p. 71.

80. Arthur S. Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 1910-1917 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954), p. 107.

81. Ibid. p. 108, Fn.

82. MacCorkle, p. 85.

letter to Mr. Wilson, February 21, 1913, appears to give an insight into the whole situation:

You are instructed . . . to receive assurances that the outstanding questions between this country and Mexico . . . will be dealt with in a satisfactory manner

. . . the administration of justice . . . shall be raised . . . so this government will no longer be compelled . . . to make diplomatic representations in favor of its unjustly treated nationals.

. . . that the Mexican government agree in principle to the settlement of claims resulting from . . . the recent political disturbances in Mexico⁸³

Taft, although he could not finish the task, had never bowed to the oil and other interests which demanded intervention in Mexico and used, as their chief arguments, the dangers to which American citizens were subjected. Taft hoped that there would be no intervention in Mexico. He was equally hard boiled, however, in his recommended treatment of that nation, if it came. A new and more scientific frontier should be shown after victory, he confided to Root. By this the United States should seize part of northern Mexico and portions of lower California. ". . . I felt . . . that we ought not to embarrass ourselves, if we go into war, with any self denying civilization."⁸⁴

83. Foreign Relations, 1913, pp. 728-729.

84. Henry T. Pringle, Life and Times of William Howard Taft (New York: Ferrar and Reinhart, Inc., 1939), p. 865.

EPILOGUE

The inauguration of Woodrow Wilson on March 4, 1913, did not end the dilemma of the United States in regard to the Mexican situation. Matters became more complex and the situation went from bad to worse. That, however, is part of a later story, which is not dealt with at this time.

The policy of the United States toward Mexico in the years 1910 to 1913 can only be described as chaotic. It was not as bad as the internal situation in Mexico, but it was, nevertheless, chaotic. During this period there seemed to be three policies, none of which seemed to have any good results. There was the policy of the President, William Howard Taft; the policy of the Secretary of State; and the policy of the American Ambassador to Mexico, Henry Lane Wilson.

The policy of the United States during this period of 1910 to 1913 can only be described as inconsistent. From the outbreak of the Madero Revolt in November, 1910, to the overthrow of Madero in February, 1913, there seems to be nothing that is consistent--with the exception that Taft said he would not intervene, and he did not. But even this is not so, because there was intervention. It was

intervention in a subdued form, but nonetheless intervention. When the Madero Revolt broke out, Taft proclaimed the neutrality laws to be in effect. This, however, seemed to be mere words. Right from the beginning Madero was treated differently. The neutrality laws were interpreted to the extent that they allowed Madero to conduct his revolution from American soil. Only after repeated protests from the Díaz government did the United States attempt to apprehend Madero. Thus, the neutrality laws and the interpretation of these laws played an important part in the success of the Madero revolution.

Considering how the United States interpreted the neutrality laws, and the way Madero was treated in the United States, one would think that once Madero was elected, the United States would do everything it could to see that Madero remained. Here, once again, the policy of the United States becomes inconsistent. This was partly due to the continued revolutionary outbreaks in Mexico, and partly due to our Ambassador, Henry Lane Wilson. The activities of Henry Lane Wilson are very important during the Madero regime. It was largely through the reports of Henry Lane Wilson that the State Department was guided. Wilson was opposed to Madero, and so he did everything he could to show the Madero administration in a bad light and not able to handle the situation. This all resulted

in confusion. The Taft administration loudly proclaimed that the United States was not going to intervene; at the same time, preparations seemed to indicate that intervention was soon to be forthcoming. The sending of troops to the border and the dispatching of warships to Mexican waters did not sound like non-intervention. The result was both chaos in Mexico and confusion in the United States.

It is, however, the activities of the American Ambassador, Henry Lane Wilson, that deserve special comment. Wilson was everything an ambassador should not be and should not do. Wilson did everything he could to dislodge Madero, even to the point of being involved in the plot to overthrow Madero. Wilson seemed to be running his own Mexican policy quite apart from that of the Taft administration. Wilson continually recommended intervention to bring order and stability to Mexico and to protect American interests. It is very probable that had Wilson supported Madero, the policy of the United States might have been a little clearer, and Madero might have lasted longer than he did. Once Madero was out and General Huerta in, Wilson tried to get Taft to recognize him. Taft, however, had only a few more days in office, and did not care to touch the matter of recognition.

Neutrality, intervention, and recognition all played important roles in this period. The interpretation

and results proved to be highly confusing, as it seemed no one knew what they were doing. Taft, however, proved to be stronger than many had anticipated, for he kept his word about physical intervention of troops. Taft realized the consequences of intervention; but he was also aware of what could be gained had the United States been forced to intervene.

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