THE TEXAS RESPONSE TO THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION:
TEXANS' INVOLVEMENT WITH U.S. FOREIGN
POLICY TOWARD MEXICO DURING THE
WILSON ADMINISTRATION

THESIS

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The Mexican Revolution probably affected Texas more than any other state. As the Revolution intensified, Texans responded with increased efforts to shape the Mexican policies of the Woodrow Wilson administration. Some became directly involved in the Revolution and the U.S. reaction to it, but most Texans sought to influence American policy toward Mexico through pressure on their political leaders in Austin and Washington. Based primarily on research in the private and public papers of leading state and national political figures, archival sources such as the *Congressional Record* and the Department of State’s decimal file, major newspapers of the era, and respected works, this study details the successes and failures that Texans experienced in their endeavors to influence Wilson’s Mexican policies.
During the eight years that Woodrow Wilson occupied the White House, many Texans became deeply involved in United States-Mexican relations. The Mexican Revolution, 1910-1920, brought about sweeping changes on both sides of the Rio Grande and caused much concern among these Texans about U.S. foreign policy toward Mexico. During the William Howard Taft administration, American involvement with the Mexican Revolution was greatly restrained by Taft’s strict interpretation of the Constitution concerning presidential power and interference in the internal affairs of other nations. Additionally, until the violent overthrow of the Francisco Madero regime in late February 1913, organized government in Mexico had not broken down and American lives and property had not been severely threatened. By then Taft had only a few days left in office so he put the Mexican situation on hold until Wilson became president.

When he became president, Wilson took quite a different approach toward Mexico and its Revolution. Unlike Taft, he believed that the Constitution gave the president broad powers in dealing with other nations and that it was his duty to help maintain and develop constitutional democracies in struggling countries such as Mexico as well as protect American lives and property there. Thus he began a course of interference in Mexico’s internal affairs that kept U.S.-Mexican relations in a state of crisis for several years. As U.S.-Mexican relations deteriorated, many
Texans became increasingly concerned and thus more involved with American policy toward Mexico.

Many Texans were investors in businesses in Mexico such as mining, petroleum, railroads, and agriculture. Many others were engaged in commerce between the two countries. They saw the growing tension between the United States and Mexico and the worsening situation within Mexico brought about by the Revolution as a threat to their financial security and sometimes their own lives. They tried to influence American policy to protect themselves and their investments and commercial interests.

The Rio Grande served as a "natural boundary" between Texas and Mexico for almost a thousand miles, but raiders from both sides of the border had always crossed it at will. Although border raids and acts of violence against Texans in the Rio Grande Valley occurred during the Taft Administration, they came with ever increasing frequency and ferocity during Wilson's years as president. The zenith of this border violence culminated in 1915 with the Plan of San Diego, which called for the return of the American Southwest (including Texas) to Mexico by an armed insurrection of Mexican-Americans and other minorities within the Southwest as well as Mexican raiders from across the border. The resulting violence, sponsored to some extent at least by the Venustiano Carranza regime, and the backlash against Mexican-Americans in Texas cost many lives and destroyed much property. Many Texans were so concerned with this violence that they tried to affect U.S. foreign policy toward Mexico in an effort to restore peace in the Valley.
The population near the border in Texas was overwhelmingly Mexican in origin and often maintained close associations with Mexico and its people and their problems. Leaders of various political factions in Mexico often manipulated these Mexican-Americans (called Tejanos in Texas) to achieve their own purposes. In 1915 the Plan of San Diego dramatized this manipulation. Some Tejano and Anglo-Texan leaders initiated on Texas soil several uprisings in Mexico. These ties to Mexico by the Tejanos and Anglo-Texans could not help but directly or indirectly affect American foreign policy toward Mexico.

As the United States became more and more involved in the European War (World War I), some Texans came to fear that Germany would use Mexico to attack the United States and that the line of attack would be through Texas while other Texans feared less sinister German designs on America involving Mexico. The Zimmermann Telegram in early 1917 and America’s entrance into World War I only served to heighten their fears. Therefore, they attempted to shape U.S. foreign policy to minimize this German threat through Mexico.

Many Texans shared President Wilson’s concern for the plight of Mexico’s people who suffered extreme hardships during the Revolution. As the Revolution dragged on, the Mexican economy almost collapsed resulting in hunger and starvation for millions of Mexicans. Individual civil liberties for the masses remained as illusive as when Porfirio Diaz was in power. Many Progressives in Texas wanted the people of Mexico to have a stable democratic government and a strong capitalist economy that would enable
them to enjoy life as did the people in Texas and the rest of the United States. Out of that concern for the people of Mexico, they generally supported Wilson’s Mexican policies.

Other Texans tried to influence American foreign policy toward Mexico for a variety of other reasons. Some were strong proponents of the international peace movement and thought that American interference in Mexico’s internal affairs was not only morally and legally wrong but also might lead to war with our southern neighbor. Others disliked and disrespected Mexico and its people, still wanting revenge for the Alamo, while some wanted the United States to dominate Mexico and bring the Revolution under control to prove to the rest of Latin America that the Western Hemisphere was still ruled by the United States.

Although some Texans influenced America’s Mexican policy by becoming directly involved in the Revolution and the U.S. reaction to it, most took the indirect approach of trying to affect American policy by influencing either state or federal officials in Austin or Washington. These officials responded to the concerns of their constituents and to their own personal agendas concerning U.S.-Mexican relations. Texas political leaders at both the state and federal level tried with varying degrees of success to influence the Wilson administration’s Mexican policy and congressional legislation that affected it.

These Texas politicians were fairly successful in their efforts. Texas was a Democratic state — the governor’s office, both houses of the state legislature, and all the U.S. congressional and senatorial seats had been in
Democratic hands since Reconstruction. Wilson, only the second Democratic president since the Civil War, got an early political boost in 1910 in Texas during a pre-presidential campaign. At the Democratic Convention in Baltimore in 1912, the Texas delegation lined up behind Wilson and made it possible for him to get the presidential nomination after several ballots. Robert Lee Henry, a U.S. Congressman from Waco, was Wilson's floor manager at that Convention. When Wilson became president, he surrounded himself with Texans who were either members of his cabinet or close advisors such as Colonel Edward M. House. Besides Henry, other members of the Texas delegation to Congress were powerful and wielded influence with Wilson such as John Nance Garner of Uvalde, who was the Wilson administration's liaison with the Democrats in Congress. Wilson respected both U.S. senators from Texas and had a good rapport with them. Other Texans served the Wilson administration in key positions during the Mexican crisis.

Despite all these advantages, Texas politicians still experienced considerable difficulty in affecting U.S.-Mexican relations. Texas was a one-party state, but the Democratic Party in Texas was splintered into several factions and intense rivalries existed between many leading Texas Democrats. The three governors who served during Wilson's two terms had but limited influence on the administration's Mexican policies and were at times bitter critics of those policies. Indeed, Governor Oscar B. Colquitt was a strong opponent of all of Wilson's policies, both foreign and domestic. Governor James E. Ferguson became embroiled with U.S. Senator Morris
Sheppard of Texarkana in at least one public feud over Mexican policy. Political infighting between the governors and the legislature climaxed with the impeachment of Governor Ferguson in 1917. Additionally, some Texas politicians who opposed the Wilson administration on matters unrelated to Mexico, consequently fell out of favor with Wilson and lost whatever influence they might have had on U.S. policy toward Mexico.

Texans did exert a significant influence on American foreign policy toward Mexico during Wilson's two terms as president, but their influence probably would have been greater if the political leaders from Texas had united in their efforts instead of engaging in political disagreements that sometimes erupted into open political warfare.
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CHAPTER I

TEXAS AND PRE-WILSON RELATIONS WITH MEXICO

Texans had been involved in American foreign policy toward Mexico long before Woodrow Wilson became President of the United States. Because of their state’s unique history and geography, they had always been extremely interested in relations between their country and Mexico. After the United States won the Mexican War in 1848, relations between the two nations stabilized. Most Texans welcomed this development, having suffered through almost a decade and a half of conflict and border disputes with Mexico. Both nations experienced civil wars during the 1860s, and Mexico was controlled by the French for part of that decade. Some Texans took advantage of these civil wars by engaging in smuggling along the Rio Grande, but diplomatic relations between the two nations were not adversely affected by this illicit trade. Domestic rebellions continued to plague Mexico until 1877, when Porfirio Diaz took control of the government and brought peace and stability that lasted until 1911.

Bandit and Indian raids back and forth across the border hampered efforts to improve relations between the two republics until both nations reached an agreement in 1882 allowing reciprocal border crossings by troops in close pursuit of raiding parties. The growing political stability in Mexico under Diaz led to significantly increased American (including Texan) economic investment in Mexico in the last two decades of the nineteenth
century. By 1911, American investment in Mexico had reached the one billion dollar mark while trade between the two countries had increased by over 1,671 percent since 1867. Mexico had become an economic satellite of the United States.¹

This growing American domination of the Mexican economy had two important results. First, it intensified an anti-American sentiment among the people of Mexico that had its roots in the Texas Revolution of 1836 and the American-Mexican War that ended in 1848. Second, when the Mexican Revolution erupted in November 1910, violent acts against Americans and their property in Mexico challenged American interests and influence, resulting in increased efforts by these investors to get the United States government to act to protect their interests in Mexico. Texans with financial interests below the border were as concerned as other American investors.²

Francisco Madero’s campaign for the Mexican presidency came to an abrupt halt in the spring of 1910 when Diaz had him arrested and jailed. After the election, Madero made bail and fled to Texas, where he formulated plans to overthrow Diaz. In late November, he departed San Antonio for Mexico and launched the Mexican Revolution. President William Howard Taft proclaimed that the United States would remain neutral but acted to protect American lives and property within Mexico and along the border. In March 1911, he mobilized 20,000 federal troops and sent them on "maneuvers" in Texas along the Rio Grande. Although the U.S. State Department assured the Diaz government that there was no cause for alarm because the mobilization was only a part of normal field training, Taft
confided to Secretary of State Philander C. Knox that he intended to use the American troops to protect the border and to deter both federal and rebel forces within Mexico from harming American citizens or their property. He also acknowledged that he had positioned the troops in Texas for possible intervention in Mexico (but only with Congressional approval) if his show of force along the border failed to prevent the serious loss of American lives and property in Mexico.³

Texas Governor Oscar B. Colquitt wrote the president a letter expressing appreciation for the increased military presence in Texas. The governor even invited Taft to come to Texas for a vacation as soon as his presidential schedule would allow. A few weeks later, Colquitt reacted quite differently to the federal government's response to the Battle of Juarez. On 8 May 1911, Mexican rebel forces attacked the city of Juarez, which was still under the control of troops loyal to Diaz. Before the rebels captured the city on 10 May, stray bullets had killed six Americans across the river in El Paso. Colquitt was furious that American troops had been used to keep Americans away from the border in an effort to reduce American casualties instead of stopping the fighting in Juarez. The governor, who had never supported Madero's cause, strongly protested to Washington. But after the fall of Juarez, Diaz soon went into exile. Then Madero became president of Mexico, and tensions eased for awhile.⁴

The Madero government attempted to bring peace and order to Mexico by instituting a liberal democratic government and committed to gradual social and economic reforms. Because it was opposed by wealthy
and powerful Mexicans and foreign investors who feared any reforms would threaten their interests, it never achieved its goal and lasted less than two years. Additionally, it lost the support of Mexico’s impoverished masses who saw little improvement in their plight under Madero’s moderate reformism. Civil unrest developed and grew into open revolt with anarchy prevalent in much of the country. Repeated efforts were made to overthrow the government. Madero’s failure to implement sufficient reforms to appease the lower class and to secure the full support of the military led to his eventual downfall.⁵

Concern for American lives within Mexico and along the border during Madero’s unstable tenure guided Taft’s foreign policy toward Mexico. He was committed to non-intervention in Mexico, but events in the Revolution and Governor Colquitt pressed him to the limit.

A false calm had settled on the border after Madero had become president. Thus, in July Taft ordered the demobilization of the 20,000 troops he had sent to the Texas border. Governor Colquitt remained concerned for the safety of Texans along the border and pushed for federal assistance in protecting the border. In September 1911, Colquitt met Taft in Hutchinson, Kansas to discuss the matter. Taft agreed to provide additional federal funding to the State of Texas to be used for increasing the number of Texas Rangers protecting the border in exchange for state cooperation in enforcing federal neutrality laws. This unique system of protecting the border lasted until late January 1912, when Colquitt announced that the State of Texas would no longer enforce federal neutrality laws and the Taft
administration informed the governor that it was ending its subsidy to the state. Colquitt's decision regarding the enforcement of federal regulations may have been influenced by the embarrassment he suffered when a member of his personal staff and a political ally, Francisco A. Chapa, was convicted of violating the federal neutrality laws for conspiring with Mexican General Bernardo Reyes to overthrow the Madero government. The jury rendered its verdict in federal court in Brownsville on 10 January 1912, and Colquitt made his announcement in Austin two days later. Meanwhile, Reyes, who had also been indicted for violating federal neutrality laws, jumped bail and slipped back into Mexico to continue the fight against Madero. A little over a year later, he would be killed as he led rebel troops in an attack on the National Palace in Mexico City during the February 1913 revolt that finally toppled Madero's government.  

In late February 1912, rebel forces led by Emilio Vasquez Gomez threatened to attack Juarez, then under the control of Madero's federal army. Texans, recalling the loss of American lives to stray bullets from across the river during the struggle for Juarez in May 1911, called on Washington for protection. Mayor C. E. Kelly of El Paso asked Secretary of War Henry Stimson to send additional troops, but Stimson declined, stating that sufficient troops were already present to handle the situation. Sheriff Peyton Edwards of El Paso County then enlisted 500 men to serve as a "posse of responsible citizens" to protect the border. Stimson relented and agreed to send additional troops to the city. Still not satisfied, Colquitt and Kelly requested American troops be sent into Juarez to insure that hostilities
would not break out and to protect American lives on both sides of the border. The Taft administration sent a threatening telegram to Madero’s government, warning that serious consequences would follow if American lives were lost due to fighting in Juarez. But Taft refused to allow American troops to cross the river or to fire into Juarez, even if American casualties were reported. He feared that anti-American sentiment in Mexico might grow even stronger and jeopardize all Americans within Mexico. The State Department’s warning telegram of 26 February 1912 proved to be sufficient, because the next day Madero ordered his forces to surrender Juarez to the rebels without a fight, citing specifically the importance of no shots being fired across the border.  

Realizing that the continuing violence of the Mexican Revolution threatened American lives on both sides of the border, Taft took additional steps to protect American lives and property. On 14 March 1912, he announced an embargo on all arms shipments to Mexico. Two weeks later, he agreed to allow arms shipments to go only to the Madero government, hoping Madero could strengthen his position and consolidate his rule in the war-torn republic. Despite these efforts by the president, rebels led by Pascual Orozco and others continued to wage war in northern Mexico. Bandit raids across the Rio Grande increased during the summer of 1912, causing much alarm among Texas residents near the river. Rebel forces controlled much of the state of Chihuahua including Juarez. The people of El Paso feared that Madero’s forces would try to recapture the city and again threaten American lives across the river. During the remainder of 1912,
Governor Colquitt continually pressed the Taft Administration for action, asking for additional federal troops on the border and American intervention in Mexico if necessary to bring the Revolution under control. In mid-September 1912, the Taft Administration dispatched a severe and threatening protest to Madero’s government. It contained a veiled threat that if American lives and property within Mexico and along the border continued to be endangered to the extent that they had been, the United States might go to war with Mexico. The Mexican government replied that it was doing everything possible to protect American interests in Mexico. The Taft administration then let the matter drop, realizing that intervention in Mexico at that time would cost far more American lives than it would save.\footnote{8}

During late 1912 and early 1913, American interests in Mexico continued to suffer and the situation along the Rio Grande steadily deteriorated. After Taft lost his bid for re-election in November 1912, he became even more entrenched in his conservative approach to U.S.-Mexican relations. Mexican bandit raids across the border intensified, causing many Texans near the border to fear for their lives. In early January 1913, J. R. Landrum, postmaster at Boquillas, Texas, which is on the Rio Grande in the remotest part of the Big Bend area, wrote U.S. Senator Morris B. Sheppard of Texarkana, pleading for him to use his influence with the War Department to have federal troops sent to the area to protect the residents from repeated bandit raids. His request was in vain. General Tasker H. Bliss, Commander of the Southern Department of the U.S. Army, denied his petition, saying
that the troops were needed in other areas and that conditions in the Big Bend did not warrant troops being sent there.\textsuperscript{9}

Governor Colquitt continued to be concerned about conditions on the border and to push for action from the Taft administration. In his State of the State Message to the Texas legislature on 16 January 1913, he blamed much of the trouble along the border on "marauding revolutionary bands" from Mexico and the "lack of cooperation on the part of the Federal government civil authorities with State civil authorities in enforcing the law along the Rio Grande." In late January, as hostilities broke out again between rebel and government forces at Juarez, Colquitt asked Taft to take the necessary steps to prevent either side from firing across the river into El Paso and endangering American lives. Taft passed the governor’s correspondence to Acting Secretary of State Huntington Wilson, who informed Colquitt that both the State Department and the War Department had brought the matter to the attention of the proper Mexican authorities.\textsuperscript{10}

On 9 February 1913, a full scale revolt broke out in Mexico City that cost the lives of thousands of government and rebel troops as well as unarmed civilians. It ended ten days later when General Victoriano Huerta, the commander of the government forces, openly joined forces with the rebels and ordered the arrest of President Madero and his entire cabinet. During the bloody revolt, Governor Colquitt pressed Taft to take decisive action. On 12 February, he urged the president to intervene in Mexico to restore order and to protect lives and property as part of our obligation under the Monroe Doctrine. Secretary of State Philander C. Knox, speaking for the
president, assured the governor that the Taft Administration would continue to watch the situation in Mexico but had no plans to intervene militarily. He further informed Colquitt that "precautionary naval dispositions" had been made should the need for them arise. Three days later, the governor demanded that more federal troops be sent to protect the border, advising Taft that if additional troops were not sent to the Texas border, he would order "Texas troops to take charge of the situation on the Rio Grande."

When the War Department refused to send the additional troops, Colquitt persuaded U.S. Senator Charles A. Culberson of Dallas to use his influence with the president to secure the additional troops. After Culberson paid a personal visit to Taft, the War Department gave in and announced that additional troops would be sent to the Texas-Mexican border.\(^{11}\)

While under arrest in Mexico City, Madero and his vice president, Pino Suarez resigned their offices in exchange for Huerta’s promise of safe-conduct out of the country. Their resignations allowed the foreign minister to become the new president, who then appointed Huerta as minister of government and next in line for the presidency. Next, this new president resigned, allowing Huerta to become president. Two days later, on 22 February, Huerta broke his promise and had both Madero and Suarez shot to death. Many Americans were appalled by the deaths of Madero and Suarez, and widespread opposition towards Huerta’s government developed in the United States. President Taft never seriously considered military intervention in Mexico but weighed the decision of whether or not to grant diplomatic recognition to Huerta’s government. Henry Lane Wilson, American
ambassador to Mexico and a friend of Huerta, did everything within his power to achieve that recognition. Congressman James L. Slaydon of San Antonio, who had acted as an advisor to Taft concerning Mexican affairs on several occasions, urged the president to recognize Huerta as president de facto of Mexico. Taft replied, "What you suggest seems to me the obvious and proper course, but a new president is coming soon, and I hardly think it courteous to take such an important step. His policy may be very different from mine." On 4 March 1913, the Taft Administration expired. Woodrow Wilson inherited the problems brought about by the ever intensifying Mexican Revolution.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER 1


2Gilderhus, Diplomacy and Revolution, 1-2.


4Colquitt to Taft, 20 March 1911, Texas State Archives, Austin, Texas Governors’ Papers: Oscar Branch Colquitt, Letter Press Books (hereafter cited as Governors’ Papers: Colquitt); Coerver and Hall, Texas and the Mexican Revolution, 26-27.

5Haley, Revolution and Intervention, 32.


7El Paso Morning Times, 25, 26, 27 February 1912; Coerver and Hall, Texas and the Mexican Revolution, 44-45; Haley, Revolution and Intervention, 39-41.

8Haley, Revolution and Intervention, 43-50; Coerver and Hall, Texas and the Mexican Revolution, 46-51.


Colquitt to Taft, 12 February 1913 (telegram) and Knox to Colquitt, 12 February 1913 (telegram) in Foreign Relation, 1913, 715; Colquitt to Taft, 15 February 1913 (telegram), Governors’ Papers: Colquitt; Washington Post, 17, 20, 21 February 1913; San Antonio Express, 20 February 1913; El Paso Morning Times, 25, 26 February 1913.

CHAPTER II

WILSON SEARCHES FOR A MEXICAN POLICY

When Woodrow Wilson became president, he appointed several prominent Texans to important positions in his administration. Of these men, Colonel Edward M. House of Austin had the most influence on Wilson’s foreign policy although he held no governmental office and was usually referred to as "a close friend and advisor to the president."

Independently wealthy, House had served as the chief political advisor to James S. Hogg and Charles A. Culberson when they were governors of Texas. He was an early ardent supporter of Wilson’s candidacy for president and helped direct his victorious campaign in 1912. Following the election, House greatly influenced the selection of Wilson’s cabinet. Although primarily interested in foreign affairs, he soon became Wilson’s most intimate advisor.¹

Another early supporter of Wilson, veteran Congressman Albert S. Burleson of Austin, asked his friend Colonel House to convince Wilson to appoint him Postmaster General. Although he wanted Burleson to remain in Congress, Wilson agreed to House’s request and appointed Burleson to the position. Burleson not only became a member of the cabinet but also part of Wilson’s inner circle of advisors, particularly concerning political decisions and relations with Congress.²
House also persuaded Wilson to appoint David F. Houston to the cabinet as secretary of agriculture. Although he was serving as chancellor of Washington University in St. Louis at the time of his appointment in March 1913, Houston was basically still a Texan in his outlook and politics. He had lived and worked most of his adult life in Texas, having taught political science at the University of Texas in Austin for several years, eventually rising to become dean of the faculty there. He served as president of Texas A&M College for three years before preceding Colonel House's brother-in-law, Sid Mezes, as president of the University of Texas.  

House also secured the appointment of another Austin friend, Thomas Watt Gregory, to the position of special assistant to the attorney general. Gregory, also a close friend of Burleson and an early supporter of Wilson in Texas, went on to become attorney general in mid 1914, when James McReynolds resigned his office. Thus from the outset, Texans had important roles in the new president's government and impacted its policies. Their number and influence increased during the Wilson administration.  

In his 1912 campaign, Wilson had paid little attention to foreign affairs, choosing instead to concentrate on the domestic reforms he envisaged for American government, business, and society. He also had demonstrated an inadequate knowledge of foreign policy issues prior to becoming president. Indeed, he commented to an old college friend just a few days before taking office, "It would be the irony of fate if my administration had to deal chiefly with foreign affairs." To make matters worse, he selected William Jennings Bryan to be his secretary of state,
probably for political reasons. Bryan knew even less about foreign affairs than did Wilson. Both men were idealists concerning international relations. With missionary zeal, they planned to reform American diplomacy to bring the blessings of democracy to millions of people in foreign lands who suffered without it. This idealism and poor understanding of foreign affairs would soon result in the United States becoming embroiled in a confusing and threatening dispute with Mexico that endured throughout most of Wilson’s tenure in office. Additionally, Wilson mistrusted the State Department and Bryan’s ability to negotiate with foreign powers. Consequently, he developed systems that used special agents and advisors such as Colonel House to bypass normal diplomatic channels. This personal approach to the conduct of foreign policy would lead to confusion within his own administration and hamper efforts to solve crisis situations such as those brought about by the Mexican Revolution.5

When Wilson took over the reins of government from Taft in March 1913, he immediately faced the dilemma of whether or not to recognize Victoriano Huerta’s government. The other major nations with embassies in Mexico City, including Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and Japan, had already extended their recognition. Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson pressured President Wilson as he had Taft to grant recognition quickly to save Mexico from national ruin. State Department specialists also favored recognition, arguing that Huerta’s government was the only constitutional one in Mexico and that historically the U.S. had always granted at least de facto recognition to revolutionary regimes. E. N. Brown, president of the
National Railways of Mexico, and those Americans with significant investments there also pressed the Wilson administration for recognition. Both men pleaded with Colonel House to convince Wilson that only Huerta could maintain order and protect American lives and property in Mexico.6

Despite all these reasons to grant Huerta recognition, Wilson remained unwilling to change his policy for several reasons. First, the president and a growing number of American citizens were outraged by the way that Huerta had come to power and the ensuing murders of Francisco Madero and his vice-president. Both Wilson and Bryan were convinced that to recognize Huerta’s unconstitutional and undemocratic regime would only lead to future coups d’etat throughout the Western Hemisphere by would-be assassins encouraged by such recognition. Additionally, Wilson thought that U.S. recognition would strengthen Huerta’s hold on power in Mexico thus helping to deprive the Mexican people of a democratic government. Although he refused to grant full recognition, the president realized that the United States had to communicate with the Mexican government, even if only in a very limited way. After studying the situation for weeks, Wilson announced that he would deal with Huerta’s government on a de facto basis temporarily and let future developments help him to decide whether or not to grant formal recognition. Perhaps, he hoped this tactic would encourage Huerta to hold democratic elections in the meantime.7

Wilson had to deal with one other development in Mexico as he attempted to determine U.S. policy toward that troubled country. The day after Huerta had seized power in Mexico City, a diverse group of Maderista
leaders in the northern Mexican states of Sonora, Coahuila, and Chihuahua unfurled the standards of rebellion against his government. Led by Venustiano Carranza, the governor of Coahuila, these Constitutionalists planned to conquer all of Mexico and then return constitutional government to their nation. Along with Emiliano Zapata, who led a separate rebellion in the state of Morelos, they plunged Mexico into a violent civil war that had adverse effects on Americans within Mexico and near the border. American lives and property fell victim to the resulting disorder, as Huertistas and the rebels battled each other inside Mexico, near the border, and sometimes across the border.\(^8\)

While Wilson tried to formulate a Mexican policy for his administration, certain powerful Texas politicians became involved in trying to shape that policy. After a series of battles in Mexican border towns between Huertistas and Constitutionalists resulted in accidental casualties on the Texas side of the Rio Grande, Wilson’s cabinet met on 11 April 1913 to consider armed intervention. Postmaster General Burleson called for continued non-intervention, reminding the cabinet that Americans near the border had been living with that dangerous situation for two and a half years. He cautioned that military action by the United States might jeopardize American lives within Mexico. Also, he expressed a fear that conditions could worsen if an American soldier patrolling the Texas side of the river fell victim to stray gunfire from Mexico and the American army returned fire across the border. Secretary of Agriculture Houston revealed a racist attitude that was typical of many Texans of that era when he also
spoke in favor of continued non-intervention. He explained that most of the residents of the affected areas in Texas were Mexicans anyway and that the country would suffer no great loss if some of them were killed. After further discussion, Wilson and his cabinet decided to continue their wait and see approach. A week later when the cabinet again discussed intervention in Mexico, Burleson told Wilson that he thought that the people of northern Mexico would favor American intervention if they believed that Huerta would succeed in his efforts to control all of Mexico. But Burleson agreed with the president’s policy of non-intervention as the best way to deal with the situation unless the prospects for peace in Mexico failed.⁹

As April wore on, deteriorating conditions along the border caused Governor Colquitt to become more involved with the Wilson administration’s Mexican policy. Mexican bandit raids across the border intensified again. Together with hostilities between the warring factions along the border, these raids threatened the lives and property of Texans. Initially, Colquitt expected the new Democratic administration to be more attentive to his requests for action than President Taft’s had been. His optimism soon disappeared as the Wilson administration continued to try to determine its Mexican policy while the situation along the border worsened. When his pleas for additional federal troops to protect the border went unheeded, once again Colquitt threatened "to use the National Guard to protect the citizens of the state." When the federal government transported a group of Huertistas, who had fled from rebel forces into Arizona, across state lines and interned them at Fort Bliss near El Paso, the governor protested
vehemently to Wilson, Secretary of War Lindley Garrison, and Secretary of State Bryan. He complained about the lack of federal cooperation and support Texas had received in struggling to deal with the problems caused by the Mexican Revolution. He also insisted that the Mexican soldiers be removed from Texas lest rebel forces cross the border and attack them at Fort Bliss. The Wilson administration responded several months later by transferring the Huertistas to an internment camp in California and announcing that any Mexican combatants fleeing from battle into the United States would be returned to Mexico at once. Meanwhile, Colquitt and the rest of Texas waited to see what Wilson's policy for Mexico would be.¹⁰

By early May, the Wilson administration appeared to be moving toward a definite Mexican policy. On 6 May, Colonel House warned Wilson that "the situation [in Mexico] has about reached a point where it seems advisable for you to take a hand." Along with this advice, he presented the president with a plan, proposed by Judge D. J. Haff of Kansas City, that offered a practical solution to the problems of Mexico. This plan had the backing of several large American companies with significant investment in Mexico, including Julius Kruttschnitt's Southern Pacific Railroad Company, Phelps, Dodge & Company, the Greene Cananea Copper Company, and Edward L. Doheny's Mexican Petroleum Company. These companies desperately wanted to see Mexico return to its former stability and peaceful conditions which favored business activity there. Haff's plan called for U.S. recognition of Huerta, if he agreed to hold democratic election by 26 October 1913, a date he had once agreed to, in the areas of Mexico under his
control. It also required the Constitutionalists to agree to suspend hostilities, hold elections in the areas under their control by 26 October, and support the person chosen as president in the October elections. To counter Wilson’s concern about even a temporary recognition of Huerta, House assured the president that in his opinion, de facto recognition of Huerta’s government would not necessarily imply moral acceptance of Huerta and his methods.¹¹

This plan, as presented by House, greatly impressed the president. Wilson overcame his reservations about recognizing Huerta’s regime and drafted a note to Ambassador Wilson in Mexico City, instructing him to present the conditions of the settlement to the provisional government there. The message was never sent. Perhaps, because the president no longer believed in the integrity of his official envoy to Mexico, he decided to send William Bayard Hale, a trusted friend and prominent journalist, as a special agent to Mexico with secret instructions to investigate and report on conditions in Mexico before he settled on any certain Mexican policy.¹²

In late May, Kruttschnitt with some of his fellow investors urged the Wilson administration to adopt a revised version of Judge Haff’s earlier plan of 6 May. This new proposal no longer mentioned recognition for Huerta. It merely asked that the United States use its good offices to mediate between the Constitutionalists and Huerta’s government, while assigning the responsibility for calling and supervising free elections to the Mexican Congress. Wilson liked the revised plan even more than the original one but waited for Hale’s reports to come in before taking action.¹³
Hale’s dispatches of late spring and early summer 1913 convinced the president that Huerta’s corrupt and tyrannical rule would ultimately lead to complete chaos and national bankruptcy for Mexico, thus forcing a full-scale American intervention. Hale suggested that the U.S. should coerce Huerta to agree to step down as president after holding free elections, enabling the U.S. to recognize the new government and avoid intervention. He also sent back a damning assessment of Ambassador Wilson’s character and his role in the coup that had brought Huerta to power.  

By early July, President Wilson realized that he must soon develop and implement a policy concerning Mexico. Convinced by Hale’s reports and armed with Kruttschnitt’s revision of Haff’s plan, Wilson and Bryan chartered a course that would lead to interference in Mexico’s internal affairs instead of armed intervention. On 16 July, they began by calling Ambassador Wilson back to Washington and forcing him to resign. Thus, they removed an untrustworthy diplomat from office and showed their disdain for Huerta’s regime by not appointing another ambassador to take his place. Then on 28 July, Wilson appointed John Lind, a former governor of Minnesota and a friend of Bryan, as a special agent to go to Mexico to negotiate Kruttschnitt’s mediation plan with Huerta’s government. Wilson’s hope was to return Mexico to peace, stability, and constitutional government.

While Wilson and Bryan were implementing this plan for peace, Governor Colquitt endeavored to persuade them that intervention would be the best policy. He informed the president that the only way to solve the problems along the Rio Grande was to have the State Department issue an
ultimatum to the Mexican government requiring it to restore order on the border or face American intervention. In a follow-up letter to Wilson, he declared that America should no longer hesitate to fulfill its Christian duty of achieving peace through intervention, which he thought would be welcomed by all classes of Mexican society. Apparently he favored neither the Constitutionalists nor the Huertistas, alleging that "the troubles in Mexico are largely fomented by desperados and selfish leaders desiring a license to loot, rob, and murder." Secretary Bryan gave Colquitt the administration's polite response by assuring him that the U.S. government was doing everything it could possibly do to protect American lives and property along the border.¹⁸

Contrary to the opinions expressed by the Texas governor, the Dallas Morning News supported Wilson's Mexican policies in a series of editorials in late July and early August. The paper praised the president's non-recognition and non-intervention positions as well as his decisions to recall Ambassador Wilson and send John Lind to seek a negotiated peace settlement. In its editorial on 26 July, the News expressed high hopes for Lind's mission, saying, "If the President can succeed in mediating between the warriors of Mexico, he will have achieved something that will secure fair fame to his Administration, no matter what else betides." The editorial went on to say that such an accomplishment by Wilson would be more important for the United States than Teddy Roosevelt's successful mediation of the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, because the welfare of the U.S. had not been threatened by that war as it was being threatened by the widespread anarchy in Mexico.¹⁷
Despite these editorials, the Texas governor did not stand alone in calling for the Wilson administration to adopt a hard-line approach concerning Mexico. On 24 July, the Texas State Senate, reacting to the fears of Texans who had chosen to work or invest in Mexico, passed a resolution introduced by Senator Claude B. Hudspeth of El Paso that called on the Texas delegation to the U.S. Congress to insist that the federal government protect the lives and property of Americans in Mexico. Such protection had been called for by a plank in the platform of the national Democratic Party in the 1912 election campaign. On 1 August, Senator Morris Sheppard introduced Hudspeth's resolution in the U.S. Senate. It was later sent to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations for consideration. Although the Senate never passed it, this resolution made the Wilson administration aware that significant sentiment existed in Texas for action by the U.S. government to solve the problems caused by the Mexican Revolution.\textsuperscript{18}

According to the president's secretary, Wilson knew that many Americans with land, mineral, industrial, and petroleum investments in Mexico vigorously opposed his non-intervention policy for selfish reasons. He demonstrated his resistance to this group as he announced his program for mediation in late July by stating, "I have to pause and remind myself that I am President of the United States and not of a small group of Americans with vested interests in Mexico." A short time later, congressman Daniel Garrett of Houston was even more critical of those American investors who called for intervention in Mexico. In a speech on the floor of the House of
Representatives, he praised Wilson for keeping America out of a war with Mexico and asserted that many American investors had obtained their property there by dishonest means. He emphasized that most Texans opposed such a war, but he bragged that if war did occur, "all you have to do is take the bridle off the boys in Texas and they can attend to Mexico anytime that is needed to be done."\(^{19}\)

Even though Senator Sheppard introduced Hudspeth’s resolution in the Senate on 1 August, both he and Senator Charles A. Culberson gave speeches in the Senate that supported Wilson’s non-intervention, non-recognition policy towards Mexico later that month. Afterwards, Wilson confided to his wife that he greatly appreciated Sheppard’s support and admired him as a man. In his speech, Sheppard lambasted Huerta and his army for depriving the Mexican people of true self-government, but he praised Carranza and the Constitutionalists, declaring that they had the support of a vast majority of the Mexican people. Going a step farther, he and Congressman John Stephens of Vernon introduced resolutions in their respective houses of Congress that would have given belligerency status to all warring factions in Mexico, thus allowing the Constitutionalist to obtain more easily arms and ammunition.\(^{20}\)

Lind labored in Mexico City throughout most of August, trying unsuccessfully to convince Huerta to agree to a mediated peace that included free elections in which Huerta would not be a candidate for president. Although Lind threatened that Wilson might go before Congress concerning Mexican affairs, grant belligerency status to the
Constitutionalists, or even resort to military intervention, Huerta refused to yield his position of not allowing the United States to determine the internal affairs of his nation. On 26 August, Lind gave up and departed the Mexican capital. The next day, Wilson addressed a joint session of Congress to explain Lind's mission and its apparent failure. He lamented that even though "war and disorder, devastation and confusion" plagued its southern neighbor, the United States could not force the warring factions to accept its peace proposals. It should remain neutral, keep the door open to future negotiations, "wait patiently," "vigilantly watch" developments, and give "the situation . . . a little more time to work itself out." Then he advised all American citizens to leave Mexico and forbade the sale of arms and ammunition to anyone in Mexico.21

Senator Sheppard was pleased with Wilson's "watchful waiting" speech and was convinced that it indicated that "this Government is practically carrying out the purpose of my resolution calling for formal recognition of the belligerency of the Constitutionalists." The Dallas Morning News and the El Paso Morning Times ran favorable editorials about the speech, while the editors of the San Antonio Express congratulated the president for his strength and wisdom in dealing with Huerta's regime and praised his non-intervention policy.22

During the evening of 27 August after Wilson had gone before Congress and admitted that Lind's mission was a failure, he received notification from the Mexican government that Huerta could not constitutionally and would not seek to be elected president in the election.
scheduled for 26 October. Lind returned to Mexico City and negotiations began anew on 1 September. A little over two weeks later, Huerta even announced to the Mexican Congress that he desired to turn over his duties to a constitutional successor. Relations between the two nations continued to improve during the next several weeks. Bryan proclaimed, "I feel that we have nearly reached the end of our trouble," while the State Department announced it would sanction the October elections, even if the Constitutionalists did not allow areas under their control to participate.\(^{23}\)

But during the autumn of 1913, the Constitutionalists profoundly affected Wilson’s Mexican policy. As they consolidated their hold on the northern states of Mexico, they stationed over 20,000 troops near the Texas border. This increased concentration of Mexican soldiers along the Rio Grande, along with the ever present bandit raids, caused Texans near the border great concern. Leading businessmen and bankers petitioned their elected officials for an increased American military presence in the area. Although Governor Colquitt had met with little success in securing additional federal troops for the region, Congressman John Nance Garner of Uvalde convinced the president to commit extra military manpower there in early November, after weeks of soliciting both Wilson and Secretary of War Garrison. These additional American troops on the border could not have eased the fears of Carranza, who was already suspicious of Wilson’s motives concerning Mexico.\(^ {24}\)

The Constitutionalists continued to press toward Mexico City and on 8 October culminated a series of military victories by capturing Torreon, the
key to Huerta's defenses in northern Mexico. Panic gripped Mexico City. Two days later, the Chamber of Deputies of the Mexican Congress threatened to end Huerta's charade of constitutionality by passing a resolution that implied it would reconvene behind Constitutionalist lines. Huerta reacted immediately to avert open rebellion in the capital. That same day, 10 October, he ordered his troops to surround the Chamber and had 110 deputies arrested and imprisoned. The next day, he dissolved Congress and assumed complete dictatorial power until a new Congress could be elected on 26 October. The fraudulent election resulted in a subservient Congress which declared the presidential election (in which Huerta was not a candidate) null and void and appointed Huerta president ad interim until new elections could be held in July 1914.25

These events of October left Wilson in a quandary concerning Mexico. On 30 October, he met with Secretary of the Treasury William Gibbs McAdoo and Colonel House at the White House to consider a new Mexican policy. House suggested that the president advise Huerta that he must restore the Mexican government as it was prior to 10 October or the U.S. government would take forcible measures to achieve that end. House recorded in his diary that Wilson considered engaging Huerta in a limited war by blockading Mexico's ports, thus depriving him of much needed revenue. Wilson also considered sending U.S. troops to the northern states of Mexico to protect the lives and property of foreigners there as well as forming American military lines across southern Mexico and just south of the states under the control of the Constitutionals. The president even prepared an
address to Congress requesting its authorization to carry out his plan to use force if necessary to rid Mexico of Huerta's corrupt regime.\textsuperscript{28}

Although Wilson was determined to force Huerta from power, he did not deliver this message to Congress. Instead of using military intervention, he planned to rely on diplomatic pressure and the increasing military might of the Constitutionalists to rid Mexico of its dictator. Through diplomatic channels, he assured Huerta that the U.S. would never recognize his government, that the U.S. would aid his enemies in Mexico, and that the U.S. would ultimately use force if need be to remove him from power. In mid-November, the president sent W. B. Hale to negotiate an arrangement with Carranza that would provide American support for the Constitutionalists if they would agree to American mediation and guarantee the lives and property of foreigners in areas under their control. These negotiations failed when Carranza refused to be dependent on a foreign power that could restrict his actions and might cause adverse repercussions in Mexico. He and his followers demanded total victory rather than mediation with a deceitful dictator conducted under the auspices of a foreign power that they did not fully trust. Meanwhile, Colonel House helped Wilson persuade the British to withdraw their recognition and support of Huerta's government. The other major powers quickly followed suit. By late November, with Huerta isolated from foreign support and the Constitutionalists steadily progressing toward Mexico City, the president returned to his policy of "watchful waiting."\textsuperscript{27}
Governor Colquitt was one of four governors who opposed Wilson’s policy of "watchful waiting." In a letter to Outlook, a New York magazine, Colquitt ridiculed the president’s policy toward Mexico, charging that Wilson did not understand the situation there. Additionally, the governor demanded that the United States hold the government and the people of Mexico responsible for violating the civil and property rights of Americans in that country. In a late November editorial, the Dallas Morning News chided the governor for misrepresenting the attitude of most Texans, while both the El Paso Morning Times and the San Antonio Express applauded Wilson’s policy toward Mexico in editorials in early December. Also, Congressman Slayden defended Wilson’s Mexican policy in a House speech during November. As 1913 ended, Texans waited and watched with their president to see if his policies would result in Huerta’s downfall and peaceful condition returning to Mexico.28
NOTES FOR CHAPTER II


4 Biographical Directory of the U.S. Executive Branch, s.v. "Gregory, Thomas Watt."


8 Link, Wilson and The Progressive Era, 109; San Antonio Express, 3, 4 April 1913; Colquitt to Bryan, 7 April 1913, Governors' Papers: Colquitt.

9 El Paso Morning Times, 9, 12, 15 April 1913; The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels 1913-1921, ed. E. David Cronon (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), 29-30, 43-44.

10 San Antonio Express, 4 April 1913; El Paso Morning Times, 15 April 1913; Colquitt to Bryan, 7, 28 April 1913, Governors' Papers: Colquitt;
Colquitt to Garrison, 28 April 1913, Governors' Papers: Colquitt; Colquitt to Wilson, 29 April 1913, Governors' Papers: Colquitt; Coerver and Hall, Texas and the Mexican Revolution, 62-63.


13Kruttschnitt to Bryan, 26 May 1913, Wilson Papers, LC; Edward Brush and S. W. Eccles to Bryan, 26 May 1913, Wilson Papers, LC; Bryan to Wilson, 27 May 1913, Wilson Papers, LC; Wilson to Bryan, 28 May 1913, Wilson Papers, LC.

14W. B. Hale, "Memoranda on Affairs in Mexico," 9 July 1913, U.S. Department of State. Records of the Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Mexico, 1910-1929, Record Group 59, File 812.00/8203 (Microfilm, Willis Library, University of North Texas) (hereafter cited as State Dept. followed by the file number); Hale to [not indicated], 18 June 1913, State Dept., File 812.00/7798 1/2; Hale to Ben G. Davis, 3, 12 June 1913, Wilson Papers, LC.

15Wilson to Bryan, 1, 3 July 1913, Wilson Papers, LC; Link, Wilson: The New Freedom, 356-58; Wilson to Lind, "Instructions (Mexico)," 30 July 1913, Wilson Papers, LC.

16Colquitt to Wilson, 16, 21 July 1913, Governors’ Papers: Colquitt; Bryan to Colquitt, 18 July 1913, State Dept., File 812.00/8065.

17Dallas Morning News, 18, 24, 26 July 1913, 6 August 1913.

18Senate Journal, 33rd Texas Legislature, 1st called sess., 24 July 1913, 21-31; Congressional Record, 63rd Cong., 1st sess., 1913, 50, pt. 3:2972-73.


22 Dallas Morning News, 28, 29 August 1913; El Paso Morning Times, 29 August 1913, San Antonio Express, 28 August 1913.

23 Lind to Secretary of State, 27 August 1913, Wilson Papers, LC; Lind to Secretary of State, 1 September 1913, State Dept., File 812.00/8635; New York Times, 17 September 1913; Link, Wilson and the Progressive Era, 116.

24 San Antonio Express, 20 August 1913; Interview with Laredo Times, 16 November 1913, John Nance Garner Papers, University of Texas Archives, Austin (hereafter cited as Garner Papers).


27 Bryan to American Embassy, Mexico, 1 November 1913, State Dept., File 812.00/10143a; Bryan to O’Shaughnessy, 24 November 1913, Foreign Relations, 1914, 443-44; Wilson to Hale, 11 November 1913, Wilson Papers, LC; Hale to Secretary of State, 18 November 1913, State Dept., File 812.00/9814; Hale to Secretary of State, 14 November 1913, State Dept., File 812.00/9735-36; House to Ambassador Walter Hines Page, 14 November 1913, House Papers; House Diary, 13 November 1913, House Papers; Secretary of State to all embassies and legations except Turkey and Mexico, 24 November 1913, State Dept., File 812.00/11443b.

28 Dallas Morning News, 25 November 1913; El Paso Morning Times, 30 November 1913 and 3 December 1913; San Antonio Express, 3 December 1913; Cong. Rec., 63rd Cong., 1st sess., 1913, 50, pt. 6:5837.
1914 — "WATCHFUL WAITING" GIVES WAY TO LIMITED INTERVENTION IN MEXICO

During December 1913 and early January 1914, the Constitutionalists, suffering under the American arms embargo, experienced several military defeats and actually lost important strongholds, such as Torreon, to Huerta’s aggressive counterattacks. After conferring separately with Special Agent John Lind and Colonel E. M. House, President Woodrow Wilson came to believe that the Constitutionalist cause was doomed unless he lifted the embargo or sent American troops into Mexico to overthrow Huerta. Wanting to avoid intervention if at all possible, Wilson favored lifting the embargo. After Luis Cabrera, Carranza’s agent in Washington, promised the State Department in late January that the Constitutionalists would respect property rights and eschew anarchy, Wilson revoked the embargo on 3 February 1914. In so doing, he rejected a British offer to attempt to convince Huerta to resign his office, falsely portrayed his action as prompting American neutrality, and predicted that the Constitutionalists would soon triumph over their opponents and end the civil war in Mexico.¹

During February and March, Texas Governor Oscar Colquitt used a highly publicized border incident to continue his attacks on Wilson’s Mexican policy. After a group of Huerta’s soldiers crossed the border near Laredo in mid-February, stole a herd of horses from Clemente Vergara, a local Tejano
rancher, abducted him across the Rio Grande and then brutally murdered him, Colquitt requested approval from both Wilson and Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan to send the Texas Rangers into Mexico to apprehend the soldiers. Bryan replied that no invasion of Mexico, however small, would be allowed. Wilson stressed to the governor that no American forces of any kind would be sent into Mexico without the consent of the Mexican authorities and that the United States government had no plans to seek such consent.\(^2\)

Colquitt then took advantage of the public’s outrage concerning the violent border incident by making several unfavorable statements about Wilson’s Mexican policy to the press. In a lengthy follow-up letter, he informed Bryan that if the Texas Rangers pursued the killer soldiers across the border, it would not be a military expedition against Mexico and its people but an attempt to "compel respect from and inflict punishment on lawless elements." He also asserted that the state constitution gave him the right to order the pursuit by state forces of raiders across the border as a legal extension of his power as governor to repel foreign invaders. He closed the letter by charging that Wilson’s misguided Mexican policy "encouraged the anarchy that prevailed" along the border and would eventually lead to substantial American bloodshed when the president would be forced to intervene militarily in Mexico.\(^3\)

On 9 March 1914 in a speech on the U.S. Senate floor, Texas Senator Morris Sheppard eloquently defended the administration’s Mexican policy against Colquitt’s attacks. While admitting that conditions along the border...
and within Mexico were deplorable, he emphasized that war and intervention would only worsen the situation. After paying tribute to the administration's handling of Mexican relations, the senator attested to public support for the president's policy:

I think I know something about the people of Texas on this subject . . . . the people of Texas are almost unanimously in sympathy with Woodrow Wilson and William Jennings Bryan in the course they have pursued as to Mexico. They are not in sympathy with the governor of Texas on this question. They deplore his attitude.

During the next few days, Sheppard further proved his point by reading into the Congressional Record numerous telegrams that supported his speech from constituents throughout Texas.4

Speaking before the Texas Cattle Raisers' Association in Fort Worth on 10 March, Colquitt continued his tirade against Wilson's Mexican policy, while reasserting his right as governor to protect the citizens of Texas and demanding more federal cooperation with state authorities to solve border problems. He also responded to Sheppard's remarks of the previous day by challenging, "If little Morris Sheppard will resign his seat in the U.S. Senate tomorrow, I will resign as governor and see whether the people of Texas endorse him or me — or Woodrow Wilson." He then condemned Sheppard and other Texas politicians for not having "the nerve to stand and defend Texas" and for criticizing him because he refused to "kiss anybody's toe at Washington."5

Contrary to reports in some newspapers, Colquitt did not send the Texas Rangers into Mexico following this incident. Instead, he tried
unsuccessfully to extradite the soldiers involved, while publicly denouncing Wilson’s policy. He quickly won national recognition as an outspoken opponent of the administration’s Mexican policy. The president attempted to placate the governor and end the controversy by agreeing to send in March and April two additional regiments of federal troops to Texas to protect the border. Although Colquitt bragged that this decision by the president was a vindication of his demands for a tougher policy toward Mexico, Wilson explained to Senator Sheppard that he agreed to send the troops “for the peace of mind of the people there, not because I thought it really necessary.” Later, he expressed the hope to Postmaster General Albert Burleson that sending the reinforcements would decrease “Governor Colquitt’s power to make mischief.” He also confided to Texas Senator Charles Culberson that he deeply resented the governor’s bellicose tactics and disregard for diplomacy and hoped that the next governor would be more restrained in dealing with border problems.⁹

In late March, Burleson persuaded Wilson to appoint Cone Johnson of Tyler as solicitor in the State Department. According to Wilson’s chief biographer, Arthur S. Link, Johnson would have significant influence on Wilson’s foreign policy decisions and the formation of foreign policy by the State Department in his role as the third highest ranking member of the department. His appointment certainly did not please Governor Colquitt, because Johnson had long been his political adversary and had almost defeated him in the 1910 gubernatorial race. Indeed, Wilson chose Johnson
in an effort to counteract Colquitt’s assaults on his Mexican policy and to shore up support in Texas for that policy.  

The president already had the support of two influential Texans from Dallas, the home town of the governor. In late March, Col. Frank P. Holland, editor of the Dallas based agricultural magazine, *Farm and Ranch*, expressed his firm support of Wilson’s policy toward Mexico to his congressman, Hatton Sumners. He praised the president’s efforts to avoid a war with Mexico, which he thought would halt the growth and development of business in the Southwest. Conversely, he strongly criticized the governor’s constant calls for intervention and charged that Colquitt and his cronies opposed Wilson’s policies regarding Mexico only to secure notoriety and the support of special interest groups. Congressman Sumners replied that he also had serious concerns about our relations with Mexico and that he backed the president’s policy toward that country.  

Meanwhile, during February and March, predictions by Wilson and his advisers that lifting the arms embargo would lead to a speedy triumph by the Constitutionalists did not come true. The stalemate that existed in Mexico resulted from two developments that perplexed the Wilson administration. First, an unfolding, fierce rivalry for control of the revolutionary forces between Carranza and his most celebrated general, Francisco "Pancho" Villa, was beginning to tear apart the ranks of the Constitutionalists. Second, Wilson’s decision to lift the embargo had a sobering effect on Huerta, who convinced the landed aristocracy, the business and banking leaders in Mexico City, the Catholic Church, and several foreign bankers to loan his
government enormous sums of money. Huerta wisely used these loans to import large shipments of arms and ammunition from Europe and Japan to strengthen his army. Lind not only apprised the president of these developments in Mexico but also recommended concerted American action to rectify the situation. He began by suggesting that American military and naval advisers be sent to aid the Constitutionalists. By the end of March, he had become convinced that their position was hopeless and called on the president to intervene with American forces. Also during March, Colonel House urged Wilson to avoid both direct aid to the Constitutionalists and intervention until he could get assurances from Great Britain, France, Germany, and Spain that they would cooperate with such American actions. 

In early April, Wilson decided that U.S. intervention was required in order to relieve Mexico of its dictator. But he needed a reason to justify American military action inside Mexico. An incident at Tampico on 9 April, when the paymaster and whaleboat crew of the U.S.S. Dolphin were unjustly arrested by Huertista soldiers, gave him the pretext to act. Calling the petty incident a deliberate affront to the honor of the United States, Wilson demanded an unconditional twenty-one gun salute to the American flag by Huerta’s forces at Tampico, even though the local commander had already released the American sailors and formally apologized. After Huerta refused his ultimatum, the president, perhaps inspired by Lind’s reports and buoyed by editorials from papers such as the El Paso Morning Times that called for "watchful waiting" to be replaced with action, went before a joint
session of Congress on 20 April and asked for its approval to use American
armed forces to enforce his demands on Huerta.¹⁰

Congressman Robert Lee Henry of Waco, chairman of the House Rules
Committee, helped lead the fight to achieve passage of a joint resolution of
Congress to allow the use of force in Mexico. Speaking on the floor of the
House in favor of the resolution, he recalled a bit of Texas history:

Tomorrow will be 78 years since Texans on the battlefield of
San Jacinto routed the Mexicans and established a great republic
there. We did it because our rights had been invaded and because we
were entitled to our liberty and independence. Since that glorious day
. . . we have come into the Union, and now from every part of Texas,
we are all proud to stand under that flag [pointing to the U.S. flag]
and rally to the support of the President of the United States.

The House passed the resolution the same day that the president requested
it with a vote of 337 in favor, 37 against, and 3 abstentions. Every Texas
congressman voted for the resolution except James L. Slayden, who
abstained. As a result, Slayden later experienced a deteriorating relationship
with the Wilson administration, particularly the War Department.¹¹

While Congress deliberated, Wilson met with his closest advisers at
the White House and decided on a plan of operation that called for the
seizure of Tampico and Veracruz, Mexico’s chief ports, a naval blockade of
both coasts of Mexico, and the possible use of American troops to capture
Mexico City. But around 2:30 A.M. on 21 April, the administration learned
that a German ship was scheduled to dock at Veracruz later that day and
unload a large cargo of arms and ammunition for Huerta’s forces. Early in
the morning on 21 April, Wilson and his advisers took immediate action to
keep the arms shipment out of Huerta’s hands. Without the approval of the resolution in the Senate, then bogged down debating the issue, Wilson ordered the occupation of Veracruz. By the next day, American forces had secured the port city after suffering light casualties, although Wilson had expected no resistance. Several hours after the fighting had begun, the Senate finally voted 72 to 13 to approve the resolution for the use of force at 3:21 A.M. on 22 April.¹²

During the next three days, Wilson met with his advisers to determine their course of action. Secretary of War Lindley Garrison called for the implementation of their original plan, while Bryan and Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels urged the president to limit operations to Veracruz and the surrounding area. Colonel House thought that the United States might have to set up a protectorate in Mexico as it had done in Cuba. Secretary of Agriculture David F. Houston expressed the opinion that the U.S. might have to occupy Mexico to force Huerta from power. Then worrying about conditions within Mexico after Huerta’s demise, Houston forecast, "It will take generations to lay the foundations of order and to develop and direct constructive programs which will bring the masses of the Mexicans to the point where they can use land or run a government, and the requisite number of intelligent and forceful men in Mexico to furnish leadership is not in sight." Reacting to a threat by Carranza of possible war between the United States and the Constitutionalists as well as unfavorable domestic and international public opinion, Wilson decided on 25 April to cease further offensive operations and accepted an offer by Argentina, Brazil, and Chile
(the ABC Powers) to mediate the conflict. Much of the adverse public opinion in the U.S. was caused by Wilson's lack of candor when he explained to Congress and the American people why he wanted to use force in Mexico. Finally on 24 November 1914, he admitted in a press conference that the Veracruz landing had been made to drive Huerta from power as well as maintain America's dignity as a nation.¹³

Public opinion in Texas, as represented by editorials in some of the state's leading newspapers, was not as negative as in the nation as a whole. On 22 April, the San Antonio Express praised the president's decision to seize the Mexican port and shared his hope that by depriving Huerta of much needed customs revenue, the corrupt dictator might be forced from power. Peace and a popularly elected government could then be re-established. A Houston Post editorial of that same date also endorsed the president's decision and tried to calm its readers' fears of a full-scale war with Mexico by predicting that Wilson would not involve America in a war with its southern neighbor. Two days later, the El Paso Morning Times gave its approval to both the president and Congress for their "vigorous and determined action" against the Huerta government "to maintain" the American government's "honor and dignity."¹⁴

Some Texans were not so pleased with Veracruz's seizure because they feared its aftermath. Apprehensive of a local Mexican reaction, James Edwards, the Anglo county judge of Hidalgo County (located in South Texas along the Rio Grande) wrote Governor Colquitt the day the Veracruz occupation began, pleading with him to use his influence to obtain more
federal troops to protect his county. Displaying a great deal of ethnic prejudice, he justified his fear by informing the governor:

A band of mounted men could swoop down upon any one of the numerous and populous but unprotected towns of the county, and with torch and flame, wipe it out of existence in a night, killing and massacring men, women, and children while they slept. There is no need to tell you what the Mexican race is. Indian warfare, divested of a few horrors, is the kind the Mexican wages.15

While the Veracruz crisis unfolded, Colquitt sent the president a list of Mexican cities along the Rio Grande that he thought should be seized immediately by American forces if Wilson decided to invade Mexico. He warned that failure to do so would threaten American lives and property along the border. After Veracruz had been secured, he insisted that the federal government should notify him in advance of any future intervention so that he could take the necessary steps to protect prominent Texans from "assassination by Mexican thugs."16

Other Texas politicians were more supportive of the administration. Congressman Sumners assured Cone Johnson on 27 April that he firmly supported the president's Mexican policy and suggested that Wilson would force Huerta from power without involving the U.S. in a major war with Mexico. Two months later, he reminded the president that he had always supported his policies and would continue to back them in the future. Senator Sheppard, chairman of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, on 23 April even offered to raise and lead a volunteer regiment if the Veracruz
occupation escalated into a war between the United States and Mexico, although he had no previous military experience.\textsuperscript{17}

In an interview with the \textit{Dallas Morning News} published on 3 May, Senator Culberson defended Wilson’s lack of recognition of Huerta’s government and non-intervention in Mexico’s internal affairs and championed the right of the Mexican people to determine their own political destiny. He said that the president’s decision to seize Veracruz was warranted by Huerta’s refusal to respect America’s sovereign rights and lauded his success at keeping the nation out of a war with Mexico. Three days later in a Senate speech, he even insisted that it was the duty of all Americans to support Wilson’s Mexican policy. The next day, the president privately expressed his profound gratitude for the senator’s favorable remarks in the \textit{Dallas paper}.\textsuperscript{18}

Also in early May, Congressman John Stephens of Texas defended Wilson’s Veracruz decision and his continued determination not to recognize Huerta’s regime against Republican criticism in Congress. He reminded Congress that neither the Taft administration nor the ABC Powers had extended recognition to the Mexican dictator. Then Congressman William Humphrey of Washington state, the leader of the attack on the administration’s Mexican policy, read into the \textit{Congressional Record} a blistering \textit{New York Sun} editorial that lampooned Wilson’s reliance on Agent Hale’s opinions concerning the various Mexican factions. Immediately, Congressman Rufus Hardy of Corsicana challenged Wilson’s detractors:
I do not know what paper he read from, nor do I care; but I have enough confidence in the President of the United States, and the country has confidence enough, to set it over against the charges and insinuations of the gentleman from Washington and rest perfectly content that the President’s character is not even impugned by the charges.¹⁹

Some Texans were directly involved in the U.S. occupation of Veracruz and its aftermath. In late April, the American governor of Veracruz appointed William F. Buckley as administrator of justice for the area in and around the city under U.S. control. The son of a former Washington County, Texas sheriff, Buckley spoke fluent Spanish, having lived near the border and in Mexico most of his life. In addition to serving as president of an American oil company in Mexico, he was one of the most respected attorneys in Mexico. In fact, along with his brother, he had drawn up most of the contracts and leases for the British and American oil companies there. Ironically, he was also a friend of Huerta.²⁰

Concerns about the Mexican reaction to the seizure of Veracruz and subsequent negotiations forced Cone Johnson to work long hard hours at the State Department. In response to a request by California Senator John D. Works for federal protection for the irrigation systems in Imperial Valley, he conducted an investigation and recommended that the request be granted. On 28 April, federal troops were dispatched there. Concerned for American lives and property in Mexico, in early May Johnson asked Bryan if the administration had a plan to deal with the increasingly violent, anarchical nature of the Mexican Revolution. Although the State Department had been advising Americans for months to leave Mexico as soon as possible, most
had not heeded the advice. The president had to send several ships to
Veracruz to evacuate thousands of American small businessmen and their
families to Galveston. Most lost their businesses or property as well as their
personal belongings, but fortunately escaped with their lives. Johnson’s
hard work and commitment did not go unnoticed. On 25 June, Wilson gave
Bryan a favorable critique of the solicitor’s endeavors subsequent to the
Veracruz landing.21

After Wilson accepted the ABC Powers’ offer of mediation on 25
April, Huerta agreed two days later to their offer. Although Carranza
steadfastly refused to participate in the peace conference that was held at
Niagara Falls, Canada from 20 May through 2 July, Wilson hoped to use the
ABC mediation to eliminate Huerta and establish a provisional government in
Mexico that he could dominate. In the later part of May, William F. Buckley
left his position with the American government of occupation in Veracruz to
become the legal counsel for the Huerta government’s delegation at Niagara
Falls. As the talks were about to begin, Huerta told him to inform the Wilson
administration that he would resign as provisional president if the U.S. would
guarantee a neutral government would be established in Mexico City. On 19
May, Buckley met in Washington with Secretary of Agriculture Houston, an
old acquaintance, and advised him of Huerta’s offer. Obviously pleased,
Houston stated that he was sure that Wilson would insist that none of the
factional leaders should succeed Huerta as president. He also promised to
inform Wilson the next day of Huerta’s decision. After hearing nothing else
from Houston during the next few days, Buckley assumed that Wilson would
guarantee a neutral government in Mexico and advised the Huerta delegation to announce their leader’s planned retirement. On 23 May, they made that announcement.22

But Wilson refused to use force to require Carranza to stop his military campaign against Huerta and accept a mediated settlement. Public knowledge in Mexico of Huerta’s possible resignation and of Wilson’s refusal to intervene further to enforce an armistice caused serious morale problems within the Huertistas’ ranks. With Huerta deprived of arms and revenue by the American occupation of Veracruz, the Constitutionalists drew an ever tightening circle around Huerta’s forces in Mexico City. As the unsuccessful Niagara Falls conference ended on 2 July, Huerta knew that his government was doomed. On 15 July, he resigned as president, fled Mexico, and went into exile in Spain. On 20 August, Carranza and the Constitutionalists triumphantly entered Mexico City.23

As much as Wilson favored Huerta’s downfall, he regretted his inability to keep Carranza from assuming power in Mexico City. The growing rift between factions loyal to Carranza and Villa threatened to plunge the country into another civil war and greatly disturbed Wilson. Through his special agents and American consular officials, he closely monitored the unfolding events in Mexico. By the end of August, he and Colonel House believed that Villa, who they favored over Carranza, would eventually win the struggle for power there. Thus, the administration began a campaign to replace Carranza as the leader of the Mexican Revolution by throwing its
moral and diplomatic support behind Villa, while continuing to negotiate with Carranza.24

At the urging of Paul Fuller, a new Wilson agent in Mexico, Carranza agreed that he would support the calling of a convention that would establish a new civil government composed of leaders from all factions within the country. The Convention of Aguascalientes met from 12 October through 12 November. Because Villa and his followers outnumbered the other delegates, the Convention set up a puppet government controlled by Villa and declared Carranza an outlaw for failing to follow its decrees. As the ensuing civil war began, Villa made an alliance with Emiliano Zapata, the Revolutionary leader from Morelos. By the end of November, these Conventionalists had driven Carranza and his Constitutionists from the capital to Veracruz, which the Americans had just evacuated. By early December, the Wilson administration's hopes for a peaceful conclusion to the Mexican Revolution seemed about to come to fruition as Villa and Zapata paraded through the streets of the capital and occupied the National Palace.25

But Governor Colquitt, whose term would soon expire, remained displeased with Wilson's Mexican policy. He fired one last salvo at the president in a New York Times interview published on 27 December 1914. In the interview that newspapers throughout America reprinted, the governor labeled Wilson's policy toward Mexico "an egregious failure" and charged that the occupation of Veracruz had accomplished absolutely nothing. He blamed the violence along the Rio Grande on the administration's refusal to
send an adequate number of troops to the area. Concluding the interview, he lambasted Wilson’s administration in general, calling it "the greatest failure in the history of the Presidency."  

Most Texans probably did not share their governor’s assessment of Wilson and his Mexican policy. In all likelihood, at the end of 1914, they thought Wilson’s policies, though flawed at times, had brought Mexico to the verge of peace and stability, with Villa (who was then quite popular in the U.S.) in charge in Mexico City. Cone Johnson’s scathing public counter-attack against Colquitt won him praise from his fellow Texans and appreciation from the president. In Washington, Congressman Hardy defended Wilson’s record on the House floor, while condemning the governor’s decision-making ability and character. He surmised that Colquitt was jealous of the president’s political ability and alleged that he had "for some time had the Wilson-phobia." In its editorial on 29 December, the Dallas Morning News expressed the sentiments of many Texans:

It is an old saying that they who are least able to do are most ready to find fault with what others do. The competent always incurs the wrath of the incompetent.

Those outside of Texas who have read the fourth revised edition of Governor Colquitt’s tirade against the President will be less able to point at this observation than those of us in Texas. The affairs of Texas were never so greatly mismanaged as they have been during the four years of his administration.

If it may not be said that the President is fortunate in having the political enmity of Governor Colquitt, it is solely because it is only Texas people who are in a position to know how infinitely preferable to his approval is his disapproval.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER III

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CHAPTER IV

1915 — THE MEXICAN CRISIS CONTINUES AFTER THE CONSTITUTIONALISTS SPLIT

As the new year began, President Woodrow Wilson must have been pleased with the apparent success of his Mexican policy. Without direct American involvement, Pancho Villa and the Conventionalists had gained control of most of Mexico as well as its capital. Venustiano Carranza controlled only the coastal areas and a few cities along the American border. But a series of events in January 1915 quickly proved that appearances can be deceiving. On 5 January, a large and well-trained Constitutionalist army under the command of General Álvaro Obregón severely defeated Villa’s forces at Puebla, seventy miles southeast of Mexico City. After realizing that he was powerless to control the excesses of Villa and some of his blood thirsty lieutenants, Eulalio Gutiérrez, Provisional President of the Conventional Government of Mexico, fled the capital and defected with about 5,000 troops to the camp of Carranza on 15 January 1915. Then, in late January, Obregón’s approaching army forced both Villa and Zapata along with their troops to withdraw from Mexico City. Although the Constitutionalisists immediately occupied the city, Carranza remained at Veracruz. In fact, within a few days he formally changed the capital of Mexico to Veracruz and made Mexico City the capital of a newly created state. He and Obregón then embarked on a campaign to inflict humiliation.
and suffering on the once proud city and its residents, including wealthy foreign investors and members of diplomatic missions who made their home there.¹

Wilson now realized the improbability of a peaceful conclusion to Mexico’s brutal Revolution. He understood that new policies for Mexico would have to be developed and implemented as soon as possible. During late January, Colonel House met with Wilson and Secretary of State Williams Jennings Bryan to discuss the changes in Mexico would be for the United States to act jointly with the ABC Powers to impose a commission form of government there until peace could be restored and a democratic government could take control of the situation. He even offered to meet immediately with the ABC ambassadors in Washington to get their support. The president told House that he thought "this" was "an excellent idea" but "believed this would be too soon, for conditions were not quite ready in Mexico for such a move, and he was afraid the ABC ambassadors would not want to move so quickly." Bryan showed even less enthusiasm for the plan. In fact; Wilson and Bryan were the ones who did not want to move so quickly. They were convinced of the necessity of sending a new confidential agent to Mexico to access conditions there before deciding on a definite course of action.²

After conferring with Postmaster General Albert Burleson and Attorney General Thomas Watt Gregory, Wilson selected Duval West of San Antonio to be his new agent in Mexico in early February. West, a former schoolmate of Gregory, had been a deputy U.S. marshal, an associate justice of the
Texas Supreme Court, and an assistant federal district attorney. He had successfully prosecuted William Sydney Porter (later known as the famous writer of short stories, O. Henry) for bank fraud years earlier in Austin. But most importantly, he was a loyal Wilson Democrat and a noted student of Mexican affairs who spoke fluent Spanish. The president’s instructions to West indicated that he was considering a more active role in events in Mexico and that he desperately wanted the civil war there permanently settled. Wilson asked West to visit the leaders of the three major factions in Mexico and estimate their characters and capabilities. He was to ascertain their purposes and objectives and evaluate their chances of success. Wilson wanted West to supply him with information that would enable him to determine which Mexican leader was most likely to put the welfare of the Mexican people above his own ambitions. He believed that only such a leader could bring "genuine reform and a settled peace" to Mexico. On 19 February, West entered Mexico and began his mission.³

Meanwhile in February, Congressman James Slayden also advocated using the ABC Powers to end Mexico’s civil war. But unlike House, he supported ABC mediation that would not be forced on the different factions. He stated his views in an interview with the Washington Star, in his article published in the February 1915 issue of The American Journal of International Law, and in a speech to Congress on 19 February. In that speech, the congressman from San Antonio agreed with Wilson’s policy of non-intervention but criticized his refusal to recognize Carranza’s government and the administration’s patronizing attitude toward Mexico. He suggested
that the U.S. should make reasonable concessions to Carranza's government and "recognize the equality of sovereignty" that Mexico should have with the United States. As early as 1913, Slayden had proposed that the United States enter into a treaty arrangement with other nations in the Western Hemisphere to guarantee mutually each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity. He thought such action would help solve problems throughout the hemisphere as well as those involving the United States and Mexico. In early November 1913, Wilson had told Bryan that he found Slayden's suggestion "striking" but would give it serious consideration only after he had solved the Mexican problem. In February 1915, Wilson was no more willing to embrace Slayden's proposals than he had been in 1913.4

The deteriorating conditions in Mexico City caused the Wilson administration much concern during February and March. Starvation and mob violence threatened catastrophe for the thousands of Americans and Europeans trapped in the city. Although the Constitutionalis abandoned the city to Zapata's forces on 10 March 1915, its occupants continued to suffer, because Carranza refused to allow food supplies from Veracruz to reach them. During the next several months, Mexico City would change hands several times and its inhabitants would continue to suffer. But in March, the administration acted in response to diplomatic pressure from the European powers as well as its own concerns for the inhabitants of the city. In threatening messages to Carranza, Wilson and Bryan stated that the United States would hold him and General Obregón personally responsible for the welfare of foreigners in Mexico City and even implied that the United
States might be willing to effect the military occupation of Mexico unless the situation there soon improved.⁵

Although these warnings produced some positive results, they were, for the most part, a calculated American bluff. As much as Wilson desperately wanted the Mexican Revolution to reach a peaceful conclusion, he knew his options concerning Mexico were greatly limited by the escalating military conflict in Europe and the possibility that the United States might be drawn into the struggle that was becoming "the World War." Concerns about the European war tended to preoccupy the administration while the situation in Mexico worsened. Colonel House spent almost as much time in Europe as he did in America, trying to get the warring nations to agree to a mediated settlement. Involved in European affairs though he may have been, House had not forgotten his earlier suggestion that the U.S. act jointly with the ABC Powers to impose a commission form of government on Mexico. He wrote the president from Paris on 15 March 1915, "I have wondered whether you have taken up the matter with the ABC Powers, as you contemplated when I left. This seems to me to be the wisest solution. I think you have now given them [the Mexicans] every chance to work it out themselves, and help should be offered them and insisted upon." The second most powerful man in the State Department, Counselor Robert Lansing had suggested a week earlier that the U.S. should explore the possibilities of the United States and the ABC Powers jointly engaging in a full-scale military intervention in Mexico. But on 18 March, Wilson indicated that he was not yet ready to take such
definite action as suggested by House and Lansing. Instead, he would wait for Duval West to complete his evaluation of conditions within Mexico.⁶

At Wilson’s direction, West first visited the Villistas. During late February and early March, he traveled with Villa and his men from Chihuahua City to Guadalajara, observing their every move. He was not overly impressed with them or their leader. He saw them as an uneducated peasant rabble led by a crude socialist who administered harsh and unfair justice. After completing two personal interviews with Villa, West characterized him as a dynamic leader with personal magnetism and "good hard common sense" but lacking the ability "to secure the services of men of experience and loyalty in the formation and administration of a proper and just civil government." Besides questioning his ability to establish a stable civil government that could enact promised reforms, West expressed dismay concerning statements by Villa that foreigners should not be allowed to own property or to invest capital in industrial developments in Mexico. However, Villa’s generals impressed West. He thought they demonstrated outstanding military leadership capabilities.⁷

Concern for his personal safety as he passed through the military lines that divided Villa’s area of control from that of the Constitutionalists and Carranza’s bout with lumbago forced West to wait until late March to meet Carranza and his followers. After spending several days with them, he dispatched his observations to Washington. While his report from Guadalajara had indicated that Villa’s government was mainly for and by the military, West found the Constitutionalists to be much more concerned with
civilian matters. He was convinced that Carranza’s close advisors were of "a much higher order" than those of Villa. He thought that they had the ability to form and maintain a fairly stable civil government and was surprised by their devotion to enacting progressive reforms once the civil war ended. But West determined that the Constitutionalists had one major weakness — inadequate military leadership. Even though he never met their two most important leaders, General Obregón and General Pablo Gonzáles, who were in the field making preparations to engage Villa and Zapata, West reported that Carranza’s generals seemed much less confident of victory than did those of Villa. On 5 April, he advised Bryan, "The Constitutionalist Government . . . cannot establish peace in Mexico because of the failure of its military leaders."  

The next day, Villa attempted to destroy Obregón’s army that was entrenched at Celaya and thus reopen the door to Mexico City. After several hours of bloody and indecisive fighting, Villa withdrew to regroup his force. A week later, he returned with most of his remaining fighting force. Again and again, the Villistas recklessly charged Obregón’s fixed machine-gun emplacements. The result was the near-destruction of Villa’s once-powerful Division of the North. The remnants of his army retreated northward in confusion, never to deny the Constitutionalists control of most of Mexico again. But Villa would remain a formidable force in northern Mexico for some time to come. On 16 April, West met briefly with Zapata, whose lack of cooperation with Villa had helped doom the Conventionalist forces at Celaya just days earlier. He was extremely disappointed with Zapata, who
had a very provincial view of the Revolution and held the belief that "it is perfectly right for the property of the rich [to] be taken and given to the poor." He accurately assessed Zapata as a local rebel leader with but a limited influence on a permanent settlement of Mexico's civil war. West's reports to Washington gave no hope that any major factional leaders was capable of bringing peace and constitutional government to Mexico in the predictable future. Although West overestimated Villa's military strength and underestimated that of the Constitutionists, historian Larry Hill asserts that his reports on conditions within Mexico were "the most balanced and least biased" of any of Wilson's special agents to Mexico.  

Continued victories during April by the Constitutionists over Villa's retreating forces caused the Wilson administration to reevaluate its opinion of Villa and any future role he might have in the pacification of Mexico. Nonetheless, Wilson's faith in West and the overall accuracy of his reports was not shaken, despite the special agent's misassessment of the Mexican factions' military capacities. In early May, new reports from Mexico City told of the increasing agony that the city and its residents were experiencing. Anarchy reigned there, as starving mobs murdered foreigners and looted their possessions. Not even members of the diplomatic corps escaped these attacks. Foreigners in other Mexican cities fared little better. But Wilson took no immediate action. He anxiously waited for West to return to Washington and give him a complete report on Mexico. But more importantly, the sinking of the British ocean liner Lusitania by a German submarine on 7 May 1915 severely damaged U.S.-German diplomatic
relations. Wilson, Bryan, and most of the State Department remained preoccupied with their efforts to insure the respect of America’s rights as a neutral nation without having to go to war with Germany.\textsuperscript{10}

West returned to Washington on 9 May 1915 but failed to confer directly with the president until 24 May, because the Lusitania crisis continued to demand Wilson’s urgent attention. In his written report to Bryan on 11 May and in his personal conference with Wilson at the White House on 24 May, West spoke disparagingly of all Mexican factions and their leaders. He concluded, "that a condition of permanent peace and order and the establishment of stable government . . . cannot be brought about by any of the contending parties without the aid or assistance of the United States." West further informed Wilson that the indescribably bad conditions in Mexico would induce most Mexicans to favor the United States lending its moral and financial support to whichever faction it considered to be the most representative of the desires of the Mexican people and to have some legitimate claim to govern under the Mexican constitution.\textsuperscript{11}

On 1 June 1915, Wilson led his cabinet in a serious discussion of conditions in Mexico and what the U.S. should do about them. They decided that the president should issue an ultimatum to the warring factions in Mexico to end all hostilities and to form a coalition government or face increased American involvement in Mexican affairs. The next day, Wilson issued a presidential statement to the press that was not only published in newspapers throughout America but also sent by wire to Mexico as a stern warning to the factional leaders. After outlining recent events in Mexico’s
civil war and describing the resultant tragic condition of the nation and its people, the president used words that reflected the influence of Duval West to declare:

It is time, therefore, that the Government of the United States should frankly state the policy which in these extraordinary circumstances it becomes its duty to adopt. It must . . . lend its active moral support to some man or group of men, if such may be found, who can rally the suffering people of Mexico to their support in an effort to ignore, if they cannot unite, the warring factions of the country, return to the constitution of the Republic . . . and set up a government in Mexico City which the great powers of the world can recognize and deal with . . . I, therefore, publicly and very solemnly, call upon the leaders of factions in Mexico to act, to act together, and to act promptly for the relief and redemption of their prostrate country. I feel it my duty to tell them that, if they cannot accommodate their differences and unite . . . this Government will be constrained to decide what means should be employed by the United States in order to help Mexico save herself and serve her people.¹²

Reaction to Wilson's statement by leading Texas newspapers was swift and generally favorable. The editors of the San Antonio Express congratulated the president for having chosen West to go to Mexico and for following his advice. They avowed "that if Mexico does not shortly solve her troubles, the United States will do it for her." In its editorial of 4 June, the Dallas Morning News praised Wilson's decision to abandon his policy of "watchful waiting" but expressed some doubt about the effectiveness of his statement because of the character of the factional leaders. The Houston Post also endorsed the president's ultimatum but seemed convinced that it alone probably could not bring peace to Mexico. Citing the past violent history of the Mexican Revolution, the editors of the Post predicted that Wilson would eventually have to resort to military intervention. They
thought such intervention would be justified not only by the appalling conditions within Mexico but also by the suffering that Texans had been experiencing along the Rio Grande at the hands of raiders from Mexico.  

During June, the factional leaders responded to Wilson's statement of 2 June. Vice-Consul J. R. Sillman's dispatch of 10 June to the State Department indicated that Carranza refused to accept the president's proposal. It read: "Foreign Office today expresses General Carranza's thanks and states there is no reply." That same day, Villa gave his answer by complaining that "outside intervention" threatened Mexico, by asserting that conditions in Mexico were not as bad as Wilson had indicated, and by stating his willingness to meet with other revolutionary leaders to find solutions for his country's many problems. Although Zapata did not personally reply to Wilson's demands, his spokesman ridiculed American leaders for trying to dominate Mexico's internal affairs. On 21 June, Sillman met with Carranza and attempted to convince him to accept Wilson's call for the factions to unite and end the civil war. The next day, he forwarded Carranza's response to Robert Lansing, now the secretary of state after Bryan's resignation on 8 June following a dispute with Wilson concerning U.S. diplomatic pressure on Germany during the Lusitania crisis. The First Chief (Carranza preferred this title to General or President) emphasized that he would never treat with Villa or Zapata. He submitted that if the U.S. government really wanted peace and constitutional government restored throughout Mexico, it should immediately and unconditionally recognize his regime as the legitimate government of Mexico and maintain strict neutrality.
towards his country. He asserted that then the Constitutionalists could completely subdue the opposition, end the civil war, and restore civilian rule.\textsuperscript{14}

Organized political pressure by the American Catholic Church (which was strongly anti-Constitutionalist), Wilson's conviction (based on reports by West) that the First Chief could not pacify Mexico, and perhaps the animosity that existed between Wilson and Carranza caused the American government to continue to deny Carranza recognition. Colonel House provided the impetus for action to back up the president's ultimatum when he returned to Washington in mid-June and immediately began to revive his earlier call for a mediated settlement involving the ABC Powers. He found Lansing much more receptive to his ideas than Bryan had been. Because of Chile's reluctance to participate fully in mediation, House suggested that several other Latin American nations should be asked to assist the United States in its efforts. On 22 June, Wilson instructed Lansing to begin preparations for a Pan-American conference on Mexico to be held in the United States as soon as possible. Within days, Wilson and Lansing met with the ambassadors of Argentina, Brazil, and Chile as well as the ministers of Bolivia, Uruguay, and Guatemala to secure their nations' participation in the conference. Colonel House worked with both Wilson and Lansing during July to insure that the conference that would begin on 5 August in Washington would be successful.\textsuperscript{15}

During the summer of 1915, the Wilson administration acted with a sense of urgency to end Mexico's civil war for several reasons. Conditions
in Mexico City continued to deteriorate during June and July, while American lives and property also became more threatened in other areas of the country. Many American investors, including Congressman Slayden, complained to the administration that an exorbitant tax on mining and oil property enacted by the Constitutionalists would result in their lands being confiscated. The ongoing civil war and the lack of diplomatic relations with Carranza’s regime made it difficult to protect the investors’ interests, but the State Department convinced Carranza to lower temporarily the tax in late summer. The danger that Villa’s waning power and resources would induce the rebel chieftain to launch a campaign of depredation against foreigners within his domain was very real. In late July and early August, he seized the inventories of foreign merchants in Chihuahua and threatened to impose a more exorbitant confiscatory tax on foreign-owned mining operations than the one Carranza had imposed. Lansing and Secretary of Agriculture Houston formulated a plan to keep Villa solvent and to prevent adverse publicity from disqualifying him as an alternative to Carranza just as the Pan American Conference began. They proposed that Villa should be permitted to import stolen cattle from northern Mexico into the United States at El Paso. Wilson initially opposed the plan but gave his approval after Lansing fully explained its relationship to the conference.¹⁶

The attempt by Victoriano Huerta to return to power in June also caused some alarm within the Wilson administration. Aided by secret agents of the intelligence division of the German General Staff, who tried to involve America in a war in Mexico and thus reduce America’s aid to the Allies in
the European war, Huerta had arrived in New York in April 1915. With continued clandestine German assistance, he immediately began preparation for his counter-revolution. In late June, he tried to slip into El Paso to meet with his devoted followers and to conclude final preparations before launching his assault. American authorities had been suspicious of Huerta, however, from the moment he had arrived in New York. Federal agents had kept him under constant surveillance and had even intercepted some of his communications with the German agents. When Pascual Orozco, his chief lieutenant, met Huerta’s train at Newman, New Mexico (just outside El Paso) on 27 June, federal officers arrested both men, took them to El Paso, and charged them with violating American neutrality laws. Carranza’s government requested Huerta’s extradition to Mexico as soon as news of his arrest reached there. State Department Solicitor Cone Johnson replied that the United States Government had to deny the request for extradition, because it did not officially recognize the “existence of a Federal Government in Mexico” and because of “the well known conditions existing throughout the Republic.” A few months later in January 1916, Huerta died of natural causes while awaiting trial in El Paso. Although the American government had crushed the former dictator’s plot to regain power in Mexico, evidence of German attempts to involve the United States in a war in Mexico gave the Wilson administration further incentive to end the civil war there.  

The explosion of violence along the Texas side of the Rio Grande during the summer of 1915 also motivated the Wilson administration to find
a way to reach a settlement for war-torn Mexico. Ardent supporters of a revised Plan of San Diego conducted numerous raids near the river with increasing frequency and ferocity all summer long. The original Plan of San Diego supposedly was drawn up in the small South Texas town of San Diego on 6 January 1915 by local Tejanos. Despite its call for Mexican-Americans, African-Americans, and Asian-Americans to wage relentless warfare against Anglo-Americans and to seize Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and California as territory for their own independent nation, the Plan was not taken seriously by federal or state officials until the increased violence began in the summer. Noted border historians Charles H. Harris III and Louis R. Sadler have put forth a convincing and well-documented argument that the Plan was neither a liberation movement started by Mexican-Americans nor, as most historians have thought, part of Huerta’s scheme to regain power in Mexico. Instead, according to Harris and Sadler, leaders within Carranza’s regime probably formulated and developed the Plan and undoubtedly controlled the violent raids against the borderlands of Texas during the summer of 1915. Although they denied any involvement in the raids, they used them to try to persuade the Wilson administration to grant diplomatic recognition to Carranza’s government. Eliseo Arredondo, Carranza’s representative in Washington, admitted as much to Wilson and Lansing in early September.¹⁸

By late June, Governor James E. Ferguson, who had succeeded Colquitt in January, had begun to take the Plan of San Diego very seriously. Bold attacks on ranches and small towns in the Big Bend area of trans-Pecos
Texas by Mexican raiders during June and July caused him to ask the president to send additional federal troops to the area. Although General Frederick Funston, commander of the Southern Department of the U.S. Army, admitted that the situation in the Big Ben almost justified martial law being declared there, he agreed to send only a few additional patrols into the area. He justified his limited response by insisting that many of the raiders were from Texas, thus their crimes were the responsibility of the state and local governments.¹⁹

Turmoil was even more prevalent in the Lower Rio Grande Valley during July and August. The raids there began to look more and more like guerrilla warfare. The attackers destroyed railroad bridges, cut telegraph and telephone lines, fired on trains, and murdered several Anglo-Texans. In early August, they struck a subheadquarters of the enormous King Ranch and killed five ranch employees before retreating southward. The Texas governor responded to this attack by expanding the state’s Ranger force from sixteen to fifty-six and then ordering all of them to patrol areas near the border. Then three days after the attack, he again called on Wilson to send more federal troops to the border to control the violence there. He emphasized that most of the raiders were from Mexico and expressed little faith in the ability of the recently enlarged Ranger force to end the violence. Ferguson also told the president that "a reign of terror exists on the border" and warned that "a disastrous invasion of Texas from Mexico" could occur at any time. Even though the president sent more than half of the army’s mobile units to the Lower Valley, conditions there continued to worsen. By
mid-September, the situation was critical. The raiders even attacked an American army patrol along the Rio Grande on 13 September. On 24 September, several hundred of Carranza’s soldiers provided covering fire for a retreating band of marauders that had just sacked the town of Progreso. Led by a Carrancista officer, they had burned a store, killed one American soldier, wounded two others, and captured another. Once safely across the river, they beheaded the captured soldier and displayed his head on a pole.

The Wilson administration, as well as most Texans, was furious. The State Department demanded that Carranza use his power and influence to end the raids. He apparently did. After the Progreso raid, border violence decreased for almost a month as the Wilson administration seemed to be moving toward granting Carranza diplomatic recognition.20

But at the beginning of the Pan American Conference in early August, the United States certainly was not ready to even consider recognizing Carranza. At the first two sessions of the conference on 5 and 6 August, Lansing had presented a plan already approved by Wilson that called for the establishment of a new provisional government in Mexico that was acceptable to the nations in attendance unless all the factional leaders united on their own to form a coalition government. Lansing believed that Carranza would never agree to meet with Villa or Zapata to form a united government. The diplomats from the six Latin American nations quickly endorsed Lansing’s plan, because they, like the secretary of state, had a negative opinion of Carranza and his ability to restore order in Mexico. Colonel House
worked out a complex scheme to provide large-scale loans to help finance the proposed provisional government.\textsuperscript{21}

Meanwhile, the Constitutionalists continued to flex their military muscle in Mexico. On 3 August, General González recaptured Mexico City and held it this time. General Obregón continued to push Villa northward. By the first of September, Villa’s military power was all but gone. He held only his home state of Chihuahua. In less than six months, Villa had lost most of his men, most of his weapons and equipment, and any real hope of being a dominant political power throughout Mexico. Colonel House must have understood the implications of these Constitutionalist advances. On 9 August, he tried to convince the president that Carranza had too much military power to be ignored in any peace settlement for Mexico. In his letter to Wilson, House, who was not an admirer of the First Chief, also presented John Lind’s belief that Carranza could be reasoned with even though he was a radical revolutionary. On 11 August, as the third session of the Pan American Conference was about to begin, Wilson sent Lansing a telegram that outlined a dramatic shift in U.S. policy toward Mexico. That same day, Lansing represented the president’s new position when he told the Latin American diplomats at the conference that the Constitutionalists were the dominant force in the Revolution, that Carranza could not be eliminated from consideration as the legitimate leader in Mexico if his followers remained united, and that it would be unwise to consider forming a new provisional government in Mexico.\textsuperscript{22}
By mid-September, Wilson and Lansing believed that the Constitutionalists would remain united since they controlled all of Mexico except two sparsely populated states, Villa’s home state of Chihuahua and Zapata’s home state of Morelos. This realization that Mexico’s civil war was all but over heightened concerns about the escalating violence along the Rio Grande. The fear that continued covert actions by Germany to keep Mexico in turmoil could cause American intervention there combined to push the Wilson administration toward recognition of Carranza. At a White House meeting on 23 September, Wilson confided to Colonel House that he planned to have Lansing propose diplomatic recognition for Carranza at the next session of the Pan American Conference, if Carranza agreed to "guarantee religious freedom, give amnesty for all political offenses, institute land reforms, give protection to foreigners, and recognize their just claims."

Although Carranza had agreed to all these conditions and more in a message to the Mexican people on 1 June 1915, the Wilson administration apparently wanted confirmation through direct diplomatic responses. After the Carranza regime promised in early October to guarantee religious freedom, to give amnesty eventually to its political foes, and to deal fairly with foreigners, Lansing persuaded the conference diplomats on 9 October to recommend recognition to their governments. On 19 October, the State Department granted de facto recognition to the Constitutionalist government. Within days, the six Latin American nations represented at the Pan American Conference joined Columbia and Nicaragua in also granting recognition to Carranza. The same day that the United States Government extended
recognition to Carranza, Wilson issued executive orders that forbade the shipment of arms and munitions to anyone in Mexico except agents of the de facto government. The president also followed the advice of Colonel House and selected Henry P. Fletcher, a career diplomat who spoke fluent Spanish, to be ambassador to Mexico.23

Texans exhibited a divergence of opinion concerning the president’s decision to recognize Carranza. The Dallas Morning News spoke for those Texans who totally supported the decision. In its editorial on 20 October, the News not only praised Wilson’s decision but also predicted that U.S. and Pan American recognition would enable Carranza to pacify Mexico and probably would put an end to the violence on the border. That same day, an editorial in the El Paso Morning Times expressed the concern and frustration shared by many Texans along the border by stating, "Diplomacy can’t quiet Mexico. We don’t believe that the recognition of Carranza will solve the Mexican problem . . . Even this, however, is better than more watchful waiting, of which we have become so tired." Three days later, in a letter to Postmaster General Burleson, Congressman Jeff McLemore of Houston vehemently attacked Carranza’s character and prophesied that his recognition would not bring peace and order to Mexico but only delay American intervention there.24

Events in the Lower Rio Grande Valley soon proved that the editors of the Dallas Morning News had been too optimistic in their assessment of the effect of diplomatic recognition on border violence. The lull in the fighting that had existed since the Progreso raid gave way to the most brazen
attacks ever — just as the Wilson administration was extending recognition to Carranza’s government. Within a week of Carranza’s recognition, Mexican raiders killed three people when they wrecked and looted a passenger train just north of Brownsville, inflicted heavy casualties in an attack on a platoon of American soldiers stationed in a remote part of the Valley, and boldly attacked an American army post outside Brownsville.\(^{25}\)

Regardless of their position concerning recognition of Carranza’s regime, most Texans expressed their anger at the renewed violence. They wanted quick action to put a stop to it. The *El Paso Morning Times* blamed Carranza for failing to control the Mexican bandits and called on the Wilson administration to revise its policy and allow American troops to pursue the raiders across the Rio Grande whether or not Carranza gave his permission. The *Dallas Morning News* forecast that Texans would rise up and “wipe out the gangs of Mexican bandits without any ceremony or much delay” but appealed to "citizens who know how to keep their heads" to ensure "that some of the innocent" would not "be made to suffer for the crimes of the guilty." On 23 October, Congressman John Nance Garner of Uvalde, whose district included the Lower Valley, sent a strong message of protest that reflected the sentiments of many of his constituents to the Wilson administration. Garner was Wilson’s liaison to the Democratic delegation in the House of Representatives and had almost always supported the president’s policies. The repeated attacks on people and property within his district, however, finally forced him to speak out reluctantly but forcefully. In identical letters addressed to Secretary of State Lansing, Secretary of War
Garrison, and Attorney General Gregory, he suggested that American troops should be allowed to pursue the raiders into Mexico. After charging that troops of the de facto Government of Mexico had given aid and support to the raiders, he demanded that the United States Government hold Carranza personally responsible for any future raids. Then Garner threatened, "If this government cannot and does not awaken Carranza to the necessity of putting an end to the bandit raids into Texas from the Mexican side of the Rio Grande, then the people of Texas will act for themselves and in no uncertain manner. Their patience is exhausted." This statement was not an empty threat by Garner. The plea by the Dallas Morning News to save "some of the innocent" had real merit. The violent raids during the summer had spawned a backlash of epic proportion within the Anglo community in South Texas. Because of their fear and prejudice, many Texas Rangers, local peace officers, and local citizens had engaged in kidnappings, beatings, and summary killings of Tejanos and Mexicans who might have been involved in the raids. Many times, the innocent suffered along with the guilty. As the raids had increased in frequency and fierceness as the summer progressed, so had the Anglo reprisals. By October, South Texas was on the verge of a full-scale race war. Action by the federal government was needed to protect the citizens of the area from themselves as well as from the Mexican raiders.26

On 23 October, Senator Sheppard began a concerted effort to get the Wilson administration's help in ending the violence. From his home in Texarkana, he wired Lansing that the border situation was desperate, that
the State Department should complain vigorously to Carranza’s government about the resumption of the raids, and that the administration should immediately give more attention to the situation along the Rio Grande. Then he caught the next train for the Lower Valley to gain a better understanding of the region’s problems. That same day, Lansing wired Sheppard back that the State Department had just demanded that the de facto government of Mexico order its forces to break up the bands of bandits on the Mexican side of the river. After reviewing conditions in all the major towns in the Lower Valley, the senator sent Lansing another telegram on 27 October that called for "more vigorous and comprehensive [federal] action" that would "give the residents of" the area "better security." On 4 November, he sent Wilson several specific recommendations to improve the border situation. They included the establishment of a unified field command for the military units along the border, the establishment of a series of permanent forts along the Rio Grande, the introduction of additional artillery units to the border region, and the negotiation of a special treaty with Carranza’s government that would permit American troops to pursue raiding bandits into Mexico. One week later, the president politely replied to Sheppard, "Copies of your important telegram of November 4 were at once sent to the state and war departments, but I want to thank you very warmly for keeping me so fully informed of the condition on the border as you see them. I shall continue to do everything in my power to handle them successfully."27

During his visit to the border, Sheppard also sought state action to quell the violence there. On 26 October, he wired Governor Ferguson in
Austin that a "state of panic" prevailed in the region and requested that the state government use "every resource at its command" to halt the attacks. Whether it was because the two Democratic leaders held opposite positions concerning federal prohibition of alcoholic beverages, because Ferguson was frustrated by the continuing violence despite his previous attempts to control it, or because of some other reason, the governor immediately gave the senator a razor-sharp response. He began his telegram, "Am glad that you have at last become interested in the troubles of Texas." Using sarcasm throughout his message, he reminded Sheppard that both the state and federal governments had been trying for months to end the lawlessness near the border. Later that day, Sheppard wired the governor, "I regret that you seem to have misconstrued the spirit of my telegram of this morning. I sent it in the best of feeling and good faith and with a desire . . . to be of some assistance." The next morning, Ferguson rejected the opportunity to make peace with the senator by informing him that he resented the second telegram more than the first one and charging that the first telegram was nothing more than "a piece of crude politics." That afternoon, Ferguson gave the press copies of the four telegrams, which soon appeared in most of the state's major newspapers. On 29 October, Sheppard told an audience of concerned citizens in Brownsville that their tragic situation should not become a partisan political issue and publicly urged the governor to come to the border area and personally investigate conditions there so that he would have a better understanding of their plight. When reporters asked Ferguson the next day to comment on the senator's speech, he simply replied, "I
never strike a man when he is down." This unfortunate episode did precious little to solve the Rio Grande violence. Indeed, it showcased the dissent that existed among the state's leading Democratic politicians, and thus distracted from their efforts to influence the Wilson administration's Mexican policy and to help Texans who lived near the border.\textsuperscript{28}

While Ferguson continued his unproductive quarrel with Sheppard, he began working with the administration to solve the border problems. After meeting with citizens' committees from Brownsville and nearby San Benito, the governor asked Wilson on 27 October to demand that Carranza "take prompt and vigorous action to suppress . . . the robber bandits crossing from . . . Mexico" who "make unexpected raids into Texas and murder, rob, and terrorize" Americans "and quickly retreat into Mexico where they are not molested." Three days later, Lansing gave the administration's response. He assured Ferguson that the State Department had immediately asked Mexico's \textit{de facto} government to guard the border vigilantly in order to prevent raiders from crossing into the United States. He further requested the governor to use his influence with state and local authorities to control the racially motivated mistreatment of Mexican and Mexican-American suspects and prisoners in South Texas. He explained that improved race relations there would aid his efforts to persuade Carranza's government to take decisive action against the bandits. On 2 November, Ferguson informed Lansing that he had just spoken with several state and local officials and had gotten their support in controlling racial violence in South Texas. The next day, the secretary of state advised the governor that Carranza had promised
to investigate the border problems himself and had pledged to transfer any of his troops that caused problems for Americans. He also related that the Mexican government wished to cooperate with American military authorities in locating and punishing the bandits and had already ordered the arrest of several Mexicans known to have participated in the raids.  

Ferguson also dealt directly with the Mexican government. In a private meeting with the governor on 30 October, Roberto Pesqueira, Carranza’s personal envoy, promised that his government would cooperate fully with U.S. and Texas officials to end the raids. After their meeting, Ferguson predicted that conditions along the border would rapidly improve. In late November, following personal negotiations with Carranza at Nuevo Laredo, the governor announced that he and the First Chief had reached an "absolute and complete understanding" of border problems and that they would work together to suppress banditry along the Rio Grande. In a December meeting in Washington with Wilson and Lansing, Ferguson presented an optimistic view of conditions in South Texas and expressed his confidence in Carranza’s ability to prevent another outbreak of bandit raids into Texas.

At the end of 1915, it seemed that Wilson, Lansing, and Ferguson had good reason to be optimistic about condition along the border, conditions within Mexico, and the future of U.S.-Mexican relations. In late November and early December, Carranza’s forces had captured and brought to justice several bandits that had been raiding in Texas. Also in November, Carranza had reached an agreement with American military commanders in
Brownsville that allowed either nation’s troops to pursue bandits across the border for a distance of about forty-five miles. When Villa had angrily threatened American lives and property within his area, upon learning of the U.S. Government’s recognition of Carranza and subsequent cooperation with his forces, the First Chief ordered Obregón’s army into Chihuahua to destroy his remaining power base. By the end of the year, Villa had been reduced to little more than a bandit leader, controlling only a few isolated towns in his home state. In his Annual Message to Congress on 7 December, Wilson indicated that his Mexican policies had finally proved to be successful and expressed hope that the Revolution would lead to "the rebirth of the troubled Republic." But one man, hiding in the Sierra Madre Mountains of Chihuahua, may have known that within a matter of weeks, he would prove that the president had once again been mistaken about Mexico. His name was Pancho Villa.31
NOTES FOR CHAPTER IV


3 San Antonio Express, 3 February 1915; New York Times, 2 February 1915; Duval West Biographical File, Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas, Austin; Wilson to West, 5, 8, 10, February 1915, Wilson Papers, LC; Wilson to West, 9 February 1915, Link, Wilson Papers, vol. 32, 203-204; San Antonio Express, 20 February 1915.


7 San Antonio Express, 17 February and 1 March 1915; El Paso Morning Times, 18 February and 1, 16 March 1915; West to Bryan, 15 March 1915, State Dept., File 812.00/14622; Larry D. Hill, Emissaries to a Revolution: Woodrow Wilson’s Executive Agents in Mexico (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973), 311-14.

8 New York Times, 30 March 1915; West to Bryan, 5 April 1915, State Dept., File 812.00/20721; Hill, Emissaries to a Revolution, 314-22; Clarence


13San Antonio Express, 1, 3 June 1915; Dallas Morning News, 4 June 1915; Houston Post, 3 June 1915.

14Sillman to Secretary of State, 10 June 1915, Foreign Relations, 1915, 701; Proclamation by Villa, 10 June 1915, Ibid., 701-03; Oliveira to Lansing, 14 June 1915, Ibid., 711; Sillman to Lansing, 22 June 1915, State Dept., File 812.00/15288; Washington Post, 9 June 1915.


16Wilson to Lansing, 2 July 1915, Foreign Relations, The Lansing Papers, 1914-1920, vol. 2, 537; Link, Wilson: The Struggle for Neutrality, 485-87; Cone Johnson to Dr. H. R. Carwile of Marshall, Texas, 30 June 1915, Johnson Papers; Slayden to Secretary of State, 23 July 1915 and numerous subsequent diplomatic exchanges between Carranza's government and the State Department, Foreign Relations, 1915, 926-76; Lansing to Wilson, 6 August 1915, State Dept., File 812.00/15751A; Wilson to Lansing, 8 August 1915, State Dept., File 812.00/15751B; Lansing to Wilson, 9 August 1915, Foreign Relations, The Lansing Papers, 1914-1920,
vol. 2, 547-48; Lansing to Wilson, 9 August 1915, State Dept., File 812.00/15751 1/2.


18Harris and Sadler, The Border and the Revolution, 71-79; Arredondo to Wilson and Lansing, 6 September 1915, State Dept., File 812.00/61041; Sandos, Rebellion in the Borderlands, 90.

19El Paso Morning Times, 29 June 1915; Tyler, "Little Punitive Expedition," 276-77.

20Brownsville Daily Herald, 6-24 July 1915; San Antonio Express, 8, 9, 10 August 1915; Ferguson to Wilson, 11 August 1915, El Paso Morning Times, 12 August 1915; S. Rept. 285, 1:1284-85; Harris and Sadler, The Border and the Revolution, 77-79; Sandos, Rebellion in the Borderlands, 90-91, 119-20.

21New York Times, 3, 5, 6, 7 August 1915; Lansing to Wilson, 6 August 1915, State Dept., File 812.00/15715 1/2A; Lansing to Wilson, 5 July 1915, State Dept., File 812.00/15410 1/2A; Wilson to Lansing, 8 July 1915, State Dept., File 812.00/15412 1/2A; House to Wilson, 3 August 1915, Link, Wilson Papers, vol. 34, 80-81; Wilson to House, 4 August 1915, Ibid., 106-07; House to Wilson, 6 August 1915, Ibid., 383-88.


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Sheppard to Lansing, 23 October 1915, Morris B. Sheppard Papers, University of Texas Archives, Austin (hereafter cited as Sheppard Papers); Lansing to Sheppard, 23 October 1915, Ibid., Brownsville Daily Herald, 26 October 1915; Dallas Morning News, 28 October 1915; Sheppard to Wilson, 4 November 1915, Sheppard Papers, Wilson to Sheppard, 11 November 1915, Ibid.

Dallas Morning News, 28, 31 October 1915; San Antonio Express, 28, 30 October 1915.

El Paso Morning Times, 24 October 1915; Dallas Morning News, 31 October 1915; Ferguson to Wilson, 27 October 1915, Foreign Relations, 1915, 835; Lansing to Ferguson, 30 October 1915, Ibid., 817; Brownsville Daily Herald, 1 November 1915; Ferguson to Lansing, 2 November 1915, Foreign Relations, 1915, 818; Lansing to Ferguson, 3 November 1915, State Dept., File 812.00/16665.

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CHAPTER V

1916 — PANCHO VILLA CAUSES THE MEXICAN CRISIS TO WORSEN

In early January 1916, Pancho Villa launched a vicious campaign against Americans that brought the United States and Mexico to the brink of war later in the year. His chief lieutenant, Pablo Lopez, led a group of Villistas who forcefully removed seventeen American passengers from a train at Santa Ysabel about fifty miles west of Chihuahua City on 10 January 1916. After robbing the Americans of their clothes, money, personal possessions, and dignity, the Mexicans shot their captives in cold blood while shouting "Viva Villa." All of the victims, employees of a nearby mine owned by an American company, were returning to their jobs in the mistaken belief that Americans no longer had to fear for their lives in Mexico. Miraculously, one of them survived the ordeal by pretending to be dead and escaped later as the Villistas celebrated the attack. Convincing evidence exists that Villa personally planned and ordered the robbery. Most Americans and their government held him responsible for the assault, although he may not have ordered the murders.¹

Many Americans also blamed Venustiano Carranza and his government in Mexico City for allowing the Santa Ysabel Massacre, the terminology used by most newspapers in the United States for the tragic incident, to occur. They demanded that the Wilson administration take decisive action within Mexico, if necessary, to insure the safety of
Americans there and along the border. In Washington, numerous members of both houses of Congress called for American intervention. Even the Democratic congressional leadership wavered briefly in its support of Wilson’s Mexican policy. Amidst this excitement, the president showed his concern for American lives in Mexico but remained committed to his policy of nonintervention. Through diplomatic channels, he sought redress from Carranza. On 12 January, Secretary of State Robert Lansing requested that the de facto government apprehend and punish the Santa Ysabel murderers and provide military protection for American mines in Chihuahua. Reacting to the growing excitement in the United States, he sent Carranza a more threatening message the next day, in which he held the Mexican government responsible for the murders. He demanded "prompt and vigorous" action and warned that inaction by the Mexican government could result in a "grave crisis with far-reaching consequences."^2

Many Texans expressed their opinion about the murders and subsequent relations with Mexico. In a public statement from his office in Austin on 13 January, Governor James E. Ferguson defended Wilson’s continued policy of nonintervention. He called on the president’s critics to realize that America was not prepared militarily "to attempt the pacification of Mexico at this time." A. R. McCollum, editor of the Waco Tribune, personally assured the president that public opinion in Texas supported his policy of restraint towards Mexico, because most Texans did not want armed intervention there even though they were horrified by the violent attack. The editors of the Austin Statesman, however, saw things
differently. In their paper's editorial on 13 January, they asserted that Wilson's failure to take a firm stand with Mexican leaders had helped create a climate in Mexico and along the border that made violence inevitable. Congressman Jeff McLemore of Houston, an outspoken opponent of Wilson's European policy, blamed the violence on the administration's determination to keep Carranza in power despite his inability to maintain order south of the Rio Grande. Although Congressman James L. Slayden of San Antonio, in a speech to Congress on 13 January, defended Wilson's recognition of Carranza's government, he blamed that government for failing to protect American lives and property within its jurisdiction. He also warned that the rising anger and frustration of citizens of border states like Texas might cause them to form volunteer armies and invade Mexico if the violence directed at Americans continued.³

The reaction of Anglo-Texans in El Paso to the arrival of the sixteen corpses from Santa Ysabel that same day gave credibility to Slayden's warning. Tensions in the city rose to the breaking point, resulting in numerous beatings of Mexicans and Tejanos. These acts soon escalated into mob violence. Mayor Tom Lea employed the entire police force, including reserves, to prevent a full-scale race riot from occurring. A volunteer posse of around a thousand cattlemen and miners threatened to cross the border, hunt down the killers, and execute them unless the U.S. Army acted quickly. After several off-duty soldiers joined in the attacks on local Tejanos, General John J. Pershing, the commandant of nearby Fort
Bliss, declared martial law and sent American troops into the city to restore order.\textsuperscript{4}

Carranza’s swift and favorable response to Lansing’s messages helped calm American fears and turned the tide against a military response by the United States. The First Chief immediately dispatched troops to pursue the Villistas responsible for the Santa Ysabel murders. On 13 January, they killed two of Villa’s generals and captured several of his soldiers. Carranza’s promise to Lansing, published in the \textit{New York Times} on 17 January, to do everything within his power to protect Americans in northern Mexico virtually ended public excitement concerning Santa Ysabel. During the last half of January, the Wilson administration, working with the Democratic leaders in Congress, recaptured congressional support for its Mexican policy. For awhile, Mexico ceased to be a major concern for the administration or the nation.\textsuperscript{5}

Then in the predawn hours of 9 March 1916, Villa led a force of at least several hundred men in a surprise attack on the border town of Columbus, New Mexico. Shrieking and shooting wildly, they looted stores, burned several buildings, and killed eight residents of the town before the 13th Cavalry stationed at Columbus rallied and drove the marauders back across the border. Eleven American soldiers lost their lives in the battle, while the Villistas lost about 75 men. Texans and other Americans reacted to the Columbus raid with expressions of disbelief and horror that soon gave way to those of outrage and anger. The American public demanded that Wilson abandon his policy of nonintervention regarding Mexico.\textsuperscript{6}
Within hours of the Columbus raid, the editors of the *Austin Statesman* took the lead in calling for the deployment of American forces in Mexico. Although they believed "in always upholding the President of the United States," they implored the Wilson administration to "forget its European quarrels for a moment and endeavor to protect its citizens at home." As soon as news of the attack reached Washington, heated debates about Wilson's Mexican policy took center stage in both houses of Congress. On 10 March, Congressman William Smith of Colorado, Texas, the only member of his state's congressional delegation to speak on the subject, praised Wilson's past policy for having kept the United States out of war with Mexico. But then he suggested that the president should change his policy for having kept the United States out of war with Mexico. But then he suggested that the president should change his policy by ordering "an adequate military force" to pursue Villa and his "band of night assassins . . . to the uttermost part of Mexico if necessary . . . until they are captured dead or alive." With typical Texas bravado, he stated that such an expedition "should not provoke a war with Mexico, but if it should, . . . then I say, let it come." Several other members of Congress clamored for a full-scale invasion of Mexico.7

The Wilson administration's initial response to the attack on Columbus was rather limited. During the afternoon of 9 March, Lansing informed the de factor Mexican government that the United States was contemplating taking action against Villa but expected Carranza to "do everything within his power to pursue, capture, and exterminate" the Villistas retreating
"westward from Columbus." But American public opinion, during the election year, the possibility that Congress might force a war with Mexico, and pressure from American military leaders to send U.S. troops to capture Villa caused Wilson to modify his Mexican policy the next day. After meeting with the cabinet during the afternoon of 10 March to discuss the available options, he decided not to risk asking Carranza for permission to pursue Villa. Choosing his words carefully, the president announced that "an adequate force" would be sent to capture the bandit leader, but it would act only in "friendly aid of the constituted authorities in Mexico and with scrupulous respect for the sovereignty of that republic." Meanwhile, the War Department selected General Pershing to command the Punitive Expedition and ordered him to assemble his troops at Columbus and prepare to "proceed promptly across the border in pursuit of" the Villistas.  

Major newspapers in Texas immediately and wholeheartedly praised the president’s decision. The Corpus Christi Caller and Daily Herald expressed the frustration of many of its readers with Wilson’s past "policy of watchful waiting" and their hope for improved conditions with his new commitment to action. The San Antonio Express emphasized that Carranza’s inability to control Villa’s villainy had left the president with no choice other than dispatching troops into Mexico. Although perhaps surprised by his decision, the editors of the Austin Statesman asked their readers to "encourage our President in his new policy, which shows unusual vigor."
During the next few days, the Mexican and American governments exchanged a series of vaguely worded diplomatic messages. Both governments attempted to use this oblique diplomacy to avoid a direct military confrontation while accomplishing their purposes. Carranza, like his American counterpart, faced domestic pressures as he formulated his foreign policy. There was no way that he could have formally approved the entry of a large American force into Mexico, even had he been so disposed. The First Chief ordered his troops in Chihuahua to intensify their efforts to capture Villa and his troops, hoping that they would be successful thus making the planned American incursion unnecessary. On 13 March, Secretary Lansing and Eliseo Arredondo, Carranza’s envoy to Washington, negotiated a reciprocal agreement that would allow the armed forces of either nation to pursue bandit raiders across their common border. The Mexican government understood the agreement to authorize only temporary crossings by small forces if future raids occurred. The Wilson administration construed it to allow Pershing’s Expedition to enter Mexico and pursue Villa. Thus in a cabinet meeting on 14 March, the president expressed little apprehension as he made final preparations for American forces to enter Mexico.  

But after receiving an urgent dispatch from Pershing late that evening, Wilson decided not to allow U.S. troops to enter Mexico the next day as planned earlier. The general had reported that it was probable that Carranza’s troops stationed south of Columbus would oppose the entry of his expedition into Mexico. The president told Colonel House that if this
report were accurate, he would not send troops across the border, because doing so would mean intervention and could lead to war. The next morning, Joseph Tumulty, Wilson’s personal secretary, tried un successfully to get him to change his mind. He explained to Tumulty that he was determined to avoid war with Mexico, because he had seen "the wreckage and terrible ruin" that war and its aftermath could impose on people, having grown up in the South after the Civil War. Out of a deep concern for the people of Mexico in their struggle for democracy and prosperity, he would not cause them to endure yet more tragedy. Concluding the conversation, he pointed out that the threat of unrestricted submarine warfare by Germany and the probability that America would eventually enter the World War required him to avoid war with Mexico so that the United States would be able to face the German threat.11

The tenacious secretary did not give up on changing his boss’s mind, however. Instead, he got Postmaster General Burleson and Secretary of Agriculture Houston to help draft a fervent letter to the president. The letter stressed that the failure to send Pershing’s troops into Mexico would ruin the Democrats’ chances of winning the upcoming fall elections, humiliate the nation, and reduce America’s influence on world affairs. In the middle of the afternoon, Tumulty signed the letter and had it delivered at once to the president. By then, however, Wilson had already been freed from having to order Pershing not to cross the border at the prearranged time. The commander of the Mexican forces south of Columbus had decided to obey his orders from Mexican Minister of War Álvaro Obregón and pledged that
both he and his men would cooperate fully with the Punitive Expedition in its pursuit of Villa. At noon that day, 15 March 1916, more than 5,000 American troops entered Mexico. On 17 March, Congress adopted a joint resolution that approved the use of American armed forces in Mexico to capture Villa and restated the president’s promise to respect that nation’s sovereignty.¹²

In the beginning, Carranza’s forces cooperated, at least to some extent, with Pershing’s expedition and its efforts to capture Villa and destroy his army. The American troops almost succeeded in their mission on several occasions. Although Villa suffered heavy losses, the elusive bandit leader continually managed to escape southward, drawing Pershing behind him. The farther south Pershing went, the more troops he needed to reinforce his supply lines from the United States. By early April, his force had grown to almost 7,000 men and had penetrated more than 300 miles of Mexican territory. This expanding American military presence that deep in Mexico with Villa still unsubdued caused tensions between the two nations to escalate dramatically during March and April. Carranza’s policy concerning the Punitive Expedition changed from acquiescence under protest in mid-March to stern indignation by late March and to adamant demands for its complete and immediate withdrawal by mid-April. Meanwhile, the Mexican army ceased to cooperate with the American troops and by early April exhibited hostile intentions towards them.¹³

Unfortunately during this crucial period in U.S.-Mexican relations, events in Europe again came to the fore. The sinking of the Sussex, an
unarmed French steamer, in the English Channel in late March and the subsequent negotiations with Germany regarding its use of submarine warfare engrossed Wilson for the next several weeks. Nonetheless, the president and his advisors could ill afford to forget about the trouble in Mexico. Indeed, the Sussex crisis, which foreshadowed even more serious trouble with Germany, probably caused them to realize the importance of preventing war with Mexico. Thus, they began to reassess the Punitive Expedition and its mission.¹⁴

In early April, Wilson asked Colonel House to determine if the cabinet favored withdrawing the troops from Mexico. House learned that both Secretary of Agriculture Houston and Attorney General Gregory wanted to keep them there until Villa was caught and his forces destroyed to insure that he could not raid another American town. Gregory also played a pivotal role in convincing Lansing that the expedition should not be withdrawn. After speaking with several members of the administration, House reported to the president on 7 April that the cabinet overwhelmingly supported keeping Pershing in Mexico and warned that an American withdrawal "would be an evidence of weakness not only to Villa and Carranza but to the Germans as well." One member of the cabinet from Texas, however, no longer favored keeping the expedition there. In a cabinet meeting on 11 April, Postmaster General Burleson spoke for more than an hour, presenting the case for recalling the troops. When he had finished his remarks, Wilson looked at him and said, "Burleson, I hardly know what to say to you in answer." Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane suggested that the
president should say what the Postmaster General had said about withdrawal at the previous cabinet meeting. The room erupted in laughter, because Burleson had been an ardent supporter of sending the expedition and at the last meeting of the cabinet had strongly objected to its withdrawal. But an incident the next day at the small Mexican town of Parral made the Wilson administration painfully aware that maintaining troops in Mexico was no laughing matter.15

On 12 April, a detachment of about one hundred American soldiers went into Parral to buy food and supplies. The town, located in extreme southern Chihuahua, contained many Villa sympathizers. An angry mob gathered in the town square and began shouting "Viva Villa" mixed with verbal abuses toward the soldiers. The Americans began at once to depart the scene but not quite soon enough. The mob, joined by around three hundred of Carranza's troops, followed them out of town. Someone in the crowd fired on the Americans. They returned fire. The ensuing skirmish resulted in two American and at least forty Mexican deaths. News of the exchange spread quickly throughout Mexico and the United States, inflaming public opinion in both countries. The Mexican government demanded that the American troops be withdrawn and warned that even more serious incidents might develop if the troops remained. After discussing all facets of the Mexican situation with his cabinet on 14 April, Wilson had Lansing reply that the Punitive Expedition had entered Mexico in order to capture Villa and would leave as soon as it accomplished its mission. The secretary of state
also asked the de facto government to join the United States in an effective campaign against Villa.\textsuperscript{16}

That same day, Congressman McLemore introduced a joint resolution in Congress that opposed the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Mexico until Villa and his gang were destroyed. It also authorized the president to send sufficient reinforcements to the expedition so that it could fulfill its mission. The next day, the editors of the \textit{Dallas Morning News} applauded Wilson’s decision to keep American troops in Mexico and expressed admiration for his moral courage in not allowing impassioned pleas to persuade him to make war on the Mexican people after the Parral incident.\textsuperscript{17}

A shocking report from Pershing on 17 April forced Wilson to realize how serious the situation in Mexico had become. The report said that Carranza’s troops as well as the local population had become so uncooperative and hostile that in order to continue the pursuit of Villa, American forces would have to capture and occupy the entire state of Chihuahua and seize all the railroads therein. The president knew that such actions would surely lead to war. On 22 April, he approved a plan by General Funston and General Hugh L. Scott, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army. It required American forces to pull back to northern Chihuahua, approximately 100 miles south of Columbus, and allow Carranza’s army to capture Villa. Thus, further conflict with Mexican troops would be minimized without the Wilson administration having to experience the political embarrassment and diplomatic humiliation that a complete withdrawal would bring. That same day, Wilson and Lansing proposed to Carranza that
Generals Scott and Funston meet with Minister of War Obregón at El Paso and Juárez to discuss military cooperation between the two governments. Two days later, Carranza accepted the proposal.  

Substantive meetings at this conference of military leaders from the two nations began on 30 April. It quickly became apparent that the representatives of both nations had completely different agendas. Scott and Funston sought only the cooperation of the de facto government’s military forces with Pershing’s troops in an effort to suppress the Villistas. Obregón politely but firmly refused to discuss their requests and demanded the immediate and complete withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Mexico. The impasse ended on 3 May when the American generals got Obregón to sign an agreement that provided for the United States to withdraw its forces gradually and for Mexico to continue the pursuit of Villa and to protect the border. The next day, Wilson gave his approval of the protocol. But on 7 May, Carranza indicated that although he liked the general tone of the agreement, he could not accept it unless it was changed to include a definite date for a complete American withdrawal and a provision that each nation should be responsible for policing its side of the border. 

That same day, the president and the rest of the country learned that two days earlier a group of around two hundred bandits had crossed the Rio Grande in the remote Big Bend area. In the middle of the night, they had attacked the small villages of Glen Springs and Boquillas, Texas, looting stores, burning several buildings, and killing three American soldiers and one small boy. At Boquillas, they also had abducted the owner of the general
store and his helper before crossing back into Mexico. The residents of that part of Texas had repeatedly requested additional federal troops to protect them from border raids. After these raids, the U.S. Army not only sent more troops to the area but also dispatched troops from two cavalry regiments across the border to pursue the raiders. These soldiers, commanded by Colonel Frederick Sibley, returned around two weeks later with the kidnap victims, having dispersed the bandits and penetrated almost two hundred miles into Mexico. Meanwhile, on 9 May, Wilson mobilized all the National Guard troops of Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas for service along the border. 20

Although the president took these steps to protect the border, he remained committed to avoiding war with Mexico if at all possible. Also, Scott and Funston continued their endeavors in El Paso to reach an agreement with Obregón despite the Glen Springs-Boquillas raids and their aftermath. Carranza’s reaction to the raids and the American military response, on the other hand, kept them from reaching any meaningful agreement. Deeply troubled by another American expedition into his country, he insisted that the raids were the work of malcontents on the Texas side of the river and refused to sign any accord that did not include the complete and immediate withdrawal of all American troops. The El Paso-Juarez Conference ended on 11 May with only a verbal agreement between Scott and Obregón that the United States would gradually withdraw its troops and that Mexico would send additional troops to its northern frontier in a vigorous attempt to rid that area of all bandits. 21
Reaction among Texans to the Wilson administration’s latest attempts to solve the problems involving Mexico was diverse but generally favorable. The editors of the *San Antonio Express* gave their approval to the negotiations held at El Paso, while praising the president’s continued determination to avoid war. But in its editorials, the Corpus Christi *Caller and Daily Herald* labeled the negotiations a failure and contended that the recent Big Bend raids proved that more American intervention in Mexico was needed. While speaking to the Texas Fireman’s Convention in New Braunfels on the morning of 9 May, Governor Ferguson endorsed Wilson’s actions in the wake of the raids. Noting the mobilization of the National Guard troops for protection of the border, he then called on the people of Texas to "be guilty of no intemperate remarks" and not to "get excited" because "everything will work out all right" for "Texas." But by that evening, Ferguson had abruptly changed his mind. While professing his continued support for administration policies, he issued a public statement from his Austin office that indicated otherwise:

> A temporary protection of the border will accomplish nothing. I have come reluctantly to the conclusion that it is now the solemn duty of the United States to enter Mexico and assume control of that unfortunate country and to give to the Mexican people that stability of government which they are unable and helpless to establish — whether it takes ten or fifty years to do it.  

A few members of the Texas delegation to Congress quickly responded to the governor’s remarks. Senator Sheppard said, "I am standing solidly with the President on the Mexican question." Congressman
Eugene Black of Clarksville announced, "I endorse fully the forcible means which the President is using to care for the situation." Congressman McLemore told the press that he agreed with Ferguson that the United States should establish a stable government in Mexico. While addressing the House a little over a week later on 19 May, he urged the president to ignore Carranza’s government and order American troops to pursue Villa throughout Mexico until he and his forces were either killed or captured. But the Dallas Morning News probably reflected the opinion of most Texans when on 11 May it declared its continued support of Wilson’s Mexican policies. Pointing out that full intervention would result in a great "sacrifice of life," the Morning News suggested that the governor "ought to retrieve his patience and exercise it a while longer."23

As May wore on, relations between the two nations continued to deteriorate. In mid-May, Carranza warned all state governors and military commanders within Mexico to prepare for war and ordered reinforcements to northern Mexico. Aided by Foreign Minister Aguilar, he completed a very long note to Secretary of State Lansing on 22 May that he designed to force a showdown with the U.S. This rambling and abusive rebuke of Wilson’s Mexican policies reached Washington on 31 May and appeared in Mexico City’s newspapers the same day, further inflaming public opinion there. It accused the Wilson administration of negotiating in bad faith and threatened war unless the United States withdrew the Punitive Expedition. Two days later, Arrendondo confided to David Lawrence, a prominent American journalist and former special agent in Mexico, that he feared public pressure
within Mexico would soon force Carranza to carry out the threat he had stated in the note.  

In late May and early June, Mexico’s de facto government continued massing troops along the border and near Pershing’s position in Chihuahua. At the same time, it secretly prepared to invade the United States at several points along the lower Rio Grande on 10 June. But after learning that the Americans knew all the intricate details of the plan, the Mexican high command wisely decided not to implement it. Instead, Carranza’s regime revived the Plan of San Diego that had proved so successful in pressuring the United States to grant de facto recognition in 1915. A series of raids began on 12 June with a raid on Webb Station, about twenty miles north of Laredo. Two days later, another small group of raiders struck at Brownsville. On 15 June, at least sixty Mexican irregulars attacked a small unit of American soldiers at San Ignacio, some forty miles down river from Laredo, killing four and wounding six of their number. Of course, the Americans fought back during these raids, killing and capturing several of the attackers, including a lieutenant colonel and a major in Carranza’s army. They also pursued the raiders across the border, even though Carranza had ordered his generals to resist any American force entering Mexico.

As in 1915, Carranza’s border intrigues caused a violent backlash by Anglo-Texans against Tejanos living in South Texas. Although the Wilson administration and state authorities, including Governor Ferguson, cooperated to protect the civil and human rights of the Tejanos and to insure
their loyalty to the United States, the overt repression of Tejanos continued throughout the summer.\textsuperscript{26}

The most important result of the resumption of the border raids, however, was the escalation towards war by both nations. On 12 June, Secretary of War Baker dispatched an additional 1,600 American troops to protect the lower Rio Grande Valley. On 16 June, General Jacinto Treviño, the commander of all Mexican federal troops in Chihuahua, informed Pershing that he had orders to attack any American forces within Mexico that moved in any direction other than north. Pershing replied that he would move his troops in any direction he chose and that the Mexicans would suffer the consequences of any attack on U.S. forces. That same day, General Scott ordered the immediate preparation of plans for an American invasion of Mexico. Also that day, the Mexican government began mobilizing its citizens to resist such an invasion. On 17 June, Wilson approved Secretary of War Baker's plan to call out the remainder of the National Guard troops from every state in the country (around 125,000 men) to protect the border so that regular army troops could be used in Mexico if needed. The next day, the mobilization of all National Guard troops began.\textsuperscript{27}

Hopes for a peaceful settlement continued to dwindle when, on 19 June Carranza's forces at the port of Mazatlán fired on and seized several sailors from the U.S.S. \textit{Annapolis} who were ashore on a diplomatic mission. Although the American consul there quickly secured their release, Colonel House lamented to Wilson that same day that he thought war was inevitable. The following day, Lansing gave the Mexican government a
blistering response to its insulting message of 22 May. In it, he justified the continued presence of Pershing’s expedition in Mexico by accusing Carranza’s government of not only having allowed bandits to launch hundreds of murderous assaults against the people of South Texas but also having given those bandits protection, aid, and encouragement. He also assigned considerable blame for the Santa Ysabel Massacre and the Columbus raid to the Mexican government. In conclusion, Lansing warned that armed attacks by forces of the de facto government on U.S. troops would "lead to the gravest consequences."  

Within a few hours of Lansing’s message being delivered in Mexico City, an incident occurred at Carrizal, Chihuahua that seemed to indicate that hostilities had begun. On 21 June, a skirmish there between an American scouting patrol commanded by Captain Charles T. Boyd and de facto troops stationed at the town resulted in fourteen Americans killed (including Boyd), ten wounded, and twenty-five captured. Wilson was greatly saddened by the news from Carrizal. The day after the attack, he indicated to Colonel House that despite his efforts, war was at hand. But he pledged to do everything possible to prevent "INTERVENTION (that is the rearrangement and control of Mexico’s domestic affairs by the U.S.)." On 25 June, House urged Wilson not to rule out intervention completely, because a weak policy towards Mexico would hamper the president’s leadership role in the "European situation." In an attempt to overcome Wilson’s concern for the Mexican people, House concluded, "Heaven knows, you have done all that a
man can do to help the people there, and the fact that they are not able to follow your kindly lead, is no fault of yours."

By then, the president had decided to use force if necessary to win the release of the Americans taken prisoner at Carrizal. And he was determined not to allow Carranza to force Pershing’s expedition out of northern Mexico. That same day, he had Lansing send the Mexican government an ultimatum to release the prisoners at once and to disavow any hostile intent towards American forces in Mexico or face the consequence. Wilson must have been convinced that Carranza would ignore his ultimatum, because on 26 June he drafted a speech that he planned to deliver to Congress, seeking authorization to use the armed forces to occupy and control all of northern Mexico.30

But the president never gave that speech, and war between the two nations was averted for the following reasons. First, American public opinion pressured Wilson to avoid war after the New York Times published a concise but complete account of the Carrizal incident that had been written by Captain Lewis S. Morey, Boyd’s second-in-command. This report proved that Boyd had needlessly instigated the violent clash at Carrizal and had recklessly led his command into an unwinnable conflict. Second, two days after the publication of Morey’s report, the Mexican government on 28 June announced that it would release the American prisoners to American officials at El Paso. Third, the president responded to the public pressure and Carranza’s conciliatory gesture by making an impassioned plea for peace and vowing, in an address to the New York Press Club on 30 June, to avoid war
with Mexico. Colonel House expressed the view of most Americans when he assured Wilson the next day, "The people do not want war with Mexico. They do not want war with anybody, but least of all a country like that."

Fourth, Carranza proved that he did not want war either when he suggested on 4 July that his government was willing to either submit to Pan American mediation or conduct friendly, direct negotiations with the American government in order to eliminate the discord that existed between the two nations. \(^{31}\)

Two days later, Lansing informed the Mexican government that Washington wanted to maintain friendly relations with Mexico and would consider any practical peace plan that it would propose. On 12 July, Carranza responded by recommending that a joint high commission composed of three representatives from each nation should be formed to settle their differences. During the next few weeks, Wilson, Lansing, State Department Counselor Frank L. Polk, and Colonel House worked together to negotiate with Mexican officials the details of implementing the commission, to select its three American members, and to prepare for its first meeting. \(^{32}\)

That meeting took place on 6 September 1916 in New London, Connecticut. There and later at Atlantic City and Philadelphia, the commissioners discussed throughout the rest of the year all aspects of U.S.-Mexican relations. As was the case during the Scott-Obregón conference at El Paso, the Mexicans and Americans had two very different agendas. The Mexicans pressed for an agreement that would lead to an immediate withdrawal of the Punitive Expedition and joint protection of the border. The
Americans insisted on debating issues relating to the protection of American lives and property inside Mexico, religious freedom there, taxes on American mining properties there, and the establishment of a claims commission to help American citizens recoup their losses from the ravages of the Mexican Revolution.33

Most Americans including those from the Lone Star State welcomed the relief from the threat of war with Mexico that Wilson’s revised Mexican policy provided. Nonetheless, Republican politicians continued to attack his efforts concerning Mexico throughout the summer and fall in an attempt to gain control of Congress and to prevent his reelection. During this period, several major newspapers in Texas extended their editorial support of the president’s handling of Mexican relations. During the political campaign, Secretary of Agriculture Houston staunchly defended the administration’s record concerning Mexico. Although Congressman McLemore opposed nearly all of Wilson’s foreign policies, he refused to condemn his Mexican policy publicly. But he did have unfavorable remarks about it from some of his constituents inserted into the Congressional Record. Going even farther, former Governor Oscar Colquitt repeatedly assaulted Wilson’s Mexican policy in his unsuccessful bid to unseat Senator Culberson. Several Congressmen from Texas, including James L. Slayden, John Stephens, Rufus Hardy, and James Davis, joined Culberson in giving unqualified support to the president’s Mexican policy. Indeed, Congressman John Nance Garner led several members of the Texas Congressional delegation in thwarting a
Republican attempt to incorporate some of Colquitt’s attacks on Wilson’s policy into the Congressional Record in late July.\textsuperscript{34}

Culberson’s lopsided defeat of Colquitt in the Democratic primary election held in September helped demonstrate that most Texans had faith in their president’s ability to deal with Mexico. An even greater indication of their support for his Mexican policy came on 7 November 1916. In the general election held that day, Wilson carried Texas by a bigger margin than he had four years earlier. His determination to protect American lives and property along the border and inside Mexico by keeping Pershing’s troops in northern Mexico while preserving the peace by continuing to negotiate their withdrawal helped him to win reelection in a very close national contest. At year’s end, the Mexican-American Joint High Commission had not reached any meaningful agreements but continued deliberating with the hope of soon reaching an accord concerning Pershing’s withdrawal so that negotiations on other contentious issues could be successfully conducted.\textsuperscript{35}
NOTES FOR CHAPTER V

1El Paso Morning Times, 12 January 1916; New York Times, 12, 13 January 1916; Clendenen, United States and Pancho Villa, 225-27.


4El Paso Morning Times, 13, 14 January 1916; Washington Post, 14, 16 January 1916. Tom Lea, who later achieved fame as a western artist and writer, was the son of Mayor Tom Lea.


9Corpus Christi Caller and Daily Herald, 12 March 1916; San Antonio Express, 11 March 1916; Austin Statesman, 11 March 1916.

11 House Diary, 17 March 1916, House Papers; Tumulty, Wilson, 157-60.


13 New York Times, 23, 24, 27, 31 March 1916 and 1, 2 April 1916; Pershing to Funston, 14 April 1916, State Dept., File 812.00/17901; Baker to Wilson, 5 April 1916, Wilson Papers, LC; Mexican Foreign Minister Candido Aguilar to Arrendondo, 17 March 1916, Foreign Relations, 1916, 494; Arredondo to Acting Secretary of State Frank L. Polk, 19 March 1916, Ibid., 495-96; Arredondo to Lansing, 27 March 1916, State Dept., File 812.00/17650 1/2; Carranza to Arredondo, 12 April 1916, Foreign Relations, 1916, 514; Haley, Revolution and Intervention, 195-98.


19 New York Times, 30 April and 5 May 1916; El Paso Morning Times, 30 April and 3-5 May 1916; Scott and Funston to Baker, 30 April 1916,

20El Paso Morning Times, 8, 10, 18, 22 May 1916; Tyler, "Little Punitive Expedition," 277-87; Scott to Baker, 9 May 1916, State Dept., File 812.00/18119; Dallas Morning News, 10 May 1916.


22San Antonio Express, 2 May 1916; Corpus Christi Caller and Daily Herald, 10, 14 May 1916; Dallas Morning News, 10 May 1916.


32 Haley, Revolution and Intervention, 230-42.


34 Dallas Morning News, 8, 10, 13 November 1916; San Antonio Express, 10, 13 November 1916; Link, Wilson: Campaigns, 162; New York Times, 29 December 1916.
CHAPTER VI

1917-1920 — AMERICA, WORLD WAR I, AND THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION

By 2 January 1917, Woodrow Wilson had reached the conclusion that the Mexican-American Joint High Commission was hopelessly deadlocked in its negotiations. Apparently, the president believed Venustiano Carranza would not yield to American demands and allow the Commission to discuss Mexico’s internal affairs while U.S. forces still occupied Mexican territory. The new Mexican constitution, with its bold provision for economic and social reforms that threatened confiscation of legally acquired foreign property, being completed at Queretaro troubled Wilson. He realized that a change in American policy toward Mexico was urgently needed. Concerns about a possible war with Germany and a possible German-Mexican alliance also influenced his decision to undertake direct diplomatic negotiations with Mexico and to withdraw promptly Pershing’s expedition from Mexico. On 15 January, the Joint High Commission held its last meeting, without having reached any meaningful agreements. Three days later, Secretary of War Newton Baker ordered that American troops in Mexico begin withdrawal. By 5 February, all American troops had returned home. During late January, Wilson decided to send Ambassador Henry P. Fletcher to Mexico. Colonel E. M. House met with him just before he left Washington on 10 February for the Mexican capital and stressed the importance of maintaining diplomatic relations with Carranza. On 3 March, Fletcher presented Carranza with his
credentials as the American ambassador to Mexico. Eight days later, Carranza was chosen as president of the Republic of Mexico in the first election held under its new constitution. ¹

Meanwhile, in late February, British officials gave the American government a copy of an intercepted telegram that German Foreign Secretary Arthur Zimmermann had sent on 19 January to the German ambassador in Mexico. The so-called Zimmermann telegram proposed that in the event that the United States went to war against Germany, Mexico should form a military alliance with Germany and with German financial support should "reconquer the lost territory in Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona." Wilson allowed the complete text of the telegram to be published in American newspapers on 1 March. This German attempt to entice Mexico to attack the United States shocked and angered the American people and their president. Geographical proximity to Mexico, the history of repeated border conflicts with Mexico during its Revolution, and Carranza’s pro-German attitude caused many Texans, especially those who lived near the Rio Grande, to be even more concerned than most Americans about the possible effects of Zimmermann’s proposals. On 4 March, the editors of the Dallas Morning News, however, called on their readers to remain calm, have faith in the president, and support whatever decision he might make concerning the matter.²

The nature of Wilson’s revised foreign policy soon became evident. The exchange of ambassadors with Mexico allowed him to use direct diplomatic negotiations to attempt to commit the Mexican government to
recognize and protect the rights of foreigners and to remain neutral if the United States became involved in a war with Germany. Despite Germany’s resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare on 1 February and the provocative Zimmermann telegram, Wilson continued to try to keep America out of the World War. He hoped that his announcement on 12 March to arm America’s merchant ships would convince Germany not to use its submarines to sink them. It did not. After the number of American merchant ships sunk by German U-boats continued to rise throughout the remainder of March, the president reluctantly asked Congress to declare war on Germany on 2 April 1917.3

During the next three days, Congress debated the war resolution. Congressman Thomas Blanton of Abilene was one of several members of Congress who spoke in favor of the resolution. He did so mainly because he feared Germany was ready to strike at the United States through Mexico. In his speech, he reviewed all the abuses that America and its people had suffered from Huerta, Carranza, and Villa. Then he cited several examples of recent cooperation between Germany and Mexico, including German military advisors being sent to train Mexican troops and German arms and ammunition begin sent to Mexico. Echoing the sentiments of many of his fellow Texans, Blanton advocated prompt and decisive action to prevent Germany from launching a war against America through "the back door to the United States." By an overwhelming majority, Congress approved a declaration of war on Germany on 6 April 1917.4
Blanton’s fears of an attack from Mexico had merit. While Congress considered the war resolution, the Mexican government moved large contingents of troops towards the Texas border in the states of Chihuahua and Nuevo Leon, ostensibly to attack Villa’s forces. After war had been declared on Germany, the U.S. State Department intensified its pressure on Mexico to declare its neutrality. Although Carranza assured Mexican neutrality while addressing the Mexican Congress on 15 April, the Wilson administration continued to cast a wary eye toward Mexico. On 18 April, Secretary of State Robert Lansing warned the president that the pro-German attitude of the Mexican military coupled with German efforts to gain Mexico as an ally could lead to war between the two countries. A pro-German, anti-American speech by Carranza on 15 May at the National University of Mexico indicated that he might not be too committed to neutrality.⁵

In fact, evidence exists that Carranza briefly contemplated entering an offensive military alliance with Germany against the United States in order to regain Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. His hopes for a victory over his colossal neighbor to the north were based on the proposition that large numbers of German-Americans, African-Americans, and Mexican-Americans might rise in rebellion against the American government. But when an agent of the German General Staff again offered an alliance with Mexico in late May, Carranza wisely refused, having realized that the hoped for uprisings would not occur. Instead, he used the implied threat of war to manipulate the Wilson administration into granting his country certain concessions. As an example, Senator Morris Sheppard forwarded to Wilson in late May a
letter that he had received from General Angel Garcia Pena, Carranza's former secretary of war. This "unofficial communication" warned that the Mexican government might ally itself with Germany and even allow German troops to attack the United States from Mexico unless relations between the two nations improved and Mexico received financial assistance from America. In July, Ambassador Fletcher sought private American sources for a loan to Mexico. And in August, the State Department informed Carranza that it would not prevent American bankers from making loans to his government. Also in July, Congressman John Nance Garner of Uvalde helped convince Wilson to order the State Department to allow the Mexican government to import almost 3 million rounds of ammunition from an arms supplier located in his congressional district. After Carranza assured Fletcher in early August that this actions in implementing the new constitution would be of a nonconfiscatory nature, Wilson granted de jure recognition to his government on 31 August. Throughout the war, German intelligence agents unsuccessfully attempted to use Mexico as an effective base of operations against the United States, and rumors persisted along the Texas border of an impending invasion from the south. But the Wilson administration adroitly employed diplomatic pressure and conciliatory gestures to insure that Mexico remained neutral so that America would not be diverted from its primary goal of defeating Germany.  

During the war and after the Allied victory in November 1918, the Wilson administration also used diplomatic pressure and financial inducements to keep the Mexican government from implementing Article 27
of its new constitution that would expropriate foreign-owned petroleum resources. Frederick Proctor of the Gulf Oil Company of Houston and other prominent American oil men worked with the administration and Congress to protect their investments in Mexican petroleum. Proctor even briefly held a position within the administration during the war, while retaining his position with Gulf Oil. Nonetheless, when Proctor and his associates pushed for a policy that would threaten war with Mexico in the summer of 1918, after Carranza had issued decrees that increased taxes on petroleum production and began implementation of the national control provisions of Article 27, Wilson refused to follow such a dangerous course. Instead, he chose to use increased diplomatic pressure to persuade Carranza to yield ground. A few days later, Carranza issued a new decree that delayed the nationalization process for petroleum. Later that year, the Mexican government began direct negotiations with the American oil companies’ representatives. Wilson resolved another "oil crisis" in early 1920, when he again refused oil company demands for military intervention in Mexico. The oil companies then reached a compromise with Carranza that allowed them to control the production of petroleum while giving the Mexican government leverage to shape the course of its development and allocation of some of its profits.7

During the war and in the immediate post-war period, violence along the border continued to trouble U.S.-Mexican relations. A series of minor border violations in 1917 and 1918 caused the State Department to complain several times to Carranza’s government, which in turn charged that America’s policy of "hot pursuit" of the border raiders was a violation of
Mexican sovereignty. Texans were especially concerned with this aspect of Wilson's Mexican policy because most of the incursions were along the Rio Grande, where American troop strength had been greatly reduced after the U.S. had entered World War I. An attack on a south Texas ranch in April 1918 caused unusual concern because all the raiders were uniformed members of the Mexican army.8

Pancho Villa's re-emergence in 1919 caused the border situation to become even more difficult. By May of that year, he had regained control of most of Chihuahua except Juárez. Responding to a request by Carranza's government in late May 1919, Lansing asked Texas Governor William P. Hobby, who had assumed office in September 1917 following the impeachment and resignation of James E. Ferguson, to allow Mexican troops to cross part of the state in pursuit of Villistas. The governor refused, fearing retaliation against Americans living near the border and in areas of Mexico under Villa's control. Despite being praised by the editors of the Austin Statesman, Hobby's decision did nothing to improve relations between the two nations. Prompted by his concern for the safety of Texans along the border, the governor asked Secretary of War Baker on 8 June to incorporate the cavalry brigades of the Texas National Guard into the U.S. Army and to post them near the border. Two days later, Baker denied his request, stating that no new border trouble seemed imminent.9

Villa's surprise attack on Juárez on 15 June 1919 proved Baker's assessment of the border situation to be inaccurate. As in the past, while the battle raged in Juárez, stray bullets crossed the river and killed
Americans in El Paso. Brigadier General James B. Erwin, the commandant of nearby Fort Bliss, quickly ordered an American assault across the river that overwhelmed Villa’s forces and drove them from the city. At midday on 17 June, the American troops returned victoriously to El Paso. Although they had saved the city and the Mexican troops assigned to protect it, Carranza’s government protested their action as a violation of its sovereignty.¹⁰

On 17 June, Congressman Claude Hudspeth of El Paso lodged his own protest with the Wilson administration. In a meeting with both the secretary of state and the secretary of war, he charged that the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Juárez would soon be followed by a wave of Villista reprisals against Americans in Chihuahua. Also concerned for the safety of Americans near the border and within Mexico, El Paso Mayor Charles Davis called on Senators Morris Sheppard and Charles Culberson as well as Congressman Hudspeth that same day to use their influence to convince the administration to protect the lives and property of its citizens. One of the measures he advocated was the establishment by the U.S. Army of a five-mile wide neutral zone south of the border that would be kept free of all hostilities. The next day, Sheppard promised that he would present the mayor’s proposals to the secretary of war. On 19 June, Hudspeth delivered a speech before the House of Representatives that deplored Carranza’s lack of concern for American lives and insisted that the American government should use necessary force to protect Americans inside Mexico and along the border.¹¹
These pleas by Texans for action had an effect on Wilson's policy. On 18 June 1919, the War Department announced that it would soon erect 30 army posts along the U.S.-Mexico border with 24 of them being in Texas. Three days later, it began contingency planning for another punitive expedition into Mexico should Villa conduct reprisals against Americans. It also drew up plans for setting up a neutral zone south of the border to protect citizens living nearby if the punitive expedition became necessary. By mid-summer, American troop strength along the border had increased to 60,000 men and was supported by a squadron of airplanes and more than a hundred tanks stationed at El Paso and San Antonio.12

Meanwhile, Texas politicians continued to press for a more aggressive Mexican policy. Governor Hobby suggested on 11 July that some of the post-war demobilization should be halted so that additional troops would be available, because "some action by the United States government with reference to conditions in Mexico and along the border" would "be necessary in the near future." On 17 July, the Texas State Senate passed a resolution that called on the American government to provide adequate protection from the State of Texas and its citizens or allow it to act as an independent nation and defend itself against attacks from Mexico. In response, Hudspeth asserted in a speech to the House on 26 July that it was the duty of the United States of America not the State of Texas to protect Texans from foreign aggression. He then championed a plan by Congressman Henry Emerson of Ohio that would authorize the use of American forces to occupy Mexico until a responsible government that
would protect the lives and property of Americans could be established there. A month later, Governor Hobby advised Secretary of State Lansing that, in his opinion, American military intervention was the only way to pacify Mexico. Lansing forwarded the governor's letter to Wilson a few days later.\textsuperscript{13}

The president found it difficult to concentrate on Mexican affairs because of his efforts to win public support for the Treaty of Versailles. But by August 1919, pressure from concerned citizens, oil companies, and politicians from Texas and other states had caused him to focus attention on the serious problems involving Mexico. Still resisting cries for intervention, he decided to take a more hardline diplomatic approach to convince Carranza's government to respect and protect American lives and property.\textsuperscript{14}

Unfortunately, Wilson suffered a severe stroke in early October that left him partially incapacitated for a number of weeks. Lansing assumed almost total responsibility for American foreign policy during that time. After Mexican officials arrested U.S. Consul William O. Jenkins in late October on charges of collusion, relations between the two nations rapidly deteriorated. While the State Department tried to negotiate Jenkins's freedom, pressure for intervention mounted within the administration and Congress. In mid-November, Postmaster General Albert S. Burleson joined Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane in calling for an invasion of Mexico. In a cabinet meeting on 28 November, even Lansing advocated intervention unless Mexico met a proposed ultimatum to release Jenkins and to safeguard Americans and their property within Mexico. He told the Mexican
ambassador that same day that without a radical change in his government’s attitude toward the United States, American public opinion might force a break in diplomatic relations that would "almost inevitably mean war." On 1 December, Lansing sent the Mexican government his ultimatum. Two days later, Senator Albert Fall of New Mexico, perhaps the severest critic of Wilson’s Mexican policy, introduced a resolution in the Senate that would require breaking diplomatic relations with Carranza’s government.¹⁵

A somewhat recovered Wilson averted a serious crisis on 5 December, when he learned in a White House meeting with Fall and Senator Gilbert M. Hitchcock of Nebraska that Carranza had ordered the release of Jenkins. Because Carranza had agreed to release the consul and no new significant border incidents had occurred in months, public support for intervention swiftly dwindled. During the next several weeks, Wilson continually resisted efforts by Fall, Lansing, Lane, Burleson, and representatives of the oil companies to effect intervention in Mexico. In fact, he warned Fall that his resolution of 3 December was not only ill-advised but also could lead to a constitutional crisis if passed by Congress, because the Constitution granted the power to conduct foreign relations only to the executive branch of the government. Carranza’s compromise with the oil companies in late January 1920 and Lansing’s forced resignation in early February effectively ended the threat of war with Mexico. By then, U.S.-Mexican relations seemed to be less strained than at any time since Wilson had become president.¹⁶

Relations between the two countries became confused in early April 1920. Carranza’s insistence on imposing his will on the nation in that year’s
presidential election provoked supporters of General Álvaro Obregón to plunge Mexico into yet another civil war. The rebels quickly triumphed. By late May, they had driven Carranza from power and murdered him. During the summer, the Wilson administration conducted negotiations with the newly established provisional government concerning its diplomatic recognition by the United States. In June, the Texas Senate indicated that most Texans favored speedy recognition of the new Mexican regime by unanimously passing a resolution that commended it for "its efforts to establish a stable government and its demonstrated desire to protect lives." State Senator J. J. Strickland of Palestine personally appealed to Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby in July to grant it recognition.

Negotiations between the two nations continued after Obregón won the presidential election in September. That same month, the chambers of commerce of San Antonio, Laredo, and El Paso heaped praise on Obregón and urged Wilson to recognize the new government. Governor Hobby, a personal friend of Obregón, also implored the president in October to grant it recognition, as did Postmaster General Burleson in a cabinet meeting in November. But Wilson's past frustration in dealing with Mexican leaders caused him to be very suspicious of the new regime and to adopt a tough diplomatic stance toward it. He required that recognition be preceded by the Mexican government's proven commitment to respect and protect the lives, property, and property rights of foreigners within its domain and to pay just claims for damages resulting from the chaos of the Revolution. Although the Mexican leaders fundamentally agreed to Wilson's conditions, their national
pride would not allow compliance prior to recognition. Negotiations ended unsuccessfully in late November. Obregón would wait a few months and deal with the incoming Harding administration.\textsuperscript{18}

During the eight years of Wilson’s presidency, the Mexican Revolution greatly influenced the lives and welfare of many Texans. They, in turn, tried to influence the Wilson administration’s handling of Mexican relations. Sometimes they succeeded, sometimes they did not. For his part, Wilson struggled tirelessly to understand and direct the Revolution. He failed to do either. Although much of the furor and chaos of the Revolution had subsided by the end of his tenure in office, many problems still existed between the two nations. As he left office in March 1921, the status of U.S.-Mexican relations was the same as it had been when he became president in March 1913 — with a revolutionary government in Mexico seeking recognition by the United States. Texans could only hope that the new Republican administration would be able to achieve better relations with their southern neighbor.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER VI

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14El Paso Morning Times, 22, 26 August 1919; New York Times, 21 August 1919; Wilson to Lansing, 4, 22 August 1919, State Dept. PR, Files 711.12/187, 193 1/2; Notation by Lansing, 26 August 1919, State Dept., File 812.00/23111B.


16Washington Post, 6, 7, 9, 10 December 1919; New York Times, 12 December 1919; Lansing to Wilson, 7 December 1919 and 3 January 1920,


18Gilderhus, *Diplomacy and Revolution*, 112-13. Memorandum on Conversation between Undersecretary of State Norman Davis and Mexican Finance Representative Roberto Pesqueira, 23 September 1920, State Dept. PR, File 711.12/530; Colby to Wilson, 25 September 1920, Wilson Papers, LC; Wilson to Colby, 27 September 1920, Ibid.; Ralph Durkee, manager of San Antonio Chamber of Commerce to Wilson, 3 September 1920, State Dept., File 812.00/24513; W. L. Guyler, President of Laredo Chamber of Commerce to Wilson, 4 September 1920, Ibid., File 812.00/24512; D. A. Banoleen, Manager of El Paso Chamber of Commerce to Colby, 20 September 1920, Ibid., File 812.00/24705; Cronon, *Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels*, 566-67; Smith, *U.S. and Revolutionary Nationalism*, 184-86, 214; Charles Johnston, State Dept. Division of Mexican Affairs to Colby, 9 November 1920, State Dept., File 812.00/24765 1/2; George Creel, Wilson’s "unofficial representative" to Mexican government to Colby, 12 November 1920, Ibid., File 812.00/24774 1/2; Colby to Creel, 17 November 1920, Ibid.
CONCLUSIONS

Upon becoming president, Woodrow Wilson had to decide whether or not to recognize Huerta’s government. Although inexperienced in foreign affairs, he stubbornly resisted the advice of the State Department, Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson, and leading American businessmen in Mexico. The president followed instead his idealistic notions about democracy and constitutional government by refusing to recognize Victoriano Huerta’s regime. Influenced by Postmaster General Albert S. Burleson, Secretary of Agriculture David F. Houston, and Colonel Edward M. House, he refused to be swayed by calls by Texas Governor Oscar Branch Colquitt and a majority of the members of the Texas Senate to intervene militarily in Mexico. Instead, he used special diplomatic agents to attempt to reach a compromise with Huerta that would restore constitutional government there. After this tactic failed when Huerta tightened his grip on power in October 1913, Wilson continued to reject intervention as a viable policy towards Mexico. With broad popular and political support in Texas, he adopted a policy of “watchful waiting” in the hope that continued diplomatic pressure and the advancing Constitutionalist armies would eventually force Huerta from power and lead to the restoration of constitutional government in Mexico.

Contrary to his claims, Colquitt’s continual demands for intervention had little impact on the Wilson administration’s Mexican policy. But his
bellicose attacks on the president’s policy did influence Wilson to appoint Cone Johnson, a progressive Democrat from Tyler, to the important State Department position of solicitor. When the president finally decided in April 1914 to seize Veracruz, most Texans and their representatives in Washington firmly supported his decision. Veracruz’s seizure deprived Huerta of much needed revenue and arms, thus enabling the Constitutionalists to drive him from power in July. After the split in the ranks of the Constitutionalists plunged Mexico into a civil war between the forces loyal to Venustiano Carranza and those loyal to Pancho Villa, Colonel House and Wilson agreed that the Villistas should and would ultimately prevail. With the approval of most Texans, the administration then gave indirect support to Villa in late 1914.

After the Constitutionalists regained territory from Villa’s forces in the spring of 1915, Wilson seemed indecisive concerning Mexico while waiting to receive Duval West’s evaluation of conditions there. Influenced by West’s report, he unsuccessfully attempted in June to force the warring factions to form a coalition government. The increased threat to Americans inside Mexico, the escalating violence, caused by Carranza’s manipulation of the Plan of San Diego, along the Texas side of the Rio Grande, and the Constitutionalists’ success at driving the Villistas out of most of Mexico caused Wilson to follow the advice of Colonel House and drastically change U.S. policy toward Mexico. His administration granted de facto recognition to Carranza’s government in October 1915. Resumption of the border violence immediately after Carranza’s recognition incensed most Texans who
demanded through their elected officials that the administration act quickly to end it. Although they were relieved when the combined efforts of Governor James E. Ferguson and the State Department convinced Carranza to halt the border raids, Texans’ interests were not well served by the intense public feud that erupted that fall between the governor and Senator Morris B. Sheppard concerning responsibility for ending the border violence.

The Santa Ysabel Massacre in January 1916 did not provoke Wilson to intervene in Mexico, but it did anger many Texans, some of whom resorted to violence against local Tejanos and Mexicans. Villa’s March raid on Columbus, New Mexico led to demands by citizens from Texas and around the nation for American military action inside Mexico. To the delight of most Texans, the president responded by dispatching General John J. Pershing’s Punitive Expedition south of the border to capture Villa and his men. This American assault on Mexico’s sovereignty caused relations between the two nations to deteriorate rapidly. Carranza’s decision to revive the violence along the Rio Grande in the summer of 1916 resulted in escalation towards war by both nations. But just as they reached the brink of war, both Wilson and Carranza attempted a negotiated settlement of their dispute. Throughout the crises of 1916, the president generally had broad based political support in Texas for his action.

Although the president withdrew the Punitive Expedition from Mexico in early 1917, the Zimmermann Telegram, Carranza’s anti-American attitude, and America’s entrance into World War I caused Wilson and many Texans to worry about a possible German-Mexican alliance against the United States.
With some influence from the Texas congressional delegation, Wilson effectively used diplomatic pressure and conciliatory gestures to insure that Mexico remained neutral during the conflict so that America could concentrate on defeating Germany. To a chorus of cries by several leading Texas politicians, including Governor William P. Hobby, Congressman Claude B. Hudspeth, and Postmaster General Albert S. Burleson, for intervention in Mexico after relations between the two countries had become strained again, the administration followed a policy that almost led to war in December 1919. But by late January 1920, the crisis had passed. Both Wilson and Carranza had again chosen to settle their differences through diplomacy instead of warfare. Carranza’s downfall and death at the hands of followers of Álvaro Obregón four weeks later impeded the development of better relations between the two nations. Despite pleas by several leading Texans to grant Obregón’s government diplomatic recognition, Wilson left office in March 1921 without doing so. He left to his successor, as his predecessor had left to him, many serious, unresolved problems with America’s southern neighbor.

In addition to U.S.-Mexican relations, issues such as America’s role in World War I, cotton prices, and control of the boll weevil vied for the attention of Texans during Wilson’s presidency. But the almost continual state of crisis in Mexican affairs under his administration deeply troubled most Texans and caused many Texas politicians to get involved in American policy towards Mexico.
The three governors who served Texas during those years had only limited influence on Wilson’s policy. Governor Colquitt’s severe criticism of all of the president’s policies guaranteed little or no administration cooperation with him. Initially, Governor Ferguson fully supported administration policy towards Mexico and succeeded in getting the cooperation of Wilson and even Carranza to protect Texans near the Rio Grande from border raids. But in mid-1916, Ferguson disagreed with the administration by publicly calling for American military occupation of all of Mexico. His unsuccessful fight to survive impeachment proceedings in 1917 insured that his influence on Mexican affairs became nil. Governor Hobby fared not much better. His refusal to concur with Lansing’s request to allow Carranza’s troops in pursuit of Villa to cross parts of the state in May 1919 and his call three months later for intervention could not have endeared him with the president. His pleas for Obregón’s recognition in 1920 went unheeded.

Members of the Texas delegation to Congress generally had better relations with the president and were more successful at affecting U.S.-Mexican relations. Both Senators Culberson and Sheppard got along well with Wilson and always supported his Mexican policies. Despite Sheppard’s public feud with Ferguson in late 1915, he too was instrumental in getting the administration to provide better security for the border areas of Texas. Congressmen Eugene Black, Thomas Blanton, James H. Davis, John Nance Garner, David Garrett, Rufus Hardy, Robert Lee Henry, William Smith, John Stephens, and Hatton Sumners also backed Wilson’s Mexican policies.
Garner helped secure more federal protection for the border in 1913 and 1915 and was involved in getting the Wilson administration to placate Carranza in the summer of 1917 so that Mexico would remain neutral in World War I. Immediately after Villa’s raid on Columbus, N.M., Smith successfully implored the president to send an expedition into Mexico to capture Villa and his men. When Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany in April 1917, Blanton gave him his support and called on him to make sure that Germany would not be able to use Mexico as a base for attacking the United States. The president’s policy protected against that possibility by keeping Mexico neutral throughout the conflict. Although Congressman Hudspeth advocated a more aggressive policy towards Mexico than Wilson followed, he helped convince the administration to protect better the lives and property of Texans near the Rio Grande by strongly fortifying the border in 1919. Even though Congressman Slayden supported the president’s Mexican policy much of the time, his influence on that policy must have been limited by his lack of support for important administration decisions such as the Veracruz occupation. Congressman Jeff McLemore had almost no influence on administration policy towards Mexico, because he was such a vocal critic of nearly all of Wilson’s foreign policies.

The Texans who exerted the greatest influence on the Mexican policy of the administration were those who held positions within it. In 1913, Secretary of Agriculture Houston advised the president not to intervene militarily in Mexico and helped him formulate American policy during Veracruz’s seizure in April 1914. The next month, he hastened Huerta’s
downfall by promising fellow Texan William F. Buckley legal counsel to the Mexican dictator’s delegation at the Niagara Falls Conference, that Wilson would insist on a neutral government in Mexico if Huerta stepped down. In August 1915, Houston helped develop an administration plan that allowed Villa to sell stolen cattle in El Paso in order to raise revenue so that he could remain a viable alternative to Carranza while the Pan American Conference was in progress.

Although Attorney General Thomas Watt Gregory did not participate in many foreign policy decisions, he and Postmaster General Burleson helped convince Wilson to appoint Duval West as a special agent to Mexico in 1915. In April 1916, Gregory advocated keeping Pershing’s Punitive Expedition in Mexico until Villa was captured and persuaded Secretary of State Lansing to adopt a similar position.

Postmaster General Burleson took part in most cabinet discussions about Mexican policy. Like Wilson, he favored non-intervention. In 1914, he suggested that the president appoint Cone Johnson as State Department solicitor. In cabinet meetings in March 1916, he supported sending American troops into Mexico to chase Villa and along with Houston even helped the president’s secretary draft a letter to Wilson that strongly urged him to dispatch Pershing’s soldiers across the border even if Carranza’s forces refused to cooperate with them. His abrupt shift the next month to advocating the immediate recall of the troops had no effect on U.S. policy towards Mexico.
Colonel House, Wilson’s close friend and chief advisor on foreign policy matters, probably had more influence on administration policy towards Mexico than any other Texan. Despite being drawn away by the European conflict, he managed to stay involved with Mexican affairs and greatly impacted U.S.-Mexican relations until America entered World War I. He presented to Wilson in 1913 the compromise plan to recognize Huerta’s regime that almost won his approval. In late 1913 and early 1914, House helped persuade the president that American military force would have to be employed in Mexico in order to drive Huerta from power. He also helped develop American policy during Veracruz’s seizure in 1914 and the next year proposed ABC mediation in Mexico’s civil war that led to the creation of the Pan American Conference. His advice to Wilson in August 1915 caused a dramatic change in American policy towards Carranza that brought about his recognition by the U.S. in October of that year. The president followed House’s suggestion and chose Henry P. Fletcher as ambassador to Mexico later that month. When Wilson considered withdrawing Pershing’s troops in April 1916, House was the main proponent of keeping them in Mexico. During the June 1916 crisis, he urged the president not to rule out military intervention, but in July he firmly endorsed his decision to avoid war with Mexico. Such reversals as that give credence to the charge by some historians that House was actually just a shrewd "yes man" who anticipated Wilson’s decisions and supported them. Nonetheless, House was the president’s chief confidant concerning foreign policy, and his continual
involvement with Mexican affairs must have significantly affected U.S.-
Mexican relations.

Many times the president ignored the advice that he received from
members of his administration and stubbornly charted his own course
concerning Mexico. Texans who experienced Wilson's rejection of their
proposals concerning administration policy towards Mexico included
Postmaster General Burleson and Attorney General Gregory's legal advisor,
Houston oil man Frederick Proctor. Although Texans did influence his
Mexican policy, Wilson never forgot that he alone bore the ultimate
responsibility for directing American foreign policy. During his eight years as
president, he sought to fulfill that responsibility by following policies that he
thought would best serve the interests of the people of the United States
and Mexico.
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