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Germany, Mexico, and the United States, 1911-1917

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF John Joseph Leffler for the
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The thesis focuses on Germany's Mexican policies from 1911 to 1917, with particular attention given to the connection of these policies to political relations between the United States and Germany and between the United States and Mexico. The paper also attempts to place German activities in Mexico within the context of Germany's desire to promote its political and economic interests on a worldwide scale. Although some unpublished sources were consulted, the account relies mostly on published documents, memoirs, and secondary sources for its factual basis.

After a brief discussion of trends in German-Amer-

can relations during the years leading up to the First World War, and a summary of German economic interests in Mexico, the thesis examines a number of means employed by Germany to exploit the value of Mexico's proximity to the United States. German policy with regard to Mexico was largely calculated to protect and promote Germany's long-term strategic interests in Latin America and throughout the world. Germany maintained a low profile in Mexico during most of this period, but contemplated various strategies involving Mexico to stir up trouble between the United States and other countries, most particularly Japan.

The advent of the First World War, however, brought about an intensification of Germany's activities in Mexico. Hoping that the United States could be diverted or tied down by significant difficulties in Mexico, which was at that time torn between revolutionary factions, Germany employed various means to create and intensify tensions between the United States and Mexico. The thesis examines some of these attempts, and concludes that Germany's activity in Mexico was an indirect but important factor behind President Woodrow Wilson's decision to declare war on Germany in 1917.

GERMANY, MEXICO, AND THE UNITED STATES, 1911-1917

by

JOHN JOSEPH LEFFLER

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

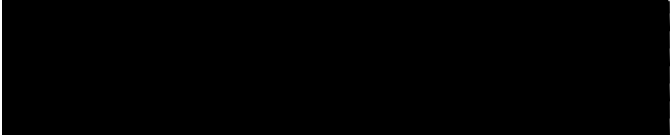
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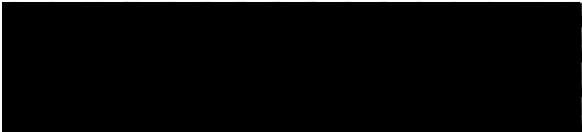
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INTRODUCTION

In September 1910, Mexico City was the setting for one of those strikingly ironic scenes that history throws in the faces of those who believe they understand their times. The occasion was a showcase festival, a month-long national holiday commemorating the centennial of Mexican independence but in reality an ostentatious and smug celebration of the longevity, wisdom, and power of Porfirio Díaz, the aging dictator who had ruled Mexico for almost thirty-five years and who had become for many the living symbol of a new, "progressive" Mexico of political stability and economic growth. Speeches, banquets, and parties were plentiful that September. Giant pageants were held for as many as a half-million spectators; buildings, monuments, and statues were erected and dedicated. The city was alive with parades and fireworks.

The lavish birthday party for Díaz and his country was also intended to signal to the world that Mexico had come of age and entered the select community of civilized nations. Towards this end the Díaz government had ed the expenses for delegations from all over the world to witness the spectacle and pay their respects to the man who made it all possible. The foreigners came, and they were impressed by the beautiful French architecture along

the Paseo de la Reforma; by the spectacular Italianate opera house; and also, perhaps, by their imported European waiters. Mexico was becoming civilized, it was becoming European. The delegates were impressed, too, by the sumptuous banquet held for them in the National Palace on September 15, Diaz's eightieth birthday and the eve of Mexican Independence Day. In appreciation of Don Porfirio's sparkling hospitality and Mexico's new civilized spirit, the 2,000 delegates present that night consumed ten box-car loads of imported French champagne.

All this was characteristic of some of the most disagreeable aspects of the Díaz regime: its perpetuation of appalling economic inequalities, its cultural alienation from the Mexican masses, its overweening solicitation of foreign interests. The foreign delegates probably did not realize that Díaz had spent more on that single month of celebrations than he had budgeted for Mexican education for the entire fiscal year. Less than nine months later, however, Díaz was forced into permanent exile. As the ex-dictator sailed away from Mexico on the German steamer Ypiranga, perhaps he remembered that his first official act of that glorious September had been to dedicate a lunatic asylum.

The insensitive "scientific" domestic policies of the Porfiriato created enormous political and social pressures that for years had been successfully stifled through a ju-

icious combination of generosity and brutal repression; Díaz's motto was pan o palo, "bread or the stick." But by late 1910, even as Díaz was basking in self-sponsored adulation, several factors had combined to undermine the regime's foundations. In early 1911 Francisco I. Madero's "unarmed and motley revolt" (as the American Ambassador described it) provided a push, and the carefully constructed Porfirian edifice began its progressive collapse, unleashing pent-up social and political conflicts that ultimately could be resolved only by force of arms.

For almost a decade Mexico was convulsed by a vicious civil war between uncompromising factions that left hundreds of thousands of people dead and huge amounts of property damaged or destroyed. The bitter domestic struggles did not take place in a vacuum; Díaz's policies had made some level of foreign involvement in the revolution almost inevitable. The fighting and increasingly nationalistic orientation of the revolution were continual sources of irritation and even alarm for the United States, Great Britain, and other countries that together had invested billions of dollars in Mexico during Díaz's accommodating administration. As those powers drifted into war amongst themselves, Mexico's strategic location and valuable resources ensured that the revolutionaries would not be left to settle their differences without foreign interference. For one embattled nation in particular, the German Empire, the Mexican revo-

lution seemed to offer excellent opportunities to further its national interests and ambitions.

This essay explores the nature and extent of German interests and activities in Mexico from 1911 to 1917. It is impossible to examine this subject in isolation, however, because most of the German efforts in Mexico during this period were contemplated or undertaken as adjuncts to a consideration of far greater importance to Germany--its relations with Mexico's northern neighbor, the United States. Germany's policy toward the United States, in turn, was formulated to promote what German leaders believed to be the Empire's most pressing interests: the attainment of world power status, and the protection and strengthening of Germany's position in Europe. Ultimately, Germany's policies concerning the United States and Mexico were determined by the overriding need to win its fight for survival during the First World War.

Britain's successful blockade of Germany gave the Allies a crucial advantage in the stalemated trench war in Europe, but a most important element of this advantage was the surprisingly productive capability of the economy of the United States, which was providing Germany's enemies with a tremendous flow of food, supplies, and munitions unavailable elsewhere. To stem or divert this trade, which was so damaging to the success of their entire war effort, the Germans resorted to various expedients, both legitimate

and covert, including diplomatic exchanges, propaganda campaigns, the establishment of phony import-export companies, sabotage, U-boat warfare, and repeated attempts to draw the United States into a war with Mexico.

Germany's intrigues in Mexico have gone relatively unnoticed by historians until recently. Even the most notorious of the attempts, the "Zimmermann telegram" affair, has often been dismissed as insignificant or even ludicrous aside from its undeniable impact on American public opinion. This is understandable to some extent, given the more dramatic events taking place at the time in Europe and the United States, the generally covert nature of the German activities themselves, and the relatively minor attention given to U.S.-Mexican diplomatic history on the whole. The German activities in Mexico nevertheless played an important role in the events surrounding the entry of the United States into the First World War, not least because they helped to convince American leaders of a real danger that Germany posed to the interests of the United States. They undoubtedly had a lasting impact on U.S.-Mexican relations and on the Mexican revolution itself. It is not necessary, then, to overemphasize the significance of Germany's Mexican activities to say that they deserve our attention.

Germany's wartime policy was far more vigorous and determined than it had been in earlier years, and covered

a wide range of activities with varying levels of success. Throughout this period Mexico was an important base for German espionage, sabotage, and propaganda activities. In addition, revolutionary factions were approached or utilized in attempts to provoke a war with the United States. These efforts failed, but if German activities were sometimes fruitless and even counterproductive, it should not be concluded that they were uniformly absurd or without a reasonable chance of success; and a major success, if indeed one had occurred, could have repaid Germany's relatively small investment in such activities many times over and perhaps even changed the course of the war.

A few historians have examined various aspects of this subject over the years. Friedrich Katz, in particular, has conducted extensive archival research and unearthed a wealth of material concerning German activities in Mexico. While I am especially indebted to Katz for his work in the German archives, this essay is more concerned with the impact Germany's Mexican activities had on the formulation of American foreign policy, a topic which Katz does not deal with in depth. Germany's activities in Mexico, especially during the First World War, were in a sense merely an extension of similar covert operations conducted in the United States; in fact, they were often planned and carried out by the same German personnel. Amer-

ican officials were aware of the connection, and this realization not only heavily influenced American policy towards Mexico but also contributed to President Wilson's decision to declare war on Germany in 1917.

Moreover, I have tried to demonstrate that these covert activities were not simply part of a "new strategy of exploiting social conflicts and anticolonial struggles," as Katz writes, but were instead manifestations of a long-standing and elemental contradiction in German foreign policy, a contradiction which was intensified by the pressures of the world war. The roots of Germany's Mexican policies can be directly traced to Germany's decision to pursue world power status, and its inability to promote its more ambitious goals in Latin America in a straightforward manner.

CHAPTER I

LATIN AMERICA AND TRENDS IN GERMAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS, 1898-1914

The retirement of Otto von Bismarck in 1890 brought to an end the Iron Chancellor's forceful but relatively cautious handling of Germany's foreign affairs and marked the beginning of the Empire's self-consciously aggressive quest to become a world power. As a united Germany quickly became an industrial heavyweight during the 1890's, a wide spectrum of domestic opinion came to believe that the "struggle for economic existence" now facing Germany demanded concomitant overseas expansion to feed the growing industrial complex.¹ This conviction was not peculiar to Germany; in America, too, and in other countries, it was "widely accepted around the turn of the century that industrialized nations either secured outlets overseas for their surplus goods or succumbed to stagnation and revolution at home and defeat and humiliation abroad."²

For many Germans, overseas expansion also seemed a logical consequence of national unification. Max Weber argued that the unification of Germany "would better have been left undone if it was meant to be the end and not the beginning of a German policy of world power."³ The drives

for political and economic expansion were soon combined in the German mind into a single concept, Weltpolitik (world policy). To the historian Karl Lamprecht, Weltpolitik was the product of an irresistible historical process:⁴

The hallmark of the age...is expansion, expansion of an economic nature and then, to support and extend it, political expansion. The economic instinct for power and the movement for [national] unity were succeeded by the age for world policy.

Official and popular enthusiasm in Germany for Weltpolitik took a big step forward in April 1898 with the passage of the first Naval Law, which authorized the construction of nineteen battleships, eight armored cruisers, and twelve large and thirty light cruisers by 1904. It was a signal that Germany would now compete in earnest with the largest naval powers; Germany was on the high road to world power. Secretary of State Bernard von Bülow declared to the Reichstag in 1899 that "The times of powerlessness and submissiveness are gone and shall never return....in the coming century the German people will become either the hammer or the anvil."⁵

By the turn of the century, Germany's expansionist spirit, and especially its scarcely concealed ambitions in East Asia and Latin America, had produced severe tensions with the United States. America, under the influence of Captain Mahan and other "big navy" proponents, was also engaged in a program of naval building and perceived its growing economic and strategic interests in these areas

threatened by Germany's increasing boldness.⁶ The Samoan crisis of 1899 had created animosities and provided an early example of the dangers involved in German-American competition over strategic territories, but if anything the competition between the two powers became more intense as the 19th century drew to a close.

An obviously attractive target for German industrialists and naval planners was Latin America, with its relatively untapped market, valuable natural resources, and excellent, strategically placed harbors. German naval men had toyed with the idea of establishing naval bases in the Caribbean as early as 1870, but Bismarck had not been "positively interested in any such project."⁷ His minister in Washington stated in 1874 that "our aversion against the outdated colonial policy and other reasons would always keep us from aspiring to overseas possessions."⁸

By the late 1890's, however, this attitude had changed. Hundreds of thousands of German immigrants had already penetrated Latin America and were well-established within the merchant community in several countries, including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico. As a result, nationalistic Pan-German societies began to clamor for political expansion in Latin America, and German naval planners increasingly appreciated the value of acquiring strategically placed harbors in the western hemisphere.⁹

Germany saw the United States as an economic threat

to its plans for trade expansion in Latin America. In 1896 Kaiser Wilhelm II attempted to form an anti-American combination among the European powers to "fend off the common danger," as the German secretary of state expressed it to a Russian envoy. This effort was partly in response to President McKinley's attempts to conclude reciprocity agreements with various Latin American countries. The Kaiser believed that if McKinley were entirely successful, the Americans could eliminate their European competition in the area. Already Chile and Uruguay had cancelled trade agreements with Europe; and these cancellations, the Kaiser irritably declared, would be the "beginning of a war to the death" between Germany and the United States if only he had his fleet already built.¹⁰

Germany's economic progress in Latin America had in turn aroused the suspicions and jealousy of its North American competitors. Americans were also disturbed by the Germans' disregard for the Monroe Doctrine: the retired Bismarck, for example, characterized the Doctrine in 1897 as an "extraordinary piece of insolence."¹¹ Theodore Roosevelt was more understanding of the German position than were many of his countrymen when he wrote in 1897:¹²

I am by no means sure that I heartily respect the little Kaiser but in his colonial plans I think he is entirely right from the standpoint of the German race...If I were a German I should want the German race to expand. I should be glad to see it expand in the only two places left for the ethnic, as distinguished from the political expansion of the

European peoples; that is, in South Africa and temperate South America. Therefore, as a German I should be delighted to upset the English in South Africa, and to defy the Americans and their Monroe Doctrine in South America....

The Spanish-American War, and especially Admiral Dewey's dramatic confrontation with the German Admiral Diederichs at Manila Bay, brought the rivalry to a head and fired contempt and hatred on both sides. During the height of the Manila crisis Dewey expressed his eagerness to tangle with the Germans: "It is indecent to fight Spain anyhow," he said. "Now, if France could come in too, we could save our faces, but best of all if Germany would come in. If only Germany could be persuaded to come in."¹³ There was, as William Langer described it, "an almost pathological suspicion of Germany...prevalent in American political and diplomatic circles."¹⁴ John Hay, then ambassador to Britain, wrote Henry Cabot Lodge that¹⁵

The jealousy and animosity felt toward us in Germany...can scarcely be exaggerated...the Vaterland is all on fire with greed, and terror of us. They want the Philippines, the Carolines, and Samoas--they want to get in our market and keep us out of theirs...there is to the German mind, something monstrous in the thought that a war should take place and they not profit by it.

This distrust of Germany reached from coast to coast. The Washington Post wrote that "we know...that in the German government the United States has a sleepless and insatiable enemy," while the Morning Oregonian called Germany our "bitter, relentless, uncompromising enemy."¹⁶

Faced with reactions of this nature, Theodor von Holleben, the German ambassador in Washington, wrote home in 1893 that the Americans were completely hostile to Germany, "the most hated land." "They believe us capable of anything," he wrote, "especially the worst."¹⁷

On the other side of the Atlantic, Wilhelm II privately railed against what he called the "Anglo-American Limited Company for International Theft and World Incitement," and wanted to call on other European powers to rally against the rough treatment Spain was suffering at the hands of the United States, this "Yankee audacity supported by John Bull."¹⁸ As was often the case in such situations, Bülow was able to restrain the impetuous Kaiser from action. Later, when a Prussian envoy wrote Wilhelm that the American victory over Spain constituted interference in European affairs, the Kaiser responded with his peculiar élan, "Right! Therefore quickly a strong fleet. Then the rest will fall into place."¹⁹ And Bismarck's testy remarks in an 1898 interview no doubt reinforced some American judgements concerning German intentions in Latin America. Asked about the Monroe Doctrine, he snorted:²⁰

That is a species of arrogance peculiarly American and inexcusable...And how will you enforce it? And against whom? The Powers most interested, now that Spain is out of the way, are England and France, the two leading naval powers. Will you drive them off American waters with your pigmy navy? The Monroe Doctrine is a spectre that would vanish in plain daylight.

Comments like this, however, only served to convince Americans that it was Germany that was "most interested" in defying the Monroe Doctrine. The "arrogance," fears, and hopes of both Germans and Americans combined to create a volatile atmosphere in the relations between the two nations over the next few years, forming a latent animosity that resulted in an overabundance of accusations and unofficial wild talk on both sides. In a speech before the Grant Memorial Association in New York on April 27, 1900, for example, Elihu Root gave voice to what was becoming a popular feeling. "No man who carefully watches the signs of the times," he declared, "can fail to see that the American people will within a few years have to either abandon the Monroe Doctrine or fight for it, and we are not going to abandon it." His audience responded with cries of "Hear! Hear!"²¹ These sentiments were echoed and encouraged by certain elements in Britain, where anti-German feelings were also running high. Commenting on Root's speech, the London Spectator asserted:²²

No American...can fail to see that the [Monroe] doctrine cannot be supported by tall talk...Germany would simply consider whether America had physical power to maintain it. If she hadn't, America's historical claims wouldn't be worth a straw...If America should wish to enforce the Monroe Doctrine she must be able to destroy the German fleet.

Among the military establishments especially, and in certain civilian circles on both sides of the Atlantic, the prospect of a German-American war began to gain a level of

acceptance and even a rather absurd aura of respectability. In America, Henry Cabot Lodge worried about an attack on Boston ("The German emperor has moments when he is wild enough to do anything"²³), while Theodore Roosevelt wrote to an English friend that he wouldn't be "sorry to see a bit of a spar with Germany...The burning of New York and a few other sea coast cities would be a good object lesson in the need of an adequate system of coast defenses..."²⁴

A conversation between an American naval officer and a German counterpart, reported in 1903 to Captain Sigsbee, the chief of U.S. Naval Intelligence, illustrates the feud and its growing danger for both countries. The German officer had predicted a war for commercial supremacy in Latin America between the United States and Germany. The Empire's "teeming and rapidly increasing population" had to have "outlets," the German officer contended, adding that "South America offers a most favorable field." Moreover, he said, "The official class of Germany has no regard for the Monroe Doctrine," and he believed Germany "would easily be victorious at war with the United States." Sigsbee sent the report to the Secretary of the Navy with his full endorsement, saying that his own estimate of the situation was "precisely as it is stated in this paper."²⁵

At this time German war contingency plans did in fact single out the United States as Germany's most likely adversary in a next war. In March 1903 Vice Admiral Büchsel,

chief of the Admiralty Staff, reported to the Kaiser that²⁶

There can be only one objective for Germany's war strategy: direct pressure on the American east coast and its most populous areas, especially New York; that is, a merciless offensive designed to confront the American people with an unbearable situation through the dissemination of terror and through damaging enemy trade and property.

Since Germany could not hope to win a war of attrition with the United States, it was hoped that a radical offensive, including an early decisive naval victory, would force the Americans to sue for peace. But, the Kaiser was told, the "necessary prerequisite" for a war with the United States would be a favorable "political constellation" in Europe. "Any uncertainty in Europe would preclude a successful war against the United States. Thus we do not seek a war, but it can be forced on us."²⁷

American naval planners, on their part, believed that the United States had to be on constant guard against a war with Germany, the country many officers believed was the United States' only possible opponent. Their biggest fear was that Germany would acquire a base in the Caribbean, since this was thought to be a prerequisite to a successful war against the United States, and would represent a threat to the future isthmian canal.²⁸

It is certainly true that Tirpitz and other naval officers appreciated the value of a Caribbean naval base or coaling station, and they were willing to risk antagonizing the United States, within certain limits, to obtain one.

To some extent these officers had the support of the Kaiser, who believed that such an acquisition would be entirely within Germany's rights. For example, when Holleben wrote Wilhelm in February 1900 to caution him concerning American sensitivity to foreign presences in the western hemisphere, the Kaiser scribbled on the dispatch "That is irrelevant! South America is no concern of the Yankees!" In May, under a similar dispatch, he noted "Once we have a decent fleet this, to a certain degree, becomes immaterial. South America simply is of no concern to the Yankees." And on yet another cautionary dispatch: "Fleet, fleet, fleet."²⁹

But Bülow, who became Chancellor in 1900, consistently and successfully blocked attempts by the Admiralty to obtain the Kaiser's permission for the acquisition of a naval base. Bülow and the Foreign Office, although in sympathy with Germany's expansionist aims, wished to avoid any serious friction with the United States, at least until a favorable "political constellation" appeared in Europe. Nevertheless, Germany's obvious ambition to acquire such a base, combined with the Navy's attempts to scout out a likely site in case of a favorable decision by the Kaiser, led to much of the bad blood between the United States and Germany during this period.

The Germans were rumored to have designs all over Latin America: Colombia, Brazil, the Danish West Indies, the Galapagos, Mexico, Margarita Island, and the Dominican

Republic were just a few of the places believed to be threatened. A fear that Germany might be tempted to acquire part of Cuba had inspired Elihu Root to insert into the Platt Amendment the second article, which forbade Cuba to transfer, sell, or lease any part of its national territory to a foreign power. "You cannot understand the Platt Amendment," Root said years later, "unless you know something about the character of Kaiser Wilhelm the Second."³⁰

Yet because of Germany's increasingly difficult position in Europe, the real threat of German political expansion in South America and the Caribbean (whether in the form of bases or actual colonization) was "more imagined than real," as Melvin Small, Dexter Perkins, and others have convincingly demonstrated.³¹ The formulation of German policy with respect to two rumored sites, the Danish West Indies and Margarita Island (off the coast of Colombia) will serve to illustrate how German naval ambitions could be thwarted by the Foreign Office yet also fuel the suspicions of wary Americans.

In the winter of 1898 Tirpitz believed the time was ripe for the acquisition of a naval base in the Caribbean, either at St. Thomas or Curacao. The Kaiser, seeing the advantages of the proposal, submitted the idea to both the Foreign Office and the Marine for "inclusive study."³² It so happened that at this same time, a former Danish naval

officer, a Captain Holmfeld (also known as "Captain Christmas") organized a company to acquire another island, St. John, which, like St. Thomas, belonged to the Danish West Indies. Holmfeld hoped to engineer an "eventual transfer" of the islands to Germany and realize a good profit from the transaction. Tirpitz supported the Captain's plan but, as Dexter Perkins puts it, the Foreign Office had a much "clearer sense of realities" and argued against the project. Bülow wrote to Tirpitz that in such an acquisition "the Imperial Government would assume a responsibility which would be justified...only in the event of compelling reasons." Due to the "present political situation," he continued, the project was "not advisable" and should be promoted only if the need was "urgent." When Tirpitz persisted in his efforts to promote the plan and even published an article arguing for the acquisition of Caribbean naval bases, Bülow, on the orders of the Kaiser, formally rebuked the admiral, saying that such agitation was "inopportune." German support for Christmas' plan faded away.³³

But the next year, when Christmas went to the United States to peddle his project, he spiced up his sales pitch with tales of German ambitions for the islands, and touched off a furor. "So they are trying to sneak into the West Indies, are they?" John Hay snapped when told of the Germans' "plans." Christmas' "facts" concerning German designs in the Caribbean inspired a good deal of anti-German sentiment

in the United States, including Root's speech of having to "abandon the Monroe Doctrine, or fight for it." The New York Times editorialized that the sale of the islands "is a transaction in which the American people take great interest:"³⁴

...if that settlement involved the sale and attempted transfer of the St. Thomas group...to one of the great powers of Europe a feeling would be aroused in this country that would dwarf all other public concerns and might endanger the peace of nations.

It had been the expectation of just such an uproar that had convinced Bülow to oppose the project; and even though the German government had dropped the idea more than a year before, in America it was believed that Germany still maintained devious designs on the islands.

In the 1901 case of Margarita Island, the rumors seem to have had even less foundation. A commander of an American warship observed a German ship taking soundings in the waters surrounding the island, and reported his suspicions. He noted that "the Germans are not much given to unselfish work for the benefit of mariners," and that they had performed similar acts before taking Kiau-chou in 1898. After the U.S. Navy had "worked itself into a considerable frenzy" over the matter,³⁵ Secretary of State Hay asked that the American chargé in Berlin make "discreet inquiries." The German government not only denied that any acquisitions were contemplated around Margarita, but also issued a gen-

eral and inclusive denial of any plans whatsoever to acquire territory of any kind in the western hemisphere, a denial which Dexter Perkins, after much research, has determined should "distinctly be taken at face value."³⁶ The Foreign Office was far too concerned with maintaining stable relations with the United States to allow the Navy's objectives to threaten the peace.

Events surrounding the Venezuelan blockade of 1902-1903 intensified American suspicions concerning Germany's designs in the western hemisphere. Although Germany and Great Britain were conducting joint operations in a debt collecting expedition to which the United States had given its approval³⁷ many Americans were convinced that the Monroe Doctrine was being challenged in Venezuela, and Germany was singled out as the foremost malefactor. Anti-German feeling ran high in the United States at this time, particularly after it was learned that the German gunboat Panther had shelled a Venezuelan town. The New York Times complained that "Worse international manners than Germany has exhibited from the beginning of this wretched Venezuela business have rarely come under the observation of civilized man." ³⁸ The tide of American indignation was felt in Europe, and the way in which this debt collecting expedition got out of hand helped to convince Theodore Roosevelt that the United States would have to police the Caribbean region to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the

future.

There is some reason to believe that Germany would eventually have made a real effort to challenge the Monroe Doctrine if the Germans had actually succeeded in obtaining a decisive naval superiority over the United States. Tirpitz was thinking along these lines when he observed that German diplomats would have to "dance on eggs" until the fleet was completed.³⁹ But aggressive German behavior in Venezuela, Wilhelm's thoughtless indiscretions, numerous rumors of German designs in the Caribbean, and Germany's refusal at this time to give even lip service to the Monroe Doctrine were exploited and perhaps purposely exaggerated by naval advocates in the United States to give the U.S. a naval buildup of its own.⁴⁰ Moreover, the Germans had to take into account their position in Europe; and the very shipbuilding program which Wilhelm and Tirpitz relied upon for a free hand in the new world was increasingly causing them troubles in the old.

Just at the time when relations between the United States and Germany were becoming difficult, relations between the United States and Britain were growing noticeably warmer. Britain's public support of the United States during the Spanish-American War had been instrumental in easing tensions; and as early as September 1899 there had been so much talk of a secret British-American alliance that Secretary of State Hay felt compelled to publicly deny

the rumors. There was, yes, a "friendly understanding," he said, "but an alliance must remain, in the present state of things, an impossible dream."⁴¹

Britain's willingness to accept United States supremacy in the Caribbean helped to cement the relationship. Partly because of the increasingly threatening naval competition in Europe, and partly because the United States itself was slowly becoming a respectable naval power, the British had reevaluated their position in the western hemisphere and concluded that it would be wise to avoid dangerous frictions with the United States in the Caribbean. In 1901, Britain conceded to the United States the right to build, control, and fortify an isthmian canal; and, in contrast to what Americans perceived as German aggressiveness in the Caribbean, Britain began to dramatically reduce the number of its troops and ships stationed there, essentially conceding American hegemony in the Caribbean.⁴² Just as German-American tensions were mounting, then, British-American relations were becoming much more cordial.

Britain's conciliatory policy toward the United States was only one aspect of the worldwide readjustments in big-power relationships that took place during the first decade of the twentieth century. As Germany upset the balance of power in Europe and the world, new alignments began to take shape. German leaders had anticipated this, and had hoped that Germany's new naval power would make it an attractive

ally; in this way, Germany had hoped to strengthen its position in Europe even as it extended its power throughout the world.⁴³ These hopes had been realized to some extent. Britain approached Germany on several occasions between 1898 and 1901, but nothing came of the British advances, largely because Germany insisted on several concessions which the British were unwilling or unable to give. Later, in 1905, the Kaiser negotiated an agreement with Czar Nicholas, but this too proved abortive.⁴⁴

As new alignments among other powers took shape, Germany found itself increasingly isolated. Britain, unable to reach a satisfactory agreement with Germany, concluded an alliance with Japan in 1902 and then, in 1904, formed the Entente Cordial with France. When in 1905 the Russo-German Björko Agreement was cancelled, and Russia began flirting with the Entente, it was evident that Weltpolitik had not achieved the expected results. Germany's new might had failed to transform it into an attractive ally; on the contrary, it was now surrounded by suspicious and even hostile neighbors. Rather than finding a "place in the sun," Germany was now shadowed by anxiety and the fear of "encirclement." Theodore Roosevelt aptly described the situation in a letter to Hay in April 1905:⁴⁵

The Kaiser sincerely believes that the English are planning to attack him and smash his fleet, and perhaps join France in a war to the death against him. As a matter of fact the English harbor no such intentions, but are themselves in a condition

of panic lest the Kaiser secretly intend to form an alliance against them with France or Russia, or both, to destroy their fleet and blot out the British Empire from the map! It is as funny a case as I have ever seen of mutual distrust and fear bringing two peoples to the verge of war.

The Kaiser's fear was not as irrational as it may seem. In 1904 Sir John Fisher, Britain's First Sea Lord, suggested to King Edward VII that the British wipe out the German fleet with a preemptive attack. The King was aghast: "My God, Fisher, you must be mad!"⁴⁶ But in February 1905 Arthur Lee, the Civil Lord of the Royal Admiralty, publicly stated that "the Royal Navy would get its blow in first before the other side had time even to read in the newspapers that war had been declared."⁴⁷ Incidents like this not only fueled Germany's determination to maintain its naval program, but also focused Germany's attention on European affairs. As a result, the German leadership tread much more cautiously where the United States was concerned. After 1905, German diplomats tacitly accepted the Monroe Doctrine, and real German-American tensions subsided, although rumors of suspicious German activity continued to appear occasionally. German merchants continued to be aggressive competitors in the Latin American marketplace against their British and American rivals in the area, but their progress was gradual where before it had been rapid. (See table on next page.) Any German ambitions to shore up their economic successes in Latin America with territorial

acquisitions were postponed indefinitely as a consequence of Germany's increasingly vulnerable position in Europe.

TABLE I

PERCENTAGE SHARE OF THE MARKET IN SELECTED LATIN
AMERICAN COUNTRIES FOR BRITAIN, GERMANY,
AND THE UNITED STATES⁴⁹

Latin American Country	<u>1903 or 1904 Figures</u>			<u>1911 or 1912 Figures</u>		
	<u>Britain</u>	<u>Germany</u>	<u>U.S.</u>	<u>Britain</u>	<u>Germany</u>	<u>U.S.</u>
Argentina	34	13	12	31	17	15
Brazil	28	13	11	25	17	15
Colombia	32	18	30	20	14	27
Haiti	10	2	73	8	5	74
Mexico	13	12	55	13	13	49
Paraguay	32	15	4	28	28	6
Peru	37	16	18	32	18	23
Venezuela	25	25	29	21	16	33

This new spirit was appreciated and reciprocated by by at least some of America's leaders. While in 1901 Theodore Roosevelt had been impressed by reports that the Germans intended to "take a fall out of us," in 1907 he personally reassured the Kaiser that such considerations no longer bothered him: "No distrust will be sown between Germany and America by any gossip," he wrote. "I sincerely believe that the growth of good feeling...is steady and permanent." And on another occasion he wrote the Kaiser not to worry about silly rumors: "I am always being told of Japanese or German or English spies in the most unlikely places ---the Moro castle in Havana, for instance, or some equally

antiquated fort."⁵⁰ In 1909 President Taft called a letter describing German intrigues in South America "absurd," and went on to say that "all the Germans he had met in different parts of the world preferred to do business out of their own colonies rather than in them, as they could make more money."⁵¹

In fact, the Germans had ruled out the acquisition of territory in Latin America, at least for the time being. But the fears created around the turn of the century by the German-American naval competition and the Germans' studied contempt for the Monroe Doctrine lingered in many minds in the form of suspicion and distrust. Huntington Wilson, an undersecretary of state in Taft's administration, wrote years later that "[German] plans for crippling the United States centered around the Isthmus and the Caribbean. Their dreams of vast empire envisaged the southernmost republics of South America. We had reason to be wary."⁵²

It is true that Americans had "reason to be wary." Geopolitical circumstances had dictated that German policymakers shelve their hopes for political expansion into the western hemisphere, but these circumstances could change again; and Wilhelm's erratic unpredictability did not inspire confidence in German policy. Theodore Roosevelt, for example, wrote to Senator Lodge that⁵³

...nothing would persuade me to follow the lead or enter into a close alliance with a man who is so jumpy, so little capable of continuity of action,

and therefore, so little capable of being loyal to his friends or steadfastly hostile to his enemies.

In 1913 and 1914 Colonel Edward House, Woodrow Wilson's close advisor, attempted to play on Germany's well-known ambitions in South America to defuse the tensions created by worldwide big-power competition. House envisioned cooperation between Germany, Britain, the United States, and Japan to develop, pacify, and exploit the "waste places" of the world (such as China and Latin America). As House explained his plan, which was "enthusiastically" supported by President Wilson:⁵⁴

...it would be my endeavor to bring about a better understanding between England and Germany; that if England were less intolerant of Germany's expansion, good feeling could be brought between them. I thought we could encourage Germany to exploit South America in a legitimate way; that is, by development of its resources and by sending her surplus population there; that such a move would have a beneficial result generally.

He hoped big-power cooperation would "ensure peace and proper development of the waste places, besides maintaining an open door and equal opportunity to every one everywhere."⁵⁵

House's idea was tentatively approved by the German and British governments, but before substantive negotiations could get underway the European powers drifted into war over the Serbian crisis.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, House's plan indicates a broad willingness to accommodate Germany's hopes for economic expansion in Latin America; German

energy would be channeled into pursuits that would not threaten to upset the peace of the world. It should be emphasized, however, that House and Wilson envisioned "legitimate" German expansion in Latin America. It is unlikely that the United States would have looked kindly upon political annexations by Germany in the area.

Germany's position in Europe had made it impossible for Germany to tackle the United States alone. Although many rumors of German designs in Latin America continued to circulate, and while Germany did in fact attempt to extend its influence surreptitiously (see next chapter for examples in Mexico), many of these rumors were groundless or based on flimsy evidence.

It is necessary to be aware of these trends in German-American relations to understand German policy and activities in Mexico, not only because they provide the backdrop for events, but also because they help to explain the perceptions and expectations of policymakers and their publics. It will be noted that Germany's Latin American policy at this time contained certain schizophrenic aspects. While nationalistic pan-German societies agitated for actual colonization in Latin America, while naval officers urged the acquisition of bases, and while Wilhelm stubbornly insisted that "South America simply is of no concern to the Yankees," there was also a pressing need to restrain these ambitious convictions in the interest of national survival. There

was in German foreign policy, then, a constant tension created by the interplay of incompatible interests which could not be satisfactorily resolved. German policy in Mexico, too, suffered from Germany's inability to resolve this basic inconsistency, its continual necessity to choose between promising opportunities and dangerous risks.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER I

¹Fritz Fischer, The War of Illusions: German Policies from 1911 to 1914, Marian Jackson, trans., (New York: 1975 [1969]), 9, 33.

²P. Edward Haley, Revolution and Intervention: The Diplomacy of Taft and Wilson with Mexico, 1910-1917, (Cambridge: 1970), 2.

³Fischer, War of Illusions, 32.

⁴Ibid., 36.

⁵Holger H. Herwig, Politics of Frustration: The United States in German Naval Planning, 1889-1941, (Boston: 1976), 54.

⁶Richard D. Challener, Admirals, Generals, and American Foreign Policy, 1898-1914, (Princeton: 1973), 12-16, 28.

⁷Dexter Perkins, The Monroe Doctrine 1867-1907, (Gloucester, Mass.: 1966 1937), 20-21.

⁸Alfred Vagts, "Hopes and Fears of an American-German War," part 1, Political Science Quarterly 54 (1939), 516.

⁹Herwig, Politics of Frustration, 73, 75.

¹⁰Ibid., 19.

¹¹Perkins, Monroe Doctrine, 301.

¹²Howard K. Beale, Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power, (Baltimore: 1956), 391.

- 13 Herwig, Politics of Frustration, 42.
- 14 Beale, Theodore Roosevelt, 391.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Morning Oregonian, September 18, 1898; Washington Post, November 25, 1895; quoted in Herwig, Politics of Frustration, 33-34.
- 17 Beale, Theodore Roosevelt, 37.
- 18 Herwig, Politics of Frustration, 21.
- 19 Ibid., 30.
- 20 Perkins, Monroe Doctrine, 302.
- 21 New York Times, May 1, 1900.
- 22 Ibid., May 6, 1900.
- 23 Alfred Vagts, "Hopes and Fears of an American-German War," part 2, Political Science Quarterly 55 (1940), 68.
- 24 Beale, Theodore Roosevelt, 37.
- 25 Vagts, "Hopes and Fears," I, 525.
- 26 Herwig, Politics of Frustration, 85.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Herwig, Politics of Frustration, 80-81, 93; Challenger, Admirals, Generals, 35-36.
- 29 Herwig, Politics of Frustration, 68-69.
- 30 Philip C. Jessup, Elihu Root, 2 vols. (New York: 1938), I, 314.
- 31 Melvin Small, "The German 'Threat' to the Western Hemisphere, 1905-1914," The Americas 28 (July 1971-April 1972), 252-271; Perkins, Monroe Doctrine, 313.

³²Perkins, Monroe Doctrine, 304-05.

³³Ibid.

³⁴New York Times, May 3, 1900.

³⁵Challener, Admirals, Generals, 111.

³⁶Perkins, Monroe Doctrine, 312-13.

³⁷Ibid., 343.

³⁸New York Times, January 23, 1903.

³⁹Herwig, Politics of Frustration, 35.

⁴⁰Perkins, Monroe Doctrine, 318; Herwig, Politics of Frustration, 83.

⁴¹Beale, Theodore Roosevelt, 153.

⁴²Kenneth Bourne, Britain and the Balance of Power in North America, (Berkeley: 1967), 339-41, 369.

⁴³Fritz Fischer, World Power or Decline, Lancelot L. Farrar, Robert Kimber, and Rita Kimber, trans., (New York: 1974), 58.

⁴⁴Luigi Albertini, The Origins of the War of 1914, 3 vols. (London, 1965 [1952]), I, 99-117, 159-61.

⁴⁵Beale, Theodore Roosevelt, 439.

⁴⁶Jonathon Steinberg, "The Copenhagen Complex," in Walter Laquer and George L. Mosse, eds., 1914: The Coming of the First World War, (New York: 1966), 36.

⁴⁷Ibid., 37.

⁴⁸Small, "German 'Threat' to the Hemisphere," 450-51, 454.

⁴⁹Figures are from Small, "German 'Threat,'" 256.

⁵⁰Beale, Theodore Roosevelt, 437, 451.

⁵¹Small, "German 'Threat,'" 254.

⁵²Ibid., 252-3.

⁵³Beale, Theodore Roosevelt, 437.

⁵⁴Charles Seymour, ed., The Intimate Papers of Colonel House, 2 vols. (Boston and New York: 1926), I, 239.

⁵⁵Ibid., 240.

⁵⁶Ibid., 256-75.

CHAPTER II

CAUTIOUS DEVELOPMENT OF INTERESTS: GERMANY, MEXICO, AND THE UNITED STATES, 1900-1911

Mexico's proximity to the United States and the predominant American economic presence there helped to make Mexico somewhat of a special case in the minds of German policymakers. German leaders and diplomats appreciated the value of Mexico's strategic location and contemplated various ways to exploit it in Germany's interests; but since Germany's relations with Mexico were formulated, as elsewhere, with its world policy objectives in mind, the notorious sensitivity of the United States to Mexican questions was a constant factor to be considered. In any case, German economic involvement in Mexico never achieved the dimensions it assumed in Brazil, Argentina or Chile during the same period, and its influence on Mexican leaders was limited. The ebb and flow of Germany's willingness to act on its ambitions in the western hemisphere during the first decade of the twentieth century were reflected in its activities in Mexico during that time.

Germans had settled in Mexico, and along the Mexican-American border, as early as the 1870's,¹ but their numbers grew slowly. By 1900 there only about 2,500 Germans in

Mexico; in 1910, about 3,600.² (By way of comparison, in Brazil alone German immigration during this period totalled almost 400,000, while U.S. nationals in Mexico in 1910 numbered about 4,000.) They enjoyed an excellent reputation among Mexicans for their energetic and scrupulous attention to business. The Mérida École Commercial, for instance, wrote in December 1905 that "Among the foreign colonies, the German is the one which has distinguished itself the most for its honesty, decent behavior, and benevolence toward Mexico and her sons. Here in Yucatán, the German colony is not large, but honest, occupies a distinguished position, and is consequently highly respected and loved by everyone."³ Five years later the Mexico City Nuevo echoed these sentiments, saying, "The German colony [in Mexico City] is not the most numerous....but we can state without exaggeration that it is one of the most respected in our land and one of the most popular."⁴

German economic activity in Mexico was focused on the central and southern regions,⁵ where the bulk of the population was concentrated. Germany's small capital investment and its commercial presence was concentrated mostly in the mercantile trade, especially cotton goods, hardware, toys, and the like. Chemical products, electrical appliances, and steel became more important after 1905.⁶ By 1910, largely because of the disproportionate influence of the well-placed German merchant community, German products accounted for

approximately 13% of Mexican imports, second in importance to the United States⁷ and roughly equal to that of Great Britain.

The German presence in Mexico was also felt in banking circles, where Germany's largest bank, the Deutsche Bank, as well as several others, worked to facilitate Mexican-German trade, finance German business in Mexico, and conclude loans with the government. In many cases German bankers cooperated with their American counterparts to their mutual advantage. But German capital investment in Mexico remained small (never more than 6.5% of total foreign investment there), and, as a result, German commercial operations, with few exceptions, did not offer a serious competitive threat to American or British companies.⁸ In fact, German-American cartel arrangements tended to limit potential German growth. It is true that by 1910 German concerns were planning a more ambitious involvement in Mexican raw materials, which might have significantly increased the level of competition, but these plans were never realized.⁹ Porfirio Díaz, who welcomed European investment to offset the flood of American money entering Mexico, once remarked that the Germans were too conservative in their Mexican dealings, especially in the field of industrial investments.¹⁰

In the sale of military weapons and technology, the Germans experienced some success, but again did not make any

spectacular gains. There were several reasons for this, perhaps the most important being the francophilia that was so prevalent in Mexico's científico circles. Contracts for military equipment were most often awarded to French concerns, at least in part because Manuel Mondragón, the War Ministry's chief procurement officer, held a substantial investment in a French munitions plant. When General Bernardo Reyes, a Germanophile, became the secretary of war in 1900, German hopes rose. Reyes, who was awarded several medals by the Germans (including the prestigious Order of the Red Eagle), did arrange several contracts for German equipment, but after he resigned in 1903, German prospects for making significant inroads in this field disappeared.¹¹ As Minister Karl Bunz wrote some years later, "There is not much to be hoped for from Mexico as long as Limantour [Díaz's financial wizard] and Mondragón control the country's finances and its army. Both are oriented toward France and not toward us."¹²

In spite of the pro-French tendencies of Mexico's elite, however, certain aspects of German military influence were evident in the Mexican armed forces. At the Chapultepec military school, for example, German military history was preferred, and German service regulations were employed; the same was true at the officer school in Tlalpan, where, in addition, the cadets wore German-style uniforms.¹³ Only a few Mexicans traveled to Germany for training, but of

these, one later became the head of Díaz's mounted bodyguard, which as a result also received German-style training. Partly because of the language barrier, then, German influence on the Mexican military was small, but it did exist, especially within the officer corps, and persisted even after Díaz's overthrow. In 1914, for example, General Aureliano Blanquet assured Franz von Papen (the German military attaché accredited to both the United States and Mexico) that he trained his troops according to German methods.¹⁴ Though limited, this early influence helps to explain the pro-German bias that would later appear within Mexican military circles.

Germany's attempts to gain influence within the Mexican military were inevitably tied to its political and diplomatic aims there. These were relatively insignificant before 1898, but then as German investment in Mexico increased, and especially because of the rising German-American rivalry, they assumed a more important role in German diplomatic strategy.¹⁵ As such, German policy in Mexico was guided by the same mixed motives, the same weighing of opportunities and risks, that characterized its diplomacy as a whole during this period. In 1902, for example, the German Minister to Mexico, Hans von Wangenheim, proposed a plan to infiltrate the Mexican army with German reservists. The Kaiser was "congenial" to the idea, and the German army expressed its willingness to cooperate in the scheme. But

in this as in other risky ventures, the moderating influence of Bülow and Speck von Sternberg (the German ambassador to Washington) consigned it to the growing list of projects abandoned in the name of stable German-American relations.¹⁶

At about the same time, an American lawyer in London informed Ambassador Choate that he had been approached by a German who expressed interest in buying a large tract of land in Baja, California near Magdalena Bay. When pressed, the German had stated that the real purchaser was none other than the Kaiser himself, "in his personal and individual capacity." Choate reported the incident to Secretary Hay. "We have a decidedly exposed flank there," he wrote, "and it seems pretty clear that the property is for sale and that the Germans are after it." While Hay's action, if any, is unknown, the purchase attempt was ultimately abandoned, most likely due to the same considerations that had doomed other such projects: Germany was increasingly unwilling to antagonize the United States.¹⁷ When the German Far Eastern naval squadron was scheduled to visit Mexico in 1904, the German chargé, Flöcker, hoped to capitalize on the occasion to arrange a German training program for Mexican naval officers. His plans were quashed by the Secretary of State, who wrote that "such a step, for reasons involving our relations with the United States, appears to us to be inopportune." Flöcker was further instructed to play down the

significance of the German naval visit, so that it could not "take on the character of a demonstration from which the United States, and particularly the American press, can draw the wrong conclusions." As a result, when the fleet did arrive Flocker did not even deliver to President Díaz the commander's invitation to inspect the flagship.¹⁸

Yet in spite of Germany's obvious desire to placate opinion in the United States, the opportunistic streak that lay beneath this conciliatory facade continued to influence planning when circumstances seemed propitious for the aggressive advancement of the ideals of Weltpolitik. The intense Japanese-American tensions which followed the Russo-Japanese War seemed to offer just such an opportunity.

Japan's dramatic victory over Russia put Americans on notice that they had a surprisingly powerful and ambitious rival in the Pacific, one that posed a potential danger to American interests in East Asia and perhaps even to the mainland itself. Racist legislation in California, Japan's increasingly aggressive posture in China, and Japanese sensitivities were among the other factors that combined to carry the two nations close to war in 1906 and 1907. Germany acted to exacerbate these tensions, partly because of the Kaiser's enthusiasm for action against the 'Yellow Peril,' but also because Japanese-American animosity could be exploited by Germany to its own best advantage. Continued friction between Japan and America, Germany's rivals in

East Asia and Latin America, could promote German interests in several ways. Germany hoped to gain a powerful ally in the United States; but if this failed, animosity or war between its rivals would weaken their objections to Germany's policies and provide openings for German advances while America and Japan were preoccupied with each other.

During this time, therefore, Germany attempted to take advantage of Japanese-American tensions to promote its own interests in Mexico. Mexico could be developed into a counterweight to the United States. The Mexicans were also alive to the possibility of using the Germans to strengthen their hand against the United States, and tried to play off Germany against the Americans.

In late 1906, for example, President Díaz and the governor of Mexico's Federal District called in Minister Wangenheim to tell him of their plans to begin a system of universal military service in Mexico, and to inquire whether Germany would be willing to send military advisers to Mexico to help with the project. Wangenheim realized, he reported to Bülow, that the "thrust of the military reform... is aimed at the United States."¹⁹ Yet he argued that the idea held certain commercial and strategic advantages for Germany. Arms contracts would be more easily obtainable for German firms, Wangenheim noted, but, in addition, a Mexican military power could "become a factor in military calculations involving the United States." Hence, a "military

friendship" with Mexico could have a "certain value" to Germany. "After all," he wrote, "World History is full of surprises."²⁰ As Warren Schiff writes, Wangenheim's argument foreshadowed some of the philosophy behind the famous Zimmermann note. But the contradictions of Germany's convoluted policy precluded any such action. Recent events in East Asia had encouraged Wilhelm to consider the idea of a German-American alliance, and his unlikely reaction to Wangenheim's report was that the United States might actually welcome a Mexico strengthened by Germany. In the event of a clash between America and Japan, he noted, "America will be pleased to have [Mexico] as a powerful ally."²¹ The Kaiser's illusions fortunately did not result in action on the proposal.

Wangenheim, realizing that he had made a mistake, less than a year later wrote that any plan to introduce German advisers into Mexico would be misguided. An important consideration, Wangenheim argued, was the effect such a militarization of Mexico would have on the security of German bondholders, who depended on a stable government in Mexico and the ability of the United States to intervene in case of trouble to maintain the value of their bonds. This, combined with the strains that a Mexican militarization might place on its economy, convinced Wangenheim that German interests would be "better served by the [francophile] Limantour regime and modest American surveillance than by a

reorganized Mexican army.²² Instead, he contended, Germany's "sole task must be to avoid friction with the United States all along the line, yet do our best to increase friction between the United States and other countries." He continued:²³

Mexico might have 400,000 well-armed and well-trained troops in ten years and thereby win a decided influence on further developments in the Western Hemisphere. A Mexico that had been strengthened by German aid could then perhaps become politically and militarily useful to us...but one should depend on the tangible in politics and not on a questionable greatness in the future.

When Japanese-American tensions reached their height in 1907, and it was learned that Mexico planned to meet with French advisers, the idea was resurrected, but in 1908 as the war scare ended, the plan was again abandoned.²⁴

In the meantime rumors were circulating which contended that thousands of Japanese reservists were infiltrating into Mexico, ostensibly in preparation for a coming war with the United States. Wangenheim skeptically reported to Bulow in May, 1907 that "The Japanese are now spread throughout the country and are armed. In the state of Chihuahua there are currently 5,000 Japanese ready to bear arms and an additional 3,000 in the state of Jalisco." These reservists were supposed to have been seen practicing close-order drill, and to be wearing uniforms, insignia, or both. In July came another report, stating that "according to the English consulate," thousands of Japanese were arriving

every month, among them officers of general rank. Wangenheim thought the truth of the rumors to be unlikely, but, he noted, "It's not completely out of the question that Japan might intend to make a landing in Mexico..."²⁵

The Kaiser not only accepted the rumors but passed them on as fact after a little embellishment. To Czar Nicholas he wrote that the Japanese had massed ten thousand troops in Mexico and planned to use them to attack the Panama Canal. ("This is my secret information for YOU PERSONALLY," he told "Nicky." "It is sure information and good as you well know by now that I never gave you a wrong one.")²⁶

Meanwhile Theodore Roosevelt was receiving a series of ominous telegrams from Charlemagne Tower, the U.S. ambassador in Berlin, which relayed German opinions concerning the probability of a Japanese attack on the United States. For example, Tower wrote in November that a German official had told him that the Japanese were fully armed and "almost ready to go to war," and that the Germans believed the Japanese would attack before the Panama Canal was finished.²⁷ Two months later, Tower transmitted the Kaiser's "facts" concerning the 10,000 Japanese "with brass buttons on their coats" drilling in Mexico in preparation for an attack on the United States. Roosevelt was not impressed, and called the rumor an "imperial pipe dream"; nor was he interested in a German offer to help repel a Japanese invasion of America

with German troops.²⁸

Japanese diplomats, who had been busy trying to ease Japanese-American tensions, rightly blamed Germany for inciting rumors and stirring up trouble between Japan and the United States. The Japanese ambassador to Washington, for example, openly expressed his belief in 1908 that the Germans were deliberately attempting to poison Japanese-American relations.²⁹ While German officials did believe that a Japanese-American war was imminent,³⁰ they did little to ease tensions between the two countries and in fact often seemed to be egging them on. Thomas Bailey goes so far as to label Wilhelm the "evil genius" of the period for his role in promoting conflict between Japan and the United States.³¹

The element of truth in this accusation becomes even more apparent when the origins of another Japanese-American war scare are examined. In March of 1911, just as Francisco Madero's revolt against Díaz began to gain its final momentum, a strikingly consistent rumor began circulating among diplomats that Japan and Mexico had concluded a secret treaty.³² When President Taft ordered 20,000 troops to the Mexican border, the stories became more insistent, and on April 9, the New York Sun ran a sensational article on the subject with the headline "SECRET TREATY PHOTOGRAPH." According to the Sun's story, President Díaz had already ratified the agreement, and Henry Lane Wilson, the American

ambassador to Mexico, had acquired a copy. Attempts by the State Department to find the truth behind the story revealed two facts: H.L. Wilson denied ever having even seen the treaty, and the Sun reporter who wrote it admitted that his source was Herwarth von Bittenfeld, the German military attaché to the United States and Mexico.³³ Nonetheless the scheme did succeed in creating some trouble between Japan and the United States; many people, including the British minister to Mexico, believed Taft's mobilization order was a show of force to impress Japan, although this was definitely not the case.³⁴

It is not known whether or not a secret treaty actually was concluded, but its existence seems unlikely. The strongest evidence that it did exist comes from the memoirs of Horst von der Goltz, a German agent who later became the chief of German intelligence efforts in Mexico. In his book Goltz claimed that he personally stole the treaty from Limantour in Paris in classic cloak and dagger fashion and supplied a copy of it to Henry Lane Wilson.³⁵ Yet Goltz seems prone to exaggeration, and Wilson denied that he ever saw any treaty. Other diplomats, including the Mexican ambassador to Japan, discounted the rumor.³⁶ The Japanese consul in Portland, Oregon supplied the most believable explanation in a dispatch to Tokyo:³⁷

One hears, for example, that this maneuver by American land and naval forces is aimed at restraining Japanese intentions toward Mexico, and that the

government's real target is not so much Mexico as Japan. One hears that there are observers that have seen 50,000 Japanese currently carrying out military maneuvers on the Pacific Coast of Mexico ... and that Japanese warships have left Japan... headed for Mexico. One also hears that negotiations for an alliance are currently in progress between Japan and Mexico. Various people cite the view of German military expert Count Ernst von Leventow that Japan will begin a war with the United States before the completion of the Panama Canal....The reports cited above are to be understood as an attempt to whip up the local population's hostility to Japan....All this...can be attributed ...to the machinations of a third country, which hopes to take advantage of America's estrangement from Japan.

Obviously this "third country" was Germany.

This is not to say that the rumors linking Mexico and Japan were entirely unfounded or simply the creation of German propaganda. The Japanese had been systematically surveying the Mexican Pacific coast for some time,³⁸ and American military planners, among others, were well aware that the Mexican border was the "soft underbelly" of the United States. American military contingency plans assumed that a Japanese invasion of the United States, if it ever occurred, would cut through Mexico on the way to the Mississippi Valley to slice the United States in half. As General Henry J. Reilly of Pershing's staff contended, "Every European and Asian General Staff which has studied a possible war with the United States recognizes the great advantage of an alliance with Mexico."³⁹ Moreover, Japan deliberately cultivated its relationship with Mexico, especially under Díaz, which resulted in some exceptionally warm

expressions of friendship. In April 1911, for example, Grand Admiral Yashiro of the Japanese fleet made a state visit to Mexico and was entertained at Chapultepec Palace with a lavish banquet. It was reported that after much wine, Yashiro made a somewhat drunken speech in which he stressed the two nations' common cause in opposing the Yankees while his Mexican audience punctuated his talk with enthusiastic applause and cries of "Viva Japon! Abajo los Gringos!"⁴⁰ The German propaganda campaigns exploited some unquestionably strong feelings on all sides. If Germany did not create these tensions, it did what it could to bring them to a boil.

The most intense Japanese-American tensions subsided after 1908, however, and with them disappeared Germany's hopes for a German-American alliance and its tentative and rather contradictory plans for a more aggressive stance in Mexico. But the period from 1906-1911, as contradictory as it was for German policymakers, marked the beginning of an interesting trend in German planning concerning the United States and Mexico. Having had to abandon for the time being the idea of a direct conflict with America, and finding that the United States was not interested in an alliance, Germany began to resort to a variation of "jackal diplomacy" by attempting to pit its rivals against other powers. Barbara Vogel described this strategy as "Weltpolitik without war, but with the war of others!"⁴¹ One possibility considered

was to strengthen Mexico to provide a counterweight to the United States, but this was judged too risky. Another possible break for Germany, a conflict between the United States and Japan, did not materialize when expected, even when encouraged by rumormongering and Wilhelm's tactless if not ingenuous warnings concerning the imminent danger of the Yellow Peril.

Still, the strategy itself was basically sound from Germany's point of view, and it remained a tool of German policy. With Germany's "free hand" to independently pursue world power increasingly paralyzed, "Weltpolitik with the wars of others" was an attractive expedient. Using this tactic Germany could indirectly work to achieve its aggressive ambitions, yet risk little prestige or goodwill. Moreover, tensions between other nations could divert attention from Germany's more overt activities and perhaps even make it a more attractive ally. In a sense, this strategy represented an attempt to resolve the conflicting demands of German policy: it was designed to opportunistically exploit international tensions to change the status quo in Germany's favor while allowing a relatively low diplomatic profile. "Weltpolitik with the wars of others" carried its own risks, however. If implemented indiscretely or obtusely, it could awaken suspicion, resentment, and even hostility within the very nations it hoped to neutralize.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER II

¹Daniel Cosío Villegas, The United States Versus Porfirio Díaz, (Lincoln: 1963), 38.

²Warren Schiff, "The Germans in Mexican Trade and Industry during the Díaz Period," The Americas 23 (July 1966-April 1967), 279-296.

³Ibid., 293.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Howard F. Cline, The United States and Mexico, (New York: 1965), 109.

⁶Schiff, "Germans in Mexican Trade," 284.

⁷Katz, Friedrich, The Secret War in Mexico: Europe, the United States, and the Mexican Revolution, (Chicago: 1981), 50; Small, "German 'Threat,'" 256; Schiff, "Germans in Mexican Trade," 286-87. As Schiff points out the exact figure is difficult to determine because it is unknown how much German trade passing through New York became confused with shipments from the United States proper.

⁸Katz, Secret War, 50-58.

⁹Ibid., 55-59, 61.

¹⁰Schiff, "Germans in Mexican Trade," 290.

¹¹Katz, Secret War, 60.

¹²Warren Schiff, "German Military Penetration into Mexico During the Late Díaz Period," Hispanic American

Historical Review [hereafter HAHR] 39 (November 1954), 578;
Katz, Secret War, 60-61.

¹³Schiff, "German Military Penetration," 576.

¹⁴Franz von Papen, Memoirs, Brian Connell, trans.,
(London: 1952), 16.

¹⁵Katz, Secret War, 62.

¹⁶Schiff, "German Military Penetration," 568-570.

¹⁷Barbara Tuchman, The Zimmermann Telegram, (New York:
1958), 28.

¹⁸Katz, Secret War, 64.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Schiff, "German Military Penetration," 571; Katz,
Secret War, 65.

²¹Katz, Secret War, 65.

²²Schiff, "German Military Penetration," 571.

²³Katz, Secret War, 65-66.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid., 68.

²⁶Tuchman, Zimmermann Telegram, 30.

²⁷Thomas A. Bailey, Theodore Roosevelt and the Japan-
ese-American Crises, (Stanford: 1934), 329.

³²Tuchman, Zimmermann Telegram, 36-37.

³³Ibid., 37; Katz, Secret War, 76.

³⁴Peter Calvert, The Mexican Revolution 1910-1914:
The Diplomacy of Anglo-American Conflict, (Cambridge:1968),
50-52.

³⁵Horst von der Goltz, My Adventures as a German Secret Service Agent, (London: 1918), 80-99.

³⁶Katz, Secret War, 77.

³⁷Ibid., 77-78.

³⁸Calvert, Mexican Revolution, 50. Japan does not seem to have had any real intention to establish a base on the Mexican coast. See Thomas A. Bailey, "The Lodge Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine," Political Science Quarterly 47 (1933), 220-239.

³⁹Tuchman, Zimmermann Telegram, 59-60, 221n.

⁴⁰Ibid., 34.

⁴¹Barbara Vogel, quoted in Emanuel Geiss, German Foreign Policy 1871-1914, (London: 1976), 229n.

CHAPTER III

NEW ELEMENTS: THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION, GERMANY, AND THE UNITED STATES, 1911-1914

Francisco I. Madero certainly did not match anyone's conception of a Mexican strongman. He was, as T.R. Fehrenbach put it, "a little man barely measuring five feet, bird-like and quivering, with a high pitched, squeaky voice."¹ A confirmed vegetarian, Madero practiced homeopathy and had been converted to spiritualism during his adolescent days in France. His dark, penetrating eyes, unimpeachable honesty, and almost uncanny ability to remain composed under even the most chaotic circumstances complete a portrait of a highly unusual caudillo. Yet this was the man who pushed Porfirio Díaz out of Mexico's presidential chair with relative ease.

Madero, a wealthy hacendado, had been relatively unknown before the publication of his book, The Presidential Succession of 1910. Its enormous success convinced him to run against Díaz in 1910 on the Anti-Reelectionist Party ticket. Madero simply advocated a program of peaceful, democratic succession, but his opposition to Diaz attracted an enthusiastic response from the many Mexicans dissatisfied with the dictatorship. Don Porfirio, who was out of touch

with the mood of the country, did not take his opponent very seriously. He had Madero arrested as a precautionary measure, and then declared himself the winner of the election with 99% of the vote.

Madero's escape in October and his subsequent revolt only increased the little reformer's popularity, however. The rebellion spread quickly. On May 26, 1911, Díaz boarded a ship headed for France, but with some prophetic parting words for Mexico. "Madero has unleashed a tiger," he said. "Let us see if he can control him."²

Two weeks later Madero rode triumphantly into Mexico City and was greeted by a reception that one American observer described as "one of the most remarkable in all history....three days of plaudits and admiration such as only the Roman emperor knew." The people saw Madero as their "messiah," she said, and crowded the rooftops along his route "throwing flowers and green branches as he passed."³ After an overwhelming electoral victory, Madero became president of Mexico on November 11, 1911.

In spite of its auspicious beginnings, however, Madero's presidency was rocky and tumultuous, and ended with his arrest and murder only fifteen months after he took office. His successful overthrow of the Díaz regime had indeed taken the cork out of the bottle and released forces he could not or would not control. Madero's domestic difficulties were compounded by his poor relations with the

diplomatic community in Mexico City, especially the American ambassador, Henry Lane Wilson, who came to detest Madero and his policies and eventually worked actively to remove him from the presidency.

German policy with regard to Mexico during the regimes of Madero and his successor, Victoriano Huerta, was multifaceted and complex, but in general it was designed to promote Germany's world policy objectives and to maximize protection for German nationals, investments, and trade from dangers posed by revolutionary violence. This translated into acquiescence to American policy, though not support for it, because Germany hoped to remain on good terms with the United States but did not relish the idea of American military intervention. During Madero's presidency, these considerations caused Paul von Hintze, the German minister, to work closely with the American ambassador. President Woodrow Wilson's moralistic attempts to dislodge Huerta, Madero's successor, however, brought an end to this confluence of interests. As Kaiser Wilhelm remarked, the "stand for morality" was "all right," but "what about dividends?"⁴

That Rear Admiral Paul von Hintze was appointed in 1911 to be Germany's new minister to Mexico at all is an indication of the growing importance given the Mexican post by his superiors. Hintze (a future Foreign Minister) was considered to be one of the most competent German diplomats. Moreover, he was a confidant of the Kaiser, whom he had

served as a personal emissary to Russia; and preceding his assignment to Mexico, he was Wilhelm's aide-de-camp. Hintze was a pan-Germanist in sympathies, and his field of expertise was East Asian affairs. Years earlier, he had served under Admiral Diederichs during the Manila crisis and had been the German officer at whom Dewey had shouted "If your admiral wants a fight he can have it now!"⁵ A man of Hintze's caliber was apparently thought to be necessary to handle Germany's delicate position in revolutionary Mexico.

During Madero's presidency, with the constant possibility of an American intervention, this meant that Hintze had to "dance on eggs" in both economic and political matters. More precisely, Germany was unwilling to take any overt action against the United States there alone. "The European countries," Hintze wrote, "all live with the fear of coming into open conflict with the policies of the United States."⁶ Even when the Americans pressed Madero for a reciprocity treaty, which could have placed German imports at a distinct disadvantage there, the German response was low key. As Secretary of State Alfred von Kiderlen-Wächter wrote Hintze in 1911, "for our policy in Mexico our general guideline is to defend German interest energetically, but, aside from that, to do everything we can to keep a low profile. We also hold to this policy on the question of the American efforts at the reciprocity agreement. The means we use to fight them must be applied covertly

wherever possible."⁷ As a result, Hintze's actions on this question were minimal; he unsuccessfully attempted surreptitiously to place pro-German articles in the Mexican press, and encouraged German bankers to ask for Mexican assurances in their loan negotiations that no reciprocity agreement would be concluded. As it turned out, the American reciprocity overtures were not accepted by the Madero government, but Germany's opinion on the matter had little to do with the decision.⁸

The same considerations determined Germany's political stance in Mexican affairs at this time. Minister Hintze's instructions actually specified that Germany had no political interests in Mexico. "If I understand the instructions properly," Hintze replied, "this means that Germany's relation to Mexico's political orientation is that of observation and waiting."⁹ Even friendly gestures by the Mexican government did not shake this opinion. When Francisco Leon de la Barra, the provisional president before Madero took office, told Hintze that "Mexico's foreign policy will aim at reliance on Europe and especially on Germany," Hintze did not pursue the matter. In fact, he suggested to Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg that Germany's neutral position be spelled out to de la Barra "to avoid any dangers raised by silence or even ambiguity."¹⁰

Yet in spite of this great reluctance to antagonize the United States, Germans continued to work behind the

scenes to advance their country's interests. In 1911, for example, a certain German businessman, Mardus, proposed to Madero that Mexico institute a system of universal military service, with the army to be trained along German lines and supplied with German military equipment. Mardus explained that political realities argued against direct German involvement: "Since Germany must avoid a war with the United States, as long as the English Bulldog is squatting at the German gates in the form of a larger fleet," he said, "Germany should not tempt the powerful Yankee, who speaks so lightly of war."¹¹ Instead, he offered an indirect arrangement whereby the Mexicans would be trained by instructors from Chile, where the German army already exerted influence and whose army had already sent military advisers to several other Latin American countries. In addition, Mardus suggested that a number of Mexicans join the German army in secret to become familiar with its methods and organization. Madero seems to have been impressed with the plan and apparently considered the possibility of implementing it: in September of 1912 the Mexican military attaché in Chile was ordered to conduct research "on how the German military system can be adopted by a Latin American country."¹² The extent of the German Foreign Office's knowledge or approval of this plan is unknown, but it does signify that the German efforts to extend their influence in Mexico had not come to a complete standstill.

Moreover, Herwarth von Bittenfeld, the German military attaché in Washington who had planted the "secret treaty" story in the New York Sun, continued to encourage U.S.-Japanese tensions over Mexico. In February of 1912 an anonymous article entitled "A Letter to Uncle Sam" appeared in the Atlantic Monthly in which the author argued that only "an alliance of the white race" could stop the "Yellow Peril." In addition, the author contended that the Monroe Doctrine was an "anachronism" that would eventually have to be abandoned south of Panama; the United States would need "Germany's prestige" to enforce it farther south. He also touched on the question of Japanese influence in Mexico:¹³

In spite of all denials, Japan is flirting with Mexico....Japan would like to make Mexico into a base for the protection of its interests on this continent....If Mexico actually responds to the Japanese siren song, then we [the United States] must take over Mexico.

Bittenfeld was enthusiastic about the article and sent a copy to his superiors in Berlin, saying it was the "first swallow" in a new American orientation. He also sent part of his report on the article to the New York Sun, which printed it under the byline of "Germanicus." Here Bittenfeld argued that a coalition of the United States, Germany and Britain could "divide the world among themselves and place a distance between themselves and the upward-striving colored peoples which will last forever."¹⁴

Efforts of this sort sometimes generated counterpro-

ductive results. In 1912 Manuel Calero, the Mexican foreign minister, bitterly complained to Hintze of Germany's "ultra-Machiavellianism." He had information, he said, from "well-informed" sources, that "Germany is pushing the United States to intervene in Mexico in hopes of tying up the United States in a long-term war and thereby make it an object of hatred for all of Latin America. While the United States is caught in this snare, Germany wants to emerge as the savior of the Latin American countries and to begin settlements and annexations there."¹⁵

Hintze vehemently denied the allegation, calling it "the height of poor taste and...unnecessary to waste time or words on..." "I was forced to lecture Calero on history," he reported, "to prove that Germany's interests have always been congruent or parallel to Mexico's. I think I succeeded in defusing the story."¹⁶

The source of this rumor is unknown, but it is clear that the policy to which Calero referred is strikingly parallel to the actual course German policy would follow in later years, and that it bears a certain resemblance to the hopeful scenarios concocted by Bittenfield and other Germans in which the power of the United States would be neutralized or diverted for Germany's benefit. Friedrich Katz¹⁷ argues that the truth of the rumor is "unlikely" because German policy at the time aimed to prevent the United States from intervening in Mexico and because Germany's increasingly

tense relations with Great Britain would prevent the German Empire from unilaterally exploiting such an opportunity to expand its influence in South America. But Germany's policies during this time were often contradictory, and, as we shall see, Germany approached Great Britain concerning a joint military intervention (which would have been a much more serious matter) as late as July 1914. While it is possible, then, that the rumor was the product of an over-imaginative American mind, the possibility that it was the result of a Teutonic brainstorm should not be dismissed out of hand. In any case, the very fact that Calero would react so strongly to the rumor is an indication that the Mexican foreign minister, at least, took it very seriously, and that Germany's motives were highly suspect in the eyes of certain diplomats.

As Madero's presidency was threatened by a series of revolts by both revolutionary and counterrevolutionary factions, Hintze, like Henry Lane Wilson, became increasingly discouraged about Madero's inability to provide order and stability in Mexico, which threatened the lives and interests of foreign nationals. Emiliano Zapata and his followers continually harassed Madero's troops in a guerilla war in Morelos to force concessions on land reform, while the right-wing generals Bernardo Reyes and Félix Díaz began abortive coups in Tamaulipas and Veracruz. The most serious threat to the government was led in 1912 by Pascual Orozco,

a disgruntled revolutionary with conservative backing, but Orozco's rebellion was also crushed by federal troops.

Some observers saw hope in Madero's consistent success in dealing with the uprisings. Sir James Stronge, the British minister to Mexico, reported in September of 1912: "Personally I believe the present state of affairs is very much what was to be expected, and that things will gradually improve, unless they should be disturbed by some unforeseen incident."¹⁸

Henry Lane Wilson, however, reported the situation in increasingly gloomy terms and began to attack Madero bitterly in his dispatches and to the press. At one point he publicly declared that Madero should be committed to a madhouse.¹⁹ Privately, Wilson expressed his belief that U.S. military intervention was called for, and on one occasion the State Department strongly rebuked him for sounding out the British ambassador on the matter.²⁰ By the spring of 1912 Wilson was completely disgusted with the direction of Madero's policies and with Madero's failure to act on his advice. An American diplomat's wife wrote in April that "Mr. W. [Wilson] has been so convinced from the beginning that Madero could not fill the position that he has lost interest in personal communications."²¹

Minister Hintze, too, believed Madero was unequal to the task. He reported that Madero's "cardinal error lies in his...belief that he can rule the Mexican people as one

would rule one of the more advanced Germanic nations. This raw people of half-savages without religion, with its small ruling stratum of superficially civilized mestizos, can live with no regime other than enlightened despotism." (the Kaiser's margin note: "Right!")²² Hintze and Wilson came to agree that Mexico needed a strong leader of the Porfirian stripe to save Mexico from anarchy. In Hintze's view, "the little conspirators, people who anywhere else would be known only as scoundrels---the De la Barras, the Flores Magóns, and so on---have neither the moral nor physical courage to strike. All that remains for a revolution having any hope of success is once again the army, naturally, under a leader of a higher caliber than the theatrical Felix Diaz." The name of Hintze's candidate for the position began to creep into his dispatches, a general who "many viewed as a strongman"---Victoriano Huerta.²³

On Sunday, February 9, 1912, the meticulously planned coup that eventually unseated Madero began to unfold. Columns of military cadets and troops loyal to Félix Díaz marched to the military prison and the penitentiary. Díaz and Bernardo Reyes, imprisoned for their earlier revolts, were released without resistance, and the rebels proceeded to the National Palace, where they were opposed by General Luaro Villar, the loyal Federal commander. After a brief fight, the attackers were repulsed, and, led by Félix Díaz, they moved on to take the Ciudadela, the federal fortress

near the center of Mexico City. General Reyes was killed in the attack; Villar was seriously wounded. The Decena Trájica, the Ten Tragic Days, had begun.

For the next eight days General Díaz and his troops held the Ciudadela, while hundreds of government soldiers died in useless frontal assaults on the rebel's position. The streets were littered with the unrecoverable bloated bodies of dead soldiers and civilians caught in artillery and machine gun cross fire. General Victoriano Huerta, whom Madero had appointed to replace the injured Villar, was actually in secret communication with Díaz from the first day of the coup, and the bloody battles were only a cynical ruse to stall for time while the two generals negotiated for power.²⁴

Wilson and Hintze saw the situation as a unique opportunity to replace Madero, and they, together with the Spanish and British ministers, cooperated officially and unofficially during this time by explicitly withdrawing their support for Madero and implicitly supporting the coup. Most accounts of the Decena Trájica justly condemn the American ambassador's high-handed and fateful encouragement of the rebels, which was so blatant that the Cuban minister later called the American embassy a "center of conspiracy;"²⁵ but, as Peter Calvert points out, too little attention is given to the roles played by other foreign diplomats.²⁶ As American ambassador and "dean" of the diplomatic community in

Mexico City, Wilson naturally took precedence, but it was the cooperation of the British, Spanish, and German diplomats that enabled him to justify many of his actions on the grounds that he spoke for the "diplomatic corps" as a whole. (Representatives of Latin American countries were apparently not consulted in any of the decisions made by the "corps" during this time.)

An important factor behind the joint effort was the terrifying danger of the battle itself, which threatened the nearby embassies and seemed to many to be the final proof of Madero's weaknesses. The Spanish minister, Bernardo Cologon y Cologon, was justifiably concerned for the safety of the very large Spanish population for which he was responsible; he himself had been through the siege of Peking and did not wish to repeat the experience.²⁷ Sir Francis Stronge, the British minister, was a somewhat timid character whose sensitivity to violence was no doubt reinforced when his car was stopped and robbed by a group of renegade federal soldiers.²⁸ Stronge may also have had economic motives for his support of Wilson's position.²⁹ In any case, Cologon and Stronge joined with Wilson and Hintze on February 15 in suggesting that Madero resign and in other ways let it be known that they shared Wilson's animosity towards Madero's government. Cologon, for example, encouraged federal army officers to refuse to fight for Madero,³⁰ while Stronge went so far as to suggest to Wilson American threats of intervention.³¹

Hintze's role was also significant, and this episode provides an interesting example of American and German interests in Mexico in simultaneous congruence and conflict. In his memoirs, Henry Lane Wilson himself singled out Hintze as a valuable collaborator in the unfolding diplomatic drama:³²

I formed a high opinion of Admiral von Hintze from the first moment of our acquaintance and this opinion I had no occasion to modify subsequently. Through all the trying hours of the revolutions against Diaz and Madero, culminating in the bombardment of the City of Mexico, his sympathy and advice were of infinite value. While the bombardment was in progress he was especially active and supported me in every crisis with unswerving courage and absolute disregard of every consideration except the faithful performance of the duties pertaining to his high office.

During the days of the Decena Trágica Hintze conspicuously accompanied H.L. Wilson on several visits to Madero, Díaz, and Huerta, demonstrating his solidarity with Wilson's diplomatic initiatives by his presence if not his words. But Hintze's "sympathy" for Wilson's actions had its limits. As we have seen, Hintze was interested in replacing Madero with a "strongman" who could establish a semblance of order in Mexico. He and the American ambassador were in complete agreement on this point, which was the foundation of their cooperation, but they differed in their estimations of who that successor should be. As a result, their actions took parallel courses until Hintze came to believe that Wilson wanted to install the supposedly pro-American Félix Díaz in the presidency. Hintze, of course, had no wish to see a

pro-American regime in power. Moreover, he had little respect for Díaz, whom he described in dispatches to Berlin as unintelligent and "more impulsive than strong."³³ On February 17, the day before Madero was arrested, Hintze reported to his superiors in Berlin: "American ambassador working openly for Díaz, told Madero in my presence he is doing so because Díaz is pro-American. This partisanship is making the activities of the diplomatic corps difficult...Am working with all energy solely for the protection of Germans, am otherwise distancing myself from other American requests without actual clashes."³⁴ The same day, hoping to sidetrack the efforts of the American ambassador, Hintze took steps to promote Huerta's chances. Without notifying Wilson, he approached Pedro Lascurain, the foreign minister, with a plan to install Huerta as "Governor General of Mexico, with full powers to end the revolution according to his own judgment." Lascurain took the idea to Madero, who by this time was struggling against a wave of requests for his resignation and Wilson's intimidating (and unauthorized) threats of American intervention. Some time later Lascurain returned with the news that Madero had "essentially accepted" the arrangement, but that Huerta would not necessarily be his choice for governor. Hintze then made his position clear, saying "every minute counts, and that it seems to me Huerta is the only man with sufficient prestige in the army. The selection of some one

else---who is perhaps weaker---would be a serious mistake."³⁵

But Madero's fatal optimism scotched the proposal. Buoyed by an encouraging telegram from President Taft which denied any American intentions of intervention, and by the arrival of new troops, Madero believed he could ride out the trouble.³⁶ On the morning of the 18th, he tersely refused a group of senators asking for his resignation, saying, "I will never resign. The people have elected me, and I will die, if necessary, in the fulfillment of my obligation."³⁷ Only hours later Madero was arrested at gunpoint by General Blanquet, and Victoriano Huerta announced that he had assumed the executive power.

That night the two contending generals met at the American embassy to hammer out the details of an agreement. H.L. Wilson's sympathies were obvious; he shouted "Long live Félix Díaz, saviour of Mexico!" as his favorite entered the door.³⁸ But Wilson was not match for Huerta, who knew he had the upper hand in the negotiations and, in any case, it was enough for Wilson that Madero would be replaced. After a "triangular discussion," as Wilson later described it, Félix Díaz walked out with nothing to show for his efforts but Huerta's empty promise of support in the next elections. Both Wilson and Hintze had reason to be gratified with the results.

Two days later, after having tendered their resigna-

tions, Madero and his vice-president were "shot while trying to escape" while being transferred to the penitentiary. The actual extent of Huerta's responsibility for the murders has never been satisfactorily determined, but Madero's death and the patently false official explanation (which almost nobody believed) left a stain on Huerta's administration that severely damaged his chances for successful rule, as well as his supporters' hopes for the establishment of order in Mexico. Though at first Huerta's backers believed that he could rally foreign and domestic support, Madero's murder crystallized domestic opposition to Huerta and brought down upon his administration the moralistic wrath of the new president of the United States, Woodrow Wilson.

Notwithstanding an oblique promise in the "Embassy Pact" to address the "agrarian question," Huerta's seizure of power did nothing to quell the revolt in Morelos, although a few Zapatistas did hail the new government.³⁹ More ominously, large-scale opposition to Huerta began to form in the north under the Constitutionalist banner of Venustiano Carranza, who allied his movement with a growing insurrection in Chihuahua headed by Pancho Villa. On March 26 Carranza issued the "Plan de Guadalupe," which denounced Huerta as a traitor, named Carranza the "First Chief of the Constitutionalist Army," and proclaimed his intention to oust Huerta from the presidency.⁴⁰ The Constitutionalist cause steadily attracted followers (though Zapata was not

among them), and in October the Constitutionals established their own provisional government.

Woodrow Wilson's attitude toward Huerta's regime was encapsulated in his private remark, "I will not recognize a government of butchers."⁴¹ Convinced by reports from his confidential agent, William B. Hale, that Huerta was indeed responsible for Madero's death, the President began a series of moves intended to remove Huerta from the presidency.

At first President Wilson hoped the application of diplomatic and economic pressure would convince Huerta to step down voluntarily. In July, Henry Lane Wilson, who had been urging the State Department to recognize Huerta, was recalled and not replaced; non-recognition would make it difficult for Huerta to obtain financing. The charge, Nelson O'Shaughnessy, would handle American affairs in Mexico. And, since O'Shaughnessy was not considered to be entirely reliable,⁴² his efforts were supplemented by the assignment of a series of trusted "confidential agents" to conduct more delicate negotiations and report on the situation in general.

In August, Wilson sent John Lind, the third "confidential agent" to visit Mexico City, to needle Huerta with promises and threats. Lind offered Huerta a "simple" solution to his problem: if Huerta would hold new elections and exclude himself from office, the United States would confer recognition and provide the Mexican government with a

sizeable loan. If not, Lind threatened, the United States would either intervene militarily or recognize the increasingly powerful Constitutionalist rebels who had promised to fight Huerta to the death. Huerta at first refused to consider these threats and bribes, but by late August a settlement seemed possible. Huerta's secretary of foreign affairs commented to Lind that the Mexican constitution prohibited Huerta from succeeding himself in any case; and in September, Huerta stated his "ardent desire to turn [the] government over to a constitutional successor." When Huerta's secretary of state was nominated for the presidency by the Catholic Party, Wilson's secretary of state, William Jennings Bryan, wrote his President that "I feel we have nearly reached the end of our trouble."⁴³ But if Huerta had ever actually intended to step down, Wilson's hopes were dashed and his anger roused by the events of October 12, when Huerta strengthened his internal position by imprisoning 112 Mexican deputies. "Huerta," O'Shaughnessy reported, may now be considered an absolute military dictator."⁴⁴

The true dimensions of Wilson's dilemma became even clearer the next day, when Sir Lionel Carden, the new British ambassador to Mexico, presented his credentials to the dictator. Britain had recognized Huerta as early as March 15, but Carden's move seemed to demonstrate the strength of Britain's support for this regime and highlighted the already obvious divergence of American and European policies

with respect to Huerta's Mexico. Wilson's "missionary diplomacy,"⁴⁵ his determination to teach the Mexicans to elect good leaders, reflected the President's urge to spread the blessings of democracy and Christian principles,⁴⁶ but it also caused the United States to become increasingly mired in Mexico's frustrating domestic disputes and threatened to produce serious frictions between the United States and other nations with interests in Mexico.

Wilson's early condemnation of Huerta's regime had not been shared in European capitals, where it was generally believed that Huerta would offer a better chance for Mexican stability than Madero had been able to provide. And, to the Europeans, more attached to traditional diplomatic recognition procedures, the "morality" of Huerta's coup was not the final criterion of the legitimacy of his regime. The fundamental question was whether or not he could reasonably be expected to remain in power and fulfill Mexico's international obligations.⁴⁷ When it became clear that this was the case, Britain recognized the new Mexican government; other European nations, including Germany, soon followed suit, as did several Latin American countries. This had irritated Woodrow Wilson somewhat, but the news of Huerta's expulsion of the opposition deputies, combined with Lind's reports that Carden had somehow influenced Huerta to ignore the wishes of the United States, threw him into a rage. On his own typewriter Wilson composed the outline for a heated

circular dispatch accusing certain European powers of supporting Huerta "without regard to the wishes of the United States." Wilson wanted to know whether these powers would support the United States policy or "is it their policy and intention to antagonize and thwart us and make our task one of domination and force?" He wanted the British to know that "the bottom was about to drop out when Sir Lionel Carden appeared upon the scene and took charge of its rehabilitation."⁴⁸ In fact, the proposed note charged that recognition of Huerta was a violation of the Monroe Doctrine, and demanded that the European powers withdraw recognition of Huerta "in behalf of the people of the Western hemisphere."⁴⁹

The spirit behind this message emerged two days later in Wilson's Mobile address, delivered October 21. This speech, which was intended to outline Wilson's policy in Latin America, was also laced with barely veiled attacks on Britain's Mexican policy, which, Wilson contended, was motivated by its "sordid" material interests there.⁵⁰ His promise that the United States would never seek "one additional foot" of territory in Mexico was a sly reminder that American military intervention had not yet been ruled out.⁵¹ Colonel House, the President's "alter ego," thought the speech was great, but Europeans had a different reaction. A Berlin paper labeled Wilson's ideas "imperialistic delirium."⁵²

Fortunately for Wilson, the blustering circular he had written earlier was never distributed. John Bassett Moore, the State Department's Counselor, had refused to send it, and on Wilson's return to Washington Moore took the occasion to instruct his President on the basics of diplomatic practice. "Recognition is an act performed in the ordinary course of diplomatic relations," Moore reminded the President, adding, "There is nothing in the record to show that the governments that recognized the administration at the city of Mexico in May, June, or July last felt they were doing anything unusual or requiring explanation.... Nor had the United States said anything to indicate to them that it entertained a different view."⁵³ Wilson agreed to withhold the note, but nonetheless began to increase diplomatic pressure on the Europeans, especially Britain, in other ways.⁵⁴

Despite their differences with Wilson, neither the Germans nor the British believed themselves to be in any position to openly defy America's Mexican policy, at least not alone. To be sure, the Europeans did not agree with the thrust of Wilson's Mexico policy. Ousting Huerta made little sense from their point of view; it seemed to be a foolish and dangerous policy, especially since the Americans contended that they had no replacement for him in mind.⁵⁵ Therefore, if Wilson was suspicious of European aims in Mexico, European diplomats tended to be equally

suspicious of American motives. This was as true of the British as the Germans.

Just prior to his departure for his new post in Mexico, Carden wrote a long letter to his foreign secretary, Sir Edward Grey, in which he outlined the Mexican situation as he saw it. He began by asserting that the United States had extended the Monroe Doctrine "up to the point of implying a right of suzerainty over Latin America," and that "far from favoring the principle of the open door" there, the Americans used "all their influence" to gain special privileges for their own trade. Eventually, Carden contended, this would result in the United States acquiring "a great preponderance if not a virtual monopoly in all matters connected with finance, commerce, or public works" in Latin America. He went on to describe the "ineptitude and bad faith" of the United States in Mexico, and concluded that "it would seem to be madness at such a juncture to contemplate substituting a new and untried man, for the present Provisional President, who from all reports is proving himself thoroughly competent to dominate the situation."⁵⁶

Carden was well known for his anti-American views, but it is significant that the Prime Minister commented that "Sir L. Carden's picture of American policy and methods in Mexico does not seem at all over-coloured."⁵⁷ Grey, the foreign secretary, was also inclined to agree, but in his reply to Carden he emphasized Britain's awkward position in

Mexico: "I do not dispute the inconvenience and untoward results of United States policy, but while I am prepared to keep a free hand, His Majesty's government cannot with any prospect of success embark upon an active counter-policy to that of the United States."⁵⁸

Britain was in a difficult position. Troubles in the Middle East, in Ireland, and the increasing tensions with Germany argued against becoming involved in a major confrontation with the United States over Mexico. Moreover, the Royal Navy, which had been converted to oilburners in 1912, was dependent for fuel on the Mexican oilfields around Tampico, which by 1913 ranked behind only the U.S. and Russia in world oil production.⁵⁹ The protection of these fields was therefore a primary British concern. Both British and American warships patrolled the area, but these were hardly proof against the constant danger of deliberate or accidental destruction by rebels or even government troops.

In addition, the Constitutionalist rebels had made it clear that they would not recognize the validity of any oil concessions contracted with Huerta, "the usurper."⁶⁰ It behooved the British, then, to remain on decent terms with Huerta, who had shown that he could and would make major efforts to protect the fields.⁶¹ These problems were compounded when it was discovered in late 1913 that most of the oil produced by British-owned Aguila Oil Company, which held the navy contract, was unfit for fuel purposes; to

fulfill its contract, the company had to buy oil from American-owned wells in Mexico.⁶² Thus, in spite of Britain's tremendous interest in a pacified Mexico, it could scarcely profit from overly antagonizing the United States, even though American policy seemed tailored to prolong the hostilities there.

For these reasons, which were reinforced by Wilson's promises to protect British interests in Mexico and his willingness to make concessions on the Panama Canal tolls question, Britain openly announced that it had no intention of opposing American policy in Mexico,⁶³ and in November 1913 informed Huerta that it could not support him against the wishes of the United States.⁶⁴

Like Britain, Germany believed Huerta was the best available answer to Mexico's problems, but it was even less willing to oppose Wilson's line, partly because of Germany's increasingly precarious position in Europe but also because its investments in Mexico did not approach the magnitude and importance of Britain's. On the other hand, German policymakers had no intention of actually cooperating with the United States there. Open resistance to the wishes of the United States was often contemplated and sometimes practiced, but only in collaboration with Britain and other nations; and even then the risks of a direct confrontation were assiduously avoided. As a result, Germany's public diplomatic stance with respect to Mexico during Huerta's

regime tended toward caution, indirection, and evasion to make the most of an extremely delicate situation.

While Britain had informed the State Department as early as March 13 of its intentions to recognize Huerta's government, for example, Germany did not declare its intentions until May 15, by which time several other nations, including France, Spain, Austria-Hungary, Colombia, and China, had already done so.⁶⁵ Because of Henry Lane Wilson's enthusiastic approval of Huerta, Hintze was actually a bit skeptical of Huerta at first, believing that the new man might be in the Ambassador's pocket.⁶⁶ But this fear was quickly dispelled. Rudolph von Kardorff, who took over as chargé for a number of months while Hintze was ill, had nothing but praise for Huerta, which was echoed by the Kaiser. Kardorff described Huerta's speech at the April 2nd opening of the Mexican congress with classic Teutonic reverence:⁶⁷

Huerta had done what no one else had been able to do for months. He had instilled confidence. Confidence with respect. The old soldier, who may not have asked his savior for counsel too often in the past, had spoken of God, had implored the higher powers and taken them as his own....In one's heart the conviction took hold: in the breast of this old soldier there resides both will and love for the fatherland, a clear instinct for what is useful in the moment and capacity for imagination, cleverness, and no over bearing scruples.

To this, Wilhelm noted: "Bravo! such a man has our sympathies."⁶⁸

Kardorff was a blunter man than Hintze, and far less capable of employing nuance and diplomatic finesse in carrying out his duties. This led to insensitive displays on his part that no doubt left some with the impression that German policy in Mexico had become overly assertive or even aggressive. In mid-April, for instance, Kardorff was approached by Henry Lane Wilson, who was hoping for German-American cooperation concerning Huerta's recognition. Hintze earlier had given Ambassador Wilson some reason to believe that joint action might be possible, but Kardorff, as he reported, gruffly treated Wilson's "astounding" proposal with "the appropriate contempt."⁶⁹ Similarly, Kardorff was not averse to publicly stating his support for Huerta's regime. As late as September, when Woodrow Wilson's antipathy toward Huerta was well known, Kardorff declared at a banquet that he had "complete confidence" in the dictator.⁷⁰

The chargé's publicly anti-American stance cannot be entirely attributed to his blunt personality, however. Until November 1913, Germany was more confident in the knowledge that its pro-Huerta stance was shared, and to some degree overshadowed, by Great Britain's equally strong support for Wilson's bête noire. Germany welcomed company in Mexico, for only in collaboration with other European powers could it oppose the United States. In July, Kardorff had cooperated with other European delegates in Mexico in send-

ing an anti-American resolution to their respective governments. The Kaiser wholeheartedly agreed: "good," he wrote, "finally unity against the Yankee." In August, Ambassador von Bernstorff even suggested to the State Department that the United States should recognize Huerta after all; but, significantly, he did so only after learning that his British colleague had made a similar overture.⁷¹

This increasing willingness to stand up against U.S. policy was not lost on American diplomats in Berlin. Ambassador Gerard wrote Secretary Bryan that Germany regarded Huerta as a "man of determination"⁷² while Joseph Grew, also of the American embassy there, wrote in August that it was "unfortunately clear that the views of the German government in Berlin are diametrically opposed to those of the United States."⁷³ At one point it was even feared that the inability of the United States to protect German nationals in Mexico might induce Germany "to take some drastic action" to ensure their safety.⁷⁴ In fact, however, German action along these lines was confined to the dispatch of the warship Hertha to the Mexican coast to calm the German nationals. A more ambitious plan, which would have sent two additional ships, was cancelled in response to protests in the American press against even this limited German naval activity.⁷⁵

The Germans had no intention of antagonizing the United States, especially in isolation, and they made efforts to ensure that differences over Huerta would not spark

an open confrontation. Upon Hintze's return to his post in September he was displeased to find that Kardorff's indiscretions had caused just such a possibility by "encouraging the Mexican government to resist American policy." Hintze reported that John Lind had heard of Kardorff's actions, and the American, believing that the chargé had been acting under orders, had insistently complained about them to the British minister. Disturbed, the German Foreign Office instructed Hintze to "Please avoid any further opposition to the United States and counter any such interpretations of our policy."⁷⁶ At about the same time, Gerard was assured in Berlin that "Germany has no political interest [in Mexico] and only desires law and order."⁷⁷ The final proof of Germany's willingness to acquiesce to American policy, while not in agreement with it, came in November, when under pressure from Wilson, German diplomacy retreated from the policy of openly supporting Huerta.⁷⁸ This change in Germany's position was illustrated when, at the end of November, Hintze's French and Belgian colleagues proposed that the European representatives in Mexico sponsor a joint declaration similar to that of July. This time Hintze demurred, on the grounds that "joint telegrams will arouse the ire of the United States, giving the appearance of organized opposition among the diplomatic corps here, and would interfere with friendly influence on Washington."⁷⁹

German policy was also guided by the fear that the

United States would choose ultimately to intervene in Mexico.⁸⁰ Germany would have little to gain in such an eventuality, and perhaps much to lose. As Bernstorff wrote to Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg in November, "The current situation from the standpoint of our economic interests, is certainly not very favorable. It is nonetheless preferable, in my humble opinion, to the possibility of an American intervention. Even if President Wilson were to remain firm and carry out his program of treating Mexico exactly as Cuba was treated, the Americans would still pick up all the pieces in Mexico after the intervention."⁸¹ Hintze therefore repeatedly attempted to convince his American colleagues that the United States was not ready for a war, and urged O'Shaughnessy to bring his government's attention to the potential dangers of its policy. When O'Shaughnessy's wife rather exuberantly declared that the United States could mobilize a million men in a matter of days, the German minister retorted, "Men, yes, but not soldiers."⁸²

These combined considerations caused Hintze, Carden, and others to think in terms of a three-power intervention in which the United States, Britain, and Germany would jointly intervene to preserve the peace.⁸³ Walter Hines Page, the American ambassador to Great Britain, proposed action along these lines, but was overruled.⁸⁴ Wilson had no intention of allowing any European presence in North America, and he believed his own policy would eventually produce

favorable results. Colonel House wrote that Wilson was determined that "all hands must be kept off excepting our own."⁸⁵ And while Germany would not dare oppose the United States alone, Britain's steadfast adherence to its November understanding with Wilson killed German hopes for a solely European intervention.⁸⁶

In March 1914, the Kaiser mused bitterly over this, which he took as a betrayal of common interests: "England has left Europe brilliantly in the lurch and brought itself into general discredit," he wrote. "It should have united with the continent in order to defend Europe's interests jointly in Mexico, and thereby break the Monroe Doctrine. Wilson would have been forced to action and would have come off with a bloodied hand in Mexico."⁸⁷

The realities of international politics argued against any such cooperation, of course; Britain was not about to take such a tremendous risk even for the sake of its sizeable interests in Mexico.⁸⁸ For Germany, however, such an eventuality would have had several advantages, including, probably, a rapprochement with Britain that would have strengthened Germany's position in Europe considerably.

As Wilson's opposition to Huerta became increasingly implacable, the United States began to resort to more intense measures to remove the dictator. The successful diplomatic sallies against Germany were followed shortly by thoughts of military intervention or recognition of the

Constitutionalists. Partly because of Carranza's stubborn refusal to allow American interference with Mexico's internal affairs, this recognition was not granted, but in February the arms embargo against the Constitutionalists was lifted to help the rebels prepare for a major confrontation with Huerta.⁸⁹ Secretary of State Bryan explicitly spelled out the aims of the administration's Mexican policy in a dispatch to O'Shaughnessy:⁹⁰

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

Usurpations like that of General Huerta menace the peace and development of the United States as nothing else could...It is the purpose of the United States therefore to discredit and defeat such usurpations whenever they occur. The present policy of the United States is to isolate Huerta entirely; to cut him off from domestic credit, whether moral or material, and force him out.

This strategy soon produced results, although not precisely in accordance with Wilson's hopes.

By April of 1914, Huerta was on his last legs, in spite of his determined and surprisingly successful attempts to counter Wilson's vendetta. The Constitutionalists, spearheaded by Pancho Villa's massive army (the Division of the North), had launched a powerful offensive in March, moving south along the central railways toward Mexico City. At Torreon, a strategic railhead, Villa's daring tactics won a decisive and symbolically important victory, enabling his troops to occupy the town on April 2. At about the same

time, other Constitutionalist forces converged on the Tampico area.

The rebels' advance, however, was delayed by a shortage of ammunition and by an intensifying rivalry between Carranza and his most illustrious general, Pancho Villa. Carranza thought Villa did not display the proper subordination due to himself, as "First Chief," while Villa was increasingly annoyed by Carranza's arrogance and impressed with his own growing power; at one point he declared he would not fight for "pantywaists" like the First Chief.⁹¹ Before this dispute was resolved (albeit only temporarily), Woodrow Wilson decided to play a more active role in determining Mexico's destiny. On April 21, 1914, American marines moved into the Mexican port city of Veracruz.⁹²

The occupation of Veracruz climaxed an escalating confrontation between Huerta and Wilson which had begun two weeks earlier, when a group of American sailors was arrested in Tampico by an overzealous Mexican officer. The sailors had been released, the offending Mexican arrested, and an apology offered, but Huerta was unwilling to comply with a subsequent American demand that the Mexicans deliver a 21-gun salute to the American flag, and President Wilson was equally adamant that it be carried out. This foolish and petty wrangling had serious consequences, however, when the State Department learned that the German steamer Ypiranga was expected to land at Veracruz with a huge cargo of

guns and ammunition for Huerta.⁹³

At 2:30 AM on April 21, Secretary Bryan called President Wilson to inform him that the "Ypirango" (sic) would arrive that morning at Veracruz with 15,000,000 rounds of ammunition and 500 rapidfire guns.⁹⁴ When Navy Secretary Daniels advised "immediate action," Wilson ordered him to "Take Veracruz at once!" "It's too bad, isn't it," Wilson later confided to his personal secretary, "but we could not allow that cargo to land. It is hard to take action of this kind. I have tried to keep out of this Mexican mess, but we are now on the brink of war and there is no alternative."⁹⁵

It is clear, however, that Wilson's decision to stop the Ypiranga was not based on his knowledge that the ship was German; that particular consideration does not seem to have been discussed or dwelt upon in any remarkable fashion. And though some, such as Barbara Tuchman, have contended that the arms shipment was part of a shady deal between Hintze and Huerta,⁹⁶ it is certain that the voyage of the Ypiranga was not the product of any sinister German intentions or plot. Thorough examinations of the incident have shown that the ship carried mostly American-made arms purchased for Huerta with Mexican bonds by a consortium of American, French, and British entrepreneurs, and that the Ypiranga was most probably chosen to transport the equipment because it traveled on the most convenient schedule.⁹⁷ Friedrich Katz speculates that the German line was deliber-

ately chosen to create an embarrassment for the German government,⁹⁸ but since he offers no evidence this assertion must be considered to be purely conjectural.

Ironically, the occupation of Veracruz failed to fulfill its primary purpose, to prevent the landing of the Ypiranga's deadly cargo. The ship was detained at Veracruz for a week and a half, but after Bernstorff told the State Department that the arms would be returned to Germany, the ship was allowed to leave, whereupon it sailed indirectly to Puerto Mexico and unloaded there. Within a month the arms were in Mexico City.⁹⁹ Knowledge of this caused chagrin in Washington. Bryan told Bernstorff he was "very unpleasantly affected" by the news,¹⁰⁰ and years later Josephus Daniels described his "sense of frustration and indignation" when he learned that the arms had made it through: "It was to the Navy like a blow on the head," he wrote.

The arms were delivered, however, not because of devious German motives, but because of sloppy diplomacy and a series of misunderstandings between the United States, Germany, and the Hamburg-American Line (Hapag) which owned the ship. Bernstorff's assurances had been in good faith, and were based on a note to the German government from Hapag which stated that the cargo would "probably be shipped back to Germany."¹⁰¹ But although Hintze was opposed to landing the arms because he believed the British would ex-

exploit such a development for propaganda purposes, he understood his instructions on the matter to mean that the incident was a "private affair," that is, to be resolved at Hapag's discretion.¹⁰² Hintze's confusion is illustrated by his belief that the Americans actually wanted the Ypiranga to attempt a landing at Puerto Mexico to provide them with a pretext to occupy that harbor too.¹⁰³ In any case, he helped the captain of the ship to slip out of Veracruz and participated in changing the delivery arrangements.¹⁰⁴ In all, Bernstorff's explanation to Bryan seems to have accurately characterized the affair for the most part: "exclusive responsibility for the delivery of the cargo," he said, "belongs to the shipper's representatives in Veracruz, who thought that in view of the changing circumstances that the Americans had no objections to delivery."¹⁰⁵ It is also evident, though, that the Foreign Office had not made its objections absolutely clear to Hapag.

In all the confusion and misunderstanding, perhaps the most revealing aspect of the incident is that it did not have any lasting effect on German-American relations in spite of the importance the United States had placed on stopping the shipment. American officials were disappointed, to be sure, and American public opinion was also temporarily inflamed.¹⁰⁶ Yet the United States had no wish to antagonize Germany over the matter, especially since Secretary Bryan understood that international law was on the side of

the Germans.¹⁰⁷ In May, customs fines levied against the Ypiranga by American port authorities in Veracruz were cancelled in a demonstration of good will, and the affair was soon forgotten.¹⁰⁸

Huerta was encouraged by the shipment, but the arms reached him too late to be of much use against the Constitutionalists.¹⁰⁹ As the dictator vacillated between his determination to hold on and the realization that his time had run out, he turned to Hintze for help, and at the end of May offered Germany 150,000 square kilometers of land, including oilfields, "which would be legally taken away from the Americans," in return for assistance.¹¹⁰

But Hintze had already begun to distance himself from Huerta; during the Ypiranga affair he had been careful to avoid the Mexican foreign minister, who had actually referred to him as Mexico's "ally."¹¹¹ Moreover, mounting tensions in Europe made it absolutely impossible for Germany to take such a risk with a man whose political future seemed non-existent. Hintze explained Germany's position to Huerta while rejecting the offer:¹¹²

The interests of Germany as well as of many other European powers are in a happy and prosperous Mexico, for with such a Mexico the European trading and commercial interests would prosper as well. The representation of these interests are nevertheless constrained by the present political juncture...The reasons for this are the antagonisms in Europe, the ceaseless European arms race, the political dynamite in various parts of Europe, all of which are material for an imminent

and explosive war in which the very existence of nations would be at stake. In such circumstances, every country has reservations about overextending itself around the world. Should this occur, whichever country did it, it would be the signal for another country to attack. Not out of hostility to Mexico, but because it would want to exploit the momentary weakness of its rival, and would be obliged to do so. As far as I can tell--and I am speaking...as one old soldier to another--Huerta has nothing to hope for from Europe, except discreet diplomatic help.

This exchange is highly significant, not only because Hintze's remarks were a succinct summation of Germany's actual predicament, but also because it foreshadowed and helps to explain the German-Mexican conspiracy of 1915 in which Huerta played a prominent role. (See next chapter.) From this conversation, and perhaps others like it, Huerta might well have deduced that he could expect German help in better circumstances, while Hintze undoubtedly understood that Huerta would be willing to make sizeable concessions in return for German support. Moreover, Hintze frankly predicted Germany's later willingness to attack the interests of its "overextended" enemies (Great Britain and the United States) in Mexico should a war make such action a feasible and attractive option. During the exchange described above, of course, neither Hintze nor Huerta could have anticipated the actual events that later occurred, nor could they have known that such cooperation would ever come to pass.

By the middle of 1914, domestic and foreign opposition

had combined to render Huerta's position hopeless. The little optimism that remained was crushed on June 24, when the revived Constitutionalist offensive took Zacatecas; their next major target was Mexico City itself. Realizing his time had come, and hoping to spare the city and his supporters from the wrath of the vengeful Constitutionalists, Huerta resigned on July 15, and was carried to exile on the German steamship Dresden.¹¹³ At the insistence of the German Foreign Office, which did not want to bear the full onus of the ex-dictator's salvation, his family and staff boarded a British ship.¹¹⁴ Few people took seriously Huerta's promise to return "when my country needs my sword."¹¹⁵

Germany's Mexican policy during the first years of the revolution can be characterized as reasonably successful only because it was generally unambitious. The first tenet of its policy, avoidance of conflict with the United States, was met, but this necessarily precluded other options in the extremely delicate Mexican situation. It is true that German leaders, especially the Kaiser, would have liked to follow a much more active course, but Germany was never in a position to do so. Germany's relatively small economic interests in Mexico, in and of themselves, would never have justified the risks that a confrontation with the United States would have entailed, and the Empire's position in Europe was increasingly insecure. Under no circumstances would Germany have opposed the United States alone, because

Germany's stance in Mexico was generally calculated to address larger considerations than its actual, tangible interests there.

For this reason German policy was remarkably flexible, and the Germans were willing to reverse completely their "pro-American" policy if the cooperation of Great Britain could be obtained. Joint Anglo-German action, even to the point of military intervention, might have ensured that Germany's economic interests and nationals would receive additional protection from revolutionary dangers, but the opposite was just as likely if war with the United States resulted. Far more important to Germany were its strategic interests; joint action on a significant scale could lead to meaningful political realignments in Europe, perhaps even the alliance with Britain that Wilhelm II so anxiously desired and needed to protect Germany's position in Europe.

After Huerta's resignation and the assassination at Sarajevo, when these considerations attained unprecedented importance, the imaginative mind of the Kaiser apparently saw a means to ameliorate Germany's difficulties with a desperate but brilliant stroke. In the middle of July 1914, a representative of Wilhelm II (probably Albert Ballin, the owner of Hapag) approached the British with a plan for an Anglo-German military intervention in Mexico.¹¹⁶ Details of the plan, if any, are not known, but it is clear that British acceptance of the overture might have dramatically

changed the European political configuration. Not surprisingly, however, the British refused the offer, which, under the circumstances, must have struck them as incredibly irrelevant to the crisis that was threatening to engulf Europe in a general war.

The outbreak of the First World War two weeks later naturally brought new pressures to bear on German diplomatic policies, particularly with regard to the United States. This intensified the conflicting components of German policy, and, especially as it became clear that the war would be a life-and-death struggle, the opportunistic aspects of Germany's policies were unleashed and began to take precedence. The next chapter explores this transformation and the means Germany employed to exploit Mexico's revolution for its own purposes.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER III

- ¹T. R. Fehrenbach, Fire and Blood, (New York: 1973), 489.
- ²Charles C. Cumberland, Mexico: The Struggle for Modernity (New York: 1968), 240.
- ³Edith O'Shaughnessy, Diplomatic Days, (New York: 1917), 53.
- ⁴Kenneth J. Grieb, The United States and Huerta, (Lincoln: 1969), 116.
- ⁵Tuchman, The Zimmermann Telegram, 55-56.
- ⁶Katz, Secret War, 82.
- ⁷Ibid.
- ⁸Ibid., 82-84.
- ⁹Ibid., 88.
- ¹⁰Ibid.
- ¹¹Ibid., 84.
- ¹²Ibid.
- ¹³Ibid., 79.
- ¹⁴Ibid.
- ¹⁵Ibid.
- ¹⁶Ibid., 79-80.
- ¹⁷Ibid., 80.
- ¹⁸Calvert, Mexican Revolution, 126.
- ¹⁹Fehrenbach, Fire and Blood, 504.

²⁰Calvert, Mexican Revolution, 123-24.

²¹O'Shaughnessy, Diplomatic Days, 267.

²²Katz, Secret War, 89.

²³Ibid., 88-90.

²⁴Virtually all accounts of the Decena Trágica are in agreement concerning these events. For more complete accounts of the Decena Trágica and concurrent diplomatic maneuvering, see Stanley R. Ross, Francisco I. Madero, Apostle of Mexican Democracy, (New York: 1955), 282-294; Charles C. Cumberland, Mexican Revolution: Genesis under Madero (Austin: 1952), 229-243; Calvert, Mexican Revolution, 131-32; Michael C. Meyer, Huerta: A Political Portrait, (Lincoln: 1972), 45-64; and Katz, Secret War, 92-115.

²⁵Ross, Madero, 289.

²⁶Calvert, Mexican Revolution, 135-36.

²⁷Ibid., 136.

²⁸Henry Lane Wilson, Diplomatic Episodes in Mexico, Belgium, and Chile, (Garden City: 1927), 182, 258, 262.

²⁹Calvert, Mexican Revolution, 136, 146.

³⁰Katz, Secret War, 102.

³¹Calvert, Mexican Revolution, 150.

³²Wilson, Diplomatic Episodes, 183.

³³Katz, Secret War, 100.

³⁴Ibid., 103.

³⁵Ibid., 104-05.

³⁶Ibid., 105.

³⁷Meyer, Huerta, 56.

³⁸Ross, Madero, 360.

³⁹John Womack, Jr., Zapata and the Mexican Revolution, (New York: 1968), 160-61.

⁴⁰For the text of the Plan of Guadalupe, see Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States [hereafter Foreign Relations], 1914, (Washington: 1923), 589; see also Meyer, Huerta, 85-86.

⁴¹Arthur S. Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 1910-1917, (New York: 1954), 109.

⁴²Grieb, U.S. and Huerta, 137.

⁴³Cline, U.S. and Mexico, 146-47.

⁴⁴Foreign Relations, 1914, 836-837.

⁴⁵For a discussion of this term, see Link, Woodrow Wilson, 81-82, 107-108.

⁴⁶Calvert, Mexican Revolution, 305, 125-26.

⁴⁷Samuel Flagg Bemis, The Latin American Policy of the United States: An Historical Interpretation, (New York, 1943), 172-73.

⁴⁸Link, Woodrow Wilson, 117; Cline, U.S. and Mexico, 149.

⁴⁹Grieb, U.S. and Huerta, 114.

⁵⁰Cline, U.S. and Mexico, 149.

⁵¹Bemis, Latin American Policy, 176; Cline, U.S. and Mexico, 149.

⁵²Grieb, U.S. and Huerta, 115.

⁵³Ibid., 115; Cline, U.S. and Mexico, 150.

⁵⁴Calvert, Mexican Revolution, 262; Grieb, U.S. and Huerta, 116-117; Cline, U.S. and Mexico, 148; Bemis, Latin American Policy, 177.

⁵⁵Calvert, Mexican Revolution, 272-73.

⁵⁶Ibid., 221-23.

⁵⁷Ibid., 224.

⁵⁸Ibid., 225.

⁵⁹Ray C. Gearhardt, "Inglaterra y El Petroleo Mexicano Durante la Primera Guerra Mundial," Historia Mexicana 25:1 (1975), 118-21.

⁶⁰Grieb, U.S. and Huerta, 120.

⁶¹Gearhardt, "Inglaterra y Petroleo," 120.

⁶²Katz, Secret War, 179.

⁶³Calvert, Mexican Revolution, 266.

⁶⁴Ibid., 267

⁶⁵Meyer, Huerta, 112.

⁶⁶Katz, Secret War, 211.

⁶⁷Ibid., 212.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Ibid., 217.

⁷¹Ibid., 216.

⁷²Grieb, U.S. and Huerta, 114.

⁷³Small, "German 'Threat,'" 264.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Katz, Secret War, 226-27.

⁷⁶Ibid., 217.

⁷⁷Small, "German 'Threat,'" 264.

⁷⁸Link, Woodrow Wilson, 119.

⁷⁹Katz, Secret War, 226.

⁸⁰Thomas Baecker, "The Arms of the Ypiranga: The German Side," The Americas 30 (1973), 16; Katz, Secret War, 226.

⁸¹Edith O'Shaughnessy, A Diplomat's Wife in Mexico, (New York: 1916), 45-46, 53.

⁸³Katz, Secret War, 218-22.

⁸⁴Burton Hendrick, The Life and Letters of Walter Hines Page, 3 vols. (New York: 1922-1925), I, 194-95.

⁸⁵Link, Woodrow Wilson, 120n.

⁸⁶See James W. Gerard, My Four Years in Germany, (New York: 1917), 59.

⁸⁷Katz, Secret War, 231.

⁸⁸Cline, U.S. and Mexico, 152-53.

⁸⁹Link, Woodrow Wilson, 120-22.

⁹⁰Foreign Relations, 1914, 443.

⁹¹Robert Quirk, The Mexican Revolution, 1914-1915, (Bloomington: 1960), 27.

⁹²Foreign Relations 1914, 479.

⁹³See Robert Quirk, An Affair of Honor: Woodrow Wilson and the Occupation of Vera Cruz, (Lexington: 1962), 21-32.

⁹⁴Joseph Tumulty, Woodrow Wilson as I Know Him, (Garden

City: 1921), 50-51. Estimates of the actual size of the Ypiranga's cargo differ, but it was enormous. M.C. Meyer, in "The Arms of the Ypiranga," HAHR 50 (1970), 548, cites an early manifest listing almost 15,000 cases of ammunition, over 50,000 carbines, and 20 rapidfire machine guns.

⁹⁵Tumulty, Woodrow Wilson as I Know Him, 150-152.

⁹⁶See Tuchman, Zimmerman Telegram, 47.

⁹⁷Baecker, "The German Side," 13-16.

⁹⁸Katz, Secret War, 235.

⁹⁹Quirk, Affair of Honor, 151; Meyer, "Arms of the Ypiranga," 554.

¹⁰⁰Baecker, "German Side," 16.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 10-15.

¹⁰²Katz, Secret War, 236-37.

¹⁰³Baecker, "German Side," 11.

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Katz, Secret War, 240.

¹⁰⁶Baecker, "German Side," 16-17.

¹⁰⁷Small, "German 'Threat,'" 265; Quirk, Affair of Honor, 98-99.

¹⁰⁸Quirk, Affair of Honor, 152, 99; Meyer, "Arms of the Ypiranga," 555-56.

¹⁰⁹Quirk, Affair of Honor, 152; Baecker, "German Side," 17.

¹¹⁰Katz, Secret War, 240.

¹¹¹Baecker, "German Side," 113.

¹¹²Katz, Secret War, 243.

¹¹³Meyer, Huerta, 208-11.

¹¹⁴Katz, Secret War, 247-48.

¹¹⁵Grieb, U.S. and Huerta, 179.

¹¹⁶See Tuchman, Zimmermann Telegram, 53, 219n.; Katz, Secret War, 248-49; Gerard, Four Years in Germany, 59; and New York Times, August 21, 1917.

CHAPTER IV

RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT: GERMANY, THE UNITED STATES, AND MEXICO 1914-1917

We have seen that the Germans earlier had contemplated various ways to capitalize on Mexico's strategic location to advance Germany's world policy. These schemes had largely remained in the realm of speculation and fruitless rumormongering until World War I began. The war, however, caused a detectable shift in Germany's policy toward the United States. Germany policy remained contradictory and schizophrenic in nature, but German actions displayed an increasing willingness to aggressively exploit tactical opportunities to further the German war effort even at the risk of damaging diplomatic relations with the United States. Germany's acts in Mexico during the First World War were the results of the intensification of an old dilemma newly couched in demanding and inescapable terms.

On the one hand, Germany was anxious to maintain friendly or at least correct relations with the United States, since it certainly had no desire to acquire yet another enemy. Conversely, Germany naturally felt compelled to slice the Allies' lines of supply, which largely originated in the United States. As it became clear after the

Battle of the Marne (September 12-16, 1914) that the war would have no quick resolution, and as America's material contributions to the Allies grew steadily, the need to cut off the Allies' trade with America became ever more acute.¹ The inability of the Imperial Navy to establish a conventional blockade, however, forced the Germans to resort to more unorthodox methods to stem the flow of munitions and supplies.

Submarine warfare on the high seas was one expedient, but it was not entirely effective for a variety of reasons, most notably because the submarine weapon could not be utilized to its full potential without infringing on the maritime rights of the United States and other neutral countries. Infractions of the international cruiser rules by German submarines were a continuing source of serious friction between the United States and Germany, but until 1917 Germany grudgingly restricted its submarine activity for fear of overly antagonizing the United States.

Instead, covert, "deniable" expedients were employed toward the same end. Within the United States itself, German agents undertook sabotage, propaganda campaigns, labor agitation, and other methods to halt the manufacture and shipment of war supplies for the Allies. Moreover, in an extension of the strategy of "Weltpolitik with the wars of others," Germany made a number of attempts to embroil the United States in a war with Mexico, knowing that such a

development would divert America's energy, attention, and resources to the more immediate threat to the south.

Under these circumstances, the increasingly chaotic civil war in Mexico seemed to the Germans to be a "godsend," as the German ambassador, Johann von Bernstorff, put it.² Huerta's resignation in July of 1914 had put only a temporary end to the fighting. The rivalry between Carranza and Villa continued to simmer, with deepening distrust and antipathy developing in both camps. Villa had expended the last of his supplies in the battle for Zacatecas, but Carranza refused to send him coal and ammunition, even though Villa's army was the most logical tactical choice to take Mexico City. Instead, Carranza stalled until his loyal generals Alvaro Obregón and Pablo Gonzalez could enter the capital first; Villa was not even invited to participate in the triumphal march into the city on August 18.³ A final break seemed imminent as Villa continued to amass arms and supplies for his formidable army. On October 1, Villa explicitly cut his ties with Carranza.⁴

Meanwhile, Carranza had also alienated the Zapatistas by concluding an agreement with Huerta's federal army whereby the federals would surrender their posts south of the capital to Constitutionalist forces, rather than to armies under Zapata's control. Zapata correctly interpreted this move as a threat to his own position and suspected, again correctly, that Carranza had no interest in the agrarian

reforms that the men from Morelos had been fighting for since 1911.⁵

The most pressing problem for Mexico at this time was the selection of a revolutionary leader who would be able to unite the factions and establish a respected provisional government to maintain order while the thorny political questions that had arisen over the past four years could be sorted out and a consensus established. To address this need a convention of the revolutionary forces was called to meet at Aguascalientes, supposedly neutral ground,⁶ where it convened on October 10 in an atmosphere suffused with suspicion, hope, fear and ambition.

Through his representatives, Villa let it be known that he would "support any provisional president except Carranza."⁷ Carranza, for his part, refused to acknowledge the convention's authority, and when it "accepted" the first Chief's "resignation" in advance, he declined to comply.⁸ When the convention elected Eulalio Gutierrez Provisional President, Carranza would not recognize the act,⁹ and called his supporters away from Aguascalientes. By the end of November, all attempts at compromise had broken down, and the revolution began a new phase, with the armies of the Conventionists (Villa and Zapata) opposed to the Constitution- alists under Carranza, while Mexico teetered close to complete anarchy.

At the beginning of 1915, the Conventionists seemed to

hold a decided advantage. Carranza's forces were confined to the periphery of Mexico's eastern coast, holding Tampico, Veracruz (which the Americans had only recently evacuated), and a few scattered towns in the northeast.¹⁰ Instead of advancing on Carranza at Veracruz, however, Villa moved north, while Zapata's forces remained in Morelos. The Constitutionalist had been granted the breathing spell they needed.¹¹

By the spring of 1915 the situation had changed dramatically. Gutierrez, unable to control Villa or Zapata, had fled Mexico City and resigned; a new Conventionist president, Roque Gonzalez Garza, as impotent as Gutierrez, had taken his place. More importantly, the Constitutionalist forces, ably led by Alvaro Obregón, had taken sizeable pieces of the territory once controlled by Villa.

The Conventionists were dealt a severe blow in April in two mammoth battles at Celaya, where Villa sent wave upon wave of fruitless assaults against Obregón's entrenched defenses, losing thousands of men as well as priceless artillery, ammunition, and supplies, which Obregón swept up with his cavalry in classic flanking movements. Celaya did not put an end to Villa's hopes, but Obregón had successfully demonstrated his ability to thrust into Villa's territory and decisively defeat the legendary caudillo with superior tactics. The battles were dramatic proof that Carranza would be able to back up his claims to power with military

might and marked the beginning of a new phase of the revolution in which the Constitutionalists were the predominant power.¹²

This was not so apparent to those in Washington, however. Wilson's policy toward Mexico after Huerta's departure had been one of "watchful waiting," for the the most part, in hopes that the renewed fighting would eventually produce a constitutional government worthy of recognition.

Despite continual reports that Villa and his troops had committed assorted atrocities, the general feeling in Washington had favored the "Centaur of the North," who managed to impress American officials with his abilities, humanity, and good intentions.¹³ Carranza, on the other hand, was seen as weak, stubborn, and pretentious; a "pedantic ass," as Woodrow Wilson described him on one occasion.¹⁴ To the disappointment of Wilson's administration, however, the battles at Celaya proved that a solution to the Mexican problem was still out of sight. Secretary of State Bryan told reporters on April 18 that the "failure of Villa...has about convinced administration officials here that the men upon whom hopes had been pinned for the pacification of Mexico cannot be relied upon to save the situation..."¹⁵ This was not unwelcome news to the Germans, who were already involved in a major effort to further confuse the situation.

On April 13, Victoriano Huerta sailed into New York City on the Spanish liner Antonio Lopez, greeted by a crowd

of Mexicans who had gathered to meet him. The "picturesque old warrior," as one reporter described Huerta, looked "just as alert mentally and physically as in the days when he was supreme in Mexico City." He was in the United States, he said, for "purposes of pleasure and travel" and "a little personal business;" he had no intentions of visiting Mexico. Two days later the ex-dictator held a news conference at his hotel. "The actual situation of my country," he said, "is too sad for me to analyze deeply. Anarchy is too soft a word for it." He denied, however, any intentions to begin a "new Mexican revolution," calling such stories "unworthy of consideration." He was considering a trip to St. Louis.¹⁷

Huerta's disclaimers did little to erase suspicions aroused by his presence in the United States. Even before his boat had landed, the Constitutionalist representative in the United States had asked the State Department for Huerta's extradition,¹⁸ and his actual arrival sparked additional protests from both the Conventionists and the Constitutionalist, asking for the ex-dictator's extradition or detention.¹⁹ The Wilson administration took no such action, however, and merely put Huerta under a loose surveillance.

Huerta's arrival was not as innocent as he claimed, but was in fact the initial step in implementing an elaborate plan to begin a new revolutionary effort with substantial backing from the German government. On February 15,

Huerta had been visited by Captain Franz Rintelen von Kleist, a staff officer attached to Abteilung IIIB, the intelligence department of the German General Staff. Although details of their conversation are unknown, Rintelen offered Huerta German backing for another Mexican revolt, and Huerta did not refuse.²⁰

About a month later, in March, Huerta received another visitor. This time it was Enrique Creel, the ex-governor of Chihuahua, who outlined to Huerta a detailed plan for a revolt which Creel and other notable conservative Mexican emigres had been preparing for months. The plan had widespread support among the Mexican expatriates in Texas, from where it would be launched; arms and ammunition had been purchased and deposited all along the border. The exiles were confident that if substantial financial backing and a strong political leader could be found, the project had a good chance of success. Huerta agreed to lead the effort, and he and Creel decided to enlist German financial support. Huerta's subsequent journey to New York, a center of the expatriate population, was to allow him to gauge the extent of actual support for such a movement, to complete necessary planning and then, if possible, to carry it through.²¹

Huerta set up his headquarters in the Manhattan Hotel, and, under the eyes of a legion of spies, proceeded to meet with hundreds of Mexican contacts.²² Rumors spread that General Felipe Angeles, Francisco Villa's artillery expert

and right-hand man, was involved in the conversations.²³ It was also at this time that Huerta began serious negotiations with the Germans.

Rintelen, who had arrived in New York ten days before Huerta,²⁴ was initially the principle German contact, but he had other responsibilities too. Convinced that supplies from America had to be stopped at any cost, he organized sabotage operations and supervised the manufacture of time-release incendiary bombs that were planted by German agents aboard ships bound for France and England.²⁵ He boasted of having \$50,000,000 to spend on his operations.²⁶ A friend of the Crown Prince, Rintelen was urbane, audacious, and, as one of his colleagues wrote, "obsessed with the personal ambition of pulling off some great coup for Germany."²⁷ He was also careless. Rintelen's crucial meeting with Huerta was overheard by a Czech agent, who had arranged to procure an adjoining room and wire Huerta's for sound.²⁸

Rintelen started small, promising only American-made arms, but Huerta insisted on more. He wanted a semblance of an alliance, heavy financial support, personal assurances in case of failure, and U-boats to land arms on the Mexican coast.²⁹ Rintelen felt compelled to wire Berlin for instructions.

There was friction among the German agents involved in the case, however, and at this point Rintelen was replaced in the negotiations by Franz von Papen, the German military

attache accredited to the United States and Mexico, and Carl Boy-Ed, the naval attache. Both men were also heavily involved in sabotage operations, propaganda dissemination, and other schemes designed to promote Germany's cause in the United States. They secretly bought up vast quantities of munitions that otherwise would have been shipped to the Allies, attempted to instigate strikes in Pittsburgh steel mills, organized the sabotage of munitions plants, and even attempted to recruit German-Americans for an army to attack Canada.³⁰ Ambassador Bernstorff strenuously opposed these activities, believing they would lead to war with the United States, but his objections were overruled in Berlin.³¹

With the negotiations in the hands of Boy-Ed and Papen, an agreement with Huerta was soon reached. Huerta was to receive a total of \$895,000 to begin with, the bulk of which was deposited in Huerta's account in Havana. Eight million rounds of ammunition were already purchased in St. Louis; 3,000,000 more were on order in New York. In addition, 10,000 rifles would be granted immediately, along with \$10,000 cash in hand; more money and even U-boat support were possible in the future. With the arrangements essentially completed by the end of May, Papen traveled to the Texas border to distribute funds in El Paso, Brownsville, and to make arrangements for smuggling German reservists into Mexico.³² In all, Germany appears to have com-

mitted approximately \$12,000,000 to Huerta's comeback plans.³³

Huerta spent the next three weeks consulting with his advisors and making final plans for his new adventure. His efforts were apparently proceeding well. On June 1, Huerta told Felipe Angeles' son that he had amassed a total of \$10,000,000, with twice that much "in reserve," and that envoys had been sent to recruit disenchanted Villistas and Carrancistas.³⁴

Huerta was also given additional information at this time concerning the Mexican Peace Assembly, the political organization which had recruited him to head the movement. A confabulation of seasoned Huertistas, Porfiristas, and other Mexicans tired of the chaos of the revolution, the Peace Assembly had concluded that appeals to the warring factions were useless, and that only a massive military force could bring an end to the civil war. Although the organization contained reformist elements, it seems to have been actually quite reactionary.³⁵ When Huerta was satisfied that he had sufficient political and financial support, he decided to act.

On June 25, Huerta boarded a train west, telling reporters that he was planning to attend the international exposition in San Francisco.³⁶ Late the next evening, however, an Associated Press correspondent notified the government that Huerta had changed trains in St. Louis, and was

headed for El Paso.³⁷ Huerta actually left the train at Newman, a few miles north, where Pascual Orozco, Jr., who was to have been the military commander of the revolt, was waiting for him in an auto ready to leave for the border.³⁸ Unfortunately for Huerta, agents of the Department of Justice, with police and soldiers to back them up, were also waiting for him. Huerta and Orozco were arrested on charges of conspiracy to violate United States neutrality laws and taken under guard to El Paso.³⁹

The arrest of Huerta and Orozco spelled the end of the movement. Orozco escaped his captors in early July, only to be gunned down by a Texas posse August 30.⁴⁰ Huerta was shuttled between the local jail, Fort Bliss, and house arrest, always under surveillance. At one point he sent a protesting telegram to Count Bernstorff, but the German ambassador merely turned it over to the State Department. "This is truly extraordinary," commented Woodrow Wilson.⁴¹ The revolutionary movement had broken up, and Germany was apparently no longer interested in Huerta.⁴² The aging alcoholic, still technically under arrest, died in January 1916 of a liver ailment.

The Huerta conspiracy demonstrated Germany's wartime eagerness to divert the United States from the European conflict in spite of the obvious risks involved. It is clear that the operation, even if it were only marginally successful, would have hopelessly complicated the Mexican domestic

situation. Papen and Boy-Ed do not seem to have extracted explicit promises from Huerta to actually begin a war with the United States; and even if the wily caudillo did make such a commitment, Huerta was sufficiently astute to understand what such a war might mean for Mexico and himself. Most likely, Germany counted on Wilson's active dislike for Huerta to provoke a thoroughgoing American intervention.

More puzzling is the United States government's curious inaction during this episode. True, Huerta was apprehended before he could cause any real damage, but it is surprising that he was allowed to get as close to Mexico as he did. The government, according to Emil Voska, the Czech agent mentioned above, had been kept completely informed of Huerta's activities and Germany's involvement; yet Secretary Bryan doubted the truth of these reports,⁴³ and American surveillance of Huerta was apparently so loose that the crucial information that Huerta had switched trains in St. Louis came from a newspaperman. Was this luck?

Moreover, the government's decision not to publicize its knowledge of Germany's involvement at this time is also revealing. Perhaps it can be best understood in light of President Wilson's personal reluctance to plunge the United States into the European war. Because of the sinking of the Lusitania, relations between the United States and Germany were particularly tense at this time, and it is possible that Wilson did not wish to further inflame public opinion,

especially on the basis of legally questionable evidence supplied by a foreign spy. It is notable that Huerta was never close to being brought to trial, although he was in custody for more than six months on the conspiracy charges brought against him before he died.

Even as Huerta sat in his cell, however, American officials were becoming concerned about the possibility of German involvement in another Mexican movement which revolved around the "Plan of San Diego," one of the more intriguing documents produced during the Mexican revolution. In January 1915, a group of Mexican prisoners in a Carrancista prison in Monterrey signed a document outlining the "Plan of San Diego, Texas," which had been written by "a friend" of one of the signers. This extraordinary manifesto called for a revolt against the United States government, with the object of winning the "independence" of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and California, states which had been "robbed" from Mexico by "North American imperialism." All Anglo males over the age of 16 would be killed, along with all "traitors" who would not subscribe to the cause. An important clause endeavored to incite the support of southern blacks, who would be rewarded with "aid in obtaining six States of the American Union" so that "they may therefore be independent."⁴⁴ A certain Agustin S. Garza was appointed to become commander of the "Liberating Army for Races and Peoples," and the invasion scheduled for February

20, 1915.⁴⁵

The Plan seemed so absurd that when Basilio Ramos, one of the signers of the Plan, was brought to trial in May for attempting to "steal" parts of the United States, he was released by the judge, who told him "You should be tried for lunacy--not conspiracy against the United States."⁴⁶

The scheme was underfunded and often the object of ridicule even in Mexico, but the Plan did have a serious effect on Mexican-American relations. No uprising occurred on February 20; instead, the movement was reorganized, and the originators were apparently replaced by a new set of men.⁴⁷ The hoped-for mass uprising was evidently impossible to engineer. A black doctor, Jesse Mosely, was sent into Texas to rouse the black population there, but his efforts produced no results, and Mosely himself was later found dead with his skull crushed.⁴⁸ Military activities under the red and white banner of the Plan of San Diego instead took the form of a long series of hit-and-run raids across the Texas-Mexican border, in which the rather motley "invaders" burned bridges, tore up train tracks, and killed a number of American citizens, including United States soldiers, causing a great deal of unrest among the Texas border population.⁴⁹ In spite of determined efforts by the United States Army to stop or apprehend the "San Diego" marauders, who typically operated in bands of 50 to 250 men, the raids intensified during August and September of 1915, and then

abruptly ended in October, with a brief resurgence of activity in May and June the following year.⁵⁰

Despite a number of diligent and perceptive studies,⁵¹ the movement surrounding the Plan of San Diego remains clouded in mystery and conjecture, especially with regard to the role played by Germany in the organization's activities. It is clear that several American officials at the time suspected German involvement. Vice Consul Randolph Robertson in Monterrey, for example, reported that the German consul there had supplied financial support to the organization and had offered to pay salaries for its adherents. A secret agent sent by the Department of Justice to investigate the matter was told by the Spanish and Italian consuls in Monterrey that the allegations were true.⁵²

Other, less reliable indications of German involvement have also surfaced. It was reported, for example, that a German-backed Mexican newspaper gave full coverage to the Plan; that raiders killed a number of Americans only after asking whether they were German; and that a Mexican used a German flag to protect his house from the border violence, saying that he had been instructed to do so by unknown men.⁵³ Two of the (probably fictitious) names signed to the February 20 reorganization document, J.Z. Walcker and J.R. Becker, seem suspiciously Germanic, and commissions given to officers of the movement were reportedly signed by a German.⁵⁴

While evidence of this sort is intriguing, however, it is certainly not compelling. Similarly, M.C. Meyer's argument that the Plan was conceived as a "diversionary movement" linked to the Huerta conspiracy⁵⁵ is plausible in some respects, but it does not explain the continued activities of the raiders long after Huerta had disappeared from the scene. Moreover, this explanation fails to take into account the insistent reports and indications that the movement was receiving money and other aid from Carranza's government.⁵⁶ Extensive research in German archives has failed to produce any references to German involvement in the Plan of San Diego, nor did any German messages intercepted by the British during this time reveal any such activity.⁵⁷

While no solid proof has been found to positively link the Germans with the Plan, the possibility that such a connection did exist cannot be ruled out either. The absence of evidence in German archives, for example, does not necessarily mean that no such activities took place; other plots of this nature are not recorded in the archives either.⁵⁸ Moreover, it has been shown that German agents were engaged in activities that were parallel or similar to those pursued by adherents of the Plan of San Diego.

For example, Heinrich von Eckhardt, the German minister in Mexico, and Heinrich Albert, the German commercial attache in Washington, were both involved in an effort to

sow discontent among American blacks. They cooperated in disseminating propaganda in the southern United States and Mexico, promising that if blacks would revolt they would be granted an independent republic.⁵⁹ The campaign was directed in Mexico City by Eckhardt, who used Mexicans to spread the propaganda in Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia.⁶⁰

In late 1914, Horst von der Goltz, a German who served as an officer in the Constitutionalist army, was named the head of the German secret service in Mexico. By Goltz's own account, he was given the authority to spend "almost unlimited sums of money for the purchase of arms, for the bribery of officials--for anything in fact that would cause trouble in Mexico."⁶¹ If the Germans were not directly involved in the Plan of San Diego, there can be little question that they would have been interested in just such an operation.⁶² Thus, while the proof is inconclusive, final judgment on this matter should be suspended until more information is available.

The fortunes of the Conventionists continued their dramatic decline in the summer and fall of 1915. Villa's twin defeats at Celaya were followed by another stinging loss at Leon in early June; the territory he controlled was shrinking rapidly. On June 2, President Wilson called on the factions to reconcile their differences peacefully, with an implicit threat that the United States would other-

wise intervene militarily and impose a settlement. Villa, stunned by his recent setbacks, was willing to comply, but Carranza refused to acknowledge that the United States had any right to interfere in Mexican affairs, and snubbed the offer. The Constitutionalist had no intention of compromising with Villa when a military victory was in sight. Obregon bluntly rejected Wilson's appeal, saying, "No sensible Mexican fails to understand that Villa is defeated as a general and is a nullity as a politician."⁶³ On July 10, at Aguascalientes, Villa suffered yet another loss, and was forced to retire north to his home state of Chihuahua.

Although Wilson personally disliked Carranza ("I have never known a man more impossible to deal with on human principles," the President commented in July),⁶⁴ it was becoming increasingly clear that the United States would have to deal with the "First Chief," whose dominant military position could not be ignored. Thus the administration began to contemplate recognizing the Constitutionalist government.

Despite Wilson's threat to intervene, the events of June and July convinced administration officials that military action in Mexico would be inadvisable. Although the growing strength of Carranza contributed to this decision, there were other important considerations. Relations with Germany were so precarious in the summer of 1915 that a break or even war could come any day, and the administration

had no wish to be tied down in Mexico at this crucial time.⁶⁵ Moreover, knowledge of German involvement in the Huerta conspiracy and reports of other German activities in Mexico worked to establish the strong conviction that by becoming militarily involved in Mexico, America would only be fulfilling Germany's wishes.

Robert Lansing, the new Secretary of State, had replaced Bryan on June 18, but first learned of Rintelen's activities on July 4.⁶⁶ Unlike Bryan, Lansing was moved to action by the information. On July 11, in a memorandum entitled "Consideration and Outline of Policies," Lansing sketched out his impressions of the situation in Mexico:⁶⁷

I have come to the conclusion that the German Government is utterly hostile to all nations with democratic institutions because those who compose it see in democracy a menace to absolutism and the defeat of the German ambition for world domination....German agents have undoubtedly been at work in Mexico arousing anti-American feelings, and holding out false hopes of support. The proof is not conclusive but it is sufficient to compel belief.

The memo proposed secret investigations of German activities in Latin America, "particularly Mexico," and the adoption of means to frustrate them. Under the circumstances, keeping friendly relations with Mexico was essential. "To do this," Lansing wrote, "it will be necessary to recognize Carranza's faction, which seems to be the stronger."⁶⁸ Although Wilson's views of German activities in Mexico at this time are not explicitly known,

it is likely that he agreed with his Secretary of State, for on August 4, Wilson stated that he was convinced that the United States was "honeycombed with German intrigue and infested with German spies."⁶⁹

In any case, the subsequent policy of the United States conformed with Lansing's blueprint for action. In August, the administration opened a conference, attended by representatives of the United States, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, and Guatemala, to decide on a solution to the Mexican situation. Despite Carranza's unpopularity, the Constitutionalist's military strength seemed to dictate the only probable answer, and on October 9, 1915, the conferees recommended that Carranza's government be accorded de facto recognition by their governments.⁷⁰

In his diary Lansing recorded his thoughts the next day, October 10:⁷¹

Looking at the general situation I have come to the following conclusions:

Germany desires to keep up the turmoil in Mexico until the United States is forced to intervene; therefore, we must not intervene.

Germany does not wish to have any one faction dominant in Mexico; therefore, we must recognize one faction as dominant in Mexico.

When we recognize a faction as the government, Germany will undoubtedly seek to cause a quarrel between that government and ours; therefore, we must avoid a quarrel regardless of criticism and complaint in Congress and the press.

It comes down to this: Our possible relations with Germany must be our first consideration; and all our intercourse with Mexico must be regulated accordingly.

Lansing's views are important because, with President Wilson increasingly distracted by European concerns, the Secretary of State had assumed greater control over Mexican policy than had been true in Bryan's time.⁷²

On October 19, the United States recognized Carranza's Constitutionalists as the de facto government of Mexico, and shortly afterward clamped an arms embargo on the Villistas. While these actions were in a sense only the latest of the administration's long series of tactics intended to stabilize Mexico, Lansing's thoughts, so concisely revealed above, show that the Secretary of State clearly recognized that the world war had given a new dimension to the continuing crisis in Mexico. More than ever, the interests of the United States lay in bringing peace to that troubled country. After recognizing Carranza, the United States was determined to help him consolidate his power, as subsequent events demonstrated.

By October Villa's status had declined considerably, but he still led a respectable army. His next move, as widely anticipated, was to march on Agua Prieta, a border town opposite Douglas, Arizona. The capture of isolated Agua Prieta would have given Villa a second "port" through which he could obtain supplies from the United States, and would have seriously reduced Carranza's strength in northern Sonora.⁷³

To counteract this threat, President Wilson gave

Carranza unprecedented permission to transport Mexican troops and supplies across United States territory. As a result, when Villa arrived at Agua Prieta in late October, he encountered not the relatively small garrison he had expected but a large, well-entrenched force protected by barbed wire and strategically placed machine guns.⁷⁴

The ensuing battle was disastrous for Villa, who would not or could not adapt his tactics to meet this new style of warfare. Enraged by the news that the United States had recognized Carranza, Villa threw his forces at Agua Prieta in a desperate, bloody, but futile assault. Repulsed, he turned his army south to Hermosillo, where, in a replay of the last battle, his army was utterly destroyed. Villa retreated north with the remnants of his once-powerful command, defeated and embittered.⁷⁵ In one year Villa had been reduced from the most powerful general in Mexico to the leader of a small and undisciplined band of outlaws.

Germany meanwhile had been busy organizing an extensive network of agents and spies in Mexico to spread propaganda, smuggle arms, plan sabotage, and conduct other activities calculated to exacerbate tensions between the United States and Mexico. Several years before the war, German nationals in Mexico had organized the Verband Deutscher Reichsangehöriger (Union of Subjects of the

German Empire.) When the world war began, the Verband, like some organizations of its kind in the United States, became involved in propaganda, fund raising, and espionage. It also grew rapidly. By October 1915, the Verband's membership had quadrupled since the beginning of the war to 522 members distributed among approximately thirty groups throughout Mexico.⁷⁶ German diplomatic and consular officials were active in recruiting agents to promote Germany's aims, sometimes with astonishing success. Felix Sommerfeld, for example, a German who was Carranza's chief intelligence officer and later Villa's most trusted agent along the border,⁷⁷ was enlisted as a German spy, as was Villa's personal physician and adviser, Lyman Rauschbaum.⁷⁸ Horst von der Goltz, a Carrancista officer, was similarly recruited by the German consul in Monterrey. He cooperated with Papen in an abortive plot to blow up Canada's Welland Canal, and was to be the head of the German secret service in Mexico until he was arrested by the British en route to Germany.⁷⁹ It is impossible to judge the full extent of Germany's espionage and propaganda network in Mexico, but it was extensive. Possibly it made use of some fifty Germans with commissions in the Constitutionalist army, one of whom, General Maximilian Kloss, was a confidant of the First Chief and his most able artillery officer.⁸⁰

An indication of the nature and scope of other German covert activities in Mexico can be found in a report

sent by Eckhardt to Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Holweg on July 30, 1915:⁸¹

First, the naval attache [Boy-Ed] suggested to me through the intermediary of the Kaiser's ambassador [Bernstorff] that we have the oil wells in Tampico destroyed. He further proposed that we help return to Germany men liable for military service who could not get to Europe from New York, and who had returned to Mexico. The Kaiser's ambassador and the military attache [Papen] told me expressly that the creation of travel possibilities for the reserve officers and aspiring officers currently in the United States would be very worthwhile. To achieve both ends, Herr Rau, at my behest, negotiated with intermediaries with whom I, for obvious reasons, could not have personal contact, following thorough discussions with the naval and military attaches.

The planned sabotage in the Tampico oil fields was never carried out, perhaps because the German Admiralty believed the action would not be worthwhile; it wired Boy-Ed on March 11, 1916 that "significant military damage to England through closing of Mexican oil resources not possible."⁸² Papen disagreed, and a week later reported that⁸³

In view of the great importance of Tampico (Mexico) oil wells for the English fleet...I have sent Herr V. Petersdorf there in order to create the greatest possible damage through extensive sabotage of tanks and pipelines. Given the current situation in Mexico, I am expecting large successes from relatively small resources.

It is possible that the Admiralty's opinion on the matter prevailed, or perhaps Petersdorf failed in his mission, but the sabotage was never accomplished.⁸⁴ In any case, it seems that other methods used to achieve the same purpose already had met with failure. On March 6, a week before

Boy-Ed received the Admiralty's telegram, four Germans were deported from Mexico at Carranza's orders for their alleged attempts to foment labor unrest in Tampico.⁸⁵

Carranza hardly could have been pleased with attempts to deprive his government of a prime source of revenue, and in spite of claims that he was already in Germany's pocket,⁸⁶ the First Chief does not seem to have been well-disposed toward Germany at this time. He was aware of Germany's participation in the Huerta conspiracy and was loath to treat with the nation which had carried "the Usurper" to safety in July 1914.⁸⁷ Events would soon transpire to alter his orientation, however.

The attention of the world public, which might have been sated by the increasingly grisly fighting in Europe, was periodically turned to Mexico, to which the war had given a strange new importance. In April 1915, as the Huerta conspiracy was unfolding, the Frankfurter Zeitung had expressed its rather remarkable concern for a nation so remote from the trenches of France:⁸⁸

Conditions in Mexico defy description...It is difficult to suppress the feeling of bitterness against those [the United States] who fomented where they could have extinguished smouldering fire....We must not lose sight of Mexico, even in the storms of the present war, because Mexico will become the focus of a gigantic movement of world power.

In August a newspaper exposé by the Providence Journal concerning the Huerta conspiracy similarly

awakened Americans to the danger from the south.⁸⁹ As the public disclosures continued, and as reports of German activities in Mexico and the United States multiplied, the Wilson administration took some action. In December the German government was requested to recall Papen and Boy-Ed; and later that month in his annual message to Congress, Woodrow Wilson lashed out against subversives ("creatures of passion, disloyalty, and anarchy") who had cooperated in "foreign intrigues," thereby creating the "gravest threats against our national peace and safety...within our own borders." He asked Congress for laws to deal with the problem.⁹⁰ The President also pledged his friendship for Mexico, saying the states of America were "cooperating friends...spiritual partners...Separated they are subject to all the cross currents of the confused politics of a world of hostile rivalries; united in spirit and purpose they cannot be disappointed of their peaceful destiny."⁹¹

Once again, however, events in Mexico proved to be beyond Wilson's effective control, for in spite of the President's every intention to refrain from military action while awaiting "the rebirth of the troubled Republic,"⁹² the United States was soon on the brink of a war with its southern neighbor.

In the early morning hours of March 9, 1916, the little border town of Columbus, New Mexico was attacked by Pancho Villa and an armed force numbering some 485 men.

For about an hour the Mexicans, shouting "Viva Villa!" looted, burned, and killed until they were finally compelled to retire by the U.S. Army detachment stationed there.⁹³ While the cavalry chased the raiders over the border in hot pursuit, it was discovered that the attackers had killed seventeen Americans (eight soldiers, nine civilians), wounded eight others, and had taken an undeterminable amount of cash from the local bank along with a number of horses, rifles, and some other supplies.⁹⁴ The Villistas paid a heavy price for these meager spoils, however, losing 67 men in the attack and about a hundred to the pursuing cavalry.⁹⁵

What was the purpose of this attack? This question has been a favorite and controversial topic ever since the day of the raid itself, and the subject of many books, articles, and monographs arguing for almost every conceivable interpretation, including the absurd contention that Woodrow Wilson himself hired Villa to do the evil deed.⁹⁶ The most standard interpretation has been that Villa attacked the town in an illogical gesture of revenge for what he believed to be a betrayal by the United States,⁹⁷ but evidence has appeared that indicates, but does not prove, the hand of Germany at work.

The idea of German influence behind the raid is not new.⁹⁸ Dr. R.H. Ellis, Villa's medical chief of staff, even argued in an interview years later that the entire

attack was staged by a German agent, one Luther Wertz, who arranged for a Villa look-alike to head the Mexicans.⁹⁹ This contention seems to be amply refuted by the evidence,¹⁰⁰ but a much more subtle and intriguing theory has been presented, in various forms, by Friedrich Katz, James A. Sandos, and Michael C. Meyer.¹⁰¹

In May 1915, the head of German propaganda operations in the United States, Bernhard Dernburg, reported to Berlin an intriguing conversation he had with Felix Sommerfeld, Villa's chief agent in the United States. After noting that it would be difficult to pull the United States into an intervention in Mexico, Dernburg continued:¹⁰²

Roughly two months ago, there was an incident on the Arizona border, which almost provoked an intervention. At that time, the chief of the American general staff was sent to the border by President Wilson...to negotiate with Villa. These negotiations took place with the mediation of Felix A. Sommerfeld, and at that moment, as he repeatedly told me, it would have been easy for him to provoke an intervention....This opportunity appears to be presenting itself again in the immediate future, and Felix A. Sommerfeld has discussed it with me. He is quite convinced that an intervention in Mexico by the United States can be brought about....Aside from Mr. Sommerfeld, who is the source of this idea, I am the only one who knows his plans. We have both declined to discuss this affair with the German ambassador here, since we are convinced that the less that is known, the better, and moreover, that this delicate affair can only be decided directly at the appropriate level. After this report has been considered, I request that Felix A. Sommerfeld be given a "yes" or a "no" in whatever way, through me directly.

This report was given to Secretary of State Jagow in the German Foreign Office, whose response was unqualified:¹⁰³

In my opinion, the answer is absolutely 'yes.' Even if the shipments of munitions cannot be stopped, and I am not sure they can, it would be highly desirable for America to become involved in a war and be diverted from Europe, where it is clearly more sympathetic to England...an intervention made necessary by the developments in Mexico would be the only possible diversion for the American government.

It is tempting to link Sommerfeld's conversation with Dernburg to the raid at Columbus less than a year later, especially since other evidence clearly demonstrates that Sommerfeld's connection with the Germans was hardly casual or sporadic. This evidence indicates, for example, that Villa, through Sommerfeld and Villa's brother Hipólito, received guns, ammunition, and large sums of money under German auspices in the latter part of 1915.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, Villa's personal physician, Lyman B. Rauschbaum, who had a good deal of influence with Villa, is also known to have been a German operative.¹⁰⁵

It is not contended that Villa was actually bought by the Germans, or that he consciously attacked Columbus to promote Germany's interests. Instead, Katz and Sandos suggest that Sommerfeld engineered a subtle "double play"-- Sommerfeld to Rauschbaum to Villa--in which Rauschbaum tricked Villa into believing that in attacking Columbus he could even the score with a Jewish merchant, Sam Ravel, by whom Villa believed he had been cheated.¹⁰⁶ The interpretation is to some extent supported by the recollections of a former Villista major, José Orozco, who served on Villa's

personal bodyguard the day before the raid on Columbus.¹⁰⁷

This is an intriguing theory, which has the additional advantage of clearing up some nagging mysteries surrounding the raid.¹⁰⁸ Yet, as Meyer points out, no "smoking gun," no document that would unambiguously establish the theorized relationship of events, has been found.¹⁰⁹ In fact, some documentary evidence exists which indicates that key officials in the German Foreign Office in Berlin knew nothing of any such plot.¹¹⁰ Ambassador Bernstorff, ironically enough, wrote Berlin in March that while "certain anti-German papers state that we have paid Villa [to attack Columbus] there would be just as much justification for saying that the President [Wilson] had bribed him. Wilson's opportunity for being reelected has at one stroke been very materially improved."¹¹¹ Bernstorff's ignorance of any such operation, of course, is not proof that one did not exist. George S. Viereck, a prominent German propagandist who knew the ambassador well, once noted that Bernstorff "abhorred illicit activities."¹¹² If a plot with Sommerfeld did exist, it is entirely possible that the planners, anticipating Bernstorff's objections, simply decided to leave him uninformed. Dernburg followed this course in reporting his conversation with Sommerfeld directly to Berlin. In this connection it might be noted that the Germans were careful to base their covert operations in New York, partly

so that Bernstorff could disassociate himself from them in case of discovery. If the case for German involvement in the Columbus attack has not been proved, it must still remain a possibility. It is also true, however, that other plausible explanations can be found for Villa's action at Columbus. In any case, it is significant that Germany did surreptitiously support Villa in his waning efforts and fully intended to make use of this secret connection to disrupt relations between the United States and Mexico. On March 28, 1916, Bernstorff again reported that Germany was being blamed for the Columbus raid, and concluded that "Naturally, no proof of such a false assertion was produced." Next to the words "false assertion" on this report, an official in Berlin added his comment: "Unfortunately."¹¹³

If Villa had intended, for whatever reasons, to provoke an American intervention, he was eminently successful. The Columbus raid, coming on the heels of other atrocities committed by Villistas against Americans, immediately brought public opinion in the United States to a unanimous boiling point.¹¹⁴ Independent magazine in New York, for example, departed from its usually deliberative pose and demanded action;¹¹⁵

The murderer Villa and his fellow bandits must be punished....The United States must perform the task itself. The armed forces must seek out the murderers of Columbus and put them to death....We are not waging war; we are administering justice. We shall

not assail the rights of any other people; we shall merely defend our own. To do less would be national dishonor.

On March 10, the President took what might have been a fateful step and ordered an expedition to enter Mexico "with the sole object of capturing Villa and preventing further raids by his band, with scrupulous regard to [the] sovereignty of Mexico."¹¹⁶ Within a week six thousand American troops poured into Mexico to chase down the Villistas, who by then had scattered into the vast Chihuahuan desert.

It soon became clear that the presence of thousands of American troops penetrating hundreds of miles into Mexican territory was fundamentally incompatible with the administration's desire to pay "scrupulous regard" to Mexican sovereignty, especially since Carranza had declined to give his permission for the incursion. While expressing his willingness to negotiate a treaty which would give the United States a limited right to chase raiders in hot pursuit in the future,¹¹⁷ Carranza repeatedly informed the State Department that the Punitive Expedition was unwelcome in Mexico. But Wilson and Lansing either misunderstood or ignored Carranza's protests. As the American forces probed ever deeper into Mexico with little success, Carranza began to deploy his troops in ominously threatening positions,¹¹⁸ and a confrontation loomed ahead.

On April 12, a column of U.S. cavalry peacefully entered the town of Parral in southern Chihuahua, 180 miles south of the border. A gathering crowd of Mexicans around the troopers became hostile, at least partly due to the efforts of "a small, compactly built man with a Van Dyke beard" shouting "Todos! Ahora! Viva Mexico!" and who, according to Major Frank Tompkins, the troop's commander, "looked like a German."¹¹⁹ Tompkins' impression was confirmed days later by the town's mayor, who told Colonel W.C. Brown that the German consul, Edward Cook, was reported to have been instrumental in inciting the crowd.¹²⁰

The troopers were able to retire from the village in good order, but they were pursued by the crowd and a number of Mexican soldiers. Shots were exchanged, and two American soldiers were killed, as well as forty Mexicans.¹²¹

After this incident the friction between Carranza's government and the United States began to assume crisis proportions. The situation was aggravated by the recurrence of a number of border raids conducted by Luis de la Rosa, a leader of the "Plan of San Diego" bands¹²² and whom Carranza was reported to be supporting.¹²³ Wilson refused to withdraw the Punitive Expedition until peace was established along the border,¹²⁴ while Carranza became increasingly adamant that the troops leave immediately.

A war seemed imminent. On May 1, Generals Scott and

Funston wired the Secretary of War that¹²⁵

Every source of information leads us to believe that Mexican generals are certain of our entire lack of preparedness, feeling that they can cope successfully with the United States and propose to attempt it unless we retire at once. Fully expect attack if US does not agree to full withdrawal.

To meet this threat the United States mobilized the National Guard and took steps to assemble over 100,000 troops along the Mexican border.¹²⁶ Nevertheless, American military weakness was painfully apparent to American officials.¹²⁷ Even after the American Chief of Staff, General Hugh Scott, met with Obregón at El Paso and agreed to an eventual withdrawal of the American troops¹²⁸ the crisis threatened to spiral out of control.

The diplomatic exchanges between the two nations grew increasingly sharp, even sarcastic. On June 20 Lansing replied to a threatening Mexican note (which special representative Rodgers had described as "inexact, improper, and impudent") with the observation that a government that could not protect life and property within its borders was a government "not worthy of the name."¹²⁹ Lansing refused to acquiesce to Carranza's demand for immediate withdrawal.

The next day a serious firefight occurred between American and Mexican forces at Carrizal. Seventy-five Mexicans were killed and the Americans lost twelve killed and twenty-three taken prisoner. To many in Mexico City, it seemed the anticipated war had begun.¹³⁰

In the United States, too, it was widely believed even in official circles that a war with Mexico was "inevitable."¹³¹ Theodore Roosevelt characteristically began organizing his own division for the anticipated fight; newspaper advertisements appeared with slogans like "Every boy going to Mexico should be provided with a package of Bellam for indigestion."¹³² President Wilson demanded the return of the prisoners, formally incorporated the National Guard into the regular army, and took other measures to prepare the nation for war.¹³³ But he was extremely reluctant to see the United States dragged into a general conflict in Mexico at a time when tensions with Germany stemming from the submarine issue were becoming especially acute. As Wilson told his personal secretary, Joseph Tumulty:¹³⁴

Tumulty, some day the people of America will know why I hesitated to intervene in Mexico. I cannot tell them now for we are at peace with the great power whose poisonous propaganda is responsible for the terrible condition of affairs in Mexico. German propagandists are there now, fomenting strife and trouble between our countries. Germany is anxious to have us at war with Mexico, so that our minds and our energies will be taken off the great war across the sea. She wishes an uninterrupted opportunity to carry on her submarine warfare and believes that war with Mexico will keep our hands off her and thus give her liberty of action to do as she pleases on the high seas. It begins to look as if war with Germany is inevitable. If it should come--I pray God it may not--I do not wish America's energies and forces divided, for we will need every ounce of strength we have to lick Germany.

Wilson's fear of becoming enmeshed in an untimely war with Mexico may have been accentuated by reports in late June that Germany was negotiating with Mexico for an alliance which would make the resumption of unrestricted warfare possible.¹³⁵ These rumors do not seem to have been rooted in fact¹³⁶ (Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg called them "ridiculous and unfounded"),¹³⁷ but there can be no question but that Germany looked upon the Mexican-American crisis with satisfaction. The Taegliche Rundschau editorialized in July:¹³⁸

We consider it not worth the trouble to deny the charge in the allied press that Germany is egging Mexico into war in order to prevent the exportation of ammunition to the allies. That the profitable export of shells to France and England will suffer through the [expected] war with Mexico is, to be sure, a fact which, however, does not make us weep.

Fortunately, Carranza was no more eager for war than was Wilson; both sides were looking for a way to avoid general hostilities and still save face. On July 4, Cañdido Aguilar, the Mexican foreign minister, informed Lansing that the Carrizal prisoners would be released, and tensions eased considerably.¹³⁹ With the Mexicans "very anxious for a conference,"¹⁴⁰ the two nations eventually resolved their differences over a table in New London, Connecticut rather than in battle.

The last American troops left Mexico on February 5, 1917. It is no coincidence that after Carranza came to an agreement with the United States, the border raids con-

nected with the Plan of San Diego also came to an end.¹⁴¹ As for the elusive Pancho Villa, his fortunes revived temporarily with the nationalistic fervor that the Columbus raid produced, but he was never again a major factor in Mexican politics.

Perhaps the most important outcome of the Mexican-American crisis of 1916 was that it persuaded Carranza to seek closer ties with another country which could be of help in the event of a future clash with the United States.¹⁴² Apparently earlier overtures to Japan had not met a sufficiently positive response,¹⁴³ so Carranza turned to his only real alternative: Germany.

Carranza, as we have seen, was aware of Germany's involvement in the Huerta conspiracy of 1915, and he was undoubtedly astute enough to understand the roots of Germany's motives for providing help to his government; yet his position was such that in all likelihood he decided to accept German assistance, if it could be had, for what it was worth. From his subsequent actions it is clear that Carranza had no intention of becoming merely a tool of German foreign policy.

Carranza's shift toward Germany began slowly, the first move coming in response to Germany's recognition of his government in November 1915 (three weeks after the United States). Carranza, to the relief of the German minister, subsequently ordered Mexican newspapers to stop

printing anti-German propoganda.¹⁴⁴ In January 1916 he took a more significant step and appointed Arnoldo Krumm-Heller to be the Mexican attaché in Berlin.¹⁴⁵ Krumm-Heller was a major in the Constitutionalist army, but he was also an active member of the Union of Subjects of the German Empire; his inflammatory speeches in border towns during 1915 have led to speculation that he was involved in the Plan of San Diego.¹⁴⁶

It was during the Mexican-American crisis in June and July of 1916, however, that Mexico began to seek help from Germany for protection against the United States. At this time Carranza consciously sought to exploit German-American tensions, even if his initial attempt was almost amusingly naive: Aguilar, the Mexican foreign minister, asked Eckhardt "if he could keep the United States permanently under the pressure of war with Germany."¹⁴⁷

In October, however, Carranza's government began a series of more ambitious initiatives. The Mexican envoy in Berlin proposed an agreement under which Germany would declare to Wilson its objection to American intervention in Mexico. In return, the Mexicans offered "extensive support for the German U-boats, should they desire to attack English oil tankers leaving the port of Tampico."¹⁴⁸ In November five additional proposals were made. Germany was asked to provide military instructors for the Mexican army; to build arms and ammunition factories in Mexico; to allow

Mexico to acquire German submarines; and to help build an "efficient" radio station to establish direct communications between Germany and Mexico. In addition, Carranza wanted to conclude a new treaty of friendship with Germany covering commercial and maritime relations, since, the Mexicans claimed, the old treaty had been rendered out of date by new developments.¹⁴⁹

Carranza's proposals were obviously intended to reduce Mexico's dependence on the United States for its military needs. The Mexicans had become painfully aware of this problem during the recent crisis when Wilson clamped an arms embargo on Mexico; German help in correcting this deficiency would have strengthened Germany's hand against the United States considerably.

Germany was not yet ready to openly support Mexico, however, even if it had been able to meet Carranza's requests. Several months later, Arthur Zimmerman, the German secretary of state, defended his rejection of the Mexican overtures, saying "I did not think the moment for such a move had arrived. I did not yet know whether there would be unlimited U-boat warfare and whether, as a result, our relations with America would be severely strained. Thus I expressed myself with unusual caution."¹⁵⁰ On the other hand, Germany did not wish to alienate Carranza, and contemplated selling Mexico 20,000,000 rounds of ammunition through a German company in Chile.¹⁵¹

Lansing received information (apparently from the British ambassador in Washington) that Carranza was flirting with the Germans, and at the end of October he instructed the American representative in Mexico City to warn Carranza that "the Allies will find themselves obliged to take energetic measures in case it comes to their knowledge that aid has been granted to their enemies in Mexican waters." He continued:¹⁵²

Make clear to General Carranza the importance of immediately taking effective measures designed to prevent the use of Mexican territory as a basis of operations for belligerent ships....General Carranza must ever bear in mind that the slightest breach of Mexican neutrality may lead to the most unfortunate of consequences.

To this Aguilar cryptically replied that if any German submarines were found operating off the Mexican coast his government's actions would be formulated according to circumstances.¹⁵³

Carranza's attitude toward Germany at this time and in the following months is difficult to determine. Plainly he wanted to shore up his position against the United States, but it is unlikely that he wanted to conclude an actual alliance with Germany. Probably he was attempting to increase his options in case of a war with the United States.¹⁵⁴ Moreover, public support from Germany, if it could be obtained, would give the Mexican government an extra measure of political leverage on other questions over

which disagreement with the United States already existed or could be expected.¹⁵⁵ In any case, the Mexican overtures probably encouraged the German Foreign Office to believe that an offer of an alliance would be favorably received by Carranza.

On January 9, 1917, the German government made the fateful decision to resume unrestricted submarine warfare. It was well understood by German leaders that this move would lead to a break in relations with the United States and perhaps to an American declaration of war, but, as Bethmann-Hollweg reluctantly put it, the U-boat gamble was Germany's "last card," one with a "very favorable" chance of success; and "If success leads, we must follow."¹⁵⁶ Field Marshall von Hindenberg assessed the situation in this way:¹⁵⁷

We are counting on the probability of war with the United States and we have made all preparations to meet it. Things cannot be worse than they are now. The war must be brought to an end by whatever means as soon as possible.

The German decision was partly based on the belief that any military contribution to the war effort by the United States would be negligible; this impression had been reinforced by the U.S. Army's thoroughly unimpressive showing during the Mexican-American crisis the summer before.¹⁵⁸ Tirpitz's successor, Admiral von Capelle, thought the chance of the United States sending troops to Europe "zero,

zero, zero."¹⁵⁹ Even so, it was decided to offer an alliance to Mexico to further hinder the potential enemy.

On January 16, 1917, Secretary of State Zimmermann cabled his famous message to Bernstorff:¹⁶⁰

Telegram No. 158.
Strictly Confidential.

For your Excellency's exclusively personal information and transmission to the Imperial Minister at Mexico by safe hands:

Telegram No. 1.
Absolutely Confidential.
To be personally deciphered.

It is our purpose on the 1st of February to commence the unrestricted U-boat war. The attempt will be made to keep America neutral in spite of it all.

In case we should not be successful in this, we propose Mexico an alliance upon the following terms: Joint conduct of war. Joint conclusion of peace. Ample financial support and an agreement on our part that Mexico shall gain back by conquest the territory lost by her at a prior period in Texas, New Mexico and Arizona. Arrangement as to details is entrusted to your Excellency.

Your Excellency will make the above known to the President in strict confidence at the moment that war breaks out with the United States, and you will add the suggestion that Japan be requested to take part at once and that he simultaneously mediate between ourselves and Japan.

Please inform the President that the unrestricted use of our U-boats now offers the prospect of forcing England to sue for peace in the course of a few months.

Confirm receipt.

ZIMMERMAN

This message was intercepted by British agents, and its contents were made known to Woodrow Wilson on February 24. Meanwhile, on February 5 Zimmerman had sent a second telegram to Mexico, instructing Eckhardt to begin the

negotiations immediately and to offer a post-war alliance if Japan could be persuaded to join.¹⁶¹ The existence of this note was apparently unknown to Wilson, but in any case it was hardly as sensational as the first.

The story behind the interception of the Zimmermann telegram, and the effect that public disclosure of the German proposals had on American opinion, is well known.¹⁶² There is little question that the alliance offer, which became public on March 1, a month after Germany openly resumed unrestricted submarine warfare, did much to persuade Wilson and the American public that Germany posed a real threat to the most basic interests of the United States and that a declaration of war was therefore justified. As Wilson stated in his war message to Congress on April 2, Germany's efforts at espionage and sabotage in the United States and Mexico served to "convince us at last that [the German] Government entertains no real friendship for us and means to act against our peace and security at its convenience. That it means to stir up enemies against us at our very doors the intercepted note to the German Minister at Mexico City is eloquent evidence."¹⁶³

The German proposals received no affirmative response in either Japan or Mexico. The Japanese foreign minister publicly denounced Zimmermann's alliance idea, calling it "absurd" and "preposterous," and said that the note

demonstrated that German leaders were laboring under a "mental delusion."¹⁶⁴ The attitude of the Mexican government, however, was ambiguous. When asked by the American ambassador on March 10 to explicitly reject the proposals, Carranza claimed that he had no knowledge of them and reiterated his desire, first expressed on February 1, to organize an agreement among the neutral powers to impose a peace on Europe.¹⁶⁵ In his report to Washington, Ambassador Fletcher expressed his belief that "under present circumstances" Carranza would not accept the alliance bid, and speculated that Carranza's refusal to categorically reject the German proposals was part of an attempt to induce the United States to accept a peace conference of neutrals.¹⁶⁶

Carranza's statement to Fletcher was of course ingenious. At least as early as February 20, Eckhardt had discussed the proposals with Foreign Minister Aguilar, who seemed "not in the least reticent;"¹⁶⁷ and not long afterward Carranza himself discussed the offer with the German minister.¹⁶⁸ No Mexican records directly concerning the government's response to the German proposition have been found but other evidence indicates that Carranza did not believe that the time was ripe for an actual alliance as proposed by Germany. He did, however, wish to keep the possibility open in case Mexico was invaded by the United States.¹⁶⁹ On April 14, two weeks after the United States

declared war on Germany, the German minister reported that Carranza had decided to remain neutral: "He says the alliance has been wrecked by premature publication but might become necessary at a later stage," Eckhardt wrote, adding that Carranza had expressed his desire to "discuss the matter again" if Mexico should find itself at war.¹⁷⁰ Thus, Carranza's announcement the next day that he was determined to maintain "the most rigorous and strict neutrality"¹⁷¹ should not be accepted at face value. So long as Carranza intended to steer an independent course, so long as a major confrontation with the United States was a possibility, prudence dictated that Mexico could not reject altogether the possibility of help from a powerful, albeit beleaguered, third power. In this context it should be remembered that in early 1917 the outcome of the Great War was by no means certain. The ability of the United States to raise, equip, and transport an effective army was unproven, and disturbing reports were beginning to filter out of Russia.

Although the Germans had hoped to tie down the United States in Mexico, it is a fundamental irony that Mexican-American tension, and particularly the crisis of 1916, helped indirectly to draw the United States into the First World War. The unimpressive military showing of the United States confirmed the mistaken belief of German analysts that the United States would not be able to make a significant military contribution to the Allied cause in time to

exercise a decisive influence on the outcome of the war. This miscalculation contributed to the German decision to employ ruthless submarine warfare regardless of its impact on German-American relations. Thus, as Clarence Clendenen has observed, "an indirect but very real line of descent" connects the Columbus raid, and the subsequent crisis, to America's entry into the war.¹⁷² More importantly, the events of 1916 persuaded Carranza to turn to the Germans for help against the United States, a move which in turn encouraged Germany to propose a formal alliance with Mexico. Thanks to the diligence of British intelligence operatives and perhaps a bit of bad luck, this extraordinary diplomatic initiative backfired miserably. Germany's activities in Mexico, together with its covert operations in the United States and the submarine question, convinced Woodrow Wilson and a majority of the American people that Germany was indeed an enemy of the United States.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER IV

- ¹Papen, Memoirs, 36-37.
- ²Johann von Bernstorff, The Memoirs of Count Bernstorff, (New York: 1936), 102.
- ³Clarence C. Clendenen, The United States and Pancho Villa: A Study in Unconventional Diplomacy, (Ithaca: 1961), 106.
- ⁴Quirk, Mexican Revolution, 74.
- ⁵Ibid., 56.
- ⁶Ibid., 101.
- ⁷Charles C. Cumberland, Mexican Revolution: The Constitutional Years, (Austin: 1972), 175.
- ⁸Foreign Relations, 1914, 612.
- ⁹Ibid., 617-619.
- ¹⁰Quirk, Mexican Revolution, 150.
- ¹¹Cumberland, Constitutionalist Years, 187.
- ¹²Quirk, Mexican Revolution, 225-26; Cumberland, Constitutionalist Years, 201-02.
- ¹³Clendenen, U.S. and Pancho Villa, 121-22, 138-40.
- ¹⁴Records of the Department of State relating to Political Relations between the United States and Mexico, 1910-1929, National Archives Microfilm Publications, Microcopy number 314, Decimal file number 711.12/36 1/2.
- ¹⁵Quirk, Mexican Revolution, 226.

¹⁶New York Times, April 13, 1915.

¹⁷Ibid., April 16, 1915.

¹⁸Foreign Relations, 1915, 827.

¹⁹Ibid, 828; New York Times, April 13 and 16, 1915.

²⁰John Price Jones and Paul Merrick Hollister, The German Secret Service in America (New York: 1917), 290; Tuchman, Zimmermann Telegram, 66-67; Michael C. Meyer, "The Mexican-German Conspiracy of 1915," The Americas 23 (1966), 82; Meyer, Mexican Rebel: Pascual Orozco and the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1915, (Lincoln: 1967), 134-35.

²¹Meyer, Huerta, 216-219.

²²George J. Rausch, Jr., "The Exile and Death of Victoriano Huerta," HAHR 42 (1962), 135.

²³Jones and Hollister, German Secret Service, 292; Clendenen, U.S. and Pancho Villa, 178-79.

²⁴Tuchman, Zimmermann Telegram, 66.

²⁵Franz Rintelen von Kleist, The Dark Invader: Wartime Reminiscences of a German Naval Intelligence Officer, (New York: 1933), 80-186; Hearings on Brewing and Liquor Interests and German and Bolshevik Propaganda, Senate Document 62, 66th Congress, 3 vols. (Washington: 1919) [hereafter Brewing and Liquor], I, 3-4.

²⁶Jones and Hollister, German Secret Service, 147.

²⁷Papen, Memoirs, 47.

²⁸Emmanuel Victor Voska and Will Erwin, Spy and Counterspy, (New York: 1940), 192; Jones and Hollister,

²⁹Rintelen, Dark Invader, 183; Tuchman, Zimmermann Telegram, 78; Rausch, "Exile and Death," 137.

³⁰Brewing and Liquor, I, 1-5; Voska Spy and Counter-spy, 118, 133; Papen, Memoirs, 38, 70. Papen denied that he took any part in activities of violence within the United States, but other evidence convincingly refutes his denials.

³¹Voska, Spy and Counterspy, 71.

³²Jones and Hollister, German Secret Service, 291-93; Tuchman, Zimmermann Telegram, 78-80; Rausch, "Exile and Death," 137.

³³Meyer, "Mexican-German Conspiracy," 83; Mexican Rebel, 127.

³⁴Jones and Hollister, German Secret Service, 292.

³⁵Meyer, Huerta, 219.

³⁶Tuchman, Zimmermann Telegram, 80.

³⁷Foreign Relations, 1915, 828.

³⁸Meyer, Mexican Rebel, 129.

³⁹Meyer, Huerta, 221.

⁴⁰Meyer, Mexican Rebel, 132-33.

⁴¹Tuchman, Zimmermann Telegram, 83.

⁴²Rausch, "Exile and Death," 147.

⁴³Allen Gerlach, "Conditions Along the Border--1915: The Plan de San Diego," New Mexico Historical Review 43 (1968), 196-197.

⁴⁴Translated copies of the "Plan of San Diego" can be found in Investigation of Mexican Affairs, Report and

Hearing before a Subcommittee on Foreign Relations, Senate Document 285, 66th Congress, 2nd Session, 2 vols. (Washington: 1920) [hereafter Investigation of Mexican Affairs], I, 1205-07; and in Gerlach, "Conditions Along the Border," 207-09. The Plan has been examined in a number of works over the years, including James A. Sandos, "The Plan de San Diego: War and Diplomacy on the Texas Border, 1915-1916," Arizona and the West 14 (1972), 5-24; Charles H. Harris and Louis R. Sadler, "The Plan of San Diego and the Mexican-United States War Crisis of 1916: A Reexamination," HAHR 58 (1978), 381-408; Meyer, "Mexican-German Conspiracy," 80-81; and Charles C. Cumberland, "Border Raids in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, 1915," Southwestern Historical Quarterly 57 (1954), 285-311. See also Consul Randolph Robertson's report in Foreign Relations, 1916, 570-72.

⁴⁵Sandos, "Plan de San Diego," 8; Investigation of Mexican Affairs, I, 1205.

⁴⁶Gerlach, "Conditions Along the Border," 46; Sandos, "Plan de San Diego," 11.

⁴⁷Sandos, "Plan de San Diego," 10.

⁴⁸Harris and Sadler, "Plan of San Diego," 404-05.

⁴⁹Ibid., 394-99.

⁵⁰Sandos, "Plan de San Diego," 18, 21; Gerlach, "Conditions Along the Border," 283; Harris and Sadler, "Plan of San Diego," 394-96.

⁵¹See footnote 44 above.

⁵²Sandos, "Plan de San Diego," 5, 15; Gerlach, "Conditions Along the Border," 201; Investigation of Mexican Affairs, II, 1263-64.

⁵⁴Sandos, "Plan de San Diego," 10; Foreign Relations, 1916, 572.

⁵⁵Meyer, "Mexican-German Conspiracy," 80.

⁵⁶Foreign Relations, 1915, 568-69, 571-72, 576; Harris and Sadler even suggest (unjustifiably, I think) that Carranza used the Germans to obscure his own involvement in the Plan of San Diego.

⁵⁷Katz, Secret War, 341; Harris and Sadler, "Plan of San Diego," 463-64.

⁵⁸Katz, Secret War, 341.

⁵⁹Brewing and Liquor, II, 1784-85; Sandos, "Plan de San Diego," 11-12.

⁶⁰Brewing and Liquor, II, 1785.

⁶¹Goltz, My Adventures, 236; Meyer, "Mexican-German Conspiracy," 81.

⁶²Katz, Secret War, 341.

⁶³Cumberland, Constitutionalist Years, 202-06; Clendenen, U.S. and Pancho Villa, 172-74.

⁶⁴Link, Woodrow Wilson, 133n.

⁶⁵Ibid., 113.

⁶⁶Ibid., 200.

⁶⁷Robert Lansing, War Memoirs of Robert Lansing, (New York: 1935), 19.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Link, Woodrow Wilson, 200.

⁷⁰Cline, U.S. and Mexico, 173-74; Link, Woodrow Wilson, 133-35.

⁷¹Lansing Diary, October 10, 1915, cited in Link, Woodrow Wilson, 134n.

⁷²Cline, U.S. and Mexico, 171.

⁷³Clendenen, U.S. and Pancho Villa, 207-08.

⁷⁴Ibid., 209-10.

⁷⁵Ibid., 213-15.

⁷⁶Percy A. Martin, Latin America and the War, (Baltimore: 1925), 526-27; George Marvin, "German Efforts in Mexico," World's Work (December 1917), 208-15; Sandos, "Plan de San Diego," 11-12.

⁷⁷For Villa's high opinion of Sommerfeld, see Martin Luis Guzmán, Memoirs of Pancho Villa, (Austin: 1965), 181.

⁷⁸Friedrich Katz, "Alemania y Francisco Villa," Historia Mexicana 12 (July 1962-June 1963), 89; Secret War, 36.

⁷⁹Goltz, My Adventures, 236; Brewing and Liquor, 3-4.

⁸⁰Martin, Latin America and the War, 525; R.H. Ellis, in Jessie Peterson and Thelma Cox Knoles, eds., Pancho Villa: Intimate Recollections by People Who Knew Him, (New York: 1977), 139.

⁸¹Katz, Secret War, 342-43.

⁸²Ibid., 343.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵New York Times, March 5, 1916.

⁸⁶Ellis, in Peterson, Intimate Recollections, 130-37.

⁸⁷Katz, Secret War, 345.

⁸⁸Cited in Meyer, "Mexican-German Conspiracy," 83.

⁸⁹New York Times, August 4, 1915.

⁹⁰Foreign Relations, 1915, xx-xxi.

⁹¹Ibid., x-xi.

⁹²Ibid., x.

⁹³James A. Sandos, "German Involvement in Northern Mexico 1915-1916: A New Look at the Columbus Raid," HAHR 50 (1970), 77-80; Clendenen, U.S. and Pancho Villa, 241.

⁹⁴Sandos, "German Involvement," 80-81.

⁹⁵Clendenen, U.S. and Pancho Villa, 242.

⁹⁶Larry A. Harris, Pancho Villa and the Columbus Raid, (El Paso: 1949), 94.

⁹⁷See Clendenen, U.S. and Pancho Villa, 245.

⁹⁸See, for example, Tuchman, Zimmermann Telegram, 88-106.

⁹⁹Ellis, in Peterson, Intimate Recollections, 147-50.

¹⁰⁰See Clendenen, 244-45; Sandos, "German Involvement,"

71n.

¹⁰¹See Katz, "Alemania y Francisco Villa," 88-102;

Secret War, 332-36; Michael Meyer, "Villa, Sommerfeld,

Columbus, y los Alemanes," Historia Mexicana 28 (1979), 546-566; Sandos, "German Involvement," 70-88.

¹⁰²Katz, Secret War, 333-34.

¹⁰³Ibid., 334.

¹⁰⁴See Sandos, "German Involvement," 84; Meyer, "Villa, Sommerfeld," 559-60; and Katz, Secret War, 337.

¹⁰⁵Sandos, "German Involvement," 71-72; Meyer, "Villa, Sommerfeld," 554.

¹⁰⁶Katz, "Alemania y Villa," 95-96; Sandos, "German Involvement," 88.

¹⁰⁷Sandos, "German Involvement," 71.

¹⁰⁸For some of these see Clendenen, U.S. and Pancho Villa, 244-45.

¹⁰⁹Meyer, "Villa, Sommerfeld," 563.

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¹¹¹Bernstorff to Foreign Office, March 14, 1916, in Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Division of International Law, Official German Documents Relating to the World War, 2 vols. (New York: 1919-1923), II, 1320.

¹¹²George S. Viereck, Spreading Germs of Hate, (New York: 1930), 55.

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¹¹⁷Ibid., 1916, 485-86, 493, 494.

- 118 Clendenen, U.S. and Pancho Villa, 264.
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- 131 New York Times, June 28, 1916
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- 134 Joseph Tumulty, Woodrow Wilson as I Know Him, 159-60.
- 135 New York Times, June 22, 1916.
- 136 See Katz, Secret War, 349.
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- 140 Ibid., 605.
- 141 See Harris and Sadler, "The Plan of San Diego," for an able argument in support of this contention.

- ¹⁴²Friedrich Katz, "Pancho Villa and the Attack on Columbus," American Historical Review 83 (1978), 128.
- ¹⁴³Katz, Secret War, 345-46.
- ¹⁴⁴Ibid., 347.
- ¹⁴⁵Ibid., 348.
- ¹⁴⁶Sandos, "Plan de San Diego," 12; Harris and Sadler, "Plan of San Diego," 404.
- ¹⁴⁷Katz, Secret War, 348, 349.
- ¹⁴⁸Ibid., 348; Clendenen, U.S. and Pancho Villa, 302.
- ¹⁴⁹Katz, Secret War, 348-49.
- ¹⁵⁰Ibid., 350.
- ¹⁵¹Ibid.
- ¹⁵²Martin, Latin America and the War, 530.
- ¹⁵³Ibid., 531.
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- ¹⁵⁵Ibid., 221, 225.
- ¹⁵⁶Official German Documents Relating to the War, II, 1320-21.
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- ¹⁶⁰Official German Documents Relating to the War, II, 1337.

¹⁶¹Ibid., II, 1338.

¹⁶²See especially Tuchman, Zimmermann Telegram, 145-92. For recently revealed facts concerning the telegram's interception, see Katz, Secret War, 350-66.

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¹⁶⁵Ibid., 238.

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¹⁷²Clendenen, U.S. and Pancho Villa, 304.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

"Poor Mexico," Porfirio Diaz once said, "so far from God and so near the United States." Germany's policies in Mexico ultimately had little to do with the Empire's economic interests there. Those were small, but even had they been more substantial, they would have been subservient to Germany's larger interests. For German policy makers, Mexico's primary value lay in its strategic location. The Zimmermann note was only the culmination of a decade of German hopes to use Mexico as a pawn in the international competition for world power.

By 1905, as we have seen, Germany's ambitions for political expansion in the western hemisphere had been checked by a healthy understanding of political realities. So long as Germany's European estrangement threatened the Empire's most basic continental interests, Germany had little to gain and much to lose from an overt confrontation with the United States, a nation which had elevated the Monroe Doctrine almost to the level of inviolable law during the first years of the twentieth century. The British, under strategic pressures similar to Germany's, had responded by conceding hegemony in the Caribbean to

the United States. Not so Germany. German leaders maintained their hopes for expanded influence in the western hemisphere, but perforce were compelled to promote Germany's interests there through covert and indirect methods. German policy with respect to Latin America was therefore torn between the need to satisfy two fundamentally incompatible principles: the ambitious drive for enhancement of national power and prestige, and the oddly concomitant fear of over-extension and destruction. In an attempt to reconcile these conflicting interests, Germany employed the strategy of setting its potential enemies against each other, in the pursuit of "Weltpolitik with the wars of others."

Mexico was destined by its geographical location to play an important part in the geopolitical calculations of the German leadership. There were early thoughts of strengthening Mexico to counterbalance the United States, and later Mexico was the centerpiece of the Kaiser's attempts to incite a war between the United States and Japan. It is clear, however, that Germany's temptation to seriously play the Mexican card increased as Germany's European situation became more dangerous. When it became obvious shortly after the outbreak of the world war that Germany would not enjoy a quick victory, the opportunities presented by the Mexican revolution for the distraction of the United States began to outweigh the risks involved.

Germany's covert activities in Mexico and the United States during the world war amounted to an attempt to attack or choke off Allied supply lines by almost any means available. The realization only slowly dawned that the United States, in providing munitions, food, and other supplies to Britain and France, was in fact an indispensable part of the Allied war machine, and that America, in steadfastly defending its right to support the Allied war effort in this way, was pursuing a course of action directly inimical to Germany's very survival. Even so, for political and very practical reasons, Germany had no wish to be at war with the United States; its American policy, therefore, remained outwardly correct, but the opportunistic streak that always lay beneath Germany's formal posture grew increasingly strong. In fact it can be argued that Germany's covert operations in the United States amounted to a form of undeclared war, albeit with limited resources and always constrained by the fear of discovery and retribution.

German operations in Mexico were an extension of those in the United States, but were inspired by years of attention to Mexico's unique strategic location and the obvious opportunities provided by revolutionary chaos. At first, Germany's attempts to draw the United States into a war with Mexico were guided by the familiar strategy of distracting Germany's enemies by creating friction with

third parties. When these efforts failed, and German leaders became sufficiently desperate, however, the ambiguities and conflicts that had plagued Germany's United States policy disappeared and were replaced by a new strategy, war by proxy: "Make war together. Make peace together." Zimmermann's second telegram to Carranza, often ignored, makes it clear that in making the decision for unlimited U-boat warfare, the German leadership deliberately burned its bridges behind, accepted the inevitability of war with the United States, and invited Carranza to do Germany's fighting against the United States, even before America declared war against Germany.

From Lansing's diary and Tumulty's testimony, we know that the President and his Secretary of State understood Germany's purposes in Mexico as early as October 1915, and certainly by the summer of 1916, when Wilson said that war with Germany seemed "inevitable." This understanding surely did nothing to enhance German-American relations, but neither did it push Wilson into an openly pro-war stance. Veiled hostility was not enough. It took the resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare, and Germany's admitted desire to support Mexico against the United States in its own interests, to push Wilson into war.

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