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Muddling of Mexico Problem By United States Due to Failure to Get Clear Idea of Mexican Viewpoint

BY ROBERT H. MURAY

(Ten years a resident correspondent in Mexico City for the New York World and in charge of the Mexican section of the U. S. Committee on Public Information during the World War. For his latter brilliant service to this country and the allies he has been decorated by both and recommended on the United States Decoration of Honor.)

NEW YORK, Aug. 21—All was peaceful in Mexico early in 1910 and there was little understanding of Mexican conditions and little interest in them by the plain folk of the United States.

Come Madero, then, crying like a Mexican John the Baptist and preaching the doctrine of "Effective suffrage and no re-election." The Diaz legend persisted with us. He would crush Madero. But, greatly to our languid surprise, he did not. He couldn't. He was too old. He had governed too long and too alone.

He, or all the government, was the story ran, or what apparently looked to be the steady one, although under the soil there was rumbling but little of it bespoke volcanic activity.

All of the other individual element in the government were changing. It was revolution, radiating out from, who knew where? Madero's followers were the men who had gone their share in making the revolution which ended in the overthrow of Diaz.

Without the assistance which came to him from the United States, Madero never could have overthrown Diaz. The Washington government permitted the Maderistas to establish their bases and hatch their plots on United States territory.

Our protected property, immovable and not comfort, materially and sentimentally, was given Madero along the border by merchants in El Paso, Eagle Pass, Laredo and other places. Through the border ports poured equipment and ammunition, machine guns, rifles, ammunition, machine guns to the Maderistas.

We didn't see that we were sowing the wind. Had we seen, could we have seen what the crop we would reap, we would have taken steps to head it off. We just experimented with it, and in the last analysis at the Mexican people paid. Diaz should go on and a democratic form of government for which apparently the hungered and thirsted Madero promised them should be set up before the Big Brother. This, then, is what we should have done.

With all disinterested sincerity and, what is more important, purposeful, constructive firmness, we should have caused the Mexicans to understand that, while as a free people ourselves we sympathized completely with their aspirations to throw off the thralldom of Diaz and were willing to assist them so far as we could, destructive revolution would not be tolerated, as much for their own sakes as for ours. Also that border fighting, which took its toll of American lives in El Paso and other frontier towns, must cease. Also that if it did not cease we should ourselves undertake the military policy of the Mexican side of the border, especially adjacent American towns.

Taft Warned and Threatened

Of course, it would have been easier to have told Diaz somewhere in the line of duty the telling may have of us to be a little part of the decent civilization to do what we said we would do if the Mexicans planned to do the thing we told them they must not do. But we couldn't, merely because it is unthinkable in the face. There was no popular demand for it. So we gave them time to see for themselves the situation.

The Mexicans started planning and doing the thing. Taft warned them again and again. They were told not only by our newspapers, but also by all honest men who came to this country from Mexico, and of course, by William Howard Taft, who was the government in this country at the time. Taft then on Mexico, or whatever he thought, was worth, or whatever he thought was worth, in his famous warning that all Americans leave the country.

In effect, what we did was to say to Diaz: "Go ahead and do what you must do." That was mistake No. 1. Mistake No. 2 came when, by the outright, planned Madero, it was revealed to Diaz we did not exert what influence we might properly have exerted in discouraging it and in fair, preventing Madero from going overboard.

As a government we did not, as Madero, the good Big Brother, said quite humanly for us to do, we did not, we promised to do, that if Madero had not gone when Mexico was and had begun a revolt, we would have gone. Madero, in fact, was encouraged to believe that if he failed we would come to his rescue.

If Madero had not gone, he did, some where, he would have lost his head, with the difficulty, he was in the right, he was right in the right, he was right in the right.

Almost from the day he came to the office, Madero was pestered and harassed by the United States. I know, for I witnessed the process. Officials of our government, both in and out of Mexico, did about everything they could either designedly or through ignorance, not only to stir up opposition to Madero within Mexico, to lessen confidence and support for him among his own people, but to discredit him in the estimation of foreign governments.

We expected Madero immediately to set up Mexico in modern fashion and in a manner as enlightened as, three months after he came, the politicians of a thousand years in a revolution in England, or, more to the point, as we had expected Diaz to do when, in 1911, he was forced to resign. Madero could do it. We don't know if Madero was, in fact, a Diaz, a superman, or even a Lincoln, but we could at least expect him to try to do the best he could for Mexico.

What he was trying to do he did at his inauguration and in the years that followed. He was, in fact, a Lincoln, or, if not, he was a good President. He was, in fact, a Lincoln, or, if not, he was a good President. He was, in fact, a Lincoln, or, if not, he was a good President