

# Understanding Wilson's Problems in Mexico

American History Standard & Honors  
AP United States History  
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## **Woodrow Wilson adopts "Moral Diplomacy" (also known as: "missionary" diplomacy):**

United States will not recognize nations that are not democratic, or are violent and/or hostile.  
How is this a change from Roosevelt's Big Stick Diplomacy or Taft's Dollar Diplomacy?

## **1911 – Porfirio Díaz, dictator of Mexico**

Partnered with U.S. for economic investments in Mexico; most Mexicans poor  
(Remember, with political turmoil in Mexico beginning in the early 1900s, a large wave of Mexican immigrants began moving into the U.S. southwest; settlement in this region was made possible by the irrigation of these lands – see information on the Reclamation Act.)

## **1911 – Peasants led by Francisco Madero overthrow Díaz**

Madero promised reforms; did not satisfy demands of different social groups  
(Review: landowners → middle class → farm workers/peasants; old social structure)

[Woodrow Wilson is elected in 1912, inaugurated 1913]

## **1913 – General Victoriano Huerta overthrew Madero; Madero murdered**

Wilson refuses to recognize new government

## **1914 – Huerta's officers arrested small group of American sailors**

Wilson sent USMC to Veracruz; war feared between U.S. and Mexico  
"ABC" powers intervene to prevent war: Argentina, Brazil, Chile  
"ABC" plan: Huerta to step down, U.S. troops withdraw

## **1915 – Huerta's regime collapsed; Venustiano Carranza became president**

Wilson recognized new government

Carranza did not have full support; opposition from Francisco "Pancho" Villa and Emiliano Zapata

Villa = nationalist; tried to gain support of the U.S.

Zapata = land reform (mestizo; son of a peasant)

Wilson continued to recognize Carranza's government

## **1916 – American engineers invited by Carranza to operate mines in N. Mexico**

**Before reaching mines, captured and murdered by Villa followers**

**Later, followers raided Columbus, New Mexico (US) and killed 17 Americans**

Wilson responded by sending General John J. Pershing into Mexico and raised a force of 150,000\* National Guardsmen to guard the U.S.-Mexico border

U.S. troops and Mexican troops (Carranza's government) fought in Mexico in June 1916.

## **1917 – U.S. troops withdrew; both sides backed away from declared war – WHY?**

## **1920 – Carranza's presidency ended; replaced by moderate Alvaro Obregón**

\* The organization of 150,000 troops represents the largest amassing of troops since the Civil War.