

Story of Present Mexican Crisis

As Gleaned from Newspaper Press Dispatches

The status of the case, leading up to the present crisis in Mexico, as summed up by cabinet officers and other officials familiar with the messages that passed between Rear Admiral Mayo, Charge O'Shaughnessy and the Washington government is described in a press dispatch as follows:

"Assistant Paymaster Charles C. Copp and a boatload of marines landed at Tampico, April 9, to obtain supplies. In accordance with regulations in all navies of the world, Rear Admiral Mayo on considering that an unwarranted arrest had been made and that the uniform of the American navy had been disregarded, demanded reparation in the form of a salute of 21 guns. The American flag, while not taken ashore, was flying at the stern of the whale-boat and all marines were in uniform.

"Rear Admiral Mayo allowed the Huerta commander until 6 o'clock that evening to fire a salute, but later extended the time in order to afford the local commander an opportunity to communicate with his superior officers in Mexico City. A statement of apology was issued in Mexico City by General Huerta, and the local officer who arrested the marines was ordered punished. This did not satisfy the United States government, and the salute was insisted upon. General Huerta himself at no time agreed to comply, but an under secretary in the Mexican foreign office did inquire of Charge O'Shaughnessy if a salute fired to the gunboat Dolphin and responded to by the American ship would be acceptable. This was emphatically rejected by the United States, and word was sent that nothing short of a public salute to the American flag would be satisfactory."

REAR ADMIRAL MAYO'S DEMAND

Concerning the Tampico incident, the navy department was informed by Rear Admiral Fletcher that the following communication in writing, addressed by Rear Admiral Mayo to the Mexican general Zaragoza at Tampico, on April 9, was the original demand for a salute to the flag:

"This morning an officer and squad of men of (the) Mexican military forces arrested and marched through the street (of) Tampico a commissioned officer of the United States navy, the paymaster of Dolphin, together with seven men composing the crew of the whaleboat of the Dolphin. At the time of this arrest, the officer and the men concerned were unarmed and engaged in loading cases of gasoline which had been purchased on shore. Part of these men were on the shore, but all, including the man or men in boat, were forced to accompany armed Mexican forces.

"I do not need to tell you that taking men from a boat flying the United States flag is a hostile act not to be excused.

"I have already received your verbal message of regret that this event has happened, and your statement that it was committed by an ignorant officer.

"The responsibility for hostile acts cannot be avoided by the plea of ignorance.

"In view of the publicity of this occurrence, I must require that you send by suitable members of your staff, formal disavowal and apology for the act, together with your assurance that the officer responsible for it will receive severe punishment. Also, that you publicly hoist the United States flag in a prominent position on shore and salute it with

21 guns. Salute will be returned by this ship.

"Your answer to this communication should reach me, and the called-for salute be fired, within 24 hours from 6 p. m., of this date."

PRESIDENT WILSON ACTS

Promptly following the refusal of the Mexican government to fire a salute to the American flag as reparation for the insult offered to an officer and men from the United States ship Dolphin at Tampico, President Wilson on April 14 ordered the entire north Atlantic battleship fleet, under Rear Admiral Badger, to proceed at once with all the ships under his command to Tampico. The decision to send the fleet was reached after the president and Secretary Bryan had conferred with John Lind, personal representative of the president in Mexico, and after a two hour cabinet meeting. Immediately after the cabinet meeting adjourned, Secretary Daniels issued his order to the Atlantic fleet.

President Wilson's purpose in ordering the dispatch of the American fleet, as outlined in a statement to members of the senate committee on foreign relations and the house committee on foreign affairs, did not contemplate war with Mexico, but the seizure of Mexican ports and the maintenance of a "peaceful blockade" until the government of Mexico furnished adequate reparation for the arrest of an American naval officer and American bluejackets at Tampico, the president contending that ample precedents justified seizure of ports to obtain reparation for national insult without going to the extreme of a declaration of war, and that the occupation of Mexican ports will cease when American honor has been satisfied through compliance with the president's demands, unless congress should determine otherwise.

On April 16, assurances were received in Washington of the willingness of the Mexican government to comply with the demands of the United States that a national salute of 21 guns to the American flag be fired in reparation for the indignity offered this nation by the arrest of an officer and enlisted men from the United States ship Dolphin. It was decided by this government that the salute should be returned by an American warship. The administration regarded this arrangement as a happy outcome of the Tampico affair and expected the firing of the salute would end the Tampico incident.

SALUTING THE FLAG

The return of the salute by the American warship was not taken by the administration to mean a recognition of the government of Huerta. At the White House and elsewhere it was contended that ample precedents established that recognition could only be given through affirmative action and not from any mere incident. A statement given out by the navy department, outlining the procedure in such incidents, was furnished to the press at the White House with a typewritten line at the top explaining that it had been issued by the navy department. It read as follows:

"If a national salute is fired as an 'amende honorable,' it is invariably returned gun for gun by a vessel of war of the power whose flag has thus been saluted. This is in accordance with international comity, and there are many precedents to establish the custom.

"In Admiral Mayo's written communication to the Mexican General



ONE PEOPLE, ONE COUNTRY, ONE FLAG

DeBeck, in Pittsburgh Gazette-Times.

Zaragoza, at Tampico, on April 9, was the original demand made for a salute to the flag. In this communication General Zaragoza was informed by Admiral Mayo that the salute would be returned by the Dolphin immediately."

The action of President Wilson in demanding a salute as reparation for the Tampico incident was sustained April 16 by unanimous vote of the house committee on foreign affairs, after a session at which the whole situation was canvassed, the committee without dissent adopted the following resolution: "Resolved, That the action of the president of the United States in the Tampico incident is sustained by the committee on foreign affairs of the house of representatives."

HUERTA'S DEMANDS

The assurances that the demands of the United States would be complied with were followed by a demand of Huerta that there should be a simultaneous salute fired by the Americans when the Mexicans should salute the American flag. The reply of the American government to this proposal was not favorable to a recession in any point from the original demand of Rear Admiral Mayo. Accordingly Huerta's proposal for a simultaneous salute was rejected by direction of President Wilson, who expressed determination to carry out the program to be entrusted to the Atlantic fleet if the salute of reparation was not forthcoming under conditions satisfactory to this government.

Secretary Bryan's ultimatum to the Mexican government, sent by direction of the president and in his name, was in vigorous language. It minced no words in making clear that the objection of General Huerta to complying with the American demands were not regarded as worthy of further consideration. The ultimatum indicated that the patience of this government had become ex-

hausted and further delay would not be tolerated.

Acting on advices that General Huerta had declined to agree to the pliance with its demands, President Wilson, on April 18, drafted a brief statement to the country giving notice of his decision to proceed to extremes. The statement, prepared by the president himself on his typewriter, follows:

PRESIDENT WILSON'S REPLY

"General Huerta is still insisting upon doing something less than has been demanded and something less than would constitute and acknowledge that his representatives were entirely in the wrong in the indignities they put upon the government of the United States.

"The president has determined that if General Huerta has not yielded by 6 o'clock Sunday afternoon he will take the matter to congress on Monday."

On April 19, the Mexican foreign minister announced that it would be impossible to agree to the demand of the United States that the flag of that country be unconditionally saluted, and announced further that the Mexican government would agree that both flags be saluted, the American flag first, and then the Mexican flag, this arrangement to be made by a protocol signed by the American Charge d'Affairs O'Shaughnessy and the Mexican foreign minister.

It was proposed by Huerta that this protocol should state that the Mexican government would agree to fire the salute to the American flag insisted upon by the United States and that a guarantee that the salute should be returned would be given in the document by this government. Secretary Bryan did not wait to telephone or telegraph President Wilson, absent at the time at White Sulphur Springs, Va., but immediately wrote a dispatch to Mr. O'Shaughnessy directing him to inform the Mexican government that its proposal was not