Time Machine (1916): President Wilson orders Mexico invasion to get Villa

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EL PASO, Texas, March 10 — An American was murdered by Mexican revolutionaries early today. According to J. B. Blair, of Columbus, New Mexico, the bandits raided an American ranch house and killed an American named Hopps.

The report was followed by a telegram from Columbus saying that great clouds of dust could be seen to the west from a heavy force of raiders.

President Woodrow Wilson today ordered an expedition into Mexico. The soldiers will put an end to outrages by General Francisco Villa and his band of outlaws.

Secretary of War Newton Baker at once began preparations for the invasion. The campaign will be entirely punitive.

General Villa, with a large force, is again moving on Columbus, New Mexico, from the west, according to a telephone call.
Mexican bandit forces are reported to be attacking American border towns from Nogales, Arizona, to El Paso, Texas. They number about 5,000 armed men and Villa is leading them.

Villa has threatened to force the United States to become involved in the Mexican revolution. The attacks began yesterday in Columbus, New Mexico. About 16 to 20 American soldiers and civilians were killed.

United States troops, 19,000 strong, have been quickly sent to patrol the border and protect the endangered towns and ranches. They are under the command of General Frederick Funston. Yesterday, the American forces pursued Villa and his outlaws five miles into Mexico. They have since returned to Columbus following the determined stand of the Villistas. More than 100 Mexican raiders were killed.

Will Send Forces To Take Villa

WASHINGTON, March 10 — President Woodrow Wilson today ordered the United States Army to capture or kill General Francisco Villa, the murderer of Americans. An expedition will go to Mexico as soon as possible to get Villa. Top officials were unanimous that action must be taken immediately. Villa’s actions had enraged Congress so much that the president and his advisers decided that he must be removed as a menace to the peace of the country. The following statement was issued by Wilson’s secretary, Joseph Tumulty:

"An adequate force will be sent at once in pursuit of Villa with the single object of capturing him and putting a stop to his forays. This can and will be done in entirely friendly aid of the constituted authorities in Mexico, and with scrupulous respect for the sovereignty of that republic."

Secretary Of War Acts At Once

Secretary of War Newton Baker went directly from the Cabinet meeting to his office, where he told General Hugh Scott to prepare orders for the troops. They will send at least 5,000 men. Possibly 20,000, and even 50,000 men might yet be needed.

General Frederick Funston will be the commander-in-chief of the expedition. At the same time, orders were telegraphed to all units of the regular Army to be ready to move at a moment’s notice.

President Wilson called Senator William Stono, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, on the telephone. The senator gave his total support and agreed to push forward any laws that might be necessary.

Expedition In Accord With Carranza Government

Officials were careful to emphasize that the expedition was intended to support the Mexican government. They admitted that the Mexicans may not look favorably on an invasion. Negative feelings against the United States have constantly been growing throughout Mexico. There were many officials and military experts who believed that
government supporters and rebels would unite to oppose the U.S. troops. If that happens, they insisted that the United States would have to conquer all Mexico and form a new government.

General Scott, who knows Villa and the Mexicans well, made no secret of his fears that it might be misunderstood.

**Fleet Ordered To Be In Readiness**

Both the Atlantic and Pacific fleets had been ordered to be ready for any possibility. At least 5,000 troops will march into Mexico, according to the War Department, and about 8,000 men in total probably will be needed to get General Villa. The expedition will consist chiefly of regular soldiers, but there will be at least 1,000 to 2,000 cavalry.
Quiz

1. Secretary of War Newton Baker would be most likely to agree with which of the following statements?
   (A) The invasion might be misunderstood by the Mexican people.
   (B) General Frederick Funston was wrong to kill 100 Mexican troops.
   (C) The United States must respond to Villa quickly and forcefully.
   (D) The U.S. should be careful not to anger the Carranza government.

2. According to the article, what is the MOST important reason why President Wilson wanted to invade Mexico?
   (A) because Villa’s forces were threatening the safety of Americans
   (B) because Wilson wanted to punish the Carranza government for their brutality
   (C) because Villa’s troops were trying to overthrow the Carranza government
   (D) because the Mexican government wanted American support in their time of need

3. Read the following sentence from the article.
   
   This can and will be done in entirely friendly aid of the constituted authorities in Mexico, and with scrupulous respect for the sovereignty of that republic.

   Which word from the sentence helps you understand that U.S. troops will be careful to honor Mexico’s leadership?
   (A) entirely
   (B) authorities
   (C) respect
   (D) republic
4 Read the sentence from the article.

An adequate force will be sent at once in pursuit of Villa with the single object of capturing him and putting a stop to his forays.

Which option is the best definition of the word "forays" as used in the sentence?

(A) policies
(B) concerns
(C) invasions
(D) strategies