

Station #6: Woodrow Wilson's "Moral Diplomacy"

Wilson disliked the assertive policies of Taft and Theodore Roosevelt. He advocated "moral diplomacy" (a policy that made the U.S. the conscience of the world). He hoped to spread democracy, condemn colonialism, and promote peace. While he pledged to limit American interventions in Latin America, he ended up intervening more than any previous President, deploying troops to Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and Mexico.

Document A: "Moral Diplomacy"

"These States lying to the south of us, which have always been our neighbors, will now be drawn closer to us by innumerable ties, and I hope, chief of all, by the tie of a common understanding of each other. Interest does not tie nations together; it sometimes separates them. But sympathy and understanding does unite them[.]

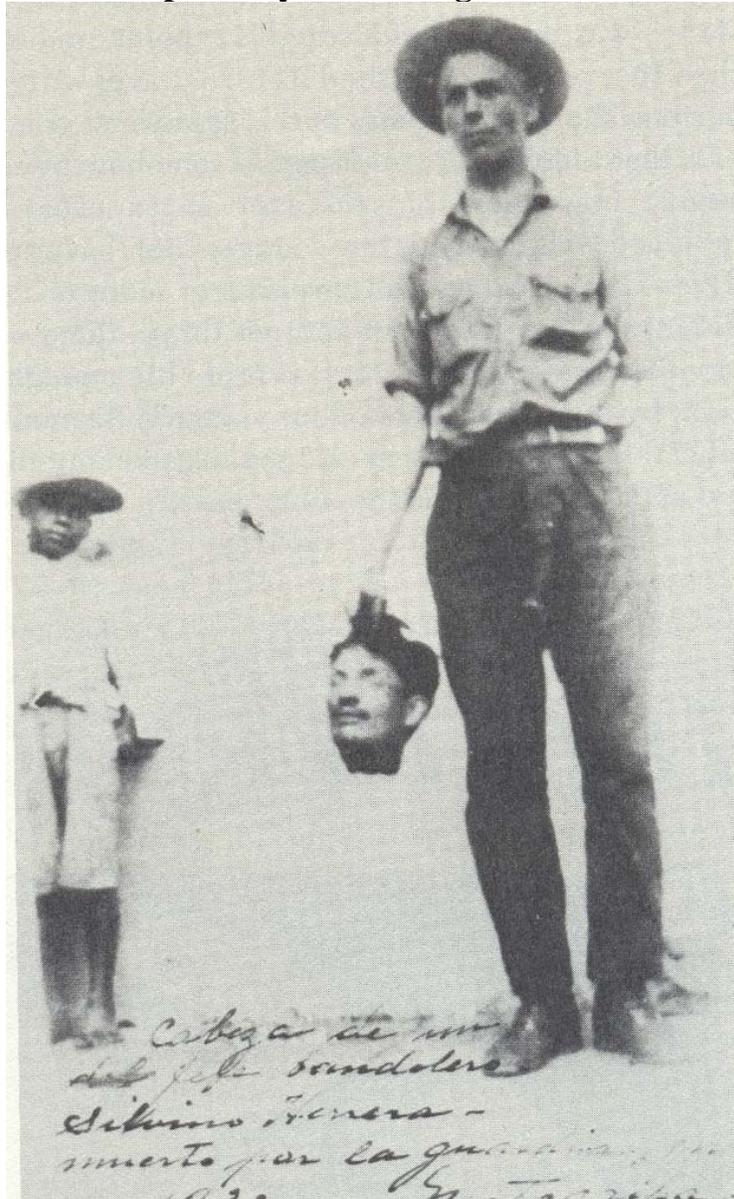
...We must prove ourselves their friends and champions upon the terms of equality and honor... We must show ourselves friends by comprehending their interest, whether it squares with our own interest or not. It is a very perilous thing to determine the foreign policy of a nation in the terms of material interest. It not only is unfair to those with whom you are dealing, but it is degrading as regards your own actions."

-President Woodrow Wilson, 1913

Document B: American Troops Practicing "Moral Diplomacy" in Nicaragua



Document C: "Moral" Diplomacy in Nicaragua?



U.S. officer and head of "the bandit Chief Silvino Herrera."

"There is a strong feeling here that mistaken humanitarianism on our part has prevented the elimination of Sandino [the commander of guerilla forces that opposed U.S. occupation]."

*-Harold Denny,
New York Times
Dispatch from
Managua, 1928*

Despite Wilson's non-interventionist intentions, he deployed U.S. troops to several Latin American countries. The document above comes from the protracted and bloody war fought by American troops against Nicaraguan guerillas between 1912 and 1926.