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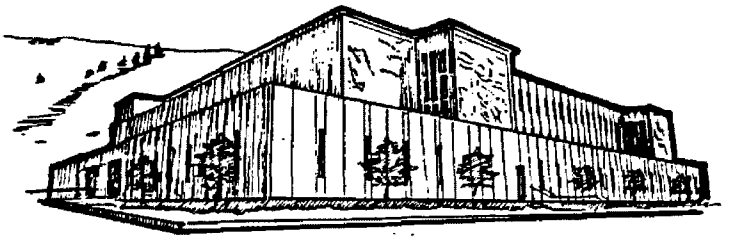

PANCHO VILLA AND THE MEDELLIN DRUG CARTEL: USE OF THE ARMY AGAINST NON-GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES

by

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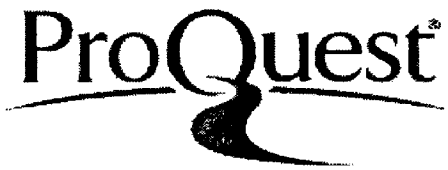

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CHAPTER 1

PURPOSE

Drugs, particularly cocaine, have become a very prevalent and dangerous threat to our nation's security. There have been many who have sought to deal with the problems of drug addiction and its associated problem of urban crime. The results, however, have been only disappointment. Many responsible members of the public have demanded that the military be used to curb this threat to our national security. The Defense Department has not readily accepted this mission because of the perceived ambiguities of any role that it may come to be assigned.

Appearing before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Major General Stephen G. Olmstead, USMC, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Drug Policy and Enforcement, and Director, Department of Defense Task Force on Drug Enforcement, provided the following response during questioning by Rep. Lawrence J. Smith of Florida:

> Mr. Smith. But do we have any idea now of what support you plan to provide in fiscal 1987-1988 to anti-drug efforts in Latin America?
> General Olmstead. In Latin America Specifically?
> Mr. Smith. Yes.
> General Olmstead. No, sir, we do not have a program for that. I think--
> Mr. Smith. You are on an as-need basis?

> General Olmstead. We are reactive. We are proactive reactors [emphasis added] to what people like Mr. Westrate and the other fine law enforcement agencies ask of us.
>
> But specifically in response to your question, we do not have a DOD program down there.[1]

Since this exchange took place, there is still no clear guidance from DoD concerning what role it will play in Latin American drug interdiction. In fact, there are some indications that the military is unwilling to participate in drug interdiction programs.[2]

The popular perception is that the United States is in a "drug war." Drug Czar William Bennett, and his umbrella organization of the federal government's anti-drug forces, display the apparent urgency of a military organization during a crisis in order to fulfill President Bush's pledge to eliminate the drug scourge from U.S. cities. Like most wars, however, the initial rhetoric of the national leadership has had to be tempered by reality. The administration is forced to search for a way to reconcile the differences between what is practical and what has been promised to the electorate.

On the question about the use of the U.S. military, and the Army in particular, in this "war," the White House has issued contradictory statements. On the one hand, the Administration said that American troops would be committed to Colombia if President Virgilio Barco Vargas asks for help[3] but during the same week, the Administration contradicted itself by saying that American troops would not

be used in any case.[4] This confusion and uncertainty on the part of the national leadership exacerbates the problem for U.S. allies.

Congress also has called for an increased military role in the war on drugs by using some of the trillion dollar plus arsenal that has been provided to the Pentagon over the last ten years. This call for action by the military is made in spite of the fact that a majority of the expensive weapons systems bought during that period were for nuclear forces or the Strategic Defense Initiative.[5]

In a Newsweek poll, the American public is reported to be in favor of a role for the U.S. military in the fight against drugs. Results show 53 per cent favoring the use of troops to only 34 per cent against, although 50 per cent feel that the only real and lasting solution to the drug problem will have to come on the cities' streets.[6] A call for action by the majority of the surveyed population for use of the military in the drug war has not gone unnoticed by politicians outside of Washington, with mayors and governors alike asking for help.[7]

The reality is that the U.S. Army already has been involved with the nations of Colombia, Peru and Bolivia in the fight against drugs for the last several years. With President Bush's promise of $65 million in aid to those countries participating in the Andean Initiative, the U.S. Army has sent seven teams of Special Forces trainers. This

aid is in addition to those advisors already in place, with the total numbers of this additional assistance between 70 and 100 U.S. soldiers.[8] These advisors have been primarily used to train the local police forces in counter-subversion tactics and small unit operations in order to combat the narcotraffickers operating in their respective jurisdictions. There have also been rumors that the Administration is seeking authority to use Special Forces to capture selected drug lords in order to bring them to justice in the U.S.[9]

Considering this lack of a clear definition of goals, it is obvious that it is now the time to think about the role the U.S. Army should be expected to perform in this national crusade. In order to be effective, the Army must be given a clear and unambiguous mission statement that is within its capabilities and has a definite beginning and ending point that can be achieved. The formation of this mission statement must carefully analyze the potential problems and identify the exact objective. It is this development that is necessary in order to create a mission statement for the Secretary of the Army to present to the Secretary of Defense for consideration by the President.

Since the philosopher Santyana stated that those who do not learn from the past are condemned to repeat it, the mission statement as developed in this paper will include an historical analysis of a like mission -- that of the

Punitive Expedition against Pancho Villa, 1916-1917, under Brigadier General John J. (Blackjack) Pershing. In the case of the Punitive Expedition, the mission was the elimination of a non-governmental entity (Pancho Villa and his forces) in a foreign land where the local national authorities had no control. The possible commitment of U.S. ground troops in Colombia, would also be to eliminate a non-governmental entity (the Medellin Drug Cartel and its paramilitary security forces), which is also beyond the capabilities of the host national government to eradicate or control. These forces represented or are now a threat to both the United States and the host nation by either direct military action (Pancho Villa) or in the disruption of the social fabric of the two countries (the Medellin Drug Cartel).

The purpose of this mission statement will not be to eliminate the use of, or addiction to, the drug cocaine, since that task is beyond the scope of the Army. However, it is possible that the Army may have a legitimate role beyond that of advisors and trainers. Drug interdiction is the most logical role to be investigated.

Although the Army does not have the capability to stop ships on the high seas like the Navy, or the observation and interception of drug smuggling aircraft like the Air Force, it is the force best suited for operations in the northern portion of the South American continent. Some may argue that the Marines also have the capability to project force

onto land. They do not, however, have a dedicated support structure independent of the Navy. The Army has its own Military Intelligence and other organizations which can be committed to the counter-drug force on the ground, instead of being siphoned away to identify ships carrying cocaine or other concerns, which detract from the mission of destroying cocaine production facilities.

Through examination of the process by which the coca plant is transformed into cocaine, it may be possible to determine limited periods of time where the drug can be successfully interdicted before it is loaded onto the ships or planes for the journey north. By using these logistical requirements against the narcotraffickers, there is a good possibility of reducing the cocaine availability in the United States.

The goal of this professional paper is to identify problems in the use of military forces in external interdiction of drug processing, by using an historical precedent, and to examine the vulnerabilities of cocaine processing in order to create a valid mission statement for the U.S. Army in an expanded role against drug trafficking. Success would be measured by the reduction of the estimated cocaine production of each of the labs destroyed, with a goal of over 200 tons in annual capacity being destroyed. This reduction in drug production will also lead to reduced availability of the drug in the U.S.

The organization of this paper is as follows: Chapter 1 states the problem as the need for a definite mission statement for the Army before it is committed in any-on-the ground role in South America against the production of cocaine.

Chapter 2 examines the general methods and processes whereby coca becomes transformed into cocaine. The purpose of this examination is to determine if there are vulnerable chokepoints in the process that can be interdicted. Chapter 2 also addresses some of the concerns of the nations of South America and explains why they have not taken full steps to eradicate coca production.

Chapter 3 uses the historical analysis system of Richard Neustadt and Ernest May's book Thinking in Time,[10] to examine significant similarities and dissimilarities between the Punitive Expedition of 1916 and the possible contemporary use of the U.S. Army in Colombia.

Neustadt and May have developed a systematic approach for analyzing policy by comparing it to events in the past. The system that they have set up begins by listing three separate lists for the situation, what is Known, Unknown, and Presumed. After these have been listed, an evaluator should look for historical comparisons, then list the Likenesses and Differences. After the situation is clearly identified, Neustadt and May suggest that the evaluator then determine what is the desired outcome. Next they recommend

that the evaluator examine the history for any lessons learned that were successful and examine their applicability to the situation. Also, the authors recommend examining failures, in order to avoid repetition. Although the use of history can only provide analogies and not blueprints for action, historical examples should not be ignored. Chapter 4 is a discussion of potential danger points for the Army and the nation as well as potential vulnerabilities that might be exploited. This chapter also uses the methods of Neustadt and May to examine the applicability of the historical example of the Punitive Expedition. The Annex is a proposed mission statement for the use of the President should action be implemented.

ENDNOTES

1. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Relations, Review of Latin American Narcotics Control Issues, 100th Cong., 1st sess., 18 March 1987, 52.

2. Congress, House, Subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations, Initiatives in Drug Interdiction, 99th Cong., 1st sess., 15 March 1985, 17.

3. Paula Dwyer, "Marines Aren't the Answer", Business Week, 4 September 1989, 30.

4. Tom Morgenthau, "Hitting the Drug Lords", Newsweek, 4 September 1989, 18.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., 19.

7. Joel Brinkley, "5 Governors Urge Military to Combat Drug Smugglers," New York Times, 18 January 1985, Sec. A, 10. and Peter Kerr, "25 Mayors Ask Military to Aid in Drug Battle," New York Times, 27 August 1986, Sec. B, 6.

8. Bernard J. Adelsberger, "Military Support Against Drug Lords Flowing South," Army Times, 25 September 1989, 14.

9. Caleb Baker, "DoD Seeks Approval for Larger Military Role in Drug War", Defense News, 18 December 1989, 12.

10. Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, Thinking In Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers, (New York: The Free Press), 1986.

CHAPTER 2

THE MEDELLIN DRUG CARTEL

Cocaine, like its other "sister" narcotics opium and cannabis, has been known to mankind for over 4,000 years.[1] The use of opium far outstretched that of either cannabis or cocaine until recently. Opium use even led to the two Opium wars that the British fought with the Chinese in order to maintain their treaty rights for supplying the needed Opium. It was not until cocaine became fashionable in the US and Europe that the production of the coca leaf expanded beyond that needed by the local Andean natives for chewing.[2] In 1912 the nations of the world got together and signed the Hague Opium Convention of 1912. This convention led the international community to begin taking serious steps to control the production and use of illegal narcotics. Yet these attempts are failing as is obvious by the rise in drug addiction and drug related crime statistics. The fact that cocaine comes from South America is widely known. Yet, outside of the immediate drug trade and their antagonists, very little else is known about this pervasive problem.

Sources estimate that 80% of the coca leaf production of the world comes from the Upper Haulaga Valley of Bolivia.[3] It is grown there by small acreage farmers as an

essential cash crop. The leaves are harvested 3-4 times a year by primarily manual methods.[4] The leaves are then purchased by regional "buyers" who arrange for the transportation to the cocaine labs which are located near the border inside Colombia.[5]

Once the coca leaves arrive at the labs, they are processed by a variety of methods that vary from extremely simple to extremely complex methods.[6] Lately, it seems as though the labs are growing in size and complexity, replacing the outdated manual production labs.[7]

In the labs, the cocaine is processed using ether and kerosene. The domestic requirements for both chemicals so outstrip local production that they must be imported from abroad.[8] The initial product is a coca paste called Basuco, which is widely preferred in Colombia by the young as a smokable narcotic.[9] It is extremely addictive and is causing problems for the Colombians' own drug addiction efforts. The other major product is cocaine hydrochloride which is the cocaine powder so well known in the United States and Europe.

Approximately one per cent of the coca leaf is actually utilizable as cocaine hydrochloride.[10] With nearly 200,000 metric tons of coca leaf production annually,[11] this means a potential of over 2,000 metric tons of cocaine available every year. How much cocaine is produced is unknown, since the Cartel is adverse to opening their books for public

scrutiny. Interdiction efforts, however, are not matching the production estimates. In testimony before the Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control of the House of Representatives, Mr. David L. Westrate, Assistant Administrator for Operations of the Drug Enforcement Administration stated that in 1988,

> 1,800 metric tons of coca leaf were seized (figure includes eradication efforts), as well as several metric tons of essential chemicals for the production of coca paste and cocaine base. Additionally, almost 17,000 gallons of liquid solution in process to produce coca paste were seized, as were almost 2 metric tons of completely processed coca paste...And, cocaine products seizures amounted to 8.2 metric tons.[12]

Using Mr. Westrate's figures in comparison to those of the potential production, even if cut in half, clearly show that we are not winning the battle against cocaine. Interdiction, however, is not the only method of preventing drug imports. Eradication is also being pursued with limited results.

Coca eradication efforts on the part of Bolivia and Peru, in spite of the efforts of the Andean Initiative, have failed for a variety of reasons. Primarily, both of these countries are extremely poor with no other agricultural product offering the financial incentive of coca.[13] There is also the traditional usage of the coca leaves by the Andean natives as a medicant for dealing with pain and the difficult life in the high Andes, which prohibits the total eradication of the crop, even though the total production

far exceeds the needs of the natives.[14]

Since the farmers are unable to receive adequate subsistence from other crops, there is a great deal of pressure on the governments to allow the continued production of the coca crop.[15] The governments cannot act effectively to eradicate the production of coca because their basis in power as a democratically elected institution is tentative at best. There are almost always rumors of a military coup whenever stronger initiatives are suggested.[16]

Colombia, with an older and more established democratic tradition, faces a different set of problems when it comes to cocaine.[17] The legal authorities are unable to respond effectively to the threat posed to its democratic institutions from a more powerful internal force, the Medellin and its lesser known and equally powerful consortium, Cali cartel.[18]

The Medellin cartel is a force which is beyond the power of the Colombian government to control. They are essentially not answerable to either the legal or political systems within the country. The cartels' power is due primarily to their unhesitating use of bribery and murder in order to accomplish their ends.[19]

It is not unusual for a Colombian judge scheduled to hear the case of a drug trafficker to receive a message that they either accept the Cartel's silver, or their lead.[20] The Cartel possesses tremendous resources, to the extent that

Carlos Lehder[21] once offered to pay off the national debt if the Colombian government gave up any attempts to extradite narcotrafficantes to the U.S., where they would not be as able to bribe or intimidate the justice system.[22] Additionally, the Cartel has a huge impact on the economic situation of the country. While actual employment figures of the Cartel are not known, it is estimated that "hundreds of thousands of people are employed by the industry."[23]

There is also a significant national sentiment in favor of the Cartel, in spite of the damage that is wreaked on Colombia. This sentiment stems from two major sources. First is the perception that cocaine is only a problem for the "Gringos" who are unable to deal with the problem in their own country and have to take it out on the poorer nations of the hemisphere. Second, there is the perception that the Cartel is the only group capable of dealing with the communist guerrillas.[24]

Cocaine is of course a significant problem in the U.S., but it is growing as a problem for the Colombians themselves. First, as already mentioned, is the growing use of Basuco, a form of coca paste that is smoked. This highly addictive drug is resulting in greater levels of crime by the users in order to obtain money with which to purchase it. There is also a concomitant increase in idle labor as more and more of Colombia's young seek diversion from reality through the use of the drug.[25]

The Colombians are also aware of the terror that the Cartel uses in order to get their way. The Cartel has routinely murdered newspaper editors, justice ministers, police chiefs and even presidential candidates who speak out against them.[26] They organized the assault on the Colombian Supreme court, which resulted in the deaths of several of the justices considering an extradition treaty.[27] The Cartel does not operate subtly since their reputation is going to be enhanced by any known murders, while at the same time, they do not fear prosecution.[28]

The second factor that leads the average Colombian to not actively oppose the Cartel, is the perception that the Cartel can deal most effectively with the Sendero Luminoso, F.A.R.C. (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and other guerilla groups. Outside of localized regions, the guerrillas do not enjoy the sympathy of the populace.[29]

The guerrillas and the Cartel were first thought to be working in concert. This was even reported by the U.S. ambassador to Colombia.[30] Recent events would seem to suggest otherwise. The guerrillas have always occupied the more rural areas of Colombia, where their greatest popular support originates. When the Cartel began looking for areas in which to set up their cocaine processing labs, they selected the same areas in which the guerrillas were based. Initially the two operated side by side ignoring each other. However, the guerrillas soon realized that they could

extract a form of "protection" for a price which was designed to protect the labs from government intrusion. The guerrillas also began to look to cocaine as a means with which to supplement contributions from abroad for the purchase of weapons.[31]

When the Cartel began to grow stronger in the region, they resisted paying for the "protection" and carried on a limited war against the guerrillas which was played up in the Colombian press to the Cartel's advantage.[32]

The government enjoys more support for the prosecution of the war against the guerrillas than it does against the Cartel. This is perhaps best typified by the example of the arrest of Carlos Lehder, a major Cartel leader. The police Major who found out where Lehder was staying had to tell his forces that they were going to raid a suspected guerrilla hideout rather than to arrest a drug trafficker. In his opinion, the police would more readily attack a guerrilla outpost than they would drug traffickers out of fear for their families and themselves.[33] To emphasize the point, when Lehder was captured, he offered to have his picture taken with his captors, who did so, only after masking their identities.[34]

It is readily apparent that the Cartel is operating a system which will only end in the destruction of the democratic processes both in the United States and Colombia. Their use of force, terror and corruption will have to be

met with a greater call for police and paramilitary measures. It is also obvious that the Colombian nation does not have the power to control the Cartel.

The Colombians will require assistance in order to prevail over this very potent force. Regional cooperation will be limited at best, since Colombia, the nation hardest hit, is also one of the strongest political and economic entities in northern South America. One can also assume that the Colombians will not readily agree to intrusion by the U.S. unless there is a guarantee of success that the Cartel's power will be broken.

There is also the possibility that any unilateral use of force on the part of the U.S. could backfire, and unite the Colombian nation as well as the other members of the hemisphere against us. The preferred method of using the U.S. military in the region would be in concert with the national and military forces in the region. Unfortunately, due to the Cartel's power, corruption exists up to the highest levels within the government, which could compromise any U.S. actions.

This is not to say that all Colombians are corrupt. Far from it in fact, since many brave Colombian police, judges and soldiers have lost their lives fighting this powerful entity. Rather, cooperation with the Colombians would have to be only in the cases of the most trusted members of the government, police and military. Even then,

to work with them more than once could lead to their compromise, or possible retribution by the Cartel. Therefore, any action on our part would have to be pursued with an eye on the clock while trying to inflict maximum damage on the Cartel in the least amount of time.

If an operation is allowed to drag on too long, we risk vulnerability to the Cartel's dollars even among our own soldiers, as the U.S. Coast Guard is finding out right now.[35] Therefore, an arbitrary, but necessary maximum time limit of no more than ten days should be established for any operations actually in Colombia. The military must also take every step possible to minimize any contact with the native populace. Opportunities for bribes, graft and corruption must be combatted at the same time in our own forces.

One possible staging area for any operations in Colombia could be the Canal Zone of Panama. Until 1999, the Zone is still under U.S. control. The Zone is also the home of USSOUTHCOM, which is responsible for all military actions in the region. The use of the Canal Zone for a staging base would improve the level of security needed for any such operation while maintaining close proximity to the target areas, which can be reached by aerial refueling of helicopters. One liability of using Panama may be the sensitivities of the Panamanians that a military force used their country for aggression against another. Active

measures must be taken by the Ambassador to Panama to explain what the purpose is and to enlist support for any such operations. Failure to do so successfully could jeopardize future operations in the region and be extremely damaging to U.S. interests.

ENDNOTES

1. John T. Cusack, "The International Narcotics Control System: Coca and Cocaine," in Coca and Cocaine, Effects on People and Policy in Latin America, Publication of the Latin American Studies Program (LASP), Cornell University and Cultural Survival Inc., eds. Deborah Pacini and Shristine Franquemont, Cultural Survival Report No. 23 (Peterborough, N.H.: Transcript Printing Company, 1986), 65. Hereafter referred to as "Coca and Cocaine."

2. Herbert S. Klein, "Coca Production in the Bolivian Yungas in the Colonial and Early National Periods," Coca and Cocaine, 1985, 53-63.

3. Congress, House, Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, Cocaine Production in the Andes, 101st Cong. 1st sess., 7 June 1989, 39.

4. Timothy Plowman, "Coca Chewing and the Botanical Origins of Coca (Erythroxylum SPP) in South America," Coca and Cocaine, 1985, 13.

5. Kevin Healy, "The Boom within the Crisis: Some Recent Effects of Foreign Cocaine Markets on the Bolivian Rural Society and Economy," Coca and Cocaine, 1985, 118.

6. Ibid., 123-124.

7. Congress, House, Subcommittee on Government Operations, Initiatives in Drug Interdiction, (part 1), 99th Cong., 1st sess. March 15, 16, July 18 and October 24, 1985, 544. This evidence shows that at least some members of the Cartel are trying to move away from low technology, and hence low production facilities to more advanced labs which can process more of the leaf faster and more efficiently.

8. Ibid., 555-557.

9. Bruce Bagley, "The Colombian Connection: The Impact of Drug Traffic on Colombia," Coca and Cocaine, 93. This is also mentioned in testimony before the House Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, Cocaine Production in the Andes as noted above, passim.

10. Plowman, Coca and Cocaine, 6.

11. Elaine Shannon, "Attacking the Source," Time, August 28, 1989, 11. While the tons of coca leaf can be accurately estimated, there are no reliable estimates of cocaine production.

12. Congress, House, Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, Cocaine Production in the Andes, 101st Cong., 1st sess., June 7, 1989, 57. Hereafter Cocaine Production in the Andes.

13. Initiatives in Drug Interdiction, 1985, passim.

14. Catherine J. Allen, Coca and Cultural Identity in Andean Communities, Coca and Cocaine, 35-48.

15. Congress, House, Subcommittee on International Development Institutions and Finance of the Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs, Decertification Resolutions, 100th Cong., 2nd sess., May 5, 1988, 15.

16. Ibid., 19.

17. James Brooke, "Bogota Chief Tells of Drug War's Toll," New York Times, 27 May 1990, Sec. 1, p. 16. In this article, President Virgilio Barco Vargas says that Colombia's cocaine traffickers have widened their goal and are determined to bring down the nation's democracy.

18. Congress, House, Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, Colombian Drug Trafficking and Control, 100th Cong., 1st Sess., May 6, 1987, 31.

19. Initiatives in Drug Interdiction, 1985, 544.

20. Cocaine Production in the Andes, 1989, 41, 59, 67.

21. Carlos Lehder is perhaps the most famous member of the Medellin Drug Cartel simply because he is the highest ranking member of the Cartel to be arrested and extradited to the U.S.

22. Guy Gugliotta and Jeff Leen, Kings of Cocaine: Inside the Medellin Cartel; An astonishing True story of Murder, Money and International Corruption, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 242.

23. Cocaine Production in the Andes, 1989, 12

24. Gugliotta, Kings of Cocaine, Sentiment ran so high for a while, that the political party that Lehder founded, National Latin Movement, was able to seat several members in the Colombian government, even though most people seemed to be aware that the party was a drug lord front.

25. Bagley, "The Colombian Connection," Coca and Cocaine, 94. Overall drug addiction had been limited to a small number until Basuco was introduced. Basuco generally contains high levels of impurities, and has no market in the U.S. at this time.

26. Colombian Drug Trafficking and Control, 1987, 35.

27. Gugliotta, Kings of Cocaine, 1989, 341-350.

28. Although the traffickers are well known, none have ever served any lengthy time for crimes. Of those who served any time at all, the police and judges involved in the case have all been murdered. Kings of Cocaine presents this information in a very easily readable format with backup references.

29. Cocaine Production in the Andes, 1989, 13-15.

30. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Developments in Latin American Narcotics Control, November 1985, 99th Cong., 1st Sess., November 12, 1985, 73-74.

31. Cocaine Production in The Andes, 1989, 13.

32. Gugliotta, Kings of Cocaine, 1989, 307-308.

33. Gugliotta, Kings of Cocaine, 1989, 288-292. Within ten days of the arrest, Major Remus of the Colombian police and his family were moved with the assistance of the U.S. Embassy to Bolivia, where they live under an assumed name.

34. Ibid., 281.

35. Philip Shenon, "Coast Guard Says it Suspects 10 of Dealing with Drug Traffickers," New York Times, 23 May 1990, Sec A., 26.

CHAPTER 3

PANCHO VILLA AND THE PUNITIVE EXPEDITION

On the morning of March 9th, 1916, Pancho Villa attacked the town of Columbus, New Mexico. This raid resulted in the deaths of three soldiers and four civilians, with several soldiers and civilians wounded. Property damage was limited to the depot and several other principal buildings in Columbus that were burned or destroyed.

This property damage was not, however, the total extent of the results, since the largest and most important was the outrage that the raid caused among the citizens of the United States. Some people believe that this arousal of the American public was exactly what Pancho Villa was trying to achieve, since the introduction of U.S. forces into Mexico could have been expected to stir up nationalistic sentiments and quite possibly result in the overthrow of the de facto Carranza government.[1]

News of the raid reached Washington by telegraph from the Customs officer of El Paso, who reported:

> Following from Deputy Collector, Columbus, New Mexico [Riggs]: "Columbus attacked this morning 4:30 o'clock. Citizens murdered. Repulsed about 6 o'clock. Town partly burned. They have retreated to west. Unable to say how many were killed." Department of Justice informed that between 400 and 500 Villa troops attacked

> Columbus, New Mexico about 4:30. Villa probably in charge. Three American soldiers killed and several wounded; also killed four civilians and wounded four. Several of attacking party killed and wounded by our forces. Attacking party also burned depot and other buildings in Columbus. United States soldiers now pursuing attacking parties across line into Mexico.[2]

At the same time, thanks to a reporter being present on the scene, the public was informed almost immediately. For the first time the American people were observing the effects of war as it happened, from the safety of their own homes.

The first question asked by the media, was what the government intended to do to punish this outrage. Unfortunately, there was no one who knew just what the clear answer was going to be. There were many competing factions who were attempting to gain this issue for their own advantage. Teddy Roosevelt led the charge of the interventionists, joined by those Americans who were looking for a reason to annex Mexico in order to exploit its natural resources.

Opposing the former president and his minions was the sitting president, Woodrow Wilson. Wilson was known for his humanitarian feelings in general and his feelings toward Mexico in particular. Since the revolution in Mexico began, Wilson had attempted every legitimate political and diplomatic practice to ensure the viability of the Carranza government at the expense of Generals Huerta and Villa, whom Wilson considered to be immoral and not fit to lead Mexico.

Unfortunately for Wilson, this support of Carranza did not result in agreement or acceptance of Wilson's proposals by Carranza, since there was always a strong sense of nationalism in Mexico that thrived on rejecting anything from the "Colossus to the North."

Although Wilson, if left to his own devices, might have wanted to pursue a particularly diplomatic course and leave out the option of military force, there were several features that would have made this impossible. First, Carranza's government did not have the power to bring Pancho Villa to justice, since they had been trying for some time to do just that. Ever since the break in relations between Carranza and Villa, Villa had been undertaking counter-revolutionary activities in order to establish his primacy in any government in Mexico. Second, the rest of the world was watching to see what the United States would do with regard to this violation of its sovereignty. Failure to act may have encouraged the Germans, who were at that moment fighting the battle of Verdun, while disheartening the Allies from expecting support from the U.S. A third aspect would have been that failure to act could only encourage future raids by Villa and other border criminals who could feel that there was no risk to any cross-border penetrations.

The biggest reason for the need of some form of action was the arousal of American public opinion during an

election year. Not even a confirmed pacifist could be expected to disregard this assault with impunity. Having recognized that inaction was not an option, Wilson had to face the possibility of a full scale invasion of Mexico and the re-arrangement of Mexico's affairs. Unfortunately, this option would have required 270,000 men and from 1 to 5 years to accomplish.[3] The President immediately discarded this option, based in part on his religious and moral convictions against war and imperialism.

It was this very lack of options that created the need for the Punitive Expedition, which was only to be concerned with the subject of Pancho Villa and his band. There was sufficient historical precedent to justify the expedition, particularly concerning the pursuit of marauding Indians. There were two characteristics that typified this type of action: (1) the force crossing into another country's territory did so for a specific and limited purpose such as the apprehension of a single band of Indians, and (2) the crossing was made on a "hot trail" where pursuit followed directly on the heels of the pursued.[4]

The issue of a limited purpose could be satisfied by the mission of apprehending Villa or the elimination of his gang. The problem, of course, was the issue of the "hot trail." There had never been an established amount of time before a trail could grow "cold." The Wilson administration took steps to rectify this problem by declaring,

> An adequate force will be sent at once in the 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 to the constituted authorities in Mexico and with scrupulous respect for the sovereignty of that Republic.[5]

The issue of respect for the sovereignty of the Republic of Mexico was confused by the desires of the Carranza government to prevent the U.S. from entering Mexico. Through Carranza's government's introduction of a proposal that would have limited action by the U.S., they hoped to prevent any immediate action until a public support base could be developed domestically.[6] The U.S. administration interpreted the proposal from the Carranza government as a positive step that would allow them to pursue Villa. The Carranza government, on the other hand, felt that it was only making a proposal for future operations, and that this had nothing to do with the present crisis. This opinion was brought home to Wilson's administration with the note from Mr. Arredondo to Secretary Lansing, in which Mr. Arredondo expressed extreme surprise at the American actions taking place in northern Mexico.[7]

Notwithstanding the obvious lack of understanding between the two nations, the Adjutant General of the U.S. Army sent a telegram to General Funston, who was the commander of the military department that included Texas and New Mexico. The telegram said:

> President has directed that an armed force be sent into Mexico with the sole object of capturing Villa and preventing any further raids by his band, and with

> scrupulous regard to sovereignty of Mexico. Secretary War directs you telegraph exactly what you need in order to carry out foregoing general instructions, but you will not take any overt steps until receipt definite orders from War Department.[8]

On March 11, 1916, General Funston received detailed orders from the War Department stating in part:

> You will promptly organize an adequate military force of troops from your department under the command of Brigadier General Pershing. You will direct him to proceed promptly across the border in pursuit of the Mexican band which attacked the town of Columbus N.M. and the troops there on the morning of the Ninth instant. The troops will be withdrawn as soon as the de facto government of Mexico is able to relieve them of this work. In any event, the work of these troops will be regarded as finished as soon as Villa's band or bands are known to be broken up. (Italics added).[9]

General Funston received a follow up telegram on March 13, 1916 from the War Department with the following instructions:

> The [P]resident desires that your attention be especially and earnestly called to his determination that the expedition into Mexico is limited to the purposes originally stated, namely the pursuit and dispersion of the band or bands that attacked Columbus, N. M., and it is of the utmost importance that no color of any other possibility or intention be given and therefore, while the President desires the force to be adequate to disperse the bands in question and to protect communications, neither in size nor otherwise should the expedition afford the slightest ground of suspicion of any other larger object.[10]

Thus, General Pershing had the mission either to (1) capture Pancho Villa and break up his band or bands, or, (2) to break up his bands. Unfortunately, the tactically feasible mission to break up Villa's bands did not fit with the original White House announcement that the object of the Punitive Expedition was to capture Pancho Villa. Since

waging war on only one man is very difficult for any army, it is quite likely, although unproven, that General Pershing saw his mission only as the elimination of Villa's bands, which was obtainable.

The problem that the Expedition first ran into was not so much Villa's bands, but the miscommunication between Washington and Mexico over what Pershing was doing. The Wilson administration believed that Mexico realized domestic politics required some form of action,[11] while Mexico felt that the Wilson administration would stand by its announced policies of non-intervention.[12] Perhaps the only reason that the entire incident did not erupt into full scale war was because neither country could afford to have one. This, however, is not to say that there were not incidents during the Expedition.

On the 12th of April, 1916, a force under Major Tompkins, consisting of Troops M and K of the 13th Cavalry entered Parral, a town in North-Central Mexico, under the invitation of General Lozano, the de facto government forces commander of the region. After having lunch in the town, Major Tompkins and his troops were leaving when they came under attack by the local citizenry and soldiers of the de facto military. No attempt was made by General Lozano to halt the attack, which resulted in 3 soldiers dead and six wounded for the U.S. and over 40 killed on the Mexican side.[13] After investigation, it was felt that this was a

poorly organized trap, designed without the knowledge of the commanding general to lure U.S. forces into an ambush.[14] The effect the battle ultimately showed in the attitude of the local natives to the Punitive Expedition by their overt hostility in there and other regions as well.[15]

This was further aggravated by a second incident at Carrizal, Mexico. On the 21st of June 1917, two cavalry troops under the command of Captain Boyd attempted to enter Carrizal. They were met on the outskirts of the town by General Gomez of the de facto military forces, who tried to convince Boyd that he could not enter the town. For some unknown reason (since Boyd died in the engagement), Boyd persisted in entering the town, even though badly outnumbered and in a tactically impossible position.[16] After the battle, 40 American soldiers were dead and 17 captured. This action seems to have been a unilateral decision made by Captain Boyd since he was not given any orders to enter the town.[17]

After this incident, for the next eight months, until the removal of the Expedition's forces, the U.S. Army was limited to local security patrolling.[18] No significant activities were reported.

In hindsight, it is obvious that Pershing did accomplish his mission, which was to break up Pancho Villa's bands in order to prevent their return and marauding. This may not have been the popular perception since Pancho Villa

himself was not captured. However, within the limits of what was tactically feasible, the only real mistake may have been the announcement of unattainable goals by the White House.

Ironically this mistake was repeated during Operation "Just Cause," the U.S. invasion of Panama in December 1989. Of the four elements for undertaking the invasion listed, it was the least significant (capture of General Manuel Noriega) that received the greatest attention.

The significant events of the Punitive Expedition that have application in a present day context can be narrowed to four:

a. The misunderstanding between the governments in Washington and Mexico prevented effective coordination or cooperation, partially resulting in the Parral Incident. This misunderstanding is complicated by the suspicious view which Latin American countries have of the motives and measures taken by the U.S. This view still exists in Latin America.[19]

b. Extended service by U.S. forces will only cause the population to resent the intrusion by "imperialistic Yankee forces." Any operation that places U.S. forces in contact with the local nationals should be quickly finished.

c. Independent operations like those of Captain Boyd's must be held to a minimum. Tight command and control must be exercised at all times over field operations. Any

operation will require the highest degree of discipline and adherence to orders.

d. Last, and most important, official proclamations of the desired results must be the same as those given to the military commander to accomplish. These objectives must have the appropriate emphasis clearly defined for the public consumption. Otherwise, the administration runs the risk of having the success of the mission determined by outside agencies with potentially negative results.

These factors must be taken into account before the U.S. introduces forces into Latin America. The preferred arrangement, would be to conduct operations in conjunction with the legitimate governments of the region. This would take care of the first two concerns listed above.

ENDNOTES

1. Frank E. Vandiver, Black Jack: The Life and Times of John J. Pershing, 2d ed., College Station and London, Texas A&M University Press, 1977, 602.

2. Cobb to Lansing, March 9, 1916, in Foreign Relations of the United States: 1916, 480, quoted in Robert Bruce Johnson, " The Punitive Expedition: A Military, Diplomatic and Political History of Pershing's Chase after Pancho Villa, 1916-1917" (Ph.D diss., University of Southern California, Los Angeles, 1964) 87.

3. Memorandum, War College Document Number 6474.373, in Box 372, Pershing Papers, as quoted in Robert Bruce Johnson "The Punitive Expedition," 98. This dissertation is the best source for study of the Punitive Expedition. At 935 pages, it is more comprehensive than all other works combined, plus it is enjoyable reading.

4. Ibid., 104.

5. Secretary of State Lansing to all American Consular Officers in Mexico, March 10, 1916, in Foreign Relationsof the United States 1916, 484.

6. Special Agent Silliman to the Secretary of State, March 10, 1916, Foreign Relations of the United States 1916, 485.

7. Mr. Arredondo to the Secretary of State, MArch 18, 1916, Foreign Relations of the United States 1916, 493.

8. The Adjutant General to General Funston, March 10, 1916, Foreign Relations of the United States 1916, 483.

9. Johnson, The Punitive Expedition, 142.

10. The Adjutant General To General Funston, March 13, 1916, Foreign Relations of the United States 1916, 489.

11. Silliman to Lansing, "Attitude by Mexican government said to be favorable," Foreign Relations of the United States 1916, 491.

12. Arredondo to Lansing, "Erroneous understanding," Ibid., 493.

13. Cobb to Lansing, "From Pershing:", Ibid., 520.

14. Ibid.

15. Funston to McCain, "Details of the Pursuit of Villa and Opposition of Civilians.", Ibid., 530.

16. Vandiver, 650. In this book, Vandiver makes it clear from the Pershing papers that Boyd was picked for the mission because of his maturity and responsibility. Pershing is also reported to have issued specific orders that Boyd was not to bring contact with the de facto forces if he could avoid it.

17. Funston to Secretary of War, "Pershing Reports on Carrizal Attack.", Foreign Relations of the United States 1916, 593.

18. Johnson, The Punitive Expedition, 673.

19. Congress, House, Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, Cocaine Production in the Andes, 100th Cong., 1st sess. 7 June 1989, 92.