

Decapitation Operations: Criteria for Targeting Enemy Leadership

**A Monograph
by
Lieutenant Commander
Victor D. Hyder
United States Navy**



**School of Advanced Military Studies
United States Army Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

SCHOOL OF ADVANCED MILITARY STUDIES

MONOGRAPH APPROVAL

LCDR Victor D. Hyder

Title of Monograph:

Decapitation Operations: Criteria for Targeting Enemy Leadership

Approved by:

Larry A. Yates, Ph.D.

Monograph Director

Kevin C.M. Benson, COL, AR

Director,
School of Advanced
Military Studies

Robert K. Baumann, Ph.D.

Director,
Graduate Degree
Programs

Report Documentation Page		Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.		
1. REPORT DATE 26 MAY 2004	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED -
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Decapitation operations: criteria for targeting enemy leadership		5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
		5b. GRANT NUMBER
		5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER
6. AUTHOR(S) Victor Hyder		5d. PROJECT NUMBER
		5e. TASK NUMBER
		5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) US Army School for Advanced Military Studies, 250 Gibbon Ave, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 66027		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER ATZL-SWV
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)		10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
		11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited		
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES		
14. ABSTRACT <p>This monograph establishes criteria for targeting enemy leadership during decapitation operations. It analyzes United States operations targeting strategic individuals over the course of the Twentieth Century. This discussion creates a list of recommended standards for the military commander to consider while planning decapitation operations. Five US decapitation operations conducted over a ninety-two year span provided historical precedence to answer the above questions. These strategic individuals were chosen for this study because they represent a century of US activity targeting enemy leadership. The author developed criteria for targeting enemy leadership through a combination of the Defense Department's doctrinal targeting process, the generally recognized principles of Just War Theory, Robert A. Pape's Decapitation Theory, and the conclusions derived from Chapter Three's case studies. This monograph concludes that attempting to decapitate an organization without adhering to the following criteria will severely hobble the operation's probability of strategic success. The four Decapitation Criteria are: Criticality, Legitimacy, Cost Effectiveness, and Proportionality. Decapitation, most often, shapes the effectiveness of a larger, grand strategy that incorporates all elements of national power. The author recommends that commanders should always investigate the potential strategic values of targeting enemy leadership. More often than not, the pressure applied will provide some level of benefit. However, commanders must continuously reassess the expected value derived from decapitation and weigh that value against its costs. Employing Decapitation Criteria and the subsequent Outcome Analysis developed in this monograph can effectively aid a commander deciding on the benefits of targeting enemy leadership, and increase the operation's strategic productivity.</p>		
15. SUBJECT TERMS		

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT 1	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 75	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

Abstract

“Decapitation Operations: Criteria For Targeting Enemy Leadership” by LCDR Victor D. Hyder, USN, 58 pages.

This monograph establishes criteria for targeting enemy leadership during decapitation operations. It analyzes United States operations targeting strategic individuals over the course of the Twentieth Century. This discussion creates a list of recommended standards for the military commander to consider while planning decapitation operations.

The paper addresses the following subquestions in order to answer the primary research question: When are decapitation operations beneficial to achieving the desired end state?

- What is a strategic individual?
- What types of political or military frameworks are susceptible to decapitation?
- How does United States military doctrine address decapitation operations?
- What decapitation operations has the United States conducted in the past?
- What was the result of these past operations?
- What criteria must be met for a campaign to benefit from targeting enemy leadership?

Five US decapitation operations conducted over a ninety-two year span provided historical precedence to answer the above questions. The five case studies are:

- General Emilio Aguinaldo, Philippines 1901
- Francisco “Pancho” Villa, Mexico 1916
- Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, Japan 1943
- General Manuel A. Noriega, Panama 1989
- Pablo Escobar, Colombia 1993

These strategic individuals were chosen for this study because they represent a century of US activity targeting enemy leadership. The occurrences are evenly distributed over the course of the past one hundred years and involve some of the most recent developments in the conduct of warfare and the influence of global mass communications relative to manhunting. Also affecting the choice of these cases was the availability and quality of unclassified information. Not all of the chosen cases were conducted for military reasons and not all were completely successful. These variances in outcome, timeframe, and motive add variety and validity to the paper’s conclusions found in the final chapter.

The author developed criteria for targeting enemy leadership through a combination of the Defense Department’s doctrinal targeting process, the generally recognized principles of Just War Theory, Robert A. Pape’s Decapitation Theory, and the conclusions derived from Chapter Three’s case studies. This monograph concludes that attempting to decapitate an organization without adhering to the following criteria will severely hobble the operation’s probability of strategic success. The four Decapitation Criteria are: *Criticality*, *Legitimacy*, *Cost Effectiveness*, and *Proportionality*.

Decapitation, most often, shapes the effectiveness of a larger, grand strategy that incorporates all elements of national power. The author recommends that commanders should *always* investigate the potential strategic values of targeting enemy leadership. More often than not, the pressure applied will provide some level of benefit. However, commanders must continuously reassess the expected value derived from decapitation and weigh that value against its costs. Employing Decapitation Criteria and the subsequent Outcome Analysis developed in this monograph can effectively aid a commander deciding on the benefits of targeting enemy leadership, and increase the operation’s strategic productivity.

Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Figures	v
Chapter One	1
Introduction.....	1
Problem Background, Methodology and Significance	1
Chapter Two	4
Preceding Considerations	4
Terminology	4
The Strategic Individual	7
Ends, Ways, and Means.....	9
Assassination	11
Susceptible Political Structures	14
Theory of Decapitation	16
Chapter Three	19
Decapitation Operations	19
General Emilio Aguinaldo, Philippines 1901	19
Francisco “Pancho” Villa, Mexico 1916	24
Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, Japan 1943	30
General Manuel A. Noriega, Panama 1989	34
Pablo Escobar, Colombia 1993	40
Chapter Four	47
Decapitation Criteria	47
Target Value Analysis	48
Criteria for Targeting the Strategic Individual	51
Conclusion	56
Appendix A	59
Strategic Individual Photos	59
Appendix B.....	62
Country Maps	62
Bibliography	65

List of Figures

Figures

Figure 1: Targeting Objectives	7
Figure 2: Political Systems of the World, 1997	16
Figure 3: Case Study Comparison Chart.....	50

Chapter One

Introduction

I used to think that the causes of war were predominantly economic. I came to think that they were more psychological. I am now coming to think that they are decisively "personal," arising from the defects and ambitions of those who have the power to influence the currents of nations.

B.H. Liddell Hart

Problem Background, Methodology and Significance

Offensive operations tasked to capture and/or kill enemy leadership have historically been viewed as providing high operational returns. United States civilian and military leaders alike have regularly placed high value on eliminating enemy leadership. Removing the strategic individual from his seat in power is seen as taking a substantial step towards lessening enemy combat capabilities, facilitating regime change, and, most importantly, winning the war. With this in mind, the nation's decision-makers must ask the following question: when are decapitation operations beneficial to achieving the desired end state?

The majority of people with whom I have discussed targeting enemy leadership revert to the topic of assassination and related subjects. This monograph is not about assassination, although a brief dialogue has been added to clarify frequently asked questions about the topic. However, the legality of targeting an individual is not within this paper's scope. This monograph is an analysis of the operational benefits or lack thereof surrounding the targeting of enemy leadership. The recent US targeting of Saddam Hussein, Mullah Mohammed Omar, and Osama bin Laden have spawned a multitude of articles and books discussing this mission's moral and legal aspects. Very few discuss whether or not it is the most advantageous course of action. The focus of this monograph differs from this previous literature by doing just that. It analyzes US operations that placed targeting enemy leadership as a national priority and, from this, develops

criteria to be considered prior to committing forces in decapitation operations. To answer the primary research question, the monograph will address the following subquestions.

- What is a strategic individual?
- What types of political or military frameworks are susceptible to decapitation?
- How does United States military doctrine address decapitation operations?
- What decapitation operations has the United States conducted in the past?
- What was the result of these past operations?
- What criteria must be met for a campaign to benefit from targeting enemy leadership?

In order to answer the above questions, the study uses five examples of US operations targeting enemy leadership. The five case studies are:

- General Emilio Aguinaldo, Philippines 1901
- Francisco “Pancho” Villa, Mexico 1916
- Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, Japan 1943
- General Manuel A. Noriega, Panama 1989
- Pablo Escobar, Colombia 1993

These strategic individuals were chosen for this study because they represent a century of US activity targeting enemy leadership. The occurrences are evenly distributed over the course of the past one hundred years and involve some of the most recent developments in the conduct of warfare and the influence of global mass communications relative to manhunting. Also affecting the choice of these cases was the availability and quality of unclassified information. Not all of the chosen cases were conducted for military reasons and not all were completely successful. These variances in outcome, timeframe, and motive add variety and validity to the paper’s conclusions found in the final chapter.

American history reflects three basic methods for decapitation: surgical strikes, invasions, and insurgencies. The United States has incorporated each tactic in recent history and has the potential to consider usage in the near future. Just over twenty years ago, in 1983, President Reagan attempted a surgical aerial attack on Libyan President Muamar Qaddafi. The successful capture of Iraq’s Saddam Hussein by US military forces in December 2003 provides another example of a recent surgical strike. Invasions have been popular in the past quarter century as American military forces invaded Panama in 1989 with orders to capture Manuel Noriega and,

more recently, Afghanistan in 2000 targeting Taliban and al Qaeda leaders. America has facilitated coups or insurgencies in a variety of countries in order to remove specific leaders; this approach was used in Iran in 1953, Guatemala in 1954, unsuccessfully in Cuba in 1961, and somewhat successfully in Nicaragua in the 1980s. So, decapitation operations are not a new concept for the American military.

Yet, even with all this historical experience targeting enemy leadership, the US military has no written doctrine guiding decapitation operations. The Special Operations Command, which is most likely to receive specific mission taskings for targeting enemy leadership, has nothing on paper as of yet. Special Operations Command personnel are now researching the subject. Nevertheless, as of today, we have no documented criteria to help guide decision-makers in their determination of when targeting enemy leadership offers the greatest return on their investment. The conclusions of this monograph address this disparity.

Chapter Two presents considerations that require attention before discussing the application of a decapitation strategy. It introduces key terminology and explains the targeting process with respect to the strategic individual. The chapter answers anticipated questions concerning assassination and explains why it is legally and morally acceptable to target individuals within a Just War concept. Chapter Two identifies susceptible political structures that offer greater value for decapitation operations, and lastly, it addresses the Theory of Decapitation.

Chapter Two

Preceding Considerations

‘for as a ship, if you deprive it of its steersman, falls with all its crew into the hands of the enemy; so, with an army in war, if you outwit or out-manuever its general the whole will often fall into your hands.’

Polybius, consul to Hannibal in 218 B.C.

The United States has targeted enemy leadership in times of war and peace all around the world. Later, in Chapter Three, this paper discusses five separate operations that applied a decapitation strategy to achieve campaign objectives. However, prior to discussing the conduct of decapitation operations, there are a few items that require attention. The leadership influencing these operations needs to understand fully the terms, effects, concepts, and strategy related to decapitation before attempting such a mission.

Terminology

First of all, with or without the benefit of established decision-making criteria for such missions, a common understanding of terminology is necessary. For this monograph, the strategy of decapitation and its four conceptual effects require defining. Additionally, the reader must understand the targeting process used in the decapitation strategy, as well as who is to be targeted.

One definition of a decapitation strategy is found in Robert Pape’s book, *Bombing to Win*. Although Pape focuses on the historical use of decapitation operations with respect to air power, the definition is universally applicable and fits the needs of this paper.

Decapitation – strikes against *key leadership* and telecommunication facilities. (The main assumption is that these targets are a modern state’s Achilles’ heel. Regardless of the strength of a state’s fielded forces or military-industrial capacity, if the leadership is knocked out, the whole house of cards comes down.¹)

¹ Robert A. Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 79.

Pape's definition of decapitation focuses on actions against a *state* but decapitation can be applied to non-state groups and actors as well. Also, in this strategy, it is not necessary to kill an opposing leader. The intent is often to isolate the leadership, reducing or eliminating his span of control. Decapitation refers to cutting the head off the system, not the individual.

The strategy of decapitation targets an individual to affect the system he influences.

Decapitation operations may be applied to achieve the following effects:

Coercion – the act or practice of forcing an opponent to think or act in a given manner by pressure, force, domination, control or intimidation.² (Decapitation may be used to influence the opposition to use his power in a manner favorable to attaining friendly objectives.)

Deterrence – to prevent or discourage from acting, as by means of fear or doubt.³ 1. Decapitation may persuade an opponent to act according to friendly objectives, by threatening him personally with capture or death. (This persuasion is designed to prevent an opponent from taking future action against friendly objectives.)

Disruption – to throw into confusion; to break apart.⁴ 1. Decapitation may result in disruption of the social, political, economic, and/or military functions of the targeted system. 2. Decapitation may preclude efficient interaction of enemy combat and logistics systems, force the enemy into ineffective tactical dispositions, and/or degrade movement of material, forces, and supplies.⁵ (This is the most likely desired effect for decapitation operations.)

Destruction – to ruin completely; to tear down; demolish; to kill.⁶ 1. Decapitation may result in destruction of the social, political, economic, and/or military functions of the targeted system. 2. A tactical mission task that physically renders an enemy force combat-ineffective until it is reconstituted.⁷ (This is the least likely effect of the four listed. Destruction, in this context, defines the effect of decapitation on the targeted *system*. Although unlikely, an extremely dependent system or environment may result in complete combat-ineffectiveness when decapitated.)

² *The American Heritage Dictionary*, Fourth College Edition, s.v. "coerce," "coercion."

³ *Ibid.*, s.v. "deterrence."

⁴ *Ibid.*, s.v. "disruption."

⁵ United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, United States Marine Corps Combat Development Command, *FM 6-20-10 / MCRP 3-1.6.14 Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures the Targeting Process*, (Washington: 8 May 1996).

⁶ *The American Heritage Dictionary*, s.v. "destruction."

⁷ United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, United States Marine Corps Combat Development Command, *FM 1-02/MCRP 5-2A, Operational Terms and Symbols*. This version supersedes the September 1997 version of FM 101-5-1/MCRP 5-2A, *Operational Terms and Graphics*.

To be operative within a decapitation strategy, these concepts presuppose an object to attack, therefore necessitating a targeting process. The US Army and US Marine Corps define this process as:

Targeting - the process of selecting targets and matching the *appropriate response* to them on the basis of operational requirements, capabilities and limitations.⁸

Targeting methodology progresses through four basic functions: decide, detect, deliver, and assess.⁹ These functions break down the targeting process into slices that organize planning and execution, and identify key targeting requirements. The targeting cell decides on what will aid in attaining the assigned military objectives. They then acquire information on the target(s) and choose an appropriate application of force that will be delivered. Finally, with whatever feasible means available, an assessment of the effects is completed to determine the level of success or failure. Targeting does not require destruction or killing. This definition simply emphasizes identifying an *appropriate response* to the chosen objective. When dealing with enemy leadership, as will be seen in Chapter Three, the *capture* option to targeting an individual is most often preferred. Under certain circumstances, however, elimination of the target is more beneficial.

Targeting and interdiction objectives focus appropriate assets on enemy capabilities that could hinder friendly objectives. These objectives are expressed in terms of limit, disrupt, delay, divert, and destroy. The following figure paraphrases the definitions found in Joint Pub 1-02 and Joint Pub 3-03. *Limit, disrupt, delay, divert, destroy, and damage* describe the effects of an attack on enemy capabilities. These terms aid in quantifying the damage or duration of effects on a designated target.

⁸ FM 6-20-10 / MCRP3-1.6.14.

⁹ Ibid.

TARGETING OBJECTIVES



Figure 1: Targeting Objectives

Source: FM 6-20-10 *Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for the Targeting Process*

When attempting to decapitate an organization, the targeting process hones its focus down to an individual or small group of leaders. The targeting process identifies appropriate applications of force and prioritizes a list of targets that will most effectively lead to decapitation.

The Strategic Individual

The strategy of decapitation is applied through targeting a strategic individual in order to achieve one or more of the defined conceptual effects (coerce, deter, disrupt, or destroy) on the individual's system or environment. The author has defined the *Strategic Individual* as:

A single person widely identified on the world stage as the nucleus of the system or environment he or she influences and is subsequently given significant diplomatic, informational, military and/or economic value relative to vital national interests and the desired end state of that system or environment.

Understanding the decapitation strategy, its applicable purposes, and the targeting process will benefit the discussion in this monograph's conclusions. Understanding the strategic individual however, is critical.

My concept of the strategic individual has its basis in Thomas Friedman’s “super-empowered individual” as presented in *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*. The super-empowered individual single-handedly has the power to influence superpowers and/or supermarkets due to the potency given him through globalization. The combination of increasing worldwide American influence and globalization creates what Friedman calls “super-empowered angry men.” These individuals no longer require state sponsorship in order to wreak havoc with superpowers, global organizations or whomever they hate. The most violent of these men present the greatest current threat to the United States and its vital interests. Friedman says, “Some of these super-empowered individuals are quite angry, some of them quite wonderful—but all of them are now able to act directly on the world stage...” due to expanding globalization.¹⁰ The angry version of the super-empowered individual is whom the United States would most likely target in a decapitation operation.

Friedman believes Ramsi Yousef typifies the super-empowered angry man. Yousef masterminded the 1993 New York City World Trade Center bombing killing six people and injuring over one thousand. Friedman chooses Yousef as his example because of Yousef’s motive. He had no other goal than to destroy and kill as much as possible. He was not trying to change the world. He wanted only to wreak as much havoc on American society as possible.¹¹

Ramsi Yousef may be the quintessential super-empowered angry man but he was not a strategic individual. The strategic individual differs from Friedman’s super-empowered individual primarily in scope. The two terms are not mutually inclusive. A strategic individual must be recognized as the nucleus to his organization’s influence on America’s vital national interests. Although Yousef created a ripple, he was not a strategic-level threat. Until Osama bin Laden took his personal war on America and Israel to the world stage, he was just an extremely rich, angry individual who knew how to utilize globalization to influence superpowers and supermarkets.

¹⁰ Thomas L. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, (New York: Anchor Books, 2000), 14.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 401-405.

Due to the successes of his attacks on New York City and the Pentagon in September 2001, he elevated himself to a strategic individual.

Ends, Ways, and Means

Decapitation operations are a means to an end. The “end” in these operations involves, at a minimum, a significantly detrimental psychological impact on a designated organization or network through a personal attack on the strategic individual. Ideally, decapitation operations result in positive effects, such as a relatively peaceful regime change, successful deterrence, or military disruption that accelerates the timeline to achieving strategic goals. With careful operational analysis, the destruction of a few key targets can have a far-reaching impact on an enemy’s capabilities, but successfully eliminating an organization’s leadership does not necessarily result in its instantaneous collapse. Very often, the real challenge is in correctly identifying the *ways* and *means* that will achieve the desired *ends*.

The Joint Operational Concept dated November 2003 aids in solving the problem presented with correctly identifying the ways and means. The Joint Operational Concept paper addresses disintegration, disorientation, dislocation, and destruction of an opponent through identifying and exploiting his system’s critical relationships. The desired end produces “specific effects that disrupt the adversary’s decision making, alter intent, diminish capability, and force the adversary to comply with US will.”¹² In certain cases this critical relationship revolves around the strategic individual and leads to the consideration of decapitation in order to produce the desired end.

The Strategic Deterrence Joint Operating Concept is another recently drafted document that helps explain *ends*, *ways*, and *means*. This concept outlines “the *ways* and *means* by which the *end* of strategic deterrence is achieved through decisive influence over adversary decision-

¹² Department of Defense, *Joint Operational Concept*, (Washington D.C.: 3 November 2003), 13.

making.”¹³ Decapitation operations may very well be the military option for influencing the opponent’s decision calculus. The specific military *means* required to achieve this *end* will vary according to the situation. If certain criteria are met, the national leadership can make a more accurate decision as to which military *means* will better achieve the strategic goals.

British military strategist B.H. Liddell Hart wrote, “Strategy depends for success, first and most, on a sound calculation and co-ordination of the end and the means.”¹⁴ These *means* must be proportional to the value of the *end*. Currently, the US military has no written criteria that aid decision-makers in identifying organizational decapitation as a *means*. To do so, one must decide on what end state is desired and balance this with the potential risks and side effects. Historically, what second and third order effects, or unintended consequences, have arisen following leadership elimination?

One example is Archduke Ferdinand’s assassination in 1914, which produced a grand series of unintended second and third order effects. The Archduke was heir to the Hapsburg throne and also Inspector General of the Austrian army -- strategically significant to the future of the region. His assassins were seven members of the Serbian nationalist movement *Mlada Bosna* who dreamt of consolidating the Serbian peoples living in Bosnia and Serbia proper under a greater Serbia. This group decided an act of defiance would possibly convince Vienna to let go of its newly annexed Turkish Bosnia-Herzegovina, thus bringing the Serbs’ vision closer to reality.¹⁵

As many historians argue, Archduke Ferdinand’s death effectively launched World War I, which in turn set the stage for World War II. The young Serbian, who shot Ferdinand on that infamous bridge in Sarajevo, could never have imagined the second and third order effects of his

¹³ Department of Defense, *Strategic Deterrence Joint Operating Concept*, Version 0.35, (Washington D.C.: 12 December 2003), 6-9.

¹⁴ B.H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, (New York: Praeger Paperbacks, 1954), 336.

¹⁵ Borijove Jevtic, *28 June, 1914 The Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand* in The World War I Document Archive, accessed on 14 September 2003; available from <http://www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wwi/1914/ferddead.html>; Internet. Borijove Jevtic, was one of the leaders of the *Narodna Odbrana* who was arrested with Gavrilo Princip immediately after the assassination. He gave this firsthand account of the killing.

actions and how they led to the colossal death and destruction of not one but two World Wars. Although successful tactically, this decapitation operation did not achieve the author's objective, or at least did not do so in a way that he envisioned. When are the *ways* and *means* proportional to the *ends*?

Assassination

Any talk of launching paramilitary troops on government-sponsored operations against strategic individuals requires some discussion of assassination. The intention of this section is to answer anticipated and previously asked questions relating to assassination up front, thereby allowing the monograph's discussion to progress in its intended direction. This brief discussion will better explain when it is legally and morally acceptable to target individuals.

The word *assassin* was first used late in the Second Century. A millennium later, the term labeled a secret order of Muslims that at the time of the Crusades terrorized Christians and other enemies by secret murder committed usually under the influence of hashish. *Assassin* evolved from the Arabic word *hashshashin*, which is the plural for *hashshash* or one who smokes or chews hashish.¹⁶

The American Heritage Collegiate Dictionary has a more modern definition - "a person who murders a politically important person either for hire or from fanatical motives."¹⁷ Assassination is typically associated with a single victim, oftentimes killed for political reasons. In the aftermath of September 11th, the Bush Administration has come to see the targeting and killing – assassination – of individual al Qaeda members without juridical process as justifiable military action.¹⁸ These actions fall under the rules of a new kind of war, involving international terrorist organizations and unstable states. Defense Department lawyers have concluded that the

¹⁶ *Wikipedia Encyclopedia*, s.v. "hashshashin," accessed on 11 November 2003; available from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hashshashin>; Internet.

¹⁷ *The American Heritage Dictionary*, s.v. "assassinate."

¹⁸ Seymour M. Hersh, "Manhunt - The Bush Administration's New Strategy in the War Against Terrorism," *New Yorker*, 23 December 2002, 66.

killing of selected individuals would not be illegal under the Law of War if the targets were "combatant forces of another nation, a guerrilla force, or a terrorist or other organization whose actions pose a threat to the security of the United States."¹⁹ This definition denies any affiliate of a terrorist network the victimized status that an assassinated individual usually receives, and legalizes the killing of anyone posing a threat to American security.

The Bush administration established a state of armed conflict with terrorism following the September 11th attacks. Anyone affiliated with terrorism or its support structure is therefore considered a combatant. Assuming this definition is accepted, the obstacles in targeting enemy leadership form around the difficulties of acquiring actionable intelligence, target identification, and reasonable justification to the global audience, not the action's legality or morality.

Assassination missions are rare for the United States. In 1975, when CIA plots to kill Fidel Castro and other hostile foreign leaders in the 1960's were uncovered, a Senate select committee on intelligence led by Frank Church concluded that such plotting "violates moral precepts fundamental to our way of life. . . . We reject absolutely any notion that the United States should justify its actions by the standards of totalitarians. . . . Of course, we must defend our democracy. But in defending it, we must resist undermining the very virtues we are defending."²⁰ According to Church's committee, the CIA had targeted five foreign leaders for assassination. None were actually killed by US personnel, although three died in coups, some of which *might* have been backed by the CIA.²¹ Each leader was categorized a threat to vital national interests and could have been labeled a *strategic individual*.

In response to this finding and in an attempt to prevent Congress from hobbling the CIA with legislative action, President Ford signed Executive Order 11905 in 1976, explicitly

¹⁹ Ibid., 66.

²⁰ Ibid., 66.

²¹ Andrew Chang, "Secret Wars -- Special Ops Forces May Soon Undertake Covert Missions of a Different Kind," (ABC News; 26 August 2002, accessed on 12 March 2004); available from <http://www.abcnews.go.com/sections/world/DailyNews/secretwars020826.html>; Internet. The CIA attempted to assassinate Patrice Lumumba (Congo); Fidel Castro (Cuba), Rafael Trujillo (Dominican Republic), Ngo Dinh Diem (Vietnam), and Rene Schneider (Chile).

prohibiting the agency from taking part, directly or indirectly, in assassinations.²² This significantly changed the options available when targeting strategic individuals and required new methods and new thinking.

The most current version of the assassination ban is in Executive Order 12333 reading: “Prohibition on Assassination. No person employed by or acting on behalf of the United States Government shall engage in, or conspire to engage in assassination.”²³ Some believe the Bush administration violated this executive order when, on 3 November 2002, an American controlled unmanned aerial vehicle fired a Hellfire missile at an automobile in Yemen that was carrying a known al Qaeda leader. A combined American and Yemeni intelligence team had tracked this man and the order to fire was given when the car was isolated in the desert. The al Qaeda leader and five other men were killed.²⁴ Critics labeled this act an assassination, but according to the Defense Department’s legal interpretations, it was not. The targeted individual was positively identified as a terrorist leader belonging to the al Qaeda terrorist organization, a proven threat to our nation’s security. He was killed in a pre-emptive strike, the justification being self-defense. If a capture option with an acceptable level of risk had provided itself to the American team reporting the target’s movement, they would not have killed him but taken him prisoner. The team may not have spent an equal amount of time researching both plans, but rules of engagement oversee all military operations and are always in effect.

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld clarified the Bush administration’s position on assassination with a response to a reporter’s pointed question about special operation units conducting assassinations. Rumsfeld stated,

“There is really no mystery to it. We [DoD] recruit, organize, train, equip, and deploy young men and women, in uniform, to go out and serve as members of our military. They are not trained to do the word you used”—assassinate—“which I won't even repeat. That

²² Bruce W. Watson, Susan M. Watson, and Gerald W. Hopple, *United States Intelligence -- An Encyclopedia*, (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 739.

²³ *Ibid.*, 739.

²⁴ Greg Miller and Josh Meyer, “US Kills Six Al-Qaida Operatives,” *Los Angeles Times*, 5 November 2002.

is not what they're trained to do. They are trained to serve the country and to contribute to peace and stability in the world.”²⁵

Of course, that statement is true. The United States works very hard at legitimizing its wars and conducting them under the generally recognized principles of Just War Theory. This widely recognized theory has two primary criteria: *jus ad bellum* – “concerns when it is appropriate to resort to war as a method of conflict resolution”; and *jus in bello* – “what methods of warfare are permissible within the context of a just war.”²⁶ America’s disdain for assassination stems from the latter criterion, *jus in bello*. Assassination is generally not seen as a permissible method of warfare within a just war.

So the United States does not engage in assassination. It may be the most precise, cost effective, and strategically influential weapon we have in the nation’s arsenal for certain targets, but it violates the nation’s legal and moral principles. The American government does not need to engage in assassination. It must, however, categorize the targeted individual within the set parameters of “combatant forces of another nation, a guerrilla force, or a terrorist or other organization whose actions pose a threat to the security of the United States.”²⁷ These parameters conveniently cover just about anyone. Dr Kevin O'Brien of the Rand Institute summarized this assessment with his statement, “Actively seeking the death of Osama bin Laden may not constitute ‘assassination’, rather the ‘decapitation of a military command structure.’”²⁸

Susceptible Political Structures

A small number of political structures depend fundamentally on a single individual, and these systems offer potentially greater value for decapitation operations.

²⁵ Hersh, 66.

²⁶ Mark Edward DeForrest, “Just War Theory and the Recent US Air Strikes Against Iraq,” (Gonzaga University: 2003, accessed on 12 December 2003); available from <http://law.gonzaga.edu/borders/documents/deforres.htm>; Internet.

²⁷ Hersh, 66.

²⁸ BBC News, “CIA’s license to kill,” BBC World News, 23 October 2001, (accessed on 17 January 2004); available from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/1613423.stm>; Internet.

Autocracies and dictatorships top the list with systems built around a leader with near-absolute power. The two structures are very similar. “A supreme, uncontrolled, unlimited authority or right of governing in a single person” characterizes an autocracy.²⁹ An autocrat/dictator requires significant force to exert control over the disloyal populace. Such reliance on a single node presents a critical vulnerability in the system.

Finally, a monarchy is a political structure whereby a queen or king, empress or emperor holds absolute or limited power, usually inherited. Most monarchies have become constitutional or limited, such as the British and Thai Monarchies. Some countries such as Oman, Brunei Darussalam, Swaziland, and Lesotho continue to employ monarchs with absolute or near absolute power. Under these conditions, the state is very similar to an autocracy and presents many of the same vulnerabilities.³⁰

When the authoritarian / dictatorial / monarchical state’s centralized leadership or strategic individual is combined with the structure’s potential for instigating war, a political system highly susceptible to decapitation operations results. Figure 2 displays the world’s political makeup in 1997. The circled areas show the concentrations of autocracies, military juntas, and monarchies throughout the world. These political structures challenge regional peace more often than their democratic or communist cousins.

²⁹ *Political Systems explained, from communism to capitalism*, (accessed on 12 March 2004); available from <http://dspace.Dial.pipex.com/town/street/pl38/sect2.htm>; Internet.

³⁰ Ibid.

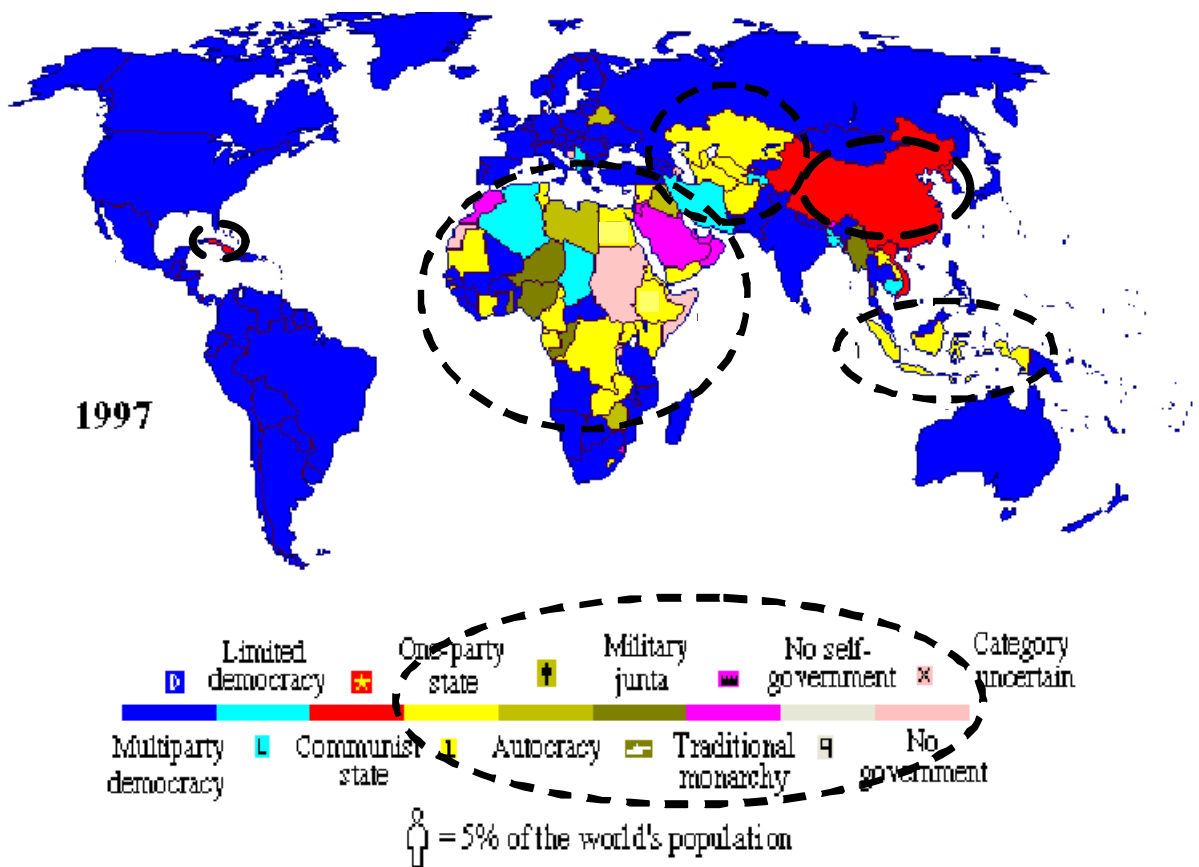


Figure 2: Political Systems of the World, 1997

Source: World Governments, <http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/govt1990.htm>; accessed on 3 February 2004.³¹

Theory of Decapitation

Leadership is oftentimes seen as the center of gravity to a nation's or organization's will to fight. The strategic individual is the only constituent with the recognized power to make decisions of war and peace on behalf of his organization. Wars throughout history have utilized decapitation operations to compel enemy leadership into making concessions. Repeatedly they have been decisive. However, the world has grown into an increasingly difficult environment for

³¹ Matthew White, "Map – Political Systems of the World in the 1990s," (accessed on 3 February 2004); available from <http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/govt1990.htm>; Internet.

manhunting. Capturing or killing an individual, especially a supported leader, has become exceedingly problematic. Technology has increased the offensive capability to attack precisely and respond quickly, but it has also increased the target's capability to see and hear.

Modern military strategist, Robert A. Pape, presents a theory of decapitation in his book, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War*. He breaks decapitation down into three variants: leadership decapitation, political decapitation, and military decapitation. Leadership decapitation assumes that specific leaders have led the state to war or to other unacceptable acts and that their successors are less likely to continue in their absence. Political decapitation favorably shapes the environment to assist a coup, resulting in regime change favorable to future relations. Lastly, military decapitation strikes national command and communications networks in order to disrupt military capabilities and cause their capitulation.³²

Pape continues with an explanation of decapitation as a strategic method,

According to this strategy, a nation's leadership is like a body's brain: destroy it and the body dies; isolate it and the body is paralyzed; confuse it and the body is uncontrollable. The logic of decapitation is part punishment and part denial. As a punishment strategy, it aims to overcome a key weakness in such strategies: the increased ability of governments to repress dissent in war. As a denial strategy, it aims to extend the logic of operational paralysis to "strategic" or national decision-makers.³³

The attractiveness of decapitation operations stems from the potential profits versus the costs. Precision targeting with air power or surgical special operations units offer a potential for high returns with minimal commitment and risk. Continuation of decapitation operations becomes a gamble when multiple failed attempts swell the commitment of resources, time involved, and risk to life into a cost equal to or greater than the realistic potential of success. This proportionality must be continually assessed and weighed against national objectives. Studying prior decapitation operations can provide lessons applicable toward establishing criteria that can aid in this outcome assessment.

³² Pape, 80.

³³ Ibid., 80.

Each of the five upcoming individuals in Chapter Three was, in his time, perceived as a strategic-level threat to national interests. Not all were angry and not all were super-empowered. Each was, however, a strategic individual targeted by the United States for an assortment of reasons and placed on the world stage due to a variety of preceding circumstances. The history and outcome of their respective decapitations provide precedent for recommendations and conclusions of this monograph.

Chapter Three

Decapitation Operations

The following case studies span the Twentieth Century. They occurred during five separate campaigns, with differing initiators and diverging outcomes. All were US-led decapitation operations that targeted a strategic individual in order to coerce, deter, disrupt, or destroy his organization's capabilities. The preliminary conclusions from these cases provide a database for establishing the Decapitation Criteria developed in Chapter Four.

General Emilio Aguinaldo, Philippines 1901

Over one hundred years ago, the United States found itself in a situation where, having removed a foreign government from power, it needed to decide what to do with the war-torn country that survived. Insurgency threats, economic stresses, and political pressures all confronted the American leadership's decision to colonize the Philippines after US forces defeated Spain there, during the Spanish-American war in 1898.

All elements of national power (diplomacy, information, military, and economics) came into play as the US government deliberated over how and why it should commit forces, dollars, and assets to an unwelcoming archipelago over 7,000 miles away. The Committee on Philippine Affairs of the United States Senate pointedly queried General Arthur MacArthur, Military Governor of the Philippines, on this topic. His response applies to similar situations today just as accurately as it did in 1901.

American withdrawal from the islands ... would, in my opinion, result in permanent failure of republicanism in the East, and the devastation of the archipelago by internecine and fratricidal war, which would *continue indefinitely* until suppressed by some external force. ... The islands in case of our withdrawal would unquestionably *become the theater of gigantic political and war-like operations*. The inevitable collision which would result from such an American

policy could not be confined. It would resound on all the shores of the Pacific and affect the commerce of the world.³⁴

Thus, the Philippine Islands became part of America's national interest in the Pacific following the Spanish-American war.

Enter Emilio Aguinaldo. Aguinaldo is known (by many to this day) as the father of Philippine independence. In 1896, he organized an insurgency against the colonial Spanish government. Unsuccessful on his first attempt against Manila, he returned in 1898 with US support following the outbreak of the Spanish-American War.³⁵ American forces and Filipino revolutionaries fought the Spanish separately until the two campaigns were fused via the highly publicized relationship between America and Aguinaldo.

This relationship had two opposing perspectives. Secretary of the Navy John D. Long gave specific orders to avoid alliances with Aguinaldo's forces. Although Commodore George Dewey, commander of US Naval Forces engaged in the Philippines, transported Aguinaldo from Hong Kong to Manila on the eve of war with Spain, he made no promises and evaded any commitments to Philippine independence. However, Brigadier General Thomas Anderson, US Army, did give Aguinaldo reason to expect partnership when he wrote, "... I desire to have the most amicable relations with you and to *have you and your people cooperate with us in military operation against the Spanish forces.*"³⁶ Aguinaldo coordinated military efforts with the United States and helped defeat the Spanish in Manila and elsewhere in the islands. To his many followers, Aguinaldo's perceived relationship with the United States gave him legitimacy as their

³⁴ Congress, Senate. Committee on the Philippines, *Hearings on Affairs in Philippine Islands*, 57th Congress, 1st Session, January 1902, p. 1918.

³⁵ Brian McAllister Linn, *The Philippine War 1899-1902*, (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2000), 27.

³⁶ Congress, Senate. Committee on the Philippines, *Hearings on Affairs in Philippine Islands*, 57th Congress, 1st Session, January 1902, p. 1935.

national leader. At the end of the Spanish-American war, on 12 June 1898, he declared the Philippines independent.³⁷

Aguinaldo established a makeshift government in Bacoar, near his hometown of Cavite. He later transferred the government to Malolos, northwest of Manila, where he was proclaimed President of the first Philippine Republic and attempted to organize and lead the dislocated people of the Islands. On 10 December 1898, however, the Treaty of Paris formally reassigned sovereignty of the Philippines to the United States.³⁸

President William McKinley proclaimed “benevolent assimilation” as the mission of the United States in the Philippines and instructed the American military government seated in Manila to “be extended with all possible dispatch to the whole of the ceded territory.”³⁹ That was easier said than done. The archipelago of the Philippines consists of approximately 7,000 islands with a total area of 115,000 square miles. At that time, there were over seven million people speaking five languages, living in severely restricted terrain within a fierce, insect-ridden jungle climate.⁴⁰

Aguinaldo felt betrayed by the United States. The Treaty of Paris annulled his declaration of independence, but when asked to turn over governmental control, he refused. His experience fighting the Spanish prior to American involvement provided a solid foundation for leading a relatively organized insurgency against the new colonial government. He understood the basic tenants of guerrilla warfare and provided detailed warfighting methods in his proclamation of 9 January 1899. He advocated duplicitous tactics and gave examples of how to conduct certain attacks. These methods explicitly advocated the use of women and children as support for combat operations and thoroughly explained how to make and when to throw bombs at passing American

³⁷ Brian McAllister Linn, *The US Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899-1902*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 6-7.

³⁸ Fremont Rockett, *Our boys in the Philippines: a pictorial history of the war*, (San Francisco: P.F. Rockett, 1899), 10.

³⁹ Linn, *The US Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899-1902*, 9.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

soldiers. His message requested all Filipinos to continue appearing loyal to American forces while secretly supporting the revolutionary combatants. Aguinaldo required the people to abide by a few, select laws of war in an effort to appear as “men of culture and patriotism, honorable and very humane.”⁴¹ America viewed his tactics as terrorism.

The American military hunted Aguinaldo for nearly three years, finally capturing him in February 1901. An intercepted courier’s message led to the leader’s location. General Frederick Funston captured Aguinaldo, a member of the Tagalog tribe, at his hideout in the isolated town of Palanan in northern Luzon. Funston employed a band of anti-Tagalog Macabebe soldiers and ex-officers of the Philippine revolutionary army to enter Aguinaldo’s stronghold, taking with them Funston and four American soldiers posing as prisoners of war. Once inside, the Macabebes, the American soldiers, and the Philippine ex-officers attacked Aguinaldo’s forces from within and captured the Philippine leader. The United States government offered clemency in return for Aguinaldo’s allegiance to American rule and public denunciation of the insurgency. Washington also promised eventual Philippine independence. Aguinaldo agreed. He died in Manila in 1964, well after his dream of Philippine independence came true on 4 July 1946.⁴²

The war in the Philippines lasted over three years, 1899-1902, costing the United States \$400 million and over 7,000 casualties.⁴³ These tolls were not accumulated solely in the effort to capture Aguinaldo but that mission was a significant factor, as US military leaders to the Philippines knew the importance of Aguinaldo’s influence and focused their efforts on his decapitation.

The Philippine War was an unpopular war. American military and political leaders alike underwent public scrutiny of their methods and strategies. The wisdom of capturing Aguinaldo came under question after the fact when Congressional members asked during the 1902 Senate

⁴¹ Congress, Senate. Committee on the Philippines, *Hearings on Affairs in Philippine Islands*, 57th Congress, 1st Session, January 1902, p. 522-524.

⁴² Rockett, 20.

⁴³ Andrew J. Birtle, *US Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine 1860-1941*, (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 2001), 108.

hearings on the affairs in the Philippine Islands, whether or not “decrying” Aguinaldo in his home nation was beneficial. Governor William H. Taft, following his assignment as civil governor of the Philippine Islands, stated, “His (Aguinaldo’s) capture ... has, it is reported to me, very much affected his prestige among the people.”⁴⁴ Taft attributed much of the insurgency’s collapse to Aguinaldo’s defeat. Major General Elwell Otis, MacArthur’s predecessor as Military Governor, preached that the Filipino revolt hinged solely on a small number of leadership figures. After defeating the leaders and demonstrating the advantages of American ways, he believed the revolt would collapse.

American leaders grossly underestimated the insurgency’s strength. Some of the Filipino insurgents were deeply nationalistic, and many others held unyielding suspicions of American intentions. The revolutionary political movement’s inertia and strength also founded itself, ironically, on the passivity of a majority of Filipinos. The people’s cultural subordination to their socio-economic “superiors” often caused them to follow their leaders, regardless of the options or consequences.⁴⁵ The average man or *hombre* felt obligated to maintain loyalties with his *principale*, and this shadowy intangible hid the root strength of the revolution to all but the most culturally aware.

Aguinaldo understood. *Principales* in nearly every village throughout the archipelago responded to his war proclamation. He knew exactly how to influence friendly Filipinos. He also knew well how to wage unconventional war. His ability to appeal to the country was critical to his cause and *even more critical to its submission*. Capturing Aguinaldo alive allowed the insurgents a respectful way to stop fighting. The American military effectively used the negotiations with Aguinaldo to both countries’ benefit. Having the recognized Filipino leader

⁴⁴ Congress, Senate, Committee on the Philippines, *Hearings on Affairs in Philippine Islands*, 57th Congress, 1st Session, January 1902, p. 375.

⁴⁵ Birtle, *US Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine 1860-1941*, 124-125.

available to announce the agreement of eventual independence severely diminished — but did not end — the insurgency.

Emilio Aguinaldo was critical to beginning and ending the Philippine insurgency. The revolution had the support and momentum to continue without him but as the *hombres* devotedly followed the *principales*, so did many *principales* follow the Father of Philippine independence. President McKinley's administration luckily captured Aguinaldo alive and used the influence of this strategic individual to shorten the war. This decapitation operation ended in both tactical and strategic success. Its costs were high but the American military leadership in the Philippines understood that the alternative of ending the hunt for Aguinaldo would only feed the insurgency and add to the operation's already high costs. Aguinaldo's capture did not single-handedly end the Philippine insurgency — in fact some of the worst fighting occurred directly following his detainment — but eliminating Aguinaldo's leadership from the anti-American revolution did provide a critical stepping stone along the path to long-term peace and stability in the archipelago.

Francisco “Pancho” Villa, Mexico 1916

The United States targeted Pancho Villa in 1916 as a strategic individual during a year-long decapitation operation meant to disrupt his offensive operations and increase security along the Mexican-American border. Villa's status as a strategic individual evolved from a series of events involving Mexican-American relations starting back in the late 1800's. These events are essential to understanding the American decisions and intricacies surrounding this decapitation operation.

The end of the Nineteenth Century found Mexico and the United States nearing war.⁴⁶ The military and diplomatic problems stemmed predominantly from the Indian tribes on both sides of the international border. The Indians, of course, did not recognize the authority of either government but did respect the imaginary line in the ground that provided sanctuary from their

⁴⁶ Congress, Senate, *House Reports*, 45 Cong., 2 sess., no 701, Appendix B, pp 241, 244-250.

pursuers. The Kickapoos, originally a plains tribe living in Kansas, homesteaded in the Mexican State of Tamaulipas about forty miles south of the Rio Grande.⁴⁷ They conducted frequent raids into Texas, stealing livestock, pilfering homes, and killing Americans. After one of the Kickapoos' more vicious raids in 1873, the 4th US Cavalry crossed the Rio Grande into Mexico at night, assaulting the Kickapoo village. Forty plus Indians were killed and many taken prisoner. The village burned to the ground, and the cavalry returned to US territory before Mexican militia could respond.⁴⁸ Mexico expressed extreme disapproval of this unauthorized use of US military force on sovereign Mexican territory.

In the 1880s, a new threat caused Mexico and the United States to overlook their former border problems and come to an agreement with respect to over-the-border use of force. As white settlers progressively moved westward to establish new settlements and mines, the Apache who had inhabited this region for countless years without interference, attacked. The Apache killed Mexicans and Americans alike.⁴⁹ In 1882, the US and Mexico came to an informal agreement, allowing soldiers of either country to cross the international border in pursuit of hostile Apaches.⁵⁰ In Mexican areas terrorized by Apaches, American soldiers were hailed as heroes. The agreement was renewed annually until another incident occurred.⁵¹ In 1886, Mexican militia ambushed an expedition made up almost entirely of Indian scouts but led by a captain from the 3rd US Cavalry. The American captain was killed along with many of his party.⁵² Washington determined more aggressive incursions were necessary. This, in turn, led to Mexican bitterness and anger toward the US troops and a glorification of the local bandits who defied the foreign military. This trend continued into the years of the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1920, and led to

⁴⁷ Congress, Senate, *House Reports*, 45 Cong., 2 sess., Misc. Doc. No. 64, Jan 12, 1873, 143.

⁴⁸ *Report of the Committee of Investigation sent in 1873 by the Mexican Government to the Frontier of Texas*, (New York, 1875), pp. 424-425.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp 241, 244-250.

⁵⁰ Clarence C. Clendenen, *The United States and Pancho Villa: A Study in Unconventional Diplomacy*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1961), 5.

⁵¹ Britton Davis, *The Truth About Geronimo*, (New Haven, Conn.: 1929), pp 165-166.

⁵² Clendenen, 6.

the legendary status of Pancho Villa. To some, he was a Robin Hood. To others he was an Attila.⁵³

Woodrow Wilson, the President of the United States during most of the revolution in Mexico, himself, wavered between two perspectives of Villa. At one point, the revolutionary was considered a possible future leader of Mexico, albeit not due to his popularity as a politician but because he would be no worse than the other choices of revolutionary leaders. However, in 1915, the United States officially recognized Venustiano Carranza as head of the Mexican de facto government. In Washington's eye, Villa reverted from being a semi-respected politician to his earlier status as bandit and outlaw, though now an extremely powerful one.⁵⁴ Villa virtually declared war against Carranza, and although he had no specific fight with the United States, he emphatically stated that "a dozen nations (like the US) could not keep Carranza from failure."⁵⁵

Searching for a way to hurt Carranza, Villa placed his sights on the port city of Agua Prieta opposite the American town of Douglas, Arizona. Agua Prieta, geographically separated from Carranza's strongholds, was short on supplies, had insufficient defenses, and was undermanned. It therefore presented a relatively soft target for a nighttime raid by Villa's bandits. The United States, however, was now in the position of opposing Villa openly and could not allow him a foothold so close to American interests. The United States assisted the defenders of Agua Prieta with trainloads of US and Mexican reinforcements, artillery, munitions, and equipment. Americans helped convert Agua Prieta from a small port city into an impregnable fortress prior to Villa's attack.

Early morning on 1 November, Villa launched his assault. Agua Prieta's freshly built defenses of interlaced trenches covered with barbed wire, defended by automatic machine guns,

⁵³ Ibid., 11.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 193.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 207.

and supported by artillery offered no vulnerability to Villa's forces. The Mexican bandit suffered a crushing defeat at Agua Prieta and found a new enemy in the United States.⁵⁶

Villa's attitude toward the United States shifted drastically after the battle. Forced "loans" from American companies in Villa's territory were demanded, while seizure of all horses and saddle equipment was intended.⁵⁷ Villista aggression reached a new high with the Santa Ysabel massacre, where Villa's men, allegedly under orders to steal a local company's payroll being delivered by rail, viciously assaulted the train. They savagely murdered and pillaged Mexican and American passengers while shouting, "Viva Villa!"⁵⁸ Although Villa denied ordering the abuse of Americans, he was held accountable. Public opinion in the United States interpreted the massacre as 17 Americans killed in a most horrific attack ordered by Villa, himself.

In March 1916, Villa led nearly 1,000 raiders to Columbus, New Mexico, where his forces indiscriminately killed men, women, and children, and maliciously burned homes and businesses to the ground. Washington immediately responded with the 13th Cavalry from nearby Camp Furlong. The US soldiers killed at least sixty-seven of Villa's men, capturing and hanging another seven the following day.⁵⁹

The feelings of most Americans were well expressed by this statement offered by the *Independent* in March of 1916.

The murderer Villa and his fellow bandits must be punished ... The United States Government must perform the task itself. The armed forces must seek out the murderers of Columbus and put them to death. They must follow the trail wherever it leads; they must use whatever means are necessary to bring the guilty to book. We are not waging war; we are administering justice. We shall not assail

⁵⁶ Col. Abner Pickering, 11th Infantry, "The Battle of Agua Prieta," *United States Infantry Journal*, XII (Jan., 1916), 707-710. This is an eyewitness account by the commanding officer of one of the United States regiments at Douglas.

⁵⁷ Clendenen, 211.

⁵⁸ Edgcomb Pinchon, *Viva Villa! A Recovery of the Real Pancho Villa, Peon, Bandit, Soldier, Patriot*, (New York: 1993), 335-336.

⁵⁹ Frank Everson Vandiver. *Black Jack: The Life and Times of John J. Pershing*, 215.

the rights of any other people; we shall merely defend our own. To do less would be national dishonor.⁶⁰

President Wilson responded to this sentiment and the undeniable need to rid the United States of the threat Villa presented, with the Punitive Expedition. Led by Brigadier General John J. Pershing, a veteran of the hunt for Aguinaldo in the Philippines, the expedition was formed in the words of a State Department press release, as “an adequate force to be sent at once in pursuit of Villa with the single object of capturing him and putting a stop to his forays.”⁶¹ The actual military orders were more detailed and restrictive, authorizing only the “pursuit of the Mexican band which attacked the town of Columbus, New Mexico.”⁶² Pershing needed only to break up Villa’s bands in order to be tactically successful. The American public, however, through the influence of the media, focused hard on the capturing of Villa “dead or alive.”

Pershing spent the next year moving a large and cumbersome mass of 10,000 US soldiers southward 400 miles through Mexico on his hunt for Villa. Villa was the quintessential guerrilla, providing a nearly impossible target for the lumbering expedition. He manipulated his own strengths and US weaknesses to create an asymmetry that significantly favored his survival. The Expedition fought conventionally, hamstrung by extremely strict and politically sensitive “rules of engagement” that denied the flexibility and violence of action required against such an adversary. Villa, on the other hand, remained quick and reactive while relying on his support structure throughout his area of operations. The longer the Punitive Expedition plodded through Mexican territory in pursuit of Pancho, the more Villa’s persona grew as a hero of the Mexican people. The Mexican populace resented the US military forces traveling through their lands and passively resisted its efforts to capture Villa. After one year of this arduous manhunt and on the eve of America’s entry into World War I, Pershing and his Expedition were called off. Villa had

⁶⁰ Ibid., 247. Taken from the *Independent*, LXXXV, (March 20, 1916), 404.

⁶¹ Ibid., 251.

⁶² Major General Hugh Lenox Scott, *Some Memories of a Soldier*, (New York: 1928), 520-521.

not been captured or killed, but his organization had been disrupted and no longer posed the threat it once had.

In 1920, the Mexican government offered Villa amnesty in exchange for his public retirement. He lived on his estate, cautious of potential assassination attempts but devoid of his prior life of banditry and politics. On 20 July 1923, he was assassinated while driving his car. An unidentified man stood at the pre-designated intersection and raised his hand yelling, “Viva Villa!” signaling his *compadres* to assault. Nine bullets killed the living legend instantly. Ironically, the same shout had been given by his men, in his honor, as they carried out similar attacks against Villa’s enemies.⁶³

The Punitive Expedition formed to pursue and destroy Pancho Villa’s band serves as an exceptional example of a failed manhunting operation that had positive consequences. Tactically, Villa’s organization was disbanded and his raids against American interests ceased. Strategically, the United States teetered on the verge of war with Mexico over the use of American military forces in Mexican territory but ultimately resolved longstanding border issues and established better relations. After one long year, General Pershing’s party returned to the United States empty handed but strategically successful.

Pancho Villa’s operations were disrupted due to the pressures applied by Pershing’s Party. The mission was perceived as a tactical failure, due to the focus placed on Villa’s capture, but it achieved its strategic objectives. The Punitive Expedition’s mission statement called for pursuit of the Mexican band responsible for the Columbus attack. This allowed flexibility and most importantly, a way out. Once the requirements needed to hunt Villa outweighed the benefits of his capture, the Punitive Expedition redeployed. The mission statement allowed Pershing that critical option.

⁶³ Friedrich Katz, *The Life & Times of Pancho Villa*, (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998), 764-766.

Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, Japan 1943

Less than twenty years after Pancho Villa's assassination, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto led the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor that destroyed the American Pacific Fleet on 7 December 1941. Prior to this day, very few Americans knew of Yamamoto, but after Pearl Harbor, he became the "embodiment of Japanese evil, the treacherous aggressor."⁶⁴ This case study differs from the other four discussed in this monograph in that the United States was fully engaged in total war and not just a state of conflict. Thus, political and military ramifications for decapitation operations differed greatly from the other situations covered in this chapter.

To the United States, Yamamoto was more than a military target. He personified America's perception of Japanese malevolence. To the Japanese, however, he transcended his military position with his living-legend popularity. He was an icon of longevity and indomitable success. His strategic and operational planning demanded respect from allies and aggressors alike. Given his professional background, political influence, and wartime leadership, Admiral Yamamoto undoubtedly became a strategic individual as the war in the Pacific developed.

Before the war, between 1926 and 1928, Yamamoto had served as the naval attaché at the Japanese embassy in Washington DC.⁶⁵ His job was to learn as much about the American military as possible. He studied history, doctrine, strategy, tactics, budgeting, English – everything possible. He made many friends in Washington and was well respected by his American peers. This tour in America and his operational reputation led to his participating in the 1930 London Naval Disarmament Conference. His successes in this conference catapulted Yamamoto onto the world stage as an extremely influential leader in Japanese military affairs.

As the 1930's came to a close, Japan's naval aviation capability steadily grew under the care of Yamamoto. The Japanese military had identified the United States as its most likely opponent in the Pacific and developed war plans based on the American threat. Yamamoto

⁶⁴ A.J. Barker, *Pearl Harbor*, (New York: Ballantine Books, Inc., 1988), 152.

⁶⁵ Carroll V. Glines, *Attack on Yamamoto*, (New York: Orion Books, 1990), 45.

disagreed with the Japanese majority. He was, first and foremost, against a war with America, and when Hitler and Mussolini together requested Japan to join in a tripartite pact, Yamamoto protested. The then Navy Vice Minister wrote,

A war between Japan and the United States would be a major calamity for the world, and for Japan it would mean, after several years of war already, acquiring yet another powerful enemy – an extremely perilous matter for the nation...It is necessary...that both Japan and America should seek every means to avoid a direct clash, and Japan should under no circumstances conclude an alliance with Germany.⁶⁶

Despite Yamamoto's outspokenness, the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy was signed on 27 September 1940, setting the stage for the war that, paradoxically, Yamamoto both protested and initiated.

The admiral's open critique of Japanese politics with respect to the Tripartite Pact left him with few friends. In an effort to remove him from the political arena, he was reassigned to sea duty as Commander of the Combined Fleet.⁶⁷ He had two and a half years to build and train the Japanese navy for Operation Z, the attack on the American fleet in Hawaii which, as previously stated, he fervently opposed. On 5 November 1941, he issued Combined Fleet Secret Operational Order No. 1, outlining the details of the Pearl Harbor attack and simultaneous assaults on Malaysia, the Philippines, Guam, Wake Island, and Hong Kong. Emperor Hirohito agreed to war with the United States on 1 December.⁶⁸

In the wake of the attack on Pearl Harbor, the American military leaders identified critical relationships, dependencies, vulnerabilities, and strengths of the Japanese nation. Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox declared to President Roosevelt that Yamamoto's elimination "could have devastating consequences on Japanese naval-aerial strategy." This statement borders on the obvious since Yamamoto *was* Japanese naval-aerial strategy. It is unclear who gave the final order to target the Japanese admiral: historians still argue over whether President Roosevelt

⁶⁶ Agawa, 186.

⁶⁷ Glines, 49.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 51-52.

gave it, or whether Knox did it on his own. Nevertheless, Admiral Marc A. Mitscher, Commander Air Solomons, received the authorization message printed on “special paper,” making it clear that Washington wanted Yamamoto killed.⁶⁹

A special mission strike force led by Major John W. Mitchell conducted the Yamamoto attack in April 1943. A P-38 squadron planned an extremely difficult and risky mission to intercept Yamamoto as he approached Bougainville in the Solomon Islands. Intercepted Japanese communications decoded by American intelligence personnel gave US officers knowledge of this trip. The information was deemed reliable not only because of its encryption level but because of Yamamoto’s reputation for extreme punctuality.

Commander in Chief, US Pacific Fleet, Admiral Chester Nimitz asked his chief intelligence officer, Commander Edwin T. Layton, “Do we try to get him?” Layton believed emphatically that killing Yamamoto would be a serious blow to the enemy. “Aside from the emperor there was no one held in higher regard by the Japanese public than Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto. His men idolized him.... his death would demoralize the Japanese navy and shock the nation.”⁷⁰ Layton later wrote,

There was no one to replace him. Admiral Yamaguchi had gone down with the carrier *Hiryu* at the Battle of Midway, and during our review of who might succeed to the command of the Combined Fleet, Nimitz proved surprisingly well informed of the reputations and qualifications of the senior Japanese naval staff. In a final summary I assured him that there was indeed only one Yamamoto.⁷¹

Admiral Nimitz sent the message of approval down the chain to Admiral William F. Halsey. Halsey relished the prospects of hunting the Japanese admiral. He had said many times that Yamamoto “was No. 3 on my private list of public enemies, closely trailing Hirohito and Tojo.”⁷²

⁶⁹ Major General John P. Condon, USMC (ret.), “Bringing Down Yamamoto,” *Proceedings*, (Naval Institute Press: Annapolis, MD), November 1990, 88.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁷¹ Edwin T. Layton, *And I Was There*, (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1985), 475.

⁷² William F. Halsey, and Bryan Joseph III, *Admiral Halsey’s Story*, (New York: Whittlesey House, 1947), 155.

On the night before the attack, mechanics at Henderson Field fitted extra large drop tanks on the fighters assigned to the Yamamoto mission. A naval compass was fitted to Major Mitchell's plane, enabling him to navigate the long over-water flight. At 0725 on 18 April 1943, eighteen P-38 Lightnings took off, following a route designed to avoid any Japanese-held islands.⁷³ One plane aborted during take off, while a second had to turn back in route. This left just two planes designated for the attack itself. At 0934 the contingent arrived at the intercept point. Almost immediately, radio silence was broken with a cry of "Bogey, ten o'clock high!" The Japanese flight of two 'Betty' bombers and six 'Zeke' fighters were spotted, right on time.⁷⁴ Seeing the American fighters, the Zekes turned to meet the threat, while the Betties split up and dived down to treetop level. One Lightning turned to meet the first three Zekes and the other dived toward the nearest Betty, which was heading for the nearby fighter base. Attacking from behind, the P-38 opened fire and sent the first Betty crashing into the jungle below.⁷⁵ The attention quickly turned to the second Betty, which had headed out over the ocean. After a short, two-sided battle, the second Betty bomber crashed into the water. The US fighters returned to Henderson Field, mission complete.⁷⁶

Admiral Yamamoto had been in the first bomber shot down over the jungle. According to reports from the troops that found the wreckage, he had been killed with multiple rounds to the head and shoulders as he sat strapped in his seat.⁷⁷

Attempting to determine how or if a loss of a strategic individual such as Isoroku Yamamoto might have affected history is contentious at best. He was a valid military target and one who had close ties to the effectiveness of the Japanese Imperial Navy. An esteemed leader, Yamamoto wielded extreme power in his position as commander of the Combined Fleet. At a

⁷³ Glines, 59.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 61.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 62-64.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 65.

⁷⁷ Uri Noy, "Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto," (accessed on 20 March 2004); available from <http://www.2worldwar2.com/yamamoto.htm>; Internet.

minimum, US leaders expected his death to result in significant shock to the Japanese navy. In a “total war” such as WWII, any potential for easing the threat to the American people and securing national interests gives cause for action.

Some still argue that targeting Yamamoto may have actually *increased* the difficulties of winning the war. As discussed earlier, he had continuously argued for peace negotiations, knowing the limitations Japan faced in sustaining a prolonged conflict. He did not fight out of hate for the United States but for love of his Japan. In killing him, did America eliminate the strongest advocate for peace within the Japanese high command? Others believe his death sparked a short increase in combativeness that would compel the United States to drop the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In one Japanese radio announcement following Yamamoto’s death, a cry for vengeance was given: “His stirring fighting spirit still lives on in the Imperial Japanese Navy and will continue to inspire officers and men of Japan’s naval forces, who are determined to avenge the death of their late Commander in Chief.”⁷⁸

The attack on Yamamoto distinctly characterizes a successful decapitation operation developed from accurate, actionable intelligence and acted on in a timely manner with a specialized force. Its tactical success is indisputable. Its strategic results are much less tangible and, to this day, irresolute.

General Manuel A. Noriega, Panama 1989

The United States has maintained a vested interest and significant presence in Panama since that country’s independence in 1903. From Theodore Roosevelt’s construction of the Panama Canal to Ronald Reagan’s campaign against drugs, the United States has guarded a long-term, closely held relationship with the transcontinental isthmus. In the late 1980s, General Manuel A. Noriega’s dictatorial rule strained this relationship to the breaking point. America was forced to respond to his criminal behavior in the interest of national security, and the consequent

⁷⁸ Map Room Military Subject Files, 1941-1945, (Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 1991), Microfilm Reel 5 of 27.

decapitation effort was part of Operation *Just Cause*, the US invasion of Panama in December 1989.

Noriega was widely recognized as a cruel and ugly dictator. By taking command of the Panamanian *Guardia* in 1983, he merged three successful, mutually reinforcing careers in politics, the military, and crime. This integration of powers brought him as close to Panamanian omnipotence as one could ever hope to attain. Noriega epitomized the definition of military dictatorship, but an outbreak of internal discontent and two US indictments on drug charges in 1988, changed his international reputation of being a disliked dictator to being a severe political problem. His control over the Panamanian national tools of power coupled with the geographic importance of Panama to the United States, made Noriega a strategic individual in every sense of the term. The Noriega regime completely revolved around crime, predominantly the drug trade, and thus earned Panama its place as the world's first "narco-military" state. America saw this condition as an explosive problem and began addressing it accordingly.

Diplomatic negotiations approved by President Reagan offered to drop Noriega's drug indictments in return for his resignation. Noriega entertained the idea and even promised to announce his "retirement," but only after US economic sanctions against Panama were publicly lifted. The Reagan administration decided not to take the word of a known criminal and rescinded all offers. The President stated, "There would be no deal that would allow Noriega to step down peacefully."⁷⁹ In the months to come, Noriega expanded his corruption, and the resulting instability reached a level requiring US military intervention.

Throughout 1988 and 1989, Noriega harassed US citizens in Panama and interfered with implementation of US rights under the 1977 Panama Canal treaties. He also established economic and military connections with Cuba, Nicaragua, and Libya. These contacts brought in significant amounts of money and Soviet bloc weapons to Panama. Specifically, according to a document written by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Joint History Office, Libya allegedly

⁷⁹ Donnelly, Roth, Baker, 34-35.

contributed \$20 million in exchange for authorization to use Panama as a base to “coordinate the activities of terrorist and insurgent groups throughout Latin America.”⁸⁰

The CIA proposed a coup to derail Noriega. This option was quickly suppressed. President Reagan had signed Executive Order 12333 prohibiting United States government personnel from engaging in or conspiring to engage in assassination. However, a coup led by a Major Moisés Giroldi of the Panama Defense Force attempted a takeover in October 1989. Giroldi planned to seize the PDF headquarters, *La Comandancia*, in Panama City, rally anti-Noriega PDF units to him, and force Noriega to retire from office. He failed and Noriega had him and several of his officers shot.⁸¹

Two months after this aborted coup, on Friday, 15 December, Noriega named himself Maximum Leader and stated formally that, “owing to US aggression,” a state of war existed with the United States. Although this declaration was not taken seriously by American national leadership, the Panamanian military and police forces reflected their dictator’s feelings. The next day saw a turning point in America/Panama relations. Four US servicemen driving through Panama City took a wrong turn and were stopped at a PDF checkpoint near the *comandancia*. The Panama Defense Force guards stopped the car and tried to force the officers outside. The Americans refused to exit the vehicle and attempted to speed away, as a PDF soldier fired on them. They approached another checkpoint that also began firing. Marine First Lieutenant Robert Paz was killed. An American Navy Lieutenant and his wife witnessed the incident and were taken into custody for questioning. “Interrogators kicked the officer in the groin, hit him in the mouth, and pointed a gun at his head. Other PDF members forced his wife to stand against a wall while they groped her; she collapsed.”⁸²

⁸⁰ Ronald H. Cole, *Operation JUST CAUSE: The Planning and Execution of Joint Operations in Panama, February 1988–January 1990*, (Washington, D.C.: Joint History Office, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1995), 27-28.

⁸¹ Ibid., 27-28.

⁸² Ibid., 27-28.

On 17 December 1989, the National Command Authority directed the Joint Chiefs of Staff to execute OPOD 90-2, Operation *Just Cause*. Joint Task Force SOUTH (JTFSO) received the execute order the next day, with an H-Hour of 0100 local, 20 December. The operation was conducted as a campaign with limited military objectives. JTFSO objectives were:

1. Protect US lives and key sites and facilities.
2. *Capture and deliver Noriega to competent authority.*
3. Neutralize PDF forces.
4. Neutralize PDF command and control.
5. Support establishment of a US-recognized government in Panama.
6. Restructure the PDF.⁸³

The popular perception of the mission was that success depended upon the strategic individual's capture when, in actuality, this was only one objective in a short list. The most important objective was neutralizing the PDF forces. Capturing Noriega was more a political event than a military necessity.

Fixing Noriega's location was a major intelligence requirement for weeks prior to the invasion. General Noriega expected the United States to attempt to capture or kill him *prior* to launching a full-fledged attack on the PDF. He did not anticipate the invasion being launched before the search for him was under way. Following this incorrect assessment, Noriega hid rather than direct PDF troops against the American assault.

The day before the invasion, American forces had tracked Noriega traveling from Colón to Panama City. En route, his caravan split into two halves, one group heading to the *comandancia* and the other toward Tocumen airport. The group moving to the *comandancia* was monitored closely, while the vehicles traveling to Tocumen were not. The general was in the convoy heading to the airport and, after the invasion began, successfully went to ground for the next four days.⁸⁴

⁸³ Federation of American Scientists, Military Analysis Network, *Operation Just Cause*, [article on-line]; (1999, accessed on 14 March 2004); available from http://www.fas.org/man/dod-101/ops/just_cause.htm; Internet.

⁸⁴ David Harris, *Shooting the Moon, The true story of an American manhunt unlike any other, ever*, (Boston; Little, Brown and Company, 2001), pp. 361-365.

Operation *Just Cause* had achieved three of its four initial objectives by afternoon on 20 December. The invasion had neutralized the PDF and its command and control, and the majority of the Canal Zone was in American control. The next step was to find Noriega. His offices and homes were searched first. The Commander in Chief of SOUTHCOM posted a one million dollar reward and established a rapid reaction unit that responded to more than forty leads on Noriega's whereabouts. The general was not found.⁸⁵

Noriega jumped from hiding place to hiding place, using his secretary's home, a business affiliate's villa, and even a graveyard. Finally, he came to the conclusion that he needed to seek asylum in a Panama City embassy. US troops expected this and had the Cuban, Libyan, and Nicaraguan embassies surrounded, preventing Noriega from approaching these possible allies. Noriega thus sent a messenger to the Vatican embassy, which was not a likely protector, but was the only possibility of sanctuary not under American surveillance. Noriega threatened to prolong the fight by directing a guerilla war from the Panamanian hills outside the city if he was not protected. With this taken into consideration, the Papal nuncio agreed to provide asylum.⁸⁶

Noriega spent the next nine days in the care of the *Nunciature* of the Vatican embassy in Panama. Finally, on 3 January 1990, the general surrendered in his uniform. With military assistance, two agents from the Drug Enforcement Administration placed him under arrest and took him on board a C-130.⁸⁷ He was flown to the United States and convicted on eight counts of drug trafficking, racketeering, and money laundering in April 1992. His trial was held in Miami, and on 10 July 1992, he was sentenced to 40 years in prison for drug and racketeering violations. His sentence was reduced to 30 years in 1999, making Noriega eligible for parole in 2006.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Ibid., 364.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 364-365.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 366-370.

⁸⁸ Jay Weaver, "Former dictator Noriega denied parole," Miami Herald, 11 March 2004.

Eighteen US soldiers, four sailors, one marine and three American civilians died during Operation *Just Cause*.⁸⁹ Another 324 were wounded. Three hundred fourteen members of the Panamanian Defense Force died defending him and approximately another 150 were wounded. The invasion killed at least 200 Panamanian civilians.⁹⁰ Approximately \$1.5 billion in damages were recorded.⁹¹ The invasion received praise from some and condemnation from others. The strategic objectives listed by the Bush administration were undoubtedly achieved, but were the means proportional to the ends? Was this unprecedented military action worth the costs? The authors of *Operation Just Cause: The Storming of Panama* wrote, “Even considering the loss of life and livelihood, most Panamanians will say yes. The invasion was worth it. No longer are they subject to the sadistic whims of a brutal dictatorship...”⁹² Their view reflects the majority’s opinion and emphasizes the fact that the democratic government installed during the invasion has resulted in Panamanian peace and stability for the past fifteen years.

This decapitation operation provides a unique case where the United States military completed a build-up in a relatively permissive environment and conducted operations in a well-known, familiar setting with staging bases literally within eyesight of military targets. The strategic individual, General Noriega, was generally constrained to the developed portion of the country, allowing the hunt to remain geographically focused. These facts greatly simplified Operation *Just Cause* and the subsequent manhunt. True operational success came with the neutralization of the PDF; however, perceived success required Manuel Noriega’s capture or lawful death.

⁸⁹ Donnelly, Roth, Baker, Appendix C.

⁹⁰ Donnelly, Roth, Baker, 390-391.

⁹¹ Frederick Kempe, *Divorcing the Dictator – America’s Bungled Affair with Noriega*, (Great Britain: I.B. Tauris, 1990), 418.

⁹² Donnelly, Roth, Baker, 390-391.

Pablo Escobar, Colombia 1993

Noriega's capture set a precedent for US authorities to arrest foreign nationals and extradite them to America for trial. The success of Operation *Just Cause* paved the way for the use of military units working alongside law enforcement elements against threats to national security. The final three decades of the Twentieth Century saw America's illegal drug problem rise to become a national issue, with the Reagan administration calling for an all-out war on drugs. In April 1986, President Reagan signed National Security Decision Directive 221 (NSDD 221), officially declaring drug trafficking a threat to national security. This directive authorized the use of military, intelligence, and other governmental units in conjunction with law enforcement agencies to conduct operations in support of the war on drugs. The directive states, "The expanding scope of global narcotic trafficking has created a situation which today adds another significant dimension to the law enforcement and public health aspects of this international problem and threatens the national security of the United States."⁹³ It guides the Secretary of Defense and Attorney General to work with the Secretary of State in the development and implementation of "necessary modifications to applicable statutes, regulations, procedures, and guidelines to enable US military forces to support counter-narcotics efforts more actively..."⁹⁴

The directive was sponsored primarily by Vice President George Bush and specifically authorized the military training, supply, and intelligence programs, previously limited to US counterinsurgency efforts, to be utilized to battle terrorist organizations, foreign governments, or guerrilla movements linked to narco-trafficking. It specifically listed the Nicaraguan and Cuban governments, as well as the M19 guerrilla group in Colombia, as its first targets. According to various sources, Colombia provided up to eighty percent of the cocaine imported to the United

⁹³ US President, National Security Decision Directive No. 221, "Narcotics and National Security," The White House Washington, 8 April 1986, p. 1. Partially declassified/Released on 3/26/98 under provisions of E.O. 12958 by R. Soubers, National Security Council.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 3.

States at this time. In addition to this staggering statistic, Colombia also experienced very high homicide rates, seventy percent of which were concentrated around Bogotá, Medellín, and Cali.⁹⁵ The most common hypothesis as to the cause of this spike in violence pointed to the narcotics industry. As the narcotics industry grew, the violence attributed to guerrilla insurgencies dropped to a level of social violence and nearly fell off the charts. Narco-traffickers took center stage, and although allied with the insurgents against law enforcement and government, the Cali and Medellín cartels were perceived internationally as the principal threat to the region.

US spending for international anti-drug efforts grew from \$300 million in 1989 to more than \$700 million in 1991.⁹⁶ The combined authority of NSDD 221 and President Bush's National Security Directive Number 18 called for approximately \$250 million from 1989 to 1994 to be used in pursuit of the Andean drug cartels "wherever and however they choose to operate with all means available to our government consistent with applicable law."⁹⁷ This directive authorized the Secretary of Defense to deploy military forces to conduct training and provide operational support activities for host nation government personnel anywhere in the Andean region, but focusing on Colombia, Bolivia, and Peru. The Bush administration established the link between drug traffickers and insurgents in the Andean countries. The guerrillas found it more profitable to join the *narcos* than to fight them. The violence and corruption they brought effectively destabilized their respective governments and societies.

Colombia saw some of the worst of this environment with the super powered Cali and Medellín drug cartels making arrangements with the *FARC*, *ELN* and M19 (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, *Ejército de Liberación Nacional*, and April 19th Movement). The king of the Medellín narco-traffickers, Pablo Escobar, reached the pinnacle of infamy by being named "the most wanted man in the world" for his horrific acts of terrorism and brutality. With

⁹⁵ Frank Safford and Marco Palacios, *Colombia Fragmented Land, Divided Society*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 360.

⁹⁶ Mark Bowden, *Killing Pablo*, (New York: Penguin Group, 2001), 65.

⁹⁷ US President, National Security Directive 18, "International Counternarcotics Strategy," The White House Washington, 21 August 1989. NSC Declassification Review {E.O. 12958}.

cocaine use shifting from recreation to devastation, and with the *narcos* publicized links to terroristic insurgencies, the men behind the monstrous Colombian cartels were transformed in the public mind from gangsters to enemies of the state. This transformation increased the acceptability of American intervention in counternarcotics, as well as allowing military forces to assist the already operating law enforcement elements. As the known leader of one of these newly targeted cartels, Pablo Escobar became the focus of an international manhunt that cost billions of dollars, hundreds of lives, and several years.

Due to the inherently dangerous and duplicitous nature of the drug business, Escobar trusted no one. He built, operated, and managed the Medellín cocaine cartel almost single-handedly, ruthlessly dealing with those that opposed him or challenged his authority. This system set Escobar as the organization's nucleus of power and, without a doubt, the Medellín cartel's strategic individual.

Pablo's list of atrocities could fill pages. The assassination of a justice minister named Rodrigo Lara elevated Escobar from a tolerated criminal to a military target. In a congressional hearing, Lara openly denounced Escobar, then a sitting member of the Colombian congress. The following day, Lara had stories published in a Colombian newspaper of Pablo's ties to drug trafficking. The articles showed mug shots from previous arrests and blew any personal opinion of the drug lord's innocence out of the water. Escobar attempted to buy out every copy of the newspaper, especially in his hometown Medellín, but this only increased the perception of his guilt. In retaliation for the damage to his character, Pablo had the Justice Minister Lara murdered three months later.⁹⁸ A message from Escobar's group, the Extraditables, confirmed his intent:

We are declaring total and absolute war on the government, on the individual and political oligarchy, on the journalists who have attacked and insulted us, on the judges that have sold themselves to the government, on the extraditing magistrates ... on all those who have persecuted and attacked us. We will not respect the families of those who have not respected our families. We will burn and destroy the industries, properties and mansions of the oligarchy.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Bowden, 39.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 85.

This attack on the government threatened all Colombian leadership and required a response.

US support to Colombia in the war on drugs involved nearly every reconnaissance, direction-finding, and imagery asset available. The information collected via overhead imagery, telephone interceptions, and human intelligence led to thousands of raids conducted by the Colombian National Police and military. For over two years, Escobar stayed just one step ahead of the non-stop attempts to capture or kill him. He had been indicted in three American states and the United States wanted him extradited for trial. This was Pablo's worst fear: he did not want to be taken to the States. The combined pressures of the Colombia officials and American technology, however, moved him to strike a bargain. In the spring of 1991 he surrendered.

The surrender was, of course, according to the king of Medellín's specific requirements. He would allow himself to be imprisoned in *La Catedral*, a prison built to Escobar's specifications in his hometown, Medellín. The Constitutional Assembly formally outlawed extradition in concurrence with his demands. In February 1992, he appeared before a judge in Bogotá.¹⁰⁰ His hearing ignored the kidnappings, thousands of car-bomb victims, political victims, and murdered judges and police officers for which he was responsible, so he admitted only to being the middleman in a French drug deal. Pablo's skillful negotiation of his surrender admonished him of nearly all guilt and his public standing rose once again.¹⁰¹

Escobar's imprisonment was a mockery. With handpicked fellow prisoners, he lived in luxury under his own terms. His family visited regularly, and he oftentimes left the prison under escort to attend functions in the city. *La Catedral* became his safe and private cartel headquarters from which he comfortably directed business operations unfettered by the ceaseless police raids. When the Colombian president decided to move Escobar to a true prison, Pablo walked out, right

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 101.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 103-105.

under the nose of a Colombian army brigade. The war began again with American support being absolutely crucial to any possibility of success.

In addition to American technology and Colombian manpower, an element not restricted by law or morality entered the fray. *Los Pepes*, an anonymous group of militants, waged their own method of total war on Escobar. They killed relentlessly, attacking Pablo in any way they possibly could. *Los Pepes* bombed his businesses, murdered his lieutenants, and harassed him with threats. They admitted no connection to the *policía*, but somehow they acted on many bits of information provided by the American assets to the Colombian National Police. This form of warfare was exactly what the Colombian government needed to battle Escobar. They could not participate in this discriminate but liberal violence publicly. The threat from *Los Pepes* combined with the *policía's* Search Bloc elements continually threatened Pablo with attacks and raids. He could not stay still for any amount of time without threat of death. The American direction-finding assets monitored all frequencies and telephone nets continuously, quickly locating Escobar and reporting such to Colombian officials for response. Finally, sixteen months after his prison escape, operational skill, technology, and luck all came together. Pablo was found and killed on 2 December 1993.¹⁰²

Under Pablo Escobar's rule in the 1980s and 1990s, Medellín became Colombia's capital of homicide.¹⁰³ But killing *El Patrón* in no way ended the cocaine industry. It merely passed it off to multiple smaller leaders. The Calí cartel, specifically, grew with the downfall of its major competitor. This group knew this would be the case even before it happened. The Calí cartel offered ten million dollars for the capture or death of Escobar: two million to those providing information and the residual eight million to the Search Bloc police.¹⁰⁴ After his death, deals were

¹⁰² Ibid., 239.

¹⁰³ Safford and Palacios, 360.

¹⁰⁴ Bowden, 225-226.

made with the Colombian *policía* allowing them minor victories in order to maintain their multi-billion dollar venture.¹⁰⁵

Colombian cocaine shipments to the United States did not slow during the hunt for Escobar. Prices dropped directly after his death, allowing more Americans to buy more product. In 1993, there was more cocaine available at lower prices than ever before, and throughout the 1990s, costs continued to decline.¹⁰⁶ In many ways, eliminating Escobar made things worse.

Max Mermelstein, a one-time lieutenant in Escobar's organization, said in a telephone interview that he thought drug trafficking to the United States could actually increase in the aftermath of Escobar's death. "Pablo had a very tight rein on trafficking operations, I think there will be an increase not a decrease," he said. "Now they don't have to worry about paying Pablo off. Everybody is going to establish their own routes."¹⁰⁷

In addition to its continued stardom as the king of cocaine production, Colombia is the only country today in the Western hemisphere with a significant guerrilla warfare problem.¹⁰⁸ This decapitation operation resulted in a tactical success with strategic failures. Many dollars, lives, and years were spent hunting Pablo Escobar, and although Colombia and the world were rid of an extremely dangerous enemy, his death had significant long-term detrimental effects.

The structure of the Colombian narcotics industry as a whole was not vulnerable to decapitation. The Medellín cartel was hit hard, but the cocaine business actually increased due to Pablo's death. Two years after, in 1995, the Cali cartel was believed to be the source for eighty percent of the cocaine and thirty percent of the heroin shipped to America. Prices dropped and

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 271.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 271.

¹⁰⁷ Peter Eisner, "Cocaine Trafficker Pablo Escobar Killed in Colombia," *Newsday*, Vol. 113, No. 62, 3 December 1993, p. 2, (Miami: accessed on 13 March 2004); available from <http://www-tech.mit.edu/V113/N62/escobar.62w.html>; Internet.

¹⁰⁸ Safford and Palacios, 362.

production increased.¹⁰⁹ Just last year on 21 March, the Treasury Department added nine business names to its list of Specially Designated Narcotics Traffickers. These businesses are now subject to economic sanctions imposed against Colombian drug cartels according to Executive Order 12978 signed by President Bill Clinton in 1999. All of these newly added businesses are owned or controlled by the Cali cartel indicating that it is still a considerable participant in the narcotics industry. Pablo's death effectively aided its growth.

¹⁰⁹ National Drug Strategy Network, "Colombia Arrests Suspected Head of Cali Cartel," September 1995, p. 1, (accessed on 13 March 2004); available from <http://www.ndsn.org/SEPT95/CALIHEAD.html>; Internet.

Chapter Four

Decapitation Criteria

On the beaten side, the loss of all order and control often makes the prolongation of resistance by individual units, by the further punishment they are certain to suffer, more injurious than useful to the whole.

Carl von Clausewitz

The United States has ample history conducting decapitation operations. Over the course of one hundred years, strategic individuals have threatened America's national interests and security in a myriad of ways. Decapitation has been used to coerce, deter, disrupt, and destroy enemy capabilities threatening the nation. Joint, interagency, and multinational task forces have targeted leadership elements and their support/political structures in nearly every setting around the world from the Philippine jungles, to the Mexican wastelands, from the Pacific islands to Panama City and Medellín. These operations have resulted in various levels of success and failure, and many are still a matter of debate.

This monograph has explored five decapitation operations that involved foreign and domestic national security issues in times of limited conflict and total war. In two of these five studies, the strategic individuals (Yamamoto and Escobar) were killed. In two others, the targets (Aguinaldo and Noriega) were captured. Finally, in one example, the enemy leader (Villa) escaped. Each case study began with a unique set of circumstances that established decapitation as a potentially beneficial strategy.

The strategy of decapitation was applied with the intent of coercing, disrupting, deterring, and/or destroying enemy capabilities through targeting, with military power, the strategic individual. Each case established the individual as a threat to national security and as the power center of his system or environment. American national leadership evaluated the enemy's capabilities and determined the targeted individual to be strategically valuable. The targeting

process was used, in one way or another, to match the appropriate response to the desired effect, and the hunt began.

Each case had tactical and strategic outcomes as unique as their beginnings. Risk and proportionality varied greatly with respect to time and dollars, casualties, and effects. In the cases of Aguinaldo and Noriega, decapitation achieved both tactical and strategic successes. Aguinaldo's capture resulted in a marked decline in the Philippine insurgency, set the stage for colonial government, ultimately led to Philippine independence, and provided America a regional ally for the last one hundred years. Noriega's imprisonment immediately decreased the threat to Americans in the Panama Canal region. It also disrupted the drug industry in Panama and established a friendly government able to take over the Canal Authority in 1999. Yamamoto's and Escobar's deaths resulted in tangible tactical successes, while the strategic objectives were left irresolute. Killing the man behind the attack on Pearl Harbor served as a major tactical success but eliminated a long-term peace advocate. The Yamamoto strike resulted in a benefit-heavy balance in proportion to the cost and risk. Whatever uncertain strategic benefits came from his death, by far outweighed the cost/risk of the single successful aerial mission. The hunt for Escobar, on the other hand, led to bloody vengeance and paved the road for the Calí cartel to accelerate narcotics growth and profits. Finally, in Mexico, Villa escaped the ten thousand man Punitive Expedition's one-year pursuit. Tactically, Pershing redeployed to the United States unfulfilled. Strategically, he circumvented a possible regional war and successfully disrupted Villa's band. The cumulative results of these five cases provide data required to develop helpful criteria for similar operations in the future.

Target Value Analysis

Methodically comparing the cumulative results of a specific operation assigns a relative value to each set of facts. Military terminology calls this comparison a Target Value Analysis (TVA). In business terminology, a TVA equates to a cost / benefit analysis that determines how

well, or how poorly a planned action will turn out. Although such tools are most commonly used for answering financial questions, they can be applied in almost any situation. The cost / benefit analysis relies on the addition of positive factors and the subtraction of negative factors to determine a net result. It finds, quantifies, and consolidates all the positive factors equaling the benefits. Then it identifies, quantifies, and subtracts all the costs. The difference between the two identifies the more profitable or beneficial option.

Targeting enemy leadership offers very few tangible effects that can provide concrete evidence in a cost / benefit analysis. Measuring coercion, deterrence, and/or disruption is problematic and normally requires some time to develop and produce measurable effects. The TVA methodology therefore prioritizes targets through war-gaming and course of action comparisons instead. The Targeting Methodology chapter of FM 6-20-10 *Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for the Targeting Process* explains how the TVA methodology works and its results.

During war-gaming, alternative friendly COA (courses of action) are analyzed in terms of their impact on enemy operations and likely responses. The enemy battlefield functions that must be attacked to force the best enemy response are identified. The commander and his staff analyze the criticality of friendly battlefield functions with regard to a specific COA. The best places to attack HPTs (high payoff targets) in relation to the friendly COA are identified.¹¹⁰

The physical effects of decapitation are easily measured by the strategic individual's capture, death, or escape and the resulting end state of his system or environment. It is significantly more difficult to quantify or predict the intangible effects of coercion, deterrence, or disruption. Detecting psychological pressures on enemy leadership or levels of disorder on the individual's organization caused by the attack may not be possible.

¹¹⁰ FM 6-20-10 / MCRP3-1.6.14.

Figure 3 compares Chapter Three's five case studies side by side with respect to target status, target type, campaign cost, and desired effect. The chart additionally shows both the tactical and strategic outcome and the resulting target value analysis.

Criteria <i>Strategic Individual</i>	Emilio Aguinaldo	Pancho Villa	Isoroku Yamamoto	Manuel Noriega	Pablo Escobar
Target Status	Philippine Leader and terroristic insurgency	Leader of Mexican insurgency; Criminal	WWII Japanese Navy Admiral	Panama Dictator; Criminal	Head of Medellín drug cartel
Target Type	Disputed but deemed a legitimate military target	Criminal; Threat to US interests/pers	Military target during war	Criminal; Threat to US interests/pers	International Terrorist; Colombian Criminal
Campaign Cost	3 yrs; \$400M; 7000 casualties (overall)	1 yr; US/Mex relations stress; 10,000 troop Expedition	Single mission; no casualties; risk to crypto	26 US deaths; 324 wounded; \$1.5B damages (overall)	3+ yrs; >\$1B; no casualties
Desired Effect	Coerce/Disrupt Insurgency	Disrupt forces	Disrupt naval operations	Regime change; Destruction	Disrupt cocaine industry; Punishment
Tactical/Strategic Outcome	T: Captured S: Negotiated reduction to insurgency	T: Escaped S: Bandit Ops disrupted by operation	T: Killed S: Effects irresolute	T: Captured S: Regime change; Noriega imprisoned	S: Killed T: Cali influence grew; drug trade increased
Target Value Analysis	Beneficial	Beneficial	Disputed	Beneficial	<u>Not</u> Beneficial

Figure 3: Case Study Comparison Chart

In order to enhance the continued cost versus benefit assessment, criteria must also include *indicators* and *verifiers*. *Indicators* are measurable states that allow the assessment of whether or not associated criteria are being met. A good indicator is clearly defined, easy to measure, and integrative. Primarily, an indicator is clearly linked to the criterion and will always be a good measure of the criterion's condition. *Verifiers* are observations that will be used to

demonstrate that the required state is being realized. A good verifier is reliable, practical and embedded in its respective indicator. A verifier must be a practical, cost-efficient, and timely source of information that demonstrates the realization of the required state.¹¹¹ Decapitation must have specific criteria and measurable indicators of performance if it is to have any reasonable expectation of achieving its designed strategic objectives. It will also need ways of verifying these indicators along the way in order to prevent the costs from outweighing the expected benefits.

Criteria for Targeting the Strategic Individual

The author developed criteria for targeting enemy leadership through a combination of the Defense Department's doctrinal targeting process, the generally recognized principles of Just War Theory, Robert A. Pape's Decapitation Theory, and the conclusions derived from Chapter Three's case studies. This monograph concludes that attempting to decapitate an organization without adhering to the following criteria will severely hobble the operation's probability of strategic success. The operation may not benefit the national strategy if these standards are not met. Conversely, the decapitation will much more likely achieve the national strategic objective if these criteria *are* met.

Criterion 1: Criticality – The political or military leader will first identify the target. In decapitation, this high-payoff target will be a strategic individual, central to the environment or system he influences, and identified on the world stage as such. The US national leadership identified each of the five case studies as strategic individuals and targeted them for their influence on the organizations threatening American interests. The value of the expected effects resulting from decapitation will decisively achieve national strategic objectives or will shape

¹¹¹ Natural Resource and Ethical Trade Programme of the Natural Resources Institute, "What are Criteria, Indicators & Verifiers?," (University of Greenwich, accessed on 13 March 2004); available at <http://www.nri.org/NRET/TP3.pdf>; Internet. This publication is an output from a research project funded by the United Kingdom Department for International Development for the benefit of developing countries.

circumstances to this end. Targeting a strategic individual within a more susceptible political structure will increase the potential value of decapitation. For example, one-party states, anarchies, military juntas, and dictatorial systems are highly dependent on their leadership figure and present a vulnerable decapitation target. As seen in the Pablo Escobar case, however, decapitating the Medellín cartel, a dictatorial system, did not achieve the intended results desired by the Bush and Clinton administrations. Escobar was a strategic individual in his own cartel; he was not a strategic individual of the drug industry as a whole. Accurately determining the criticality of a target is the first step to applying a decapitation strategy.

Criticality Indicators

- Is the target a strategic individual?
Verifier: Strategic Individual definition
- What is the desired effect?
Verifier: Coerce, disrupt, deter, or destroy
- What is the most probable result from applying a decapitation strategy?
Verifier: Historical precedence (successfully achieve the desired effect or no; if not successful, what could result?)
- Does the most probable effect link directly toward attaining the campaign objectives?
Verifier: Linkage to listed objectives
- Will successfully decapitating this organization benefit the national objectives?
Verifier: Refer to national objectives
Verifier: Refer to campaign objectives

Criterion 2: Legitimacy – The operation will conform to the generally accepted principles of Just War Theory. The commander must answer whether or not the targeted individual's actions pose a valid threat to the security of the United States. The targeted individual must present a threat to national security either personally or through the organization that he influences. If the decapitation operation results in the individual's death, it will be ruled a lawful death according to the Laws of War. Each of the five strategic individuals in Chapter Three ultimately met this criterion. The United States diligently works to conduct military operations justly. Although the

CIA in the 1960's attempted five assassinations against foreign leaders, America's judicial system righted the wrong and reset the country onto the moral high ground. Evaluating and/or establishing legitimacy is the second step to applying a decapitation strategy.

Legitimacy Indicators

- Is decapitation a legitimate option?
Verifier: Apply Just War Theory
- Is this individual a valid military target?
Verifier: Refer to Rules of Engagement
Verifier: Refer to Laws of War definition

Criterion 3: Cost Effectiveness – America's "benevolent assimilation" of the Philippines following the Spanish-American War cost over three years, \$400 million, and 7,000 casualties. The separated cost for hunting down and capturing Emilio Aguinaldo specifically, was not recorded but his capture was certainly determined to be sufficiently beneficial to regional objectives. Cost effectiveness incorporates all aspects of negativity weighing against the value of the expected outcome. The commander must include cost analysis with respect to risk, time, and money. Determining cost effectiveness is the third step in evaluating decapitation.

Cost Effectiveness Indicators

- What is the risk to force?
Verifier: Conduct thorough risk assessment
- What is the cost with respect to all elements of national power?
Verifier: Military cost
Verifier: Diplomatic cost
Verifier: Economic cost
Verifier: Informational cost
- What are the anticipated opportunities for decapitation?
Verifier: Expected actionable intelligence availability
Verifier: Military capabilities

Criterion 4: Proportionality – Analyze the ends, ways, and means. The ways and means must be proportional to the predicted end state. Do the realistic potential gains outweigh the costs

of force commitment and risk to life? The single air mission developed to interdict Yamamoto risked the potential interception of future Japanese communications by revealing that the US had broken the Japanese codes. By showing the Japanese that the Americans knew Yamamoto's itinerary in detail, and therefore must have intercepted communications to do so, the American leadership accepted the risk that Japan would change their cryptology and prevent further interceptions. This potential cost weighed heavily against the psychological and physical gains of a successful strike. The benefits outweighed the costs in this comparison since the mission was accomplished so swiftly with minimal loss. The commander must also consider the consequences of inactivity. As in Operation *Just Cause*, the US government could not allow Noriega to continue his tyrannical reign threatening American citizens and vital national interests. However, in the Yamamoto attack, inactivity or not decapitating the Japanese naval powers, may have eased peace negotiations by keeping the Admiral alive. The commander and his staff must fully research the act's second and third order effects, minimizing or preventing those that are potentially detrimental. Evaluating the operational proportionality requires tactical experience, strategic understanding and complete truthfulness. It is the fourth step in evaluating decapitation.

Proportionality Indicators

- Calculate the probability of success
Verifier: Mission success criteria vs. risk assessment
- How long can the hunt be sustained?
Verifier: Logistic enablers
Verifier: Political considerations
Verifier: Long term effect on decapitation force
- Conduct a Target Value Analysis
Verifier: Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield
Verifier: Target analysis
Verifier: Reassess linkage to national objectives

Outcome Analysis – Once the commander and his staff establish criticality and legitimacy, cost effectiveness and proportionality, they will incorporate indicators and verifiers from criteria 1-4 into a comprehensive analysis of the predicted outcome. This final scrutiny of

the problem results in a decision. Problem-solving is a subset of decision-making. Gary Klein speaks of this in his book, *Sources of Power*, listing items that require judgments based on available experience and information in order to define problems and develop courses of action. These items apply to the Decapitation Outcome Analysis. The commander needs to draw from his own and his staff's experience to make judgments about:

- Reasonable goals and their attributes (linkage to national objectives).
- The appearance of an anomaly (unintended consequences).
- The urgency of solving a problem (whether to take anomalies seriously or treat them as transients that will go away).
- What constitutes an opportunity worth pursuing (degree of actionable intelligence)?
- Which analogues best fit the situation, and how to apply them (previous decapitation operations presenting comparable circumstances)?
- The solvability of the problem (What is the likelihood of success?).¹¹²

Each of these items must be researched and answered to the highest degree of accuracy possible prior to deciding on decapitation as an applicable strategy.

Outcome Analysis

- Quantify the decapitation criteria
 - Degree of criticality
 - Compare legitimacy interpretations and opinions
 - Cost effectiveness comparison
 - Proportionality evaluation
- Precedence set by previous decapitation operations
 - General Emilio Aguinaldo, Philippines 1901
 - Francisco “Pancho” Villa, Mexico 1916
 - Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, Japan 1943
 - General Manuel A. Noriega, Panama 1989
 - Pablo Escobar, Colombia 1993
 - Other cases providing comparable circumstances
- Determine predicted outcome productivity
 - Decide whether or not decapitation is beneficial

¹¹² Gary Klein, *Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions*, (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1999), 141.

- Carry out course of action
- Reassess linkage to national objectives
 - Revise goals
 - Revisit Decapitation Criteria
 - Analyze new outcomes

The commander must instill a process that continually reassesses his decision to decapitate. The Punitive Expedition in 1916 legitimately pursued the strategic individual, Pancho Villa, for an entire year, successfully disrupting his band's offensive capabilities. The pending US intervention in World War I required the United States to reassess this operation's cost effectiveness and proportionality. The Expedition abandoned the search in the face of higher priority taskings after the Wilson administration determined that national objectives regarding Pancho Villa were sufficiently met. Outcome Analysis is the fifth and final step determining the overall benefit of decapitation in a military campaign.

Conclusion

Recent events from 2001 to the present significantly add to the relevance of determining the benefits of decapitation. Saddam Hussein's capture in December 2003 marked an undeniable victory for American troops and the Bush administration in Operation *Iraqi Freedom*. This tactical victory has not yet seen all the strategic effects resulting from the Baathist decapitation. Insurgency activity goes on with ever-increasing intensity. Seemingly endless numbers of liberated Iraqis commit hostile acts against US personnel and any Iraqi collaborating with the occupation forces. Many critics of *Iraqi Freedom* and the Bush Administration say the cost in dollars, lives, and international relations is too high. These critics focus their assessment more on the current situation than on the potential future investment benefits.

Libya has provided one such return on the Bush Administration's investment in Iraq and could help tip the Operation *Iraqi Freedom* cost effectiveness marker into the "beneficial" realm. In a recent National Public Radio interview on *All Things Considered* entitled "Clinton Diplomat:

Libya's WMD Decision Not Linked to Iraq,” Martin Indyk, an assistant secretary of state during the Clinton administration, spoke about Libya's public decision to give up its decades-long pursuit of weapons of mass destruction. Although Mr. Indyk would not directly link the December 2003 Hussein capture to Moamar Qaddafi’s announcements, Qaddafi coincidentally made this monumental statement just four days afterwards.¹¹³ If Qaddafi’s decision was a result of the Hussein capture, President Bush has one strong bullet to top his list of productive results.

Milt Bearden of *The New York Times* posed a question pertinent to the current hunt for the al Qaeda leadership duo, Osama bin Laden and Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri. In his March 21 article called “You Cut the Head, But the Body Still Moves,” Bearden asks, “What impact would the capture of Ayman al-Zawahiri have on America’s campaign against al Qaeda?” We know that a publicized successful capture/kill mission for either one of these men would provide a sense of retribution for all those affected by the September 11th attacks. Armed forces personnel would feel a recharged sense of purpose and accomplishment as they conduct risk-filled operations in support of the War on Terror. And President George W. Bush would get a supercharged run at re-election vindicating his father’s single-term disappointment. But in terms of strategic effects with respect to the campaign against terrorism, capturing or killing either of these super villains will not disrupt, coerce, deter, or destroy the al Qaeda franchise. This presents a critical problem for those commanders leading the manhunt for bin Laden and Zawahiri. What is the true strategic benefit of tactical success and when should the Osama Expedition redeploy? It could be argued that bin Laden and Zawahiri are no longer strategic individuals because neither is the nucleus of the al Qaeda network. Military commanders must reassess the linkage of this manhunt to their strategic and operational objectives and conduct a thorough outcome analysis. The growing costs may now outweigh the potential benefits.

¹¹³ Robert Siegel, National Public Radio interview with Martin Indyk on *All Things Considered* entitled “Clinton Diplomat: Libya's WMD Decision Not Linked to Iraq,” 19 March 2004.

Accurate and comprehensive assessments with respect to criticality, legitimacy, cost effectiveness, and proportionality lead to an accurate and effective outcome analysis that will greatly assist commanders when planning decapitation operations. Decapitation, most often, shapes the effectiveness of a larger, grand strategy that incorporates all elements of national power. The four decapitation criteria provided in this monograph can effectively aid a commander assessing the benefits of targeting enemy leadership and greatly increase the operation's strategic productivity.

In conclusion, one should *always* investigate the potential strategic values of targeting enemy leadership when participating in a campaign. More often than not, the pressure applied will provide some level of benefit. Commanders, however, must continuously reassess the expected value derived from decapitation and weigh that value against its costs. Hunting men requires a great deal of skill, flexibility, speed, and funding. It also requires luck. Adhering to the Decapitation Criteria will increase the commander's odds of success and aid in shaping or deciding the national strategic objectives. Without criticality and legitimacy, cost effectiveness and proportionality fully considered in a comprehensive analysis of the predicted outcome; the operation will rely solely on luck and have lottery odds against it.

Certainly there is no hunting like the hunting of man and those who have hunted armed men long enough and liked it, never really care for anything else thereafter.

Ernest Hemingway, 1936

Good luck and good hunting.

Appendix A

Strategic Individual Photos



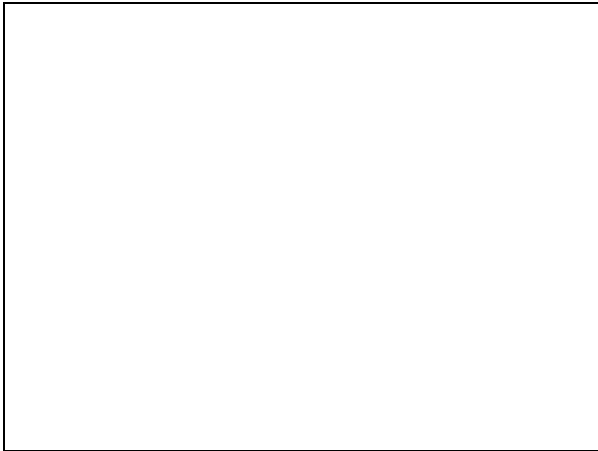
General Emilio Aguinaldo, Philippines

Source: Hispanic Division of the Library of Congress, *The World of 1898: The Spanish-American War*, Aguinaldo photo labeled “Rebel Leader of the Philippine Forces,” (accessed 10 February 2004); available from <http://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/aguinaldo.html>; Internet.



Francisco “Pancho” Villa, Mexico

Source: Department of Spanish and Portuguese, University of Texas at Austin, *Pancho Villa -Legends Before the Revolution*, Villa photo labeled “Pancho Villa During the Revolution,” (accessed on 13 March 2004); available from <http://www.sp.utexas.edu/jrn/cwp/pvg/legends.html>; Internet.



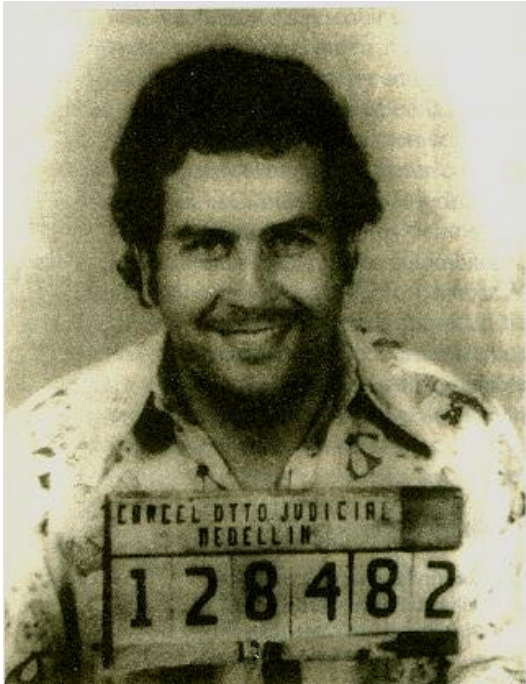
Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, Japan

Source: Department of the Navy, Naval Historical Center, Yamamoto photo “Photographed at the Navy Department, Washington DC, circa 1925-28, while Capt. Yamamoto was serving as Japanese Naval Attaché to the US. Photograph received from the US Embassy, Tokyo, Japan, 1973,” (accessed on 13 March 2004); available from <http://www.history.navy.mil/photos/prs-for/japan/japrs-xz/i-yamto.htm>; Internet.



General Manuel A. Noriega, Panama

Source: *Wikipedia Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Manuel Noriega,” (accessed on 13 March 2004); available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manuel_Noriega; Internet.



Pablo Escobar, Colombia

Source: William Combs, St. Mary's College of Maryland, "Pablo Escobar," (Maryland, accessed on 12 December 2003); available from <http://www.smcm.edu/users/jrrogachevsky/110fa02/wtcombs/>; also available from <http://www.robertoescobar.net/fotos.htm>; Internet.

Appendix B

Country Maps

The Philippine Islands



Source: Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Fact Book 2003*, map of "Philippines," (accessed on 13 March 2004); available from <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/rp.html>; Internet.

Mexico



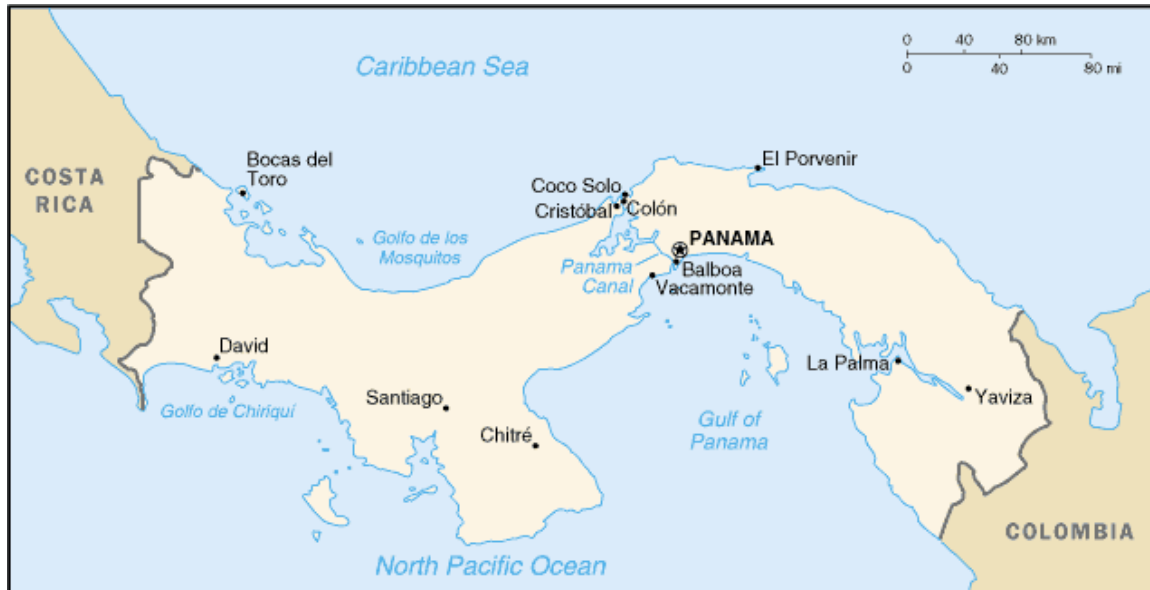
Source: Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Fact Book 2003*, map of “Mexico,” (accessed on 13 March 2004); available from <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/mx.html>; Internet.

Japan



Source: Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Fact Book 2003*, map of “Japan,” (accessed on 13 March 2004); available from <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ja.html>; Internet.

Panama



Source: Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Fact Book 2003*, map of "Panama," (accessed on 13 March 2004); available from <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/pm.html>; Internet.

Colombia



Source: Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Fact Book 2003*, map of "Colombia," (accessed on 13 March 2004); available from <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/co.html>; Internet.

Bibliography

Chapter One: Introduction

Chapter Two: Preceding Considerations

BBC News. "CIA's license to kill." BBC World News, 23 October 2001. Accessed on 17 January 2004; available from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/1613423.stm>; Internet.

Chang, Andrew. "Secret Wars -- Special Ops Forces May Soon Undertake Covert Missions of a Different Kind." ABC News; 26 August 2002, accessed on 12 March 2004; available from <http://www.abcnews.go.com/sections/world/DailyNews/secretwars020826.html>; Internet.

DeForrest, Mark Edward. "Just War Theory and the Recent US Air Strikes against Iraq." Gonzaga University: 2003. Accessed on 12 December 2003; available from <http://law.gonzaga.edu/borders/documents/deforres.htm>; Internet.

Department of Defense. *Joint Operational Concept*. Washington D.C.: 3 November 2003.

Department of Defense. *Strategic Deterrence Joint Operating Concept*, Version 0.35. Washington D.C.: 12 December 2003.

Friedman, Thomas L. *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*. New York: Anchor Books, 2000

Hart, B.H. Liddell. *Strategy*. New York: Praeger Paperbacks, 1954.

Hersh, Seymour M. "Manhunt -- The Bush Administration's New Strategy in the War Against Terrorism." *New Yorker*, 23 December 2002.

James, G. "Political Systems explained, from communism to capitalism." Accessed on 12 March 2004; available from <http://dspace.Dial.pipex.com/town/street/pl38/sect2.htm>; Internet.

Jevtic, Borijove. "28 June, 1914 -- The Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand" in *The World War I Document Archive*. Accessed on 14 September 2003; available from <http://www.lib.byu.edu/~rdh/wwi/1914/ferddead.html>; Internet.

Miller, Greg and Josh Meyer. "US Kills Six Al-Qaida Operatives." *Los Angeles Times*, 5 November 2002.

Pape, Robert A. *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1996.

Rummel, R.J. "Political Systems, Violence, and War." Accessed on 12 March 2004; available from <http://www.firearmsandliberty.com/rummel.war.html>; Internet.

The American Heritage Dictionary, Fourth College Edition. New York: Dell Publishing, 2001.

United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, United States Marine Corps Combat Development Command. *FM 1-02/MCRP 5-2A, Operational Terms and Symbols*. Washington D.C.

United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, United States Marine Corps Combat Development Command, *FM 6-20-10 / MCRP 3-1.6.14 Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for the Targeting Process*. Washington D.C.: 8 May 1996.

Watson, Bruce W., Susan M. Watson, and Gerald W. Hoppie. *United States Intelligence -- An Encyclopedia*. New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990.

Wikipedia Encyclopedia, s.v. "hashshashin," accessed on 11 November 2003; available from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hashshashin>; Internet.

White, Matthew. "Map – Political Systems of the World in the 1990s." Accessed on 3 February 2004; available from <http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/govt1990.htm>; Internet.

Chapter Three: Decapitation Operations

Emilio Aguinaldo

Birtle, Andrew J., *US Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine 1860-1941*. Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 2001.

Linn, Brian McAllister. *The Philippine War 1899-1902*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2000.

_____. *The US Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899-1902*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989.

Rockett, Fremont. *Our boys in the Philippines: a pictorial history of the war*. San Francisco: P.F. Rockett, 1899.

US Senate Committee on the Philippines. *Hearings on Affairs in Philippine Islands*, 57th Congress, 1st Session, January 1902.

Pancho Villa

Clendenen, Clarence C., *The United States and Pancho Villa: A Study in Unconventional Diplomacy*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1961.

Davis, Britton. *The Truth About Geronimo*. New Haven, Conn.: 1929.

Katz, Friedrich. *The Life & Times of Pancho Villa*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998.

Pickering, Col. Abner, 11th Infantry. "The Battle of Agua Prieta." *United States Infantry Journal*, XII. Jan., 1916.

Pinchon, Edgcomb. *Viva Villa! A Recovery of the Real Pancho Villa, Peon, Bandit, Soldier, Patriot*. New York: 1993.

Report of the Committee of Investigation Sent in 1873 by the Mexican Government to the Frontier of Texas. New York: 1875.

Scott, Major General Hugh Lenox. *Some Memories of a Soldier*. New York: 1928.

US Congress. *House Reports*, 45 Cong., 2 sess., Misc. Doc. No. 64, 12 January 1873.

_____. *House Reports*, 45 Cong., 2 sess., no. 701.

Vandiver, Frank Everson, *Black Jack: The Life and Times of John J. Pershing*, Texas A&M University Press, TX, 1977.

Isoroku Yamamoto

Agawa, Hiroyuki. *The Reluctant Admiral*. Tokyo: Kodnasha International Ltd., 1979.

Barker, A.J. *Pearl Harbor*. New York: Ballantine Books, Inc., 1988.

Condon, Major General John P., USMC (ret.). "Bringing Down Yamamoto." *Proceedings*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press. November 1990.

Glines, Carroll V. *Attack on Yamamoto*. New York: Orion Books, 1990.

Halsey, William F., and Bryan Joseph III. *Admiral Halsey's Story*. New York: Whittlesey House, 1947.

Layton, Edwin T. *And I Was There*. New York: William Morrow and Co., 1985.

Map Room Military Subject Files, 1941-1945. Combined Arms Research Library, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Microfilm Reel 5 of 27. Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America, 1991.

Noy, Uri. "Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto." Accessed on 20 March 2004; available from <http://www.2worldwar2.com/yamamoto.htm>; Internet.

Price, Willard. "Hidden Key to the Pacific." *National Geographic Magazine*, Vol. 82. June 1942.

Manuel Noriega

Cole, Ronald H. *Operation JUST CAUSE: The Planning and Execution of Joint Operations in Panama, February 1988–January 1990*. Washington, D.C.: Joint History Office, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1995.

- Donnelly, Thomas, Margaret Roth, Caleb Baker. *Operation Just Cause: The Storming of Panama*. New York: Lexington Books, 1991.
- Federation of American Scientists, Military Analysis Network. *Operation Just Cause*. [article on-line]; 1999, accessed on 14 March 2004); available from http://www.fas.org/man/dod-101/ops/just_cause.htm; Internet.
- Harris, David. *Shooting the Moon, The true story of an American manhunt unlike any other, ever*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2001.
- Kempe, Frederick. *Divorcing the Dictator – America’s Bungled Affair with Noriega*. Great Britain: I.B. Tauris, 1990.
- Physicians for Human Rights. *Operation “Just Cause” The Human Cost of Military Action in Panama*. Boston: Physicians for Human Rights, 1991.
- Weaver, Jay. “Former dictator Noriega denied parole.” *Miami Herald*. 11 March 2004.

Pablo Escobar

- Bowden, Mark. *Killing Pablo*. New York: Penguin Group, 2001.
- Eisner, Peter. “Cocaine Trafficker Pablo Escobar Killed in Colombia.” *Newsday*. 3 December 1993, Vol. 113, No. 62. Miami: accessed on 13 March 2004; available from <http://www-tech.mit.edu/V113/N62/escobar.62w.html>; Internet.
- National Drug Strategy Network. “Colombia Arrests Suspected Head of Cali Cartel.” September 1995. Accessed on 13 March 2004; available from <http://www.ndsn.org/SEPT95/CALIHEAD.html>; Internet.
- Safford, Frank and Marco Palacios. *Colombia Fragmented Land, Divided Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- US President. National Security Decision Directive No. 221. “Narcotics and National Security.” The White House Washington: 8 April 1986.
- US President. National Security Directive No. 18. “International Counternarcotics Strategy.” The White House Washington: 21 August 1989.

Chapter Four: Decapitation Criteria

- Bearden, Milt. “You Cut the Head, But the Body Still Moves.” *New York Times*, Week in Review, Section 4, p. 1. 21 March 2004.
- Clausewitz, Carl von. New York: Penguin Books, 1968.
- Hart, B.H. Liddell. *Strategy*. New York: Praeger Paperbacks, 1954.

Klein, Gary. *Sources of Power: How People Make Decisions*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1999.

Natural Resource and Ethical Trade Programme of the Natural Resources Institute. "What are Criteria, Indicators & Verifiers?" University of Greenwich. Accessed on 13 March 2004; available at <http://www.nri.org/NRET/TP3.pdf>; Internet.

Siegel, Robert. "Clinton Diplomat: Libya's WMD Decision Not Linked to Iraq." National Public Radio interview with Martin Indyk on *All Things Considered*. 19 March 2004.

Appendix A: Strategic Individual Photos

Combs, William. Photo of "Pablo Escobar." St. Mary's College of Maryland. Accessed on 12 December 2003; available from <http://www.smcm.edu/users/jrrogachevsky/110fa02/wtcombs/>; also available from <http://www.robertoesobar.net/fotos.htm>; Internet.

Department of the Navy, Naval Historical Center. Photo of Yamamoto. Accessed on 13 March 2004; available from <http://www.history.navy.mil/photos/prs-for/japan/japrs-xz/i-yamto.htm>; Internet.

Department of Spanish and Portuguese, University of Texas at Austin. *Pancho Villa -Legends Before the Revolution*. Villa photo labeled "Pancho Villa During the Revolution." Accessed on 13 March 2004; available from <http://www.sp.utexas.edu/jrn/cwp/pvg/legends.html>; Internet

Hispanic Division of the Library of Congress. *The World of 1898: The Spanish-American War*. Aguinaldo photo labeled "Rebel Leader of the Philippine Forces." Accessed 10 February 2004; available from <http://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/aguinaldo.html>; Internet.

Wikipedia Encyclopedia. s.v. "Manuel Noriega." Accessed on 13 March 2004; available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manuel_Noriega; Internet.

Appendix B: Country Maps

Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Fact Book 2003*. Map of "Colombia." Accessed on 13 March 2004; available from <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/co.html>; Internet.

_____. Map of "Japan." Accessed on 13 March 2004; available from <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ja.html>; Internet.

_____. Map of "Mexico." Accessed on 13 March 2004; available from <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/mx.html>; Internet.

_____. Map of "Panama." Accessed on 13 March 2004; available from <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/pm.html>; Internet.

_____. Map of “Philippines.” Accessed on 13 March 2004; available from <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/rp.html>; Internet.