

### **DOCUMENT 3 - FIRST HAND ACCOUNT OF ATAHUALPA'S CAPTURE**

Now read this first hand account of the capture of Atahualpa, from Pizarro's brothers, Pedro and Hernando. This account has been translated from the original Spanish. The text here is fairly dense, so read it through once to get a sense of it before you take any notes. Take notes on your second reading. You will find instructions at the end.

"First came a squadron of Indians dressed in clothes of different colors, like a chessboard. They advanced, removing the straws from the ground and sweeping the road. Next came three squadrons in different dresses, dancing and singing. Then came a number of men with armor, large metal plates, and crowns of gold and silver. So great was the amount of furniture of gold and silver which they bore, that it was a marvel to observe how the sun glinted upon it. Among them came the figure of Atahualpa in a very fine litter with the ends of its timbers covered in silver. Eighty lords carried him on their shoulders, all wearing a very rich blue livery. Atahualpa himself was very richly dressed, with his crown on his head and a collar of large emeralds around his neck. He sat on a small stool with a rich saddle cushion resting on his litter. The litter was lined with parrot feathers of many colors and decorated with plates of gold and silver. "Behind Atahualpa came two other litters and two hammocks, in which were some high chiefs, then several squadrons of Indians with crowns of gold and silver. These Indian squadrons began to enter the plaza to the accompaniment of great songs, and thus entering they occupied every part of the plaza. In the meantime all of us Spaniards were waiting ready, hidden in a courtyard, full of fear. On reaching the center of the plaza, Atahualpa remained in his litter on high, while his troops continued to file in behind him. "Governor Pizarro now sent Friar Vicente de Valverde to go speak to Atahualpa, and to require Atahualpa in the name of God and of the King of Spain that Atahualpa subject himself to the law of our Lord Jesus Christ and to the service of His Majesty the King of Spain. Advancing with a cross in one hand and the Bible in the other hand, and going among the Indian troops up to the place where Atahualpa was, the Friar thus addressed him: 'I am a Priest of God, and I teach Christians the things of God, and in like manner I come to teach you. What I teach is that which God says to us in this Book. Therefore, on the part of God and of the Christians, I beseech you to be their friend, for such is God's will, and it will be for your good.'

"Atahualpa asked for the Book, that he might look at it, and the Friar gave it to him closed. Atahualpa did not know how to open the Book, and the Friar was extending his arm to do so, when Atahualpa, in great anger, gave him a blow on the arm, not wishing that it should be opened. Then he opened it himself, and, without any astonishment at the letters and paper he threw it away from him five or six paces, his face a deep crimson.

"The Friar returned to Pizarro, shouting, 'Come out! Come out, Christians! Come at these enemy dogs who reject the things of God. That tyrant has thrown my book of holy law to the ground! Did you not see what

happened? Why remain polite and servile toward this over-proud dog when the plains are full of Indians? March out against him, for I absolve you!" "The governor then gave the signal to Candia, who began to fire off the guns. At the same time the trumpets were sounded, and the armored Spanish troops, both cavalry and infantry, sallied forth out of their hiding places straight into the mass of unarmed Indians crowding the square, giving the Spanish battle cry, 'Santiago!' We had placed rattles on the horses to terrify the Indians. The booming of the guns, the blowing of the trumpets, and the rattles on the horses threw the Indians into panicked confusion. The Spaniards fell upon them and began to cut them to pieces. The Indians were so filled with fear that they climbed on top of one another, formed mounds, and suffocated each other. Since they were unarmed, they were attacked without danger to any Christian. The cavalry rode them down, killing and wounding, and following in pursuit. The infantry made so good an assault on those that remained that in a short time most of them were put to the sword.

"The Governor himself took his sword and dagger, entered the thick of the Indians with the Spaniards who were with him, and with great bravery reached Atahualpa's litter. He fearlessly grabbed Atahualpa's left arm and shouted 'Santiago!', but he could not pull Atahualpa out of his litter because it was held up high. Although we killed the Indians who held the litter, others at once took their places and held it aloft, and in this manner we spent a long time in overcoming and killing Indians. Finally seven or eight Spaniards on horseback spurred on their horses, rushed upon the litter from one side, and with great effort they heaved it over on its side. In that way Atahualpa was captured, and the Governor took Atahualpa to his lodging. The Indians carrying the litter, and those escorting Atahualpa, never abandoned him: all died around him.

"The panic-stricken Indians remaining in the square, terrified at the firing of the guns and at the horses — something they had never seen — tried to flee from the square by knocking down a stretch of wall and running out onto the plain outside. Our cavalry jumped the broken wall and charged into the plain, shouting, 'Chase those with the fancy clothes! Don't let any escape! Spear them!' All of the other Indian soldiers whom Atahualpa had brought were a mile from Cajamarca ready for battle, but not one made a move, and during all this not one Indian raised a weapon against a Spaniard. When the squadrons of Indians who had remained in the plain outside the town saw the other Indians fleeing and shouting, most of them too panicked and fled. It was an astonishing sight, for the whole valley for 15 or 20 miles was completely filled with Indians. Night had already fallen, and our cavalry were continuing to spear Indians in the fields, when we heard a trumpet calling for us to reassemble at camp. "If night had not come on, few out of the more than 40,000 Indian troops would have been left alive. Six or seven thousand Indians lay dead, and many more had their arms cut off and other wounds. Atahualpa himself admitted that we had killed 7,000 of his men in that battle. The man killed in one of the litters was his minister, the lord of Chincha, of whom he was very fond. All those Indians who bore Atahualpa's litter appeared to be high chiefs and councillors. They were all killed, as well as those Indians who were carried in the other litters

and hammocks. The lord of Cajamarca was also killed, and others, but their numbers were so great that they could not be counted, for all who came in attendance on Atahualpa were great lords. It was extraordinary to see so powerful a ruler captured in so short a time, when he had come with such a mighty army. Truly, it was not accomplished by our own forces, for there were so few of us. It was by the grace of God, which is great.

Text Source: Jared Diamond: Guns, Germs and Steel. W.W. Norton and Company, New York, 1997.

### **Instructions**

On your second reading of the document, respond to the following in your notes:

- What evidence is there that the Spaniards had planned the attack before the meeting with Atahualpa?
- On what grounds did the Spanish justify the attack?
- In your view, why was the attack either warranted or unwarranted?