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Territorial Madness: Spain, Geopolitics, and the American Revolution

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TERRITORIAL MADNESS:

SPAIN, GEOPOLITICS, AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

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by

Michael J. Devine

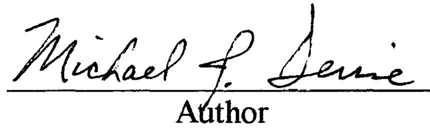
1994

APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts



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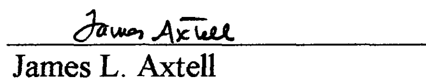
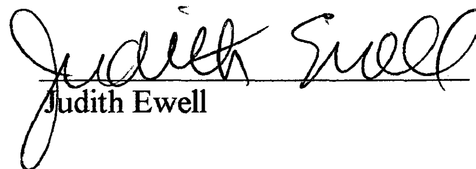


James L. Axtell



Judith Ewell

John E. Selby

For Nicki

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a study of Spanish participation in the American Revolution, especially with reference to Spain's discrete territorial goals in that struggle. For most participants, the war was about many things besides American independence, but the Spanish government of King Charles III viewed it almost exclusively as an opportunity to recover possessions lost to Britain over several centuries. From Madrid's perspective, the American rebels and their aspirations were merely an unpleasant distraction.

Spain's single-minded focus on conquering and bargaining for territory shaped her actions in the military, naval, economic, and diplomatic spheres. This thesis explores how Madrid coordinated all the elements of Spanish national policy in the service of acquiring as much territorial compensation as possible from Spain's four-year participation in the war.

Contemporary observers could not understand how the Spaniards, already masters of the world's largest empire, could maintain their insatiable appetite for land when many of their existing domains were thinly settled and barely controlled. Spain seemed to believe that land itself was power, as much as military strength or trade could be.

In a geopolitical sense—the one that mattered most to Madrid—Spain was undoubtedly a victor in the American Revolution, winning back the Floridas and Minorca from Britain while deflecting numerous attacks on her extensive empire. But that victory was bittersweet. The fondest hope of Spanish revanchists, the Rock of Gibraltar, held out against the fiercest military, naval, and diplomatic assaults that the combined Bourbon forces could muster. The Spanish leadership's dissatisfaction with the war's outcome, despite Spain's outward success, shows its appreciation that it is not land per se, but the right land, that makes all the difference.

TERRITORIAL MADNESS:

SPAIN, GEOPOLITICS, AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Prologue:
CASTLES AND LIONS

February 12, 1781—

Sunrise heralded yet another frigid day on the southeastern shore of Lake Michigan. The winter of 1781 was already the coldest in memory, but the forty-nine inhabitants of St. Joseph, a British trading post overlooking a river of the same name, were more grateful than annoyed. Their village, designated Fort St. Joseph in military parlance, had fallen prey to French marauders from distant Cahokia only two months earlier. The grip of winter promised at least temporary relief from further depredations.

Inside fifteen buildings crowded within the palisades, the people of St. Joseph were asleep. Most of them were French Canadians or métis who made their living from the Indian fur trade. Two hundred Indians lived nearby, most of them Potawatomis, all tributaries of the British. This morning the fort was well stocked, a sizable shipment of maize having arrived from Detroit in anticipation of a spring campaign against American and French settlements to the south.[1]

As military outposts go, Fort St. Joseph was remarkable only for its anonymity. Even General Haldimand in Quebec considered it a "remote Quarter"—quite a tribute in a region as sparsely populated as the Illinois territory. As a trip-wire to warn Detroit against attacks from enemy-held Vincennes, Cahokia, Kaskaskia or St. Louis, the fort had a certain value, but seldom enough to warrant a garrison of more than eight British troops, its full contingent

but seldom enough to warrant a garrison of more than eight British troops, its full contingent this morning.[2]

At seven o'clock, on the opposite bank of the ice-covered river, 125 men with quite different loyalties shouldered their muskets. They had camped here the previous night, seven miles west of the fort, after a river voyage and a twenty-day, three-hundred-mile overland march. Among them were sixty-five European militiamen from St. Louis and Cahokia, led by Captain Eugenio Pouré. The rest were Indian allies, mostly Milwaukees whose leader, El Heturno, had persuaded the commandant of St. Louis to organize the expedition.[3]

The motives of these two groups differed radically. In a dramatic reversal of previous attitudes, the Indians wanted plunder at St. Joseph, the whites revenge. In May 1763, only two years after its transfer from French to British possession, the fort had been caught in the sweep of Pontiac's Rebellion, in a raid that left ten of the fourteen-man garrison dead and the rest prisoners. Since that time the local Indians had been quiescent, content to let St. Joseph exist as a trade depôt, nothing more. So had it remained until the American Revolution drew France and other European powers into its vortex. In mid-1778 three hundred Frenchmen and Indians seized and burned the fort, but the British soon rebuilt it.[4]

Recent months had seen the Illinois country convulsed by raids and reprisals on both sides. St. Louis suffered sixty-eight killed on May 26, 1780, in a British attack which was thrown back only by Colonel George Rogers Clark's timely arrival with five hundred American reinforcements. Cahokia repelled a similar assault the same day; and as some traced the origin of both attacks to Fort St. Joseph, the post suddenly acquired a strategic importance disproportionate to its size.[5]

In the autumn, a party of seventeen Cahokians under Jean Baptiste Hamelin had struck

back in an expedition devoted primarily to looting. Reaching St. Joseph while the local Indians were away on a hunt, the raiders had surprised the defenders and carried off goods worth 62,000 livres—and then their luck ran out. For they had paroled and released their twenty-two British captives, who promptly fell on them as they made their way home. In the woodland skirmish that ensued on December 5, only three Cahokians escaped death or capture.

The report of British treachery carried by those survivors sparked a cry in St. Louis and Cahokia for militia to make a second attempt, the one which would meet its fate today.[6] So vengeance was uppermost in the minds of the Europeans in this band as they studied the fort silhouetted against the morning sun. Stealthily the group crossed the frozen river, leaving behind their five pack-horses and camp supplies. The Potawatomis in and around St. Joseph were strangely passive, pledged to neutrality the previous night by the raiders' promise of half the booty collected from British stores.

If the sentries were at their posts they were surely asleep, for the approach of the invaders brought no warning shots from the fort's ramparts. Rushing the gate, Indians and whites swarmed inside the high walls. They rapidly overpowered the sleepy British regulars, taking their leader Duguiet and his seven troops prisoner with hardly a struggle. As the palisades enclosed a space of only two acres, the inhabitants had nowhere—as in December—to mount a proper defense. The crackle of scattered musket-fire split the morning silence, but not one attacker was hit. Merchants, women, or children who took cover indoors were quickly flushed out by the Indians and bundled, shivering, out to the middle of the stockade.[7]

As the invaders looted the fort's warehouses, they divided the plunder between the

attacking Indians and the local Potawatomies. On Pouré's orders, the white raiders took nothing for themselves; they had enough difficulty, they reported later, restraining their Indians "from taking the lives of [all] the conquered, as they were barbarously accustomed to do."" Even so, two pro-British merchants who did try to flee were quickly overtaken and killed by Milwaukee warriors.[8] The expedition's work was complete within hours.

At last, Pouré commanded his soldiers with their prisoners to assemble in the fort's central square. Reading aloud in French a declaration of conquest, he proclaimed his intention to "annex and join...this post of St. Joseph and its dependencies" to the dominions of his sovereign, then ordered the Union Jack hauled down, to be replaced by a banner his men had brought.[9]

To the amazement of the onlookers, however, the flag ascending the pole was not the familiar fleur-de-lis of the French Bourbons. Instead, the castles and lions of Spain, bold against a background of scarlet and yellow, fluttered alone atop the mast. The campaigning season of 1781, last of the war in America, was begun in earnest...and the forces of Charles III had struck the first blow.

Next day the Spaniards, after burning the excess stores and much of the fort as well, slipped away with their captives in the direction of St. Louis. There they arrived on March 6, having executed their mission without the loss of a single man. At St. Joseph they left no garrison. The British commander at Detroit, Major A. S. De Peyster, did not realize until a month later that the raiders had been Spanish.[10]

* * *

As an isolated incident—a frontier foray, actually—in the American Revolution, this

story cannot summarize Spain's global role in that conflict. The daring initiative and "spectacular success" of the St. Joseph expedition, for example, certainly did not typify Spain's wartime operations against Britain. Yet this episode does illustrate in microcosm the most salient characteristics of Spain's conduct during her four-year participation in the war.

By its very nature, the attack on Fort St. Joseph was a hit-and-run raid par excellence. But it was only one of many. Nowhere in the vast arena of the war did Spain opt for pitched battles when shock tactics would serve her interests as well. Conducted on land and sea alike, her surprise attacks sometimes flouted British and French notions of martial honor, but they consistently proved an effective means of reconciling Spain's limited military capabilities with her expansionist war aims.

The conception and planning of the St. Joseph mission also characterized Spanish policy in the American war. In an age of slow, unreliable communications, all states had to allow local commanders some autonomy, but Spain outdid both her allies and enemies in this regard. Just as Governor Francisco Çruzat in St. Louis authorized this 1781 expedition at the urging of El Heturno, left the tactical details to Captain Pouré, and obtained the approval of his superiors in New Orleans and Madrid only after the fact, so too did Spanish officers act independently in Central America, in the West Indies, even in the Mediterranean where the influence of Madrid was strong.[11]

Third, the geopolitical implications of Spain's attack on St. Joseph far outweighed the military significance of the operation itself. When he authorized the raid, Governor Cruzat had no idea that Pouré's 'conquest' would form the basis for far-reaching Spanish claims to the Northwest Territory at the Paris peace negotiations of 1782; yet that is precisely what Madrid made of it. The Spanish court's announcement of the attack in the Gaceta de Madrid

of March 12, 1782 elicited a cynical response from the American envoys in Europe. John Jay urged Congress to "consider the ostensible object of this expedition, the distance of it, the formalities with which the place, the country, and the river were taken possession of in the name of his Catholic majesty," in declaring its objection to Spain's pretensions to sovereignty over the St. Joseph region. Benjamin Franklin agreed wholeheartedly.[12] Considering that Spain possessed barely enough power to control the territories she already owned, her ploy of amassing bargaining chips to barter when peace talks began was patently obvious to all. Yet she persisted in this practice, and conquest without control remained a Spanish trademark throughout the war.

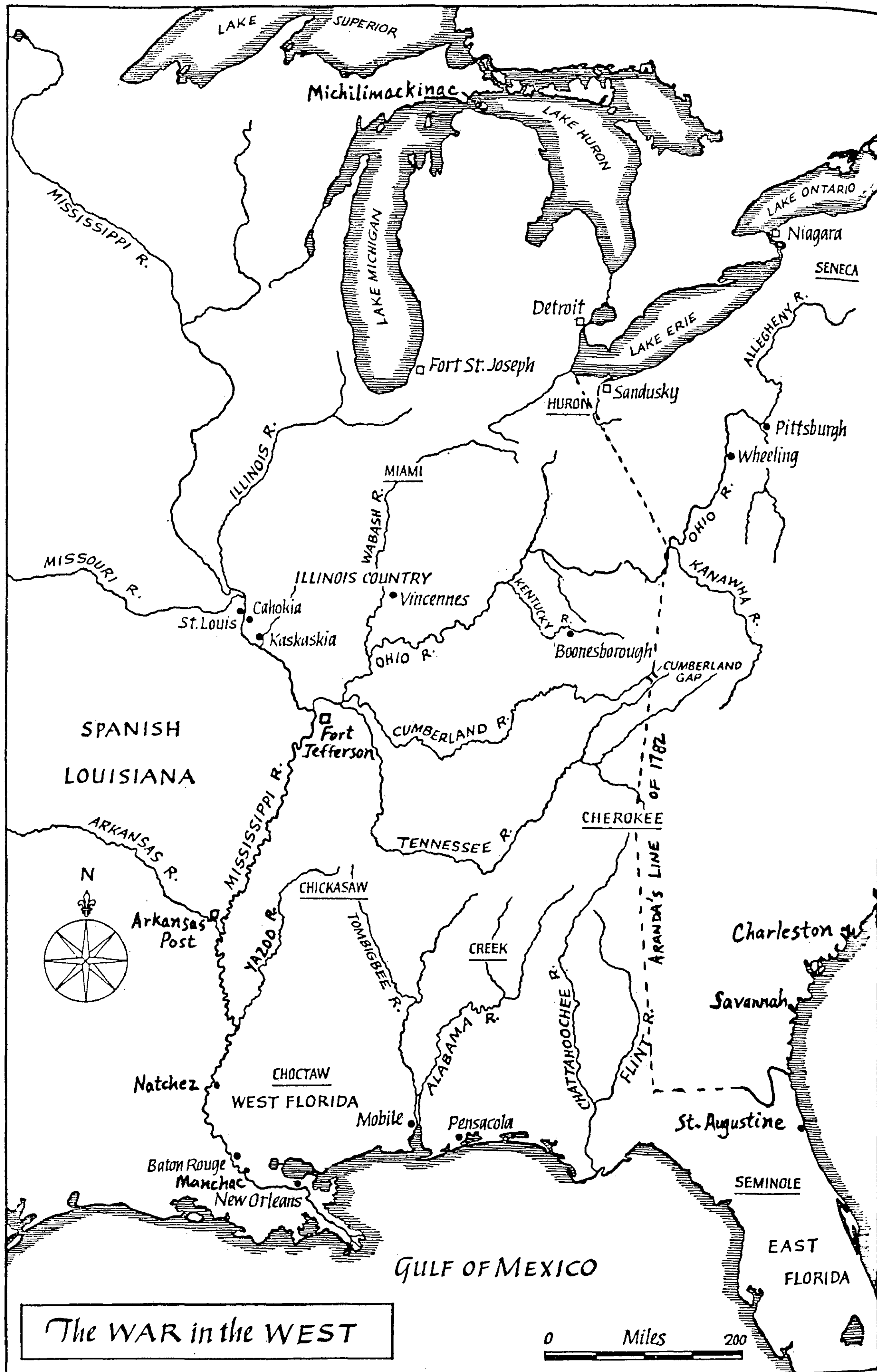
Fourth, the St. Joseph raid was preemptive: Cruzat wished to forestall further attacks on Spanish Illinois by destroying Britain's advanced posts and intimidating her Indian allies.[13] Preemption was the keynote of Spanish policy from the start and around the globe, for fear dictated much of Spain's behavior in the American Revolution. Ruling the largest territorial empire in the world without the manpower or ships to defend it properly, Spain felt herself vulnerable to the power that Great Britain wielded on both land and sea. The logical response to this perceived imbalance was to strike before the enemy marshaled enough forces locally to resist—a tactic so effective that, when executed properly, it never failed Spain over four years; so utterly necessary that Spanish forces only once triumphed without it.[14]

Finally, in conducting the St. Joseph raid, Spanish officials craftily employed the minuscule force at hand to secure apparently substantial gains with no losses on their own side. Time and again in America, Spain used campaigns like this one to wage the most cost-effective war of any combatant in the American Revolution. For a state whose resources were severely constrained from the outset, such economy was vital not only to Spain's

ultimate success in 1783, but also to her imperial survival before that time.

* * *

The intent of this essay is to explore Spanish participation in the American Revolution in the context of global interests. Whether Spain's contribution to American independence was crucial, as some scholars contend—or even significant, as others deny—is not at issue here.[15] Whatever the future impact of her policy during this period, one aspect of Spain's involvement commands attention. Geopolitics is the equating of territory with power, and Spain's interests in the American Revolution, and the means by which she pursued them, were all geopolitical in the extreme.



Adapted from John R. Alden, *A History of the American Revolution* (1969)

IN AT THE KILLING:
Spanish Military and Naval Policy to 1778

> I will not dissimulate, Sire, that the views and pretensions of Spain are gigantic.
>
> Comte de Vergennes to Louis XVI,
> December 5, 1778[1]

As King of Spain and the Indies since 1759, Charles III did not need a painful lesson driven home twice before he grasped its meaning. So when the news of Lexington and Concord reached Madrid on June 27, 1775, Charles's first thought was of anything but involvement in an Anglo-American struggle.[2] The last time Spain had fought Britain, in the Seven Years' War, her defeat had been decisive and frighteningly rapid. In less than seven months' combat the Spaniards had lost two valuable overseas colonies and failed dismally in their attempt to conquer neighboring Portugal, a British ally.

Spain's sorry performance in this earlier struggle was a crucial factor in Charles's decision to wait before joining his nephew, Louis XVI of France, in reaping the spoils of Britain's colonial difficulties in 1779. For ties of blood had led him into the fiasco of 1762 in the first place.

French fortunes were on the wane in both Europe and America in 1761, and Charles had vacillated for months before renewing the Bourbon 'Family Compact' on August 15 of that year. He did so out of fear that with France's fleet prostrate before Britain, Spain and her empire would be the next targets of British aggression. Though embattled Britain had

deferred a preemptive war declaration against Spain earlier—leading Prime Minister William Pitt to resign in fury—Britain took the plunge on January 4, 1762.[3]

The Bourbon powers promptly invited Portugal to join their alliance, but her chief minister, the Marquis de Pombal, opted for a neutrality tinged with pro-British leanings. Madrid's response was drastic: in April 1762 a Spanish army of 40,000 men invaded Portugal. Led by the Conde de Aranda and reinforced by 8,000 French troops, the Spaniards seized Almeida, a border city, and overran northern Portugal, but an expeditionary force of only 6,000 British regulars blocked their descent on Lisbon. A minor foray in South America gained for Spain the Brazilian post of Colonia del Sacramento and £4,000,000 in booty, but there Spanish luck ended. The army in Portugal, stalemated and wasted by disease, withdrew in the autumn. Meanwhile, two catastrophes abroad brought Spain's war to a shattering close.[4]

Havana was Spain's principal naval and military base in the New World. This, along with her fame as 'Queen of the Indies,' rendered her a natural magnet for enemy operations in time of war. Britain, her naval prowess at a peak in 1762, landed a 10,000-man army near Havana early in June. This massive amphibious attack was led by the Earl of Albemarle, a lieutenant general, with George Eliott (the future defender of Gibraltar) second in command. Their objective was a huge citadel—reputedly impregnable—called El Morro castle. If El Morro fell, Havana and all Cuba would collapse with it. Albemarle called in reinforcements from New York.

For forty-five days Don Luis de Velasco and El Morro's 17,600 defenders held out, but on July 30 the British took the fortress by storm. On August 13, Governor Don Juan de Prado surrendered Havana, twelve warships, and £737,000 in prize money. Word of the

city's capture led one Sardinian envoy to ridicule Spain's war effort as "more burning than brilliant."[5] But worse news was to follow.

Halfway around the world, the Philippine base of Manila had long been famous throughout Europe for its legendary riches. Furthermore, the British East India Company feared that Spanish ships from Manila could interdict its China trade at will. So Company officials persuaded the British government in January 1762 to marshal a force of regulars and sepoys in India for an attack on the Philippines.[6] Sailing from Madras on August 1, the British contingent of 2,300 men under General Sir William Draper arrived in Manila Bay on September 23 and quickly established a beachhead. Their landing benefited immeasurably from Manila's complete ignorance that Spain was now at war with Britain. The acting governor of Manila, Archbishop Rojo, and a mixed force of defenders resisted stubbornly for twelve days, but British naval strength carried the city in the end, as Rear-Admiral Samuel Cornish's eleven warships and three Company vessels unleashed an artillery barrage that wrecked Manila's fortress defenses. Redcoats and sepoys poured into the breach, and Rojo surrendered Charles III's jewel of the East on October 7, 1762.[7]

Fortunately for Spain, the news of Manila's capture did not reach Europe until after the definitive Treaty of Paris was signed on February 10, 1763. Thus Britain forfeited her conquest—despite ongoing British claims to the balance of a $4,000,000 ransom agreed to by Archbishop Rojo.[8] However, Draper's advertisement of Spanish weakness in the Philippines made Spain increasingly fearful for the archipelago's security, to the point that even rumors of British designs on Manila in 1779 would help to push Madrid toward a declaration of war in that year.

* * *

So it was that Spain, having met disaster in two hemispheres and reached a humiliating stalemate in Portugal, joined France on the loser's side of the 1763 Treaty of Paris. By that settlement, Spain relinquished the Caribbean islands of Grenada, St. Vincent, and Tobago, and even handed back recently-captured Minorca. She also gave up her historic claims to the Newfoundland fisheries and agreed to allow British logwood cutters on the coast of Belize. In exchange for Havana, Britain demanded and received Florida, thus acquiring a long shoreline on the Gulf of Mexico.[9]

The previous November, by the secret Treaty of Fontainebleu, Louis XV had made Charles III a gift of western Louisiana and the then 'island' of New Orleans. This cession—clearly a compensation for Spanish losses incurred on France's behalf in the war—gave Spain a buffer insulating New Spain from the British domains to the east, but in strategic terms it could never replace Florida.[10]

Beaten and vengeful, Spaniards bided their time for the next several years. The later 1760s were marked by a colonial tax revolt in Quito in 1765 (ironically concurrent with Britain's proclamation of the Stamp Act in North America) and the 1766 'Squillace riots' in Madrid on the question of social reform.[11]

A decade of military reescalation opened for Spain in 1770. Fittingly, that very year featured a showdown during which Charles's court redefined and took steps to achieve its geopolitical objectives. Spain's opponent in this duel, predictably, was Britain, but the unexpected flashpoint was a desolate, windswept whaling station in the South Atlantic—the Falkland (or Malvinas) Islands. In 1765 Lord Egmont, for whom the chief British settlement there was named, called the Falklands "the key to the whole Pacific Ocean." Both London and Madrid knew their potential as a British stepping-stone into that ocean, which had

hitherto been Spain's private preserve.[12]

The instigator of the Falklands crisis was Francisco Bucareli, the saber-rattling Spanish governor of Buenos Aires. Acting on an earlier suggestion from Madrid, Bucareli had been harassing British patrols near Port Egmont for several months when, in June 1770, he dispatched 1,400 men with six vessels to seize the post.

His massive show of force proved superfluous. Don Juan Ignacio de Madariaga, leading the landing detail on June 4, discovered that only twenty-five marines and a single frigate defended Port Egmont. After firing a few volleys for honor's sake, the garrison hastily surrendered. Madariaga hauled them back to Buenos Aires with all their possessions.[13]

News of the incident reached Europe weeks later and set off a storm of protest throughout Britain. Parliament and populace were equally furious at Spain's impertinence, although few Englishmen had ever heard of the Falklands before. The British court immediately demanded that Madrid disavow Bucareli's action. It backed up this ultimatum by ordering General Thomas Gage, the commander-in-chief in North America, to mobilize 1,000 redcoats at Pensacola in West Florida, ready to move against New Orleans should war break out.[14]

The Conde de Aranda, now president of the royal council in Madrid, was eager for a fight. But his king, though burning with the same war fever, could not take on Britain without French backing. Tension grew as Charles awaited France's reaction. Meanwhile, the Spanish council drew up plans to attack British-held Florida, Jamaica, the Mosquito Coast, and the Bay of Honduras. It also voted reinforcements for Havana, Panama, and Veracruz; but tellingly, no resources were directed to Louisiana. Its governor in New Orleans, Luis de Unzaga, received orders to defend the city as best he could, but if pressed, to fall back to

Mexico. Thus New Orleans residents witnessed the disheartening spectacle of their army working as hard to improve its path of retreat as to strengthen the city's defenses.[15]

In Paris the anglophobic foreign minister, the Duc de Choiseul, urged Louis XV toward war, but the French king judged it neither the time nor the issue for the Bourbons to force a reckoning with Britain. He wrote Charles a personal letter in December 1770, begging his cousin to moderate his belligerent stance: "If Your Majesty can make some sacrifice to preserve peace without injury to your honour, you will render a great service to humanity and myself."[16]

Clearly, if Spain brought on a war with Britain, she would have to wage it alone. Charles bowed to the inevitable. On January 22 of the new year, his ambassador in London delivered a note repudiating Bucareli's "violent enterprise" and promising to restore Port Egmont to Britain. The crisis abated after a British landing party reoccupied the settlement on September 15, 1771.[17]

In both France and Spain, the fallout from the Falklands crisis was swift and severe. Choiseul fell from power in December 1770, his hawkish policy discredited for the moment, and Aranda's defeat followed in August 1773.[18] Though Aranda became Spain's principal scapegoat for the affair, he was nevertheless a remarkable political animal. Already he had wangled from Charles III the ambassadorship to Paris, where he began mending Bourbon fences for the inevitable next crisis.[19]

Besides clarifying Spain's territorial priorities, the crisis of 1770-1771 was significant for its effect on Charles's psyche. Feeling betrayed by Louis and humiliated over his submission to Britain, the Spanish king vowed never again to sail in France's diplomatic wake.[20] His resolution would keep Spain a spectator of the American Revolution, when it

came, for more than four years.

Yet this incident did have one immediate (though unintended) effect on the American colonies. The Boston Massacre was recent news in the summer of 1770, and the British crown planned to deal harshly with Massachusetts in consequence. With the first report from the Falklands, however, that matter instantly lost importance in London. Colonial Secretary Lord Hillsborough sent instructions to Gage identifying Spain as by far the greater threat, and by shifting forces to Florida to meet it, the British general defused much of the tension in Boston.[21]

Five years later, Britain's attention was riveted on another Spanish escapade, this time in Africa. On July 28, 1775, three days after the shocking news of Bunker Hill reached them, Londoners learned that a Spanish army of 20,000 men under Irish-born General Alexander O'Reilly had attacked Algiers and had been repulsed with heavy losses.[22]

That grand assault, the brainchild of Spanish foreign minister the Marqués de Grimaldi, had been intended as a punitive expedition against the dey of Algiers, a known conspirator with the notorious Barbary pirates. By striking at the pirates' headquarters, Grimaldi hoped to make the Mediterranean safe for European shipping.

By this, of course, he primarily meant Spanish shipping, which had recently suffered heavy blows when the sultan of Morocco broke a 1767 treaty of friendship with Spain. The sultan began aiding the pirates and also laid siege to Ceuta and Melilla, two Spanish enclaves in Morocco. Charles III sent relief parties to raise the sieges, which they did with such success that Grimaldi decided to attempt Algiers. But through a leak in the Spanish cabinet the dey was forewarned of the surprise attack, and O'Reilly's troops had scarcely disembarked on July 8 when Algerian forces set upon them and drove them back to their

transports in disarray. The sheer magnitude of the fiasco toppled Grimaldi from power in February 1777. He was replaced as foreign minister by José Moñino, the Conde de Floridablanca. This conservative, cynical Murcian was then little known but would become the chief architect of Spain's war effort in 1779. As for General O'Reilly, he narrowly escaped being lynched on his return by an outraged Spanish public.[23]

Spain's disaster before Algiers in 1775 was notable mainly because it brought Floridablanca to power. The most disturbing legacy the new minister inherited from Grimaldi was a mini-war with Portugal over South American borders.

* * *

The "Undeclared War" of 1774-1777 was not really of Spain's making. From Madrid's perspective, the villain of the piece was Portugal's aggressive, anglophilic prime minister, the Marquis de Pombal. On the pretext of rectifying some territorial grievances left over from the Seven Years' War, Pombal in 1774 had ordered Portuguese troops in Brazil to cross the Spanish frontier near the La Plata River (into what is now Uruguay) and occupy land formerly associated with the Spanish Jesuits. He was able to carry off this coup because Portugal had more troops committed to the La Plata region, and five ships of the line there to Spain's one.

Pombal anticipated Spanish military retaliation by turning again to Britain in November 1775 in hopes of support. But Britain, her army heavily committed in America, could not afford another war on Portugal's behalf. Realizing this, Grimaldi had already made a proposal to the French in October. Spain had a long-standing interest in conquering Portugal and unifying the Iberian peninsula; she had in fact done so once before, under Philip II in 1580. Suddenly Grimaldi had a ready-made excuse to try again, so he assured French

foreign minister Charles Gravier, the Comte de Vergennes, that in exchange for French aid in crushing Portugal, Spain would help France to seize Brazil for herself.[24] South America would become a Bourbon fortress.

A French-ruled Brazil was Grimaldi's idea, not Vergennes'. Had France subscribed to Spain's habit of equating land-holding with politico-military power, Vergennes might have taken the bait. But the French had bowed out of the territorial game in 1763, and now their geopolitical focus was on strategic points rather than vast expanses with indefensible frontiers. Vergennes also worried that an all-Spanish peninsula would raise Spain's power and prestige above that of France. Finally, the news of General Howe's smashing victory over the Americans at Long Island in August 1776 convinced him that Britain still had teeth and that war with her—inevitable if the Bourbons invaded Portugal again—was ill-advised at that time. France still awaited the proper moment to strike, and on learning of Britain's desire to settle the Portuguese crisis peacefully, Vergennes indicated that he shared that wish, though "rather from necessity than inclination."[25]

So Vergennes declined to support Spain, couching his retreat in suitably vague terms: "The king [Louis XVI] will always regard the aggrandizement of the Spanish monarchy with satisfaction," he wrote in November 1776, "but...the conquest of Portugal would be alarming to all states interested in maintaining the balance of power."[26] Madrid cared nothing for European equilibrium in any case, so France's posture appeared there as pusillanimous as it had been in 1770. But both Grimaldi and the even more bellicose Aranda in Paris now recognized that Spain would have to confine hostilities to South America.

One of Grimaldi's last official acts was to order the sailing of two fleets against the Portuguese. One hovered outside Lisbon, the other left Cádiz in November 1776, bound for

Buenos Aires. This second Spanish convoy of thirteen warships and 9,300 troops under General Pedro Cevallos annihilated Portugal's occupying force on the La Plata and quickly recovered the post of Sacramento at the river's mouth. When Cevallos also captured Portugal's strategically important island of Saint Catherine further north, the Portuguese hastily signed an armistice in June 1777.[27]

Back in Lisbon, King Joseph I had died on February 24, 1777. His successor, Maria I, was a niece of Charles III. She dismissed Pombal on March 5 in favor of the more conciliatory Marquis de Angeja, who negotiated with Floridablanca for a formal peace. Spanish diplomacy hit its eighteenth-century high in the resultant Treaty of The Prado (March 24, 1778), which completed the work begun by the Treaty of San Ildefonso the previous October.[28] Besides resolving some thorny territorial controversies,[29] these pacts bound Spain and Portugal not to make war or contract alliances detrimental to the other's interests. Of greatest import for the American Revolution, however, was an article stipulating that if one of the signatories became entangled in a war—any war—the other must remain scrupulously neutral in it.[30]

Overnight, Spain's foreign policy became more pacific. Easing a European posture that, in 1776, had been far more belligerent than either France's or Britain's (though the latter was then already at war), Spain by 1778 was playing hard-to-get. She could now listen as the combatants in the American war bid for her friendship or neutrality, always with offers of territory, as her lust for land was well known to all her petitioners. The Portuguese conflict had cost Spain little in blood or treasure, but by its outcome Floridablanca had guaranteed her position with respect to Portugal in the event of war with Britain.[31] Given a nearly continuous history of Anglo-Spanish hostility since the sixteenth century, there were good odds that this

insurance would soon pay dividends. As it turned out, Spain needed it the very next year.

* * *

French statesmen tried a variety of tactics to lure Spain into the American war on France's side. But in addition to diplomatic inducements to join the fight against Britain, a skeptical Spanish court required military evidence that Spain's intervention could be both decisive and profitable. The needed proof came in a seemingly inconclusive naval action, France's first real battle of the war.

On the French side, the Comte d'Orvilliers commanded a fleet of thirty-two ships of the line, cruising out of the port of Brest. His British opponent, Admiral Augustus Keppel, sailed from Portsmouth on July 9, 1778 with the Home Fleet of twenty-four ships, later increased to thirty. Fearing that Spain's entry into the war was imminent, Lord North in London hoped that Keppel could force an engagement with the French, win it, and thereby frighten Spain into neutrality.[32]

The two fleets met sixty-six miles west of the Isle of Ushant, near the mouth of the Channel. After four days of maneuvering, Keppel forced the hesitant d'Orvilliers into battle on July 27.[33] The latter had orders not to bring on a general action, but finding himself engaged, he employed a new French battle tactic. As Keppel told it afterward, "The object of the French was at the masts and rigging, and they have crippled the fleet in that respect beyond any degree I ever before saw."[34] Neither side sank any enemy vessels, though casualties were high all around (508 British, 736 French).[35] Despite his tactical success, d'Orvilliers failed to press his advantage and returned to Brest. Both admirals claimed victory, yet neither side won a lasting strategic edge at Ushant.

"A pretty smart skirmish" was naval historian A. T. Mahan's later assessment of the

battle. In spite of its ambiguous outcome (Keppel's ships suffered far worse damage, but he held the 'field' in the end), the battle of Ushant was as pivotal for Spain in 1778 as Saratoga had been for France the previous year. Two aspects of the clash impressed Spaniards deeply. First, Keppel's fleet had failed to defeat a French squadron in equal combat, which raised hopes in both Paris and Madrid that Spanish naval power would tip the balance in the Bourbons' favor. Second, Vergennes realized that standoffs like Ushant were the best that France could achieve unaided, so he began sweetening his earlier offers to entice Spain into the war.[36]

This proved a straightforward task for the French minister because his options were so limited. The Spaniards had made it clear that humbling Britain and helping America were objects which held no charm for them. Without Vergennes' guarantee that Charles III would expand his imperial holdings as a result of the war, Spain simply refused to fight.

BIDDING FOR COUNTERS:
Diplomacy and the Spanish Navy, 1775-1779

> The Spaniards are a little like children. They can be interested only by presenting shining objects to their gaze.
>
> Montmorin to Vergennes,
> February 26, 1778[1]

Spanish leaders paid little attention to the American Revolution when it began in 1775. Madrid's leading newspaper devoted only one sentence to the news of the United States' Declaration of Independence.[2] And King Charles III abhorred the very idea of a free republic in the New World. How, then, did Spain become a major participant in a world war over the future of Britain's American colonies?

The answer depended principally on how Madrid hoped to profit by that war in the currency it knew best: territory. With the British empire collapsing from within, never had the time seemed more propitious for Spain to settle old scores. "Spain has treasures which she must redeem," urged ambassador the Conde de Aranda from Paris. "This chance will hardly return while the world shall last."[3]

Soon after the opening clash at Lexington and Concord in April 1775, leading Spaniards began pondering how they could best turn Britain's colonial troubles to their advantage. Foreign Minister Grimaldi, like his French counterpart Vergennes, secretly rejoiced that the Americans had revolted. In his official correspondence, however, Grimaldi sympathized openly with Lord North's ministry, and by January 1776 he was complaining that

Britain had not sent an army of respectable size to crush the rebellion.[4]

In that same month, Thomas Paine electrified America with the publication of Common Sense, in which he insisted that "France and Spain never were...our enemies as Americans, but as our being the subjects of Great Britain." However, his assessment was true of France alone. For Spain's king and council regarded the colonists with a suspicion and fear that were no less real than their hatred of the English.[5] Their anti-American sentiments had both philosophical and geopolitical roots. Spanish statesmen instinctively condemned any uprising against monarchical rule, and, more to the point, they worried how this particular war might threaten their empire's territorial integrity.

Because Vergennes had worked closely with Grimaldi since 1774, the French minister knew intuitively of Madrid's concerns. Citing Spanish "anxiety as to what is happening in America," Vergennes presented to the French cabinet in March 1776 some "Considerations on the Affair of the English Colonies" there. The Bourbon courts should desire the war's continuation in order to exhaust both combatants, he reasoned, since the eventual outcome was fraught with danger no matter which side prevailed. Should Britain subdue the rebels, she might then turn on French and Spanish colonies to recover the costs of the war, or to re-establish Anglo-American union with a campaign to plunder Bourbon riches. Conversely, an American victory could lead the colonists to become "conquerors from necessity," overrunning the Spanish Main and French sugar islands to capture markets for their goods. In either event, Vergennes concluded, Providence had marked England for humiliation after a century of tyrannizing her neighbors; and the Bourbons must speed her decline by means of "secret favours" to the Americans to prolong the war.[6]

His hatred of Britain undimmed after fifteen years, Aranda envisioned an identical

scenario and urged both Paris and Madrid to shore up their Caribbean defenses. Though Grimaldi ignored this unsolicited counsel, he concurred with Vergennes' plan of covert assistance to the rebels. On June 27, 1776, he initiated a Spanish loan of one million livres to the colonists, matching the sum advanced by France three weeks earlier. By August, American agents were buying Spanish gunpowder in New Orleans.[7]

British officials quickly learned of this escalating Spanish aid to America, but chose a non-confrontational response in view of Spain's growing hostility toward their ally, Portugal, over the La Plata occupation. Thus the Admiralty warned its anti-smuggling patrols away from Spanish coastal waters, and the secretary of state downplayed those skirmishes which occasionally flared up between British and Spanish warships. Their circumspection was rewarded in October 1776 when the Spanish Council of State approved in principle a French plan for war with Britain, but conditioned its agreement on Spain's acquiring both Portugal and Minorca in the peace settlement.[8] France refused to fight Britain simply to obtain Portugal for Spain, so the Spanish-Portuguese quarrel remained a limited war. Even at this early date, Charles's government sought to extort territory from France as the price of alliance.

Meanwhile, General Howe's army had driven the rebels from New York City. Grimaldi's ongoing policy of crippling Britain by attrition led him to propose a new subsidy for the Americans in December 1776 "to ensure that the war is prolonged." His government still looked on the colonists merely as a convenient tool with which to humble its enemy, but they intended to become far more than that. Already in September, Congress had guaranteed the safety of Charles III's South American dominions from rebel intrusion. Now Americans attracted the king's support for an ambitious proposal: a rebel expedition would march on

West Florida, seize Pensacola and the British settlements on the Mississippi, and then hand them over to Spain once American independence was assured. To facilitate this peaceful acquisition of a prized possession, José de Gálvez, Spain's minister of the Indies, instructed his nephew Bernardo de Gálvez, the new governor of Louisiana, to supply the Americans with arms, munitions, and clothing.[9] Spanish aid flowed more freely than ever.

Congress hoped to clear the way to even further assistance and eventually to formal alliance with both Bourbon kingdoms. To this end its most famous member, Benjamin Franklin, had sailed to France in October 1776 as commissioner with broad powers to treat with that court. Three months later, Congress named him commissioner to Spain as well. Franklin met with Aranda in Paris and pronounced the Spanish ambassador "well dispos'd towards us," but he did not anticipate Grimaldi's ouster in February 1777.[10] Once Floridablanca took the reins of Spanish foreign policy, Aranda's goodwill toward the United States found little support in Madrid.

Aranda favored Spanish recognition of the United States, not out of any belief in republican government, but because he sensed that America was destined to achieve independence in the near future, whatever Spain might do. He likewise urged Madrid to ally itself with the rebels, in exchange for a mutual guarantee of each side's territory in North America. This was the only way to halt the encroachment of Anglo-American settlers upon Louisiana and eventually New Spain itself, he argued.

But Floridablanca was deaf to Aranda's pleas. He felt that American independence could hurt Spain as badly as it would Britain, especially as an example to her own colonies. While he lied as artfully as Grimaldi had done about Spain's desire for harmonious relations with her longtime enemy, Floridablanca did see the potential for territorial gain if Madrid

could keep open a line of communication to London.[11] Perhaps Spain could recover some important irredenta, yet avoid the expense and danger of war, if she ignored the colonists and dealt strictly with the British court. In Floridablanca's eyes, the trick was to seize all one could from a conflict whose central issue was American sovereignty, while simultaneously denying the rebels' existence as a nation. The Marqués de González Castejón, Spain's minister of marine, echoed Floridablanca's feelings when he declared, "I think that we should be the last country in all Europe to recognize any sovereign and independent state in North America."[12]

Yet Charles's government would face that specter the very next month. Unaware of the new drift in Spanish policy, Franklin delegated his colleague, Arthur Lee, to visit Spain in March 1777 to lay the groundwork for negotiations on trade and possibly an alliance. Lee carried a formal letter of introduction from Aranda, but Floridablanca, horrified that an American envoy's presence in Madrid might imply Charles's approbation of the rebellion, sent the departing Grimaldi to intercept him. On March 4, Grimaldi met Lee at Burgos and pledged renewed financial support to the rebels, explaining, "The Spanish court is convinced that its dominions run much less danger if they have a commercial republic for a neighbour than an ambitious monarch." Of course, this was not Floridablanca's position at all, but it enabled Grimaldi to steer Lee gently back to France. In parting, the Spaniard added with a straight face that his king had no appetite for territorial expansion, but that he would accept Florida, the better to supply the Americans from Havana.[13]

Floridablanca's rebuff of Lee convinced Franklin to postpone his own planned journey to Spain. Instead, on April 7 he presented to Aranda a proposal of Congress dated December 30, 1776. In return for a Spanish declaration of war against Britain, the United States again

promised to seize Pensacola for Charles III, adding a pledge to join Spain's war on Portugal and assist the Bourbons in conquering the British sugar islands. Aranda relayed this proposal to Madrid, but his government made no reply.[14]

In a significant departure from its earlier offer, Congress now coupled its promise to deliver Pensacola with a demand that Spain grant Americans the free navigation of the Mississippi River. The summer of 1777 was to witness a sudden heightening of tensions along that waterway, even without rebel participation. Ever since 1763, when Article VII of the Treaty of Paris had declared the Mississippi open to navigation by the subjects of both empires occupying its banks, Britain and Spain had maintained an uneasy coexistence there.

But Bernardo de Gálvez broke the truce. Soon after being named acting governor of Louisiana, he began to confiscate British vessels on the river, charging that their crews were carrying on "an illicit Trade" in his province. "By former resolutions and Laws of our Kings," Gálvez insisted, "every Power knows that we did not admit Strangers into our America." He therefore brought several English captains to trial for smuggling. Although British officials protested loudly and ships of the Royal Navy commenced firing on Spanish merchantmen near New Orleans, Gálvez refused to back down.[15]

These hostile encounters on the Mississippi might have given Madrid a casus belli in late 1777, had the time been right in other respects. But Floridablanca thought Britain still too powerful to engage directly and opted to continue Spain's secret aid to the rebels. He rejected a plea from Franklin, Lee, and Silas Deane for Spain to intervene with her fleet, arguing:

> Our great naval armament....is an efficacious and powerful defence for the Colonies, and even in open warfare would not be more so, since in that case we should have to distribute it according to the requirements of our own

> defence, while at present it threatens England exclusively, and defends the Americans....The war into which those same [American] Deputies might wish to plunge us inopportunely, might be more hurtful to them, by withdrawing our forces to act in our own defence.[16]

On the same day, October 17, Burgoyne capitulated at Saratoga. The news reached Europe in December, and within a week Vergennes launched his first full-scale effort to lure the Spaniards into the war. Spain must act quickly, he wrote his ambassador in Madrid. Her stake in the war's outcome was ten times that of France, whose Caribbean islands were an unlikely target for British greed: "They already have enough of that sort of thing; what they want is treasure, and that is to be got only from the [Spanish] continent." Besides, he added, Spain might acquire Florida in the subsequent peace treaty.[17]

The Spanish royal council spent two sessions debating Vergennes' proposition. Eventually Floridablanca persuaded his king to delay overt hostilities, at least until Spain's treasure ships returned from Mexico in the spring of 1778. The Spanish minister had been stung by Burgoyne's defeat; he saw that it would lead to French belligerency on behalf of the colonists. Then, when Britain retaliated indiscriminately against all Bourbon possessions, Spain would be drawn into the fray. "If that happens," Floridablanca warned French ambassador the Comte de Montmorin, "we shall not be the first to wish for peace...Before asking for it we must sell even our last shirt." Nevertheless, Montmorin left secure in the knowledge that "in whatever manner France is dragged into war, Spain will follow." By December 31, 1777, Vergennes knew that Madrid would resist joining the war voluntarily.[18] But if France took the lead, he guessed, she could induce Spain to fight in spite of herself.

* * *

"An approaching war with France and Spain appears now almost out of doubt,"

declared Lord North as 1778 began. The British press had been saying as much since 1776, and newspapers throughout the colonies for the past year, but none of them appreciated Spain's distrust of French motives.[19] Montmorin reported from Madrid that Floridablanca needed strong reassurance against the "instability" of Vergennes' diplomatic projects, while Charles III was similarly nervous about his nephew, Louis XVI. "I will always be his good friend and ally," the Spanish king told Montmorin, "but...I have many things to foresee and many points to guard....it is not the same with Spain as with France."[20] The safety of its far-flung possessions was thus Madrid's chief concern as it tried to dissuade French leaders from any rash gesture that would provoke open warfare with Britain. Accordingly, Charles and Floridablanca overruled the bellicose Aranda and rejected France's offer of a tripartite alliance with her and the American rebels.

So Vergennes decided it was time for France to act alone. On February 6, 1778, only two days after news of the Spanish refusal reached Paris, French representative Conrad-Alexandre Gérard and the American commissioners signed treaties of amity, commerce, and alliance. Appended to these agreements was a separate article pledging both signatories to work to bring Spain into their new partnership.[21] Both France and Britain anticipated a quick response from Madrid. But Floridablanca ridiculed the Franco-American pact as one "worthy of Don Quixote" and made it clear that his government had no plans to recognize American independence.[22]

Floridablanca's resolve hardened over the next several months as reports arrived from Philadelphia and New Orleans. His agent and unofficial observer, Juan de Miralles, had landed at Charleston in January 1778 and journeyed to Pennsylvania to learn Congress's feelings toward Spanish land claims in the West. There he heard speakers call the Mississippi

an American river—ignoring Spain's possession of both banks at its mouth and Spanish domination of the gulf into which it emptied. Miralles's accounts of their presumptuousness led Floridablanca, who in March had accepted the Mississippi as a logical Spanish-American boundary, to view rebel claims to that river with increasing alarm. By the end of 1778 the Spanish minister angrily opposed permitting Americans anywhere near the river which had seemed an eminently reasonable Anglo-Spanish border for the past fifteen years.[23]

Recent events in New Orleans heightened Floridablanca's fears about American designs on the Mississippi. On January 11, 1778, rebel Captain James Willing had departed Pittsburgh with twenty-seven men aboard the gunboat Rattletrap and glided downriver toward New Orleans. Seizing loyalist ships and prisoners along the way, they plundered $15,000 in British property. Finally they reached New Orleans and delivered dispatches to Gálvez, who in return lavished money and supplies on them and promised free transit through Louisiana.[24] As if this were not provocation enough for Britain, Gálvez began courting the Choctaw Indians near his capital in apparent expectation of future hostilities with West Florida.[25] Such inflammatory actions by its supposedly neutral governor upset Madrid no less than London.

Clearly, events were conspiring to push Floridablanca toward war with Britain. Although determined that Spain must benefit from her enemy's internal dissension, the foreign minister hoped to avoid an open conflict if possible. So he approached the British in 1778 with a proposal suggested by Aranda: that Britain should compensate Spain for her continuing neutrality by "restoring" a coveted irredenta such as Gibraltar, Jamaica, or Florida.

Gibraltar was Floridablanca's chief objective from the outset. In June 1778 Vergennes, knowing this, specified for the first time the territories that Spain might acquire

by joining the Franco-American alliance and placed the Rock at the top of his list. But Floridablanca doubted that France really wanted Gibraltar in Spanish hands and resolved to continue his quest by diplomatic means. He sent a new ambassador, the Marqués de Almodóvar, to London on a difficult mission.[26]

To the new Spanish envoy, "a man of very slender abilities" in the eyes of British diplomats, Floridablanca entrusted the ticklish job of convincing Britain to participate with France in a Spanish-brokered mediation conference (because Spain did not recognize the colonies' sovereignty, the French would represent them). As even French diplomats looked askance at this idea, it naturally found a cool reception in London.[27] Lord North believed Spain's feelings toward Britain to be "almost as hostile as those of France," and after the battle of Ushant in July, George III hoped at best to keep the Spaniards quiet until the following spring. By then, he anticipated, the British fleet would be a match for both Bourbon navies.[28]

But Floridablanca's government, undaunted, pressed on with its project. On September 28, 1778, the foreign minister sent to Almodóvar a "Plan of mediation" which the ambassador forwarded to the British Cabinet the following month. The document invited both Britain and France to submit to Madrid their conditions for making a truce, which Charles III would integrate into a comprehensive peace plan acceptable to all parties. Floridablanca backed up this proposal with a veiled threat to open hostilities if the British rejected such an opportunity.[29] The noncommittal response the idea drew from both Paris and London was surprising, for, by late autumn, Spain's potential to shape the war's outcome had grown dramatically.

But her diplomatic posture remained as unfathomable as ever, at least with respect to

America. Thus George Washington could speculate that Spanish intervention might make "a very interesting change" in the course of the struggle even as his young subordinate, Alexander Hamilton, was arguing that "[t]he sluggishness of Spain affords room to doubt her taking a decisive part." Across the Atlantic a better-placed observer, Montmorin, wrote Vergennes to explain Madrid's hesitation:

> There is no concealing the fact that the interest they feel here in the Americans is not very tender....Spain regards the United States as destined to become her enemy in no remote future, and consequently, far from allowing them to approach her possessions she would omit no precaution calculated to keep them off.[30]

Unable to foment Spanish belligerency on the colonists' behalf, Vergennes soon resumed trying to entice Madrid with offers of territory. On December 5 he told Louis XVI that "everything advises our risking something in order to bring this ally to the desired point of reunion with us." Here the Comte was playing directly into Floridablanca's hands. The latter intended to secure French support for Spain's war aims by having Vergennes guarantee their achievement in return for an alliance.[31]

Montmorin cautioned that Spanish involvement would alter the war to the detriment of French interests, but Vergennes made a proposition to the Spaniards in December anyway. In response, Floridablanca listed Spain's "necessary" objectives—Gibraltar, West Florida, and the entire Gulf of Honduras—while adding some "useful" ones such as Jamaica, Minorca, and the eviction of British loggers from Campeche.[32] Interestingly, he made no mention now of the Mississippi.

But French sentiment about the river was steadily approaching the Spanish viewpoint in any case. Vergennes, who had originally endorsed American territorial ambitions in the West, now instructed Minister Conrad-Alexandre Gérard in Philadelphia to clarify France's

position for Congress and discourage American settlement beyond the Appalachians. Gérard lectured a congressional committee in January 1779 that such expansion would be "totally foreign to the principles of the [Franco-American] alliance," adding that "the United States had not the slightest right to the possessions of the King of England that did not equally belong to the King of Spain when he was at war with England." As to the war effort, he finished, Spain would not join the allies as long as "so great a subject for jealousy" persisted between them.[33]

Certain that his speech had made a strong impression on the delegates, Gérard appeared before Congress again on February 15 to report that Spain wished to see America's territorial claims "terminated." She also wanted the Floridas and the navigation of the Mississippi for herself, he went on; and when someone accused Spain of land-grabbing, he answered loftily, "His Catholic Majesty is too great and generous to desire an acquisition of territory."[34] In the dispute between her old and new allies, France's loyalties were all too clear.

In these exchanges, Spain's eventual belligerency was taken by all interested parties to be a foregone conclusion. Lieutenant Colonel Henry Hamilton, the lieutenant-governor of Canada, spoke for many when he declared in January 1779, "I have no doubt at this minute of the existence of a Spanish as well as French war." Charles's government was quite willing to intercede, but not before its strategic and territorial demands were met in full. As young Montmorin warned Vergennes in February, Spain's diplomatic policy was "to exact everything and accord nothing," yet only by accepting Spanish terms could France secure Madrid's spirited cooperation.[35]

* * *

Once war became imminent early in 1779, Floridablanca had cast about for a way to humble Britain quickly, cheaply, and with minimum risk to Spain's far-flung possessions. Vergennes believed the aims of the Bourbons could best be achieved by assisting the American colonists and by seizing Caribbean islands for use as bargaining chips.[36] But two considerations made this strategy unpalatable to the Spaniards. First, their chief objectives (Gibraltar and Minorca) were in Europe, so Vergennes' plan was too indirect; and second, the idea of cooperating actively with rebels against established authority was philosophically repugnant to them. Ushant had proven that France needed Spain's naval aid, so Floridablanca held the whip hand in any Franco-Spanish negotiations, and he knew it.

Floridablanca wanted to fight the war in British home waters and finish it quickly, for if the focus of conflict shifted to America, Britain would be free to detach forces to assail the widespread, vulnerable Spanish empire.[37] His initial preference was a combined assault on Ireland, which Spain could later exchange for Gibraltar. But although Vergennes had yielded grudgingly to Floridablanca's insistence on a European strategy, he rejected a descent on Ireland in February 1779 on the grounds that Spain was unwilling to commit a single soldier to the occupying force. In March, the two ministers decided that their combined armada should concentrate on Portsmouth and Plymouth.[38]

* * *

Despite the ominous implication of these Bourbon discussions, Spanish policy remained outwardly quiescent through March 1779. Britain's George III, desperate for good news, began to credit "the supposition that the Court of Spain will not take part in the War." But on April 3, Madrid dashed his hopes by issuing to the British ambassador an ultimatum which "offered" again to mediate Britain's differences with France.[39] The core of the Spanish

proposal was an immediate armistice to be followed by a long-term truce lasting up to twenty-five years, during which the "American Colonies" might be considered de facto independent. Territorial ownership would be decided according to the principle of uti possidetis, with each side keeping what its arms controlled. At this date, that meant that New York City, Rhode Island, much of Georgia, and part of the Northwest would remain under British rule, leaving the United States a scarcely viable agglomeration of provinces, intersected at key points by ports bristling with warships of the Royal Navy.[40]

British statesmen, too, found small comfort in the proposal. It did offer peace, but on terms laid out by a hated Bourbon regime with the prospect of Britain ultimately losing most of her American empire anyway. And as before, Spain expected to receive Gibraltar (and possibly Minorca as well) as compensation for her services as mediator. Thus her proposition was no offer at all, in Britain's view, but a case of blatant extortion. Fleet Street trumpeted predictions of an inevitable war with Spain as the North ministry awaited the next proof of Spanish antipathy.[41]

They had not long to wait, for Madrid acted before London could even reply. On April 12, 1779 at Charles III's summer palace in Aranjuez, Montmorin and Floridablanca signed a Franco-Spanish convention laying out their nations' aims in what both knew was a coming clash with Britain. The pact called for Spain to declare war if Britain spurned her offer of April 3, and for the Bourbons then to invade the British Isles. Floridablanca set out Spain's territorial objectives in great detail: Mobile, Pensacola, East Florida, and Minorca were to be captured or secured by treaty, and the British were to be expelled from both the Bay of Honduras and the Campeche coast. France promised to share Newfoundland's fisheries with Spain if she acquired the island, while asking that Charles III recognize

America's independence and offer "not to set aside his arms until that independence is recognized by the King of Great Britain."[42] Significantly, Vergennes knew Charles's temper well enough that he did not insist on the king's acknowledgement of American sovereignty as a precondition of the treaty. To have done so might have derailed the talks completely.

The most essential item of the convention from Madrid's point of view, Article IX, committed both parties to continue hostilities until Spain recovered Gibraltar.[43] This was the Spanish sine qua non for participation in the war; France had proffered several alternatives, but to no avail. One troubling aspect of France's guarantee of Gibraltar was its effect on her prior commitment to the United States to fight until they won their freedom. This unilateral change threatened to embroil the Americans in a protracted conflict to satisfy the ambitions of a power which refused even to recognize their independence.

Thus the Convention of Aranjuez simultaneously activated the Bourbon Family Compact and complicated France's relations with her American allies.[44] French diplomats were vastly relieved at having lured Spain into the war, regardless of the cost, but Montmorin reminded Vergennes that France's allies were anything but friends themselves. "We ought...not [to] conceal from ourselves, Monsieur," the ambassador wrote, "how little interest Spain takes in the United States of America; we shall certainly have evidence of this in the course of the war but especially when the question shall arise of concluding peace." The Spaniards and Americans had become co-belligerents, but nothing more, by Spain's choice.[45]

To the Americans who pressed him for reasons why Spain had not joined the Franco-American alliance, Gérard responded on May 27 that Charles III would continue to offer mediation until London's refusal "convinced [him] of the injustice of the views and of the ambition of England." At that point, he said, Spain would actively take up the allied cause.

His words were prophetic. The very next day Floridablanca informed Aranda that the moment had come to break with Britain.[46]

Unknown to Gérard, London had in fact rejected Charles's mediation offer on May 4, and now the Bourbon fleets were ready to sail for the Channel. A French war council on June 12 designated Portsmouth as their principal objective. As the base of Britain's Home Fleet this port was strategically vital and, once captured, its restoration would certainly warrant the cession of Gibraltar by Britain at future peace talks. George III worried that "20,000 Men Landed in England and 10,000 in Ireland would cause great fear," but the French invasion force intended for Portsmouth actually numbered closer to 50,000.[47]

As if to quell any lingering doubts in Madrid, reports of a British plan to seize the Philippines began to trickle into the capital in June. Already Britain had attacked French posts in the East Indies, and memories of the Manila fiasco of 1762 convinced Spanish officials that the British could reconquer that city almost at will.[48] Better to enter the war and conduct an active defense, Madrid decided, than to stand by and watch the Philippines fall without a struggle.

The prearranged signal for Spain to declare war was the sailing of d'Orvilliers's French squadron from Brest to rendezvous with the Spaniards. When news of his departure on June 3 reached Paris, a courier left for England carrying a statement of Spanish grievances. He reached London on June 10 and Spanish ambassador Almodóvar handed the document to Lord Weymouth, the British secretary of state, on June 16 and requested his passports. Two days later Almodóvar, with the sound of the Dover forts' twenty-seven-gun salute echoing in his ears, crossed the Channel to Calais.[49]

British reaction to Spain's announcement was mixed. The Duke of Richmond felt that

it betokened a crisis "the most awful this country has ever experienced," and in the Commons, Opposition leader Edmund Burke called for Lord North's impeachment as prime minister. But the press was jubilant and the stock market rose strongly at the prospect of war with Spain. "The fingering of their Gold," as one Londoner wrote, "is no small object with a commercial People."[50] Still, not even the staunchest optimist in Britain could deny that the road to victory had turned decidedly steeper overnight.

The charade of Spanish neutrality was over. Now, perhaps, Spain's fleet would acquire for her what diplomacy had not.

* * *

Like many Spaniards, Floridablanca believed that a naval victory followed by invasion of the British Isles would secure for Spain her cherished ends. Confidence in Spain's navy was high after the success of Cevallos's expedition to Brazil in 1776.[51] And on paper, there was good reason for optimism: Spain entered the American Revolution with 131 warships of all sizes (57 of them ships of the line), a fleet three times larger than it had been around 1700.[52]

This made Spain's fleet the third largest in the world, and its addition to the Franco-American war effort shattered British naval calculations. Ever since the 1690s Britain had kept her fleet at least as strong as the combined forces of her rivals, giving her an eighteenth-century 'two power standard' that was no less real than its more heralded successor in the 1890s. In 1779, however, that naval preeminence vanished before what George III called "the unexpected magnitude" of Bourbon seapower. Temporary though it may have been, this unaccustomed inferiority left Britain's statesmen apprehensive about her future. For unlike the American theater of the Revolution, the Anglo-Bourbon conflict was essentially a

maritime struggle.[53]

Lord Sandwich grasped the implications of Spanish intervention perfectly. "England till this time," he observed, "was never engaged in a sea war with the House of Bourbon thoroughly united, their Naval force unbroken, and having no other war or object to draw off their attention & resources."[54] Like others in Britain, however, Sandwich gave too much weight to outward appearances where Spain was concerned. It was true that the Spanish navy's major ports—Cádiz, Ferrol, and Cartagena—possessed excellent dockyards, and that a surge of naval construction had begun in the mid-1770s which would augment the fleet's size even further after war broke out. Individual Spanish warships, too, were universally respected for their quality.[55]

But behind its impressive facilities and vast number of ships, Spain's navy hid some crippling weaknesses. Many of its officers were hopelessly inept, having received commissions only through hurried, arbitrary wartime promotions. Their incompetence moved one French commodore inspecting maneuvers to say in disgust, "Their ships all sail so badly that they can neither overtake an enemy nor escape from one."[56] A similar unevenness characterized the ships' crews; their pay was abysmal, and their discipline and level of training often reflected it. With regard to the ships themselves, Britain had partly offset the effect of Spain's entry into the war by coppering the hulls of many vessels for improved speed. Few Spanish ships had coppered bottoms before 1783.[57]

The trouble did not end there. At the strategic level, too, the sound appearance of Spain's naval force distribution[58] masked its leadership's underlying indifference to politico-military priorities at sea. Spain's prospective war prizes would all depend on seapower for their retention after conquest, so naval grand strategy should logically have been the object

of much debate. But it was ignored. Instead, a meek and indecisive officer corps reduced the navy to a "peninsula-hugging fleet" by hoarding warships in home waters near Ferrol and Cádiz, and shunning action except when attacked. The naval high command could not even honor its commitment to maintain sixteen to eighteen ships of the line off Gibraltar, a top priority.[59]

In both its lack of élan and its perceived mission, then, the Spanish navy obeyed the feeble counsel of one of Charles III's advisers: "It is neither advisable nor necessary that our fleet should attack that of the British...the King should preserve his fleet so as to cover the seas and guard the coasts, protect trade to the Indies, and carry out, when the British have left, some of those other projects he proposes to undertake."[60]

Foreign opinion of Spain's navy varied, depending on the commentator's familiarity with it. Americans had no recent experience of Spanish seapower, but they understood the arithmetic of naval superiority and wanted Spain's fleet on their side. George Washington, who sensed early in the war that "the truth of the position will intirely depend on naval events," believed that Spanish aid could neutralize Britain's naval preponderance over France in American waters.[61]

But Spain's European neighbors knew better. The French initially hoped for naval cooperation from their new allies, but the impotence of the armada in 1779, followed by a Spanish admiral's flat refusal to join French ships in attacking British islands in the West Indies the next year, would quickly set them straight as to Spain's intentions. In any case it proved impossible to coordinate fleet movements when the allies started every campaign from separate ports (the French from Brest, the Spaniards from Cádiz). Vergennes came to view the Spanish fleet merely as a device to be preserved for maintaining pressure on Britain; and

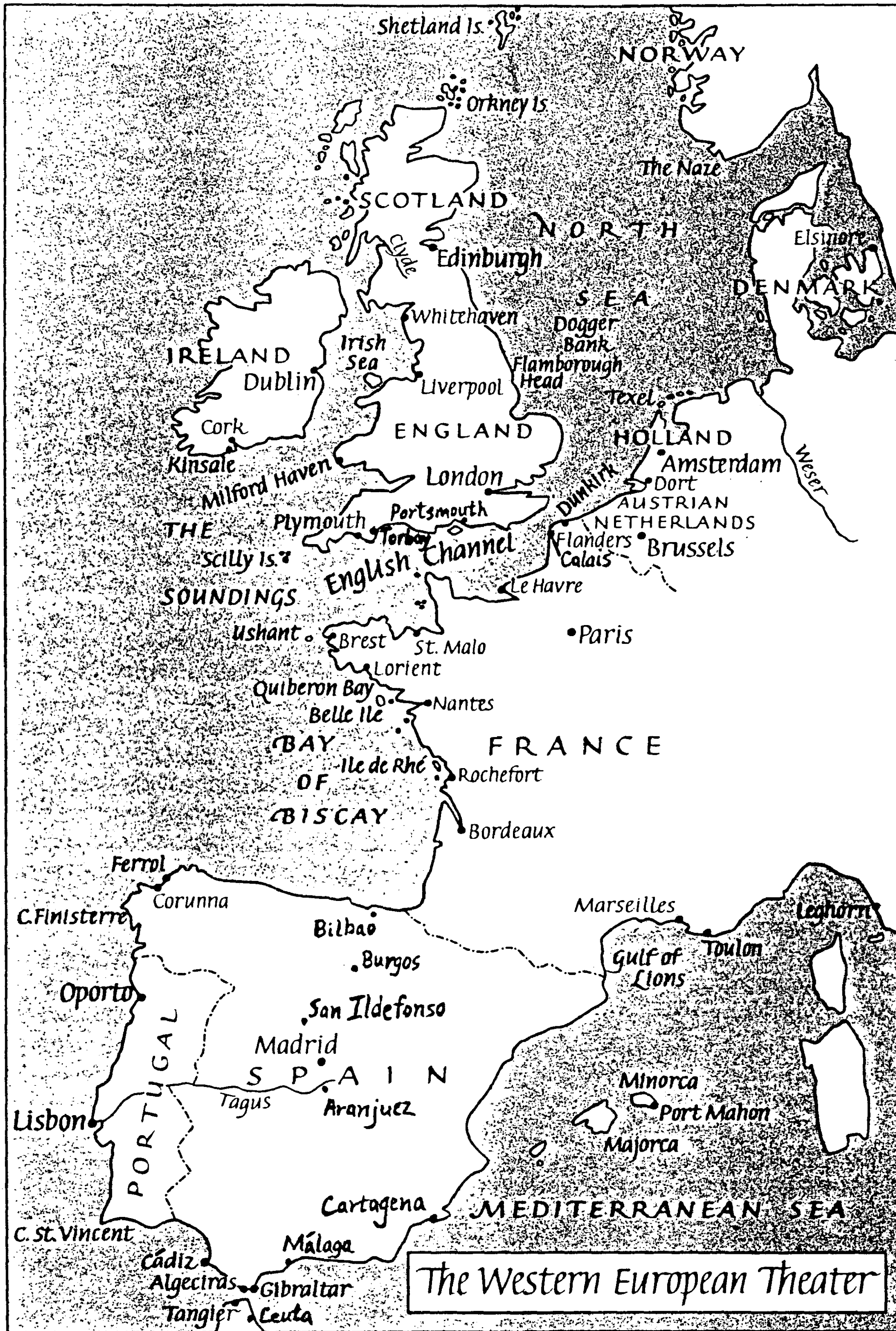
Montmorin, his subordinate in Madrid, was "not at all anxious that it should meet with the British....a defeat would have the most disastrous consequences."[62] This from Spain's ally.

As for her enemy, "the English," as John Adams noted in 1780, "do not seem to take Spain into their account at all. They make their calculations to equal or excel the French a little, but reckon the Spaniards for nothing." The sorry performance of the Spanish navy in the war cheered Parliament, which had feared in 1779 that "Spain held the balance in her hand....[and] would give a decisive superiority against England" by virtue of her powerful fleet. By war's end, it would become clear that that fleet "might indeed be numerous, but many of their ships were foul."[63]

The acid test of war stripped away the veneer of Spanish naval power. Spain's fleet would win no victories at sea, or even capture a British ship of the line, through four years of combat.[64] The fleet seldom came into battle, and when it did, its posture was invariably defensive despite a frequent superiority in numbers to the British. By avoiding decisive engagements even though its nation was on the strategic offensive, the Spanish navy amply justified later historians who asserted that it was of little consequence in the American Revolution. For its presence it mattered; by its actions it would achieve nothing.[65]

* * *

The great Bourbon invasion of 1779 was a disaster from the start. D'Orvilliers and the French fleet sailed from Brest on June 3 to rendezvous with the Spaniards near Corunna. On July 2, eight Spanish ships of the line from Ferrol joined them off Cape Finisterre, but the bulk of Spain's fleet, under 73-year-old Admiral Don Luis de Córdoba, had not left Cádiz until June 23 and so did not arrive until a month later. With Córdoba's appearance the Bourbon force now numbered sixty-six ships of the line, and thirty-six of them were Spanish.



The Western European Theater

adapted from Don Higginbotham, *The War of American Independence* (1983)

Thirteen frigates rounded out the combined fleet.[66]

Late to begin with, the admirals subsequently squandered another week of summer weather and valuable provisions coordinating their signals, before finally heading for the English Channel on July 30. The French were now seven weeks at sea with nothing to show for it.[67] On land it was the same story of waste, as thousands of French troops under the Comte de Rochambeau idled in staging areas between Le Havre and St. Malo, waiting for the Bourbon warships to vanquish Britain's Home Fleet so their transports could ferry them across to Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight. Week after week they practiced landings in the summer heat.[68]

That weather, in conjunction with smallpox, dysentery, and lack of supplies, had taken a fearful toll on the sailors. By August 16, when the Bourbon armada finally came in sight of Plymouth, over half of them were ill or dying. So many French corpses were tossed overboard that the people of Plymouth, fearing contamination, were afraid to eat fish for weeks afterward.[69]

Englishmen greeted the news of the combined fleet in 'their' Channel with a mixture of trepidation and bravado. George III immediately put the best face on the invasion, saying, "I sigh for an action. I know it must turn out to the advantage of this nation." His optimism was admirable considering that Sir Charles Hardy, commanding the British Home Fleet, could muster only thirty-nine warships to oppose the Bourbon navies. Some in that overmatched British fleet hoped, with their countrymen, that the armada was only "a bugbear, and a cloak for other more important operations."[70] But to many the appearance of over seventy enemy sails presaged disaster. Panic spread through Britain's Channel ports, the press bemoaned the scarcity of regulars available to meet the threat, and militia flocked to temporary camps in

Winchester, Salisbury, and other towns.[71] There they waited, tensely, for the attack that never came.

In the end, squabbling within the Bourbon high command prevented the armada from meeting a single one of its goals. Córdoba felt slighted at the idea of taking orders from a Frenchman, even though d'Orvilliers had been named the armada's commander-in-chief by prior arrangement. The French admiral, for his part, revealed a timidity undesirable in the leader of any offensive expedition. On top of his complaints about sickness (too much) and provisions (too few), he once actually asserted that the combined fleet was too large to maneuver effectively in the English Channel. Paris added to the confusion by attempting to divert the fleet toward Cornwall midway through its cruise.[72]

Amid such petty bickering and general incompetence, it is no surprise that the Bourbons never established a beachhead in Britain or sank any enemy warships. They captured only one British vessel, the 64-gun Ardent, and that by accident.[73] Late in August, on Hardy's initiative, the opposing fleets made contact for the only time that summer. But d'Orvilliers responded lethargically, allowing the smaller British squadron to flee up the Channel to safety. The armada resumed its aimless cruising for a few weeks more, and on September 13 it returned to Brest.[74]

By then the invasion scare in Britain had passed. The North ministry believed that the danger was over, for that year at least. "We have no reason to be dissatisfied," the prime minister wrote Sandwich, "at the event of their retiring without any advantage...after their great preparations, their immense expenses, their boastings, their menaces, and their having in fact an opportunity of attacking us...which I flatter myself they will hardly ever have again." All of Britain shared Lord North's relief, and that autumn the musical comedy "Plymouth in

an Uproar" played to huge crowds in London.[75]

Across the Channel, d'Orvilliers retired from the French navy upon his return to Brest. A joint military-naval council decided on October 3 to abandon all further attempts at refitting the armada for that year. With that, Córdoba returned to Cádiz with sixteen warships, leaving the others in Brest for the winter.[76] Floridablanca's grand vision had not met with any tangible defeat, but had instead melted away to nothingness.

Looking back, Britain's opponents took an understandably dim view of the whole campaign. American colonists knew little about the armada—and cared less—even though by its presence it had prevented British reinforcements from reaching General Clinton's army in New York.[77] But to Versailles and Madrid, the expedition's futility boded ill for future combined operations between France and Spain. On top of that, there was the sheer wastefulness of it all. Queen Marie Antoinette of France, herself no stranger to extravagance, summed up the frustration of both courts when she lamented, "It will have cost a deal of money to do nothing."[78] For Spain as well as France in 1779, money was already in short supply.

"A PENNYLESS POCKET":
The Spanish War Economy, 1775-1783

> The Spaniards...tho' they talked so loud are now averse to War. My Conjecture is that Spain wishes to play a saving Game till her Galleons arrive.
>
> Lord Stormont to Lord Weymouth,
> February 26, 1778[1]

In October 1778, with Spanish-American alliance still a distant hope, George Washington wrote wistfully, "If the Spaniards would but join their Fleets to those of France, and commence hostilities, my doubts would all subside. Without it, I fear the British Navy has it too much in its power to counteract the Schemes of France."[2] Much as Washington valued Spain's seapower, he realized that "she is withheld from interfering by some weighty political motives; and how long these may continue to restrain her, is a question I am unqualified to determine."[3]

Spain's motives were weighty indeed, but to restrict them to the merely "political" is to underrate the influence of her economic and military (especially maritime) preparedness on when, where, and how she decided to commit herself in the American war. Finance and commerce seldom lead the list of geopolitical forces, but for Spain they powerfully influenced the extent—and the limitations—of her involvement in the war. They also determined where the chief thrust of Spanish military power would be directed. For both reasons, economic issues merit independent consideration as forces shaping Spain's global policy during these years.

* * *

That Spain entered the American Revolution at all owed much to the threat Britain posed to her economic interests in the New World. Jealously guarding her riches from the clutches of British imperialism, Spain had geopolitical ambitions which—in the Americas at least—were distinctly economic in nature. She wished to evict British loggers from the valuable Honduran coast, and she coveted the Floridas for their usefulness in reestablishing the Gulf of Mexico as a Spanish lake and zone of economic monopoly. Even the Newfoundland fisheries, far to the north of any Spanish political interests, attracted Madrid's attention as a potential zone of shared monopoly with France, in the event the Bourbon powers managed to conquer the island.[4]

Even at the outset, Spain's behavior in the war was dictated by economic necessity. The Convention of Aranjuez had been signed in April 1779, yet Madrid delayed issuing a formal declaration of war until June 16, when the annual plate fleet laden with South American treasure began to dock in Spanish ports. The safe arrival of these ships was one factor in Spain's advocacy of an invasion of England. Such an attack, many argued, would bottle up Britain's Home Fleet in the Channel and permit the Spanish flota to cross the Atlantic unmolested. (This was precisely what happened in 1779.)[5] So much of Spain's wealth throughout the 1770s had come across on these ships that the interruption of their passage for more than a year would presage a national economic catastrophe. Lord North knew that "Nothing can more enfeeble the operations of the Spaniards in war, than an impediment to their gold trade," and with Britain's supremacy on the high seas, the latter was in the optimum position to effect a blockade. If and when she did, Spain would have to devise stopgap measures that could bring far-reaching—and adverse—consequences in their

train.

The outbreak of the American war in 1775 had found Spain in the midst of an economic renaissance. Under Charles III the economy, like much else in Spain, had been so revitalized that the half century after 1750 has been called the age of "greatest material progress in the annals of Spain."[6] Treasure poured in from the mines of Peru, while Mexican and Spanish mints turned out so much bullion that Spanish coin was unchallenged as the medium of choice in international currency transactions. The riches of Spain's American empire were so legendary that in September 1779 both Britain's colonial secretary, Lord George Germain, and her army's chief of staff, General Jeffery Amherst, briefly harbored visions of the American rebels reuniting with the mother country to join her in plundering the Spanish colonies. Viewed in Spanish terms, the 1770s were boom years for the national economy.[7]

But relative to the rest of Europe, Spain was ill-prepared to finance an all-out war. Much of the wealth drawn annually from the Americas and Philippines found its way into private hands, hence the government had little surplus to deal with any crises that might threaten national security. Spain had been fortunate in receiving an exceptionally large import of treasure just before she entered the American war. Still, the British journalist who in 1780 called the Spanish treasury "a pennyless pocket" was not far wrong. Rapidly its specie reserves ran dry, and neither voluntary popular contributions nor substantial Dutch loans could obviate the need for more drastic financial measures on the part of the government.[8]

Madrid's response in the summer of 1780 was to issue paper money (vales reales) for the first time in Spanish history. Before examining the effects of this controversial decision on Spain's war effort, we must first trace the forces that drove Charles III's government to

take such an unprecedented step.

A major and ongoing source of expense was outright Spanish assistance to the Americans. Long before Spain embarked on full-scale military intervention, the granting of subsidies to the rebellious colonists was Bourbon policy in both Paris and Madrid. Eager to weaken Britain but fearful lest the contagion of revolt spread southward to Spanish America, Spanish ministers had ample incentive to keep the British at war with their colonies, helping each side to bleed the other white while upholding the monarchic principle. "Surely it suits us," wrote Spanish foreign minister Jeronimo Grimaldi to Vergennes in March 1776, "that the revolt of these people be kept up and we ought to desire that they and the English exhaust themselves reciprocally." To this end, Spain began funding America's war effort in 1776, and continued even after such contributions had become a serious burden on her own hard-pressed economy. George III of Britain protested Spain's aid to the Americans, but expressed relief that her policy was not militarily menacing. "She promises pecuniary Assistance but fairly declines War," he observed in 1777, adding the dubious praise that Spain at least "acts more honorably than France...towards the Rebels."[9] Doubtless he knew that honor had nothing to do with it.

When the French playwright Pierre Caron de Beaumarchais conceived a plan in 1776 for aiding the Americans through the 'front' of the fictitious Roderigue Hortalez and Company, Spain matched France's initial contribution of one million livres ($181,500), channeled through American envoy Arthur Lee. Louisiana governors Unzaga and Gálvez supplied money and munitions to merchant Oliver Pollock and other American agents operating in New Orleans. And John Jay, whatever his diplomatic failures in Madrid, did convince Foreign Minister Floridablanca to underwrite numerous bills which Congress had

forwarded to Jay for payment.[10] American leaders thought such aid the least Spain could contribute to humble a traditional enemy, short of fighting him openly, but Spaniards claimed that the resources simply were not available much of the time. Jay's experience persuaded him that indeed, "There is little Corn in Egypt," but Alexander Hamilton, a man who knew something about money, was unimpressed. "If they were heartily disposed to do it, they might still afford us some assistance," he wrote. "Their conduct hitherto has manifested no such disposition; it has been as cold and reserved as it could well be."[11]

But Spain was grappling with a monetary problem of her own: retrieving the products of her Mexican and Peruvian mines while the British navy straddled the transatlantic sea lanes. Floridablanca likened his country's predicament to that of the legendary Tantalus, "who with Water in View could not make use of it."[12] The comparison was painfully accurate, for the British menace often forced Spanish captains to tie up treasure-laden galleons in Caribbean ports for safety, cutting off the flow of specie from the New World. Not only did this restrict the quantity of precious metals in circulation, but the interruption of Spain's sea-borne trade also diminished the customs revenues on which the Spanish treasury depended for steady income.[13] These reduced revenues had to finance expensive campaigns in West Florida and the Caribbean; the outfitting of fleets to Algiers, Buenos Aires, England, Minorca, and Gibraltar; and the suppression of rebellions in Peru and New Granada.[14] Because Spain's war effort from 1779 to 1783 was predominantly naval (a money-intensive way to fight), the sheer physical separation of her interests from one another and her perceived need to attend to them all would have rendered this war costly for Spain even had she refused financial support to the American rebels.

In spite of its difficulties, Charles's government did grant the Americans a total of

$214,098 in loans and $397,230 in subsidies. Though this amount paled in comparison to France's contributions—$6,171,000 and $1,996,500 respectively—it represented a severe drain on the Spanish treasury all the same. Recent historians downplay the Spanish subsidies to America as having "little actual result," or being "hardly influential"; but in a geopolitical sense this aid was actually critical to the outcome of the war. For much of it was used in the American West, where the colonists' military victories gave them a basis for treaty claims which they upheld in 1783 at Spain's expense.[15]

In addition to having territorial aims in two hemispheres, the expense of particular conquests immensely complicated Madrid's economic calculations. Its paramount military objective was Gibraltar, and Spanish forces repeatedly poured blood and treasure into fruitless attacks on the Rock from land and sea. To finance the climactic "great assault" of 1782, the government took out loans in Europe at 18 to 20 percent interest. Such a rate was then usurious even for wartime, but Spain had no alternative but to pay it. As will be seen, when Madrid had attempted to recoup the loss from earlier campaigns by increasing taxes on her subjects in the Americas (it was politically impossible to do so at home), the creole "Comuneros" of New Granada had risen up in protest.[16] Thereafter, the government borrowed the funds it needed to wage war instead of extracting them from Spain's dependencies.

Yet another significant expenditure was the purchase of alliances in which the other party had no interest in Spain's fortunes. Such was the case with Morocco, whose pirates had long preyed on Spanish shipping. Early in 1781, as the Spanish noose tightened on Gibraltar, Floridablanca arranged to lease the African ports of Tangier and Tetuan from Sultan Mohammed I for £7,500,000. Besides buying Spain a temporary ally in the vital western

Mediterranean, this transaction deprived Britain of her only local supplier of provisions and munitions for Gibraltar's defense.[17] Later, though, as one British admiral after another burst through Spanish siege lines to revictual the Rock's garrison, the money spent for the Moroccan ports proved merely another tragic waste of Spain's limited resources.

The Spanish navy managed to offset some of these losses by seizing British merchant vessels. Its most spectacular capture took place off the Azores on August 9, 1780, when a squadron under Córdoba intercepted the annual British trading fleet bound for the East and West Indies. Driving sixty-one ships of the British convoy into Cádiz harbor, the Spaniards took 2,865 prisoners and £1,500,000 worth of military and naval supplies.[18] Captures such as this were stunning moral victories for Spain, but they could never make up for the loss of treasure she suffered from 1779 onward.

Early in the American war, Spanish entrepreneurs in Bilbao turned to privateering to recover lost profits. As this practice spread among Spaniards and others, the question of neutrality assumed increasing importance. Privateers often needed neutral ports to redeem their prizes after capture and, conversely, by flying the flag of a neutral they could avoid being preyed upon themselves. For the Iberian nations, neutrality became a potent economic as well as political issue from the outset. Although Spain and Portugal were both technically neutrals at the start of the contest, they interpreted that status quite differently. Charles III explicitly proclaimed Spanish neutrality on August 6, 1776, yet the next month Spain secretly opened both her peninsular and Caribbean bases to American ships. Because Spanish vessels also began carrying provisions to Havana and other Caribbean ports for sale to the Americans the following March, they upset Britain's force dispositions by making her deploy additional fleet strength off the American coast to prevent such smuggling.[19]

On July 4, 1776 in Lisbon, on the other hand, Pombal had persuaded King Joseph I to bar all American ships, "however distressed," from Portuguese harbors worldwide. Such vessels, the royal edict read, were henceforth to be treated as pirates. When Maria I succeeded her father in 1777, she upheld this decree but declared Portugal strictly neutral in the American conflict. Ultimately, Portuguese neutrality proved an economic boon to Spain for two reasons. Besides relieving Madrid of the need to finance an additional army along their common frontier, it also enabled Spaniards to use Portugal's flag, ports, and roads to transport treasure home from the Indies (on those few ships that ran the blockade, anyway) when Spanish ports were threatened by British naval squadrons.[20]

* * *

As recently as 1775 the Conde de Campomanes, a government minister and renowned economist, had boasted of Spain's freedom from paper-money inflation as a great national asset. But after 1779 Spanish funds steadily dwindled, confronting Charles's government with an unpleasant new choice: raise taxes or finance the war effort by inflation.

Increased taxation was anathema to Floridablanca's reforming ministry, and the government also feared its effects on Spanish morale. So in 1780, when bond sales to the public failed to generate the necessary revenue and France turned down Spain's request for a sizable loan, Floridablanca chose to accept the offer of a multinational merchants' syndicate to endorse the forced circulation of 9,900,000 pesos' worth of paper currency. These vales reales initially carried 4 percent interest and were declared legal tender for all domestic transactions in place of specie. Early the next year a second issue, of 5,303,100 pesos, was authorized.[21]

During this phase of the war, Spanish arms were achieving many of the government's

military and territorial objectives, but from an economic standpoint these successes were scored in the wrong theater. They clustered mostly in North America, where Spain desired land only as a buffer for her truly valuable properties farther south. In those more important regions, 1780 and 1781 were marked by setbacks at San Fernando de Omoa and Fort San Juan on the Spanish Main, and by the costly insurrections of Tupac Amaru in Peru and the New Granada Comuneros. As all these areas were traditional sources of wealth for Spain, even their temporary loss, compounded by British seizures of merchant shipping, left Spanish money reserves in a precarious state.

In the wake of these calamities in the New World, Madrid decided on a third and final issue of paper currency. This issue of June 20, 1782 doubled the amount of paper in circulation. The government made it palatable to the merchant class by using the prestige of the new Banco de San Carlos to stimulate confidence. This institution, the first national bank in Spanish history, had been chartered not three weeks earlier by François Cabarrús. Its potential usefulness in promoting paper-money circulation was one motive for its founding, and it quickly secured the widespread acceptance that this large third issue needed. Nevertheless, within three months the paper currency had to be discounted by 13 to 14 percent.[22]

The inflation caused by the forced circulation of these three fiduciary issues was noticeable but not disastrous for Spain's economy. From 1781 to war's end in 1783, the new paper money depreciated steadily at about 15 percent. In the process, it sustained price levels in Spain in the near-absence of fresh specie imports. Of course, the coming of peace in 1783 brought a resumption of American treasure fleet operations, and prices skyrocketed throughout the country. When working-class wages, which had fallen sharply in 1781, did not keep pace after the war, the social consequences of paper-money inflation became

frighteningly apparent to its advocates in Madrid.[23] In their resentment at being forced to bear the burden of war finance, Spain's American subjects thus found unexpected allies among peninsular Spaniards of the laboring class.

The era of the American Revolution saw important transitions in Spanish commercial policies as well. Charles III's program of national economic development had been given an impetus when France abandoned Spain in the 1770 Falklands crisis, a 'betrayal' which hurt French commercial interests in the Spanish market. English merchants in Spain had long held an advantage there anyway, one that they quickly recovered when the war ended in 1783. The Family Compact, it seems, did not extend to economic privileges: in some cases Spain levied heavier duties on French imports than on goods from Britain. Spaniards had little fear of French economic retaliation because in 1769 King Charles had prohibited (for strictly domestic reasons) all exports of grain, the most important Spanish market product. This ban was in effect throughout the 1775-1783 period, one more drag on the Spanish economy.[24] Whether or not one credits skillful English salesmanship with overcoming the Spanish consumer's traditional anglophobia, the fact remains that political and economic interests clearly did not coincide in Spain's case; at any rate, not in Europe.

As a nation, Spain was known throughout Europe as "the chief upholder of the old system of commercial monopoly," and on this point she never compromised. But within the Spanish empire, ideas were different. On October 12, 1778, Madrid announced the implementation of comercio libre, a 'free trade' regime which liberalized earlier trade restrictions between Spanish port cities and Spain's American colonies. Previously, certain ports had enjoyed monopolies of trade with specified American regions—one of them, Cádiz, retained her trade monopoly of Mexico under the new law—but now all parts of Spain could

trade with most of Spanish America. For the latter, the new commercial system was only nominally 'free,' since all shipments between Spanish colonies and rest of Europe still had to pass through Spanish ports. But whatever its shortcomings, the plan worked. Exports to Spanish America leaped 500 percent, imports from the colonies 900 percent. This expansion was vital to a nation facing the economic dislocations that Spain would over the next five years.[25]

Whether this imperial policy was formulated in anticipation of an imminent war with Britain is unclear. What is certain is that the growth it fostered helped Spain to bear the cost of fighting, and that it demonstrated the value of Charles III's American domains at a time when Madrid was assessing its strategic priorities anew. The proven profitability of the New World territories was one reason the Spanish peace negotiators in 1782-1783 would be leery when Britain offered to cede Gibraltar in exchange for Puerto Rico and the Floridas. Similarly, a combination of profit motive and geopolitics would animate Spain's plans to conquer British-held Jamaica in 1782.

Spain's New World territories benefited in one unforeseen way from the American Revolution and the British blockade it occasioned. Unable to trade freely with the mother country, Spanish-American merchants used their de facto alliance with the United States to increase trade links with North America. One Spanish colony did so on a huge scale. Since Havana was the center of Spanish naval operations in the west, Cuba had a continuing military connection to the Floridas which shifted the focus of her commerce to the north. With productivity generally high during the war, Cuba used her relative immunity to British attack to expand her economy and to replace Spain with the United States as her largest trading partner.[26] Few economic effects of the American Revolution lasted until 1959 as this one did,

but Cuba's case is only an extreme example of how this war altered Spain's global economy.

* * *

The upshot of this economic analysis is that Spain's financial straits virtually forced her into a grand strategy based on cheap campaigns for large payoffs. Just as the protection of her American treasure fleet was an overriding priority before Spain entered the war, the need to secure her geopolitical/territorial objectives before her domestic economy collapsed dictated much of Spain's wartime strategy once the struggle was underway. Floridablanca's advocacy of an invasion of England in 1779 was only the first—albeit the best—example of this practice.

In the long run, most emergency measures that the American Revolution forced on the Spanish economy—trade liberalization, diversification of markets, and a national bank—proved beneficial to the country. The introduction of paper currency was a mixed blessing, but at the same time an absolutely necessary step for a regime "more willing to fight than to tax."[27] The war stimulated Spain's imperial and domestic economies alike, an effect rarely noted by those who rate its outcome solely in terms of territorial gains and losses.

This is not to imply, however, that Spain's government welcomed the economic tribulations of war any more than her people did. No nation seeks such a trial. In 1782, the French foreign minister Vergennes had France's economic distress in mind when he confided to a subordinate, "It is necessary to finish [the war] and the sooner the better when we can do it with dignity and justice."[28] For Spain, suffering even greater financial and commercial strains, dignity and justice were not all that she hoped to gain. Strategically placed territory was equally important. The Spaniards had entered the war not for wealth or prestige, but for geopolitical advantage, and they planned to fight on until they felt they had obtained it.

JACKAL WARFARE:
Spanish Military Operations, 1779-1781

> They must know that what we do not get by negotiation
> we know how to get with a club.
>
> Floridablanca to Almodóvar,
> August 25, 1778[1]

Spain's wartime strategy of picking at the fringes of Britain's military strength was not preordained, even by Madrid's economic constraints. Instead, it evolved in piecemeal fashion as Spanish geopolitical objectives swung into sharper focus.

The allied armada's failure to achieve any of its objectives—including the establishment of maritime cooperation between France and Spain—led Spain to go her own way thereafter. Once in a great while she required French aid to accomplish her ends, specifically those in Europe. But of Spain's four military projects of 1779, only Gibraltar was a European objective.[2] The others—St. George's Cay, Omoa, and the Mississippi River forts—were all New World targets. Charles III anticipated their conquest in a directive issued on August 29, 1779: "The king has determined that the principal object of his arms in America during the present war will be to drive them [the English] from the Mexican Gulf and the neighborhood of Louisiana."[3]

The royal proclamation had not yet been delivered when the governor of Spanish Louisiana set out after the British. Governor Bernardo de Gálvez, only thirty-three years of age in 1779, was the nephew of Spain's minister of the Indies and a commander of remarkable

energy.[4] His aggressiveness appeared even more pronounced in comparison with his British opposite number in West Florida, the sluggish Major General John Campbell.

Gálvez had been ordered in May 1779 to prepare for war, and through a sophisticated intelligence network along the Mississippi, he learned of British plans to seize New Orleans once hostilities began. Spanish spies in Mobile, Pensacola, and St. Augustine also reported back to him on the condition of British defenses there.[5] When official notice of Spain's war declaration reached him on August 9, he gathered together an army capable of carrying the fight to the British. Then on August 20, Gálvez assembled the people of New Orleans in the town square, announced his promotion from acting to permanent governor of Louisiana, and asked their support for Spain's new war against Britain. Then, "by beat of drum," he recognized "the Independency of America." Needless to say, Gálvez's showmanship won over the enthusiastic crowd. "Viva al Rey!" they cheered. (It mattered little to any of them that Charles III would withhold diplomatic recognition from the United States until August 23, 1783, over four years later.)[6]

General Campbell in Pensacola did not learn that hostilities had commenced until September 9. In August a French fleet under Admiral the Comte d'Estaing with some 20,000 troops had arrived at St. Domingue (now Haiti) and so frightened British Vice-Admiral Sir Peter Parker in nearby Jamaica that he detained the British messenger there for weeks. This delay enabled Gálvez's attack on Britain's Mississippi forts to achieve complete surprise.[7]

The Spanish force of 667 men departed New Orleans on August 27. Additional militia and friendly Indians joined Gálvez as his troops marched upriver, raising his total strength to 1,427 when he reached the enemy's Fort Bute at Manchac on September 6. Unlike Britain's other Mississippi River settlements whose primary function was agriculture, Manchac was

essentially a strategic post. Its location 121 miles from New Orleans stood testimony to an earlier British attempt to cut a canal eastward from the Mississippi to the Iberville River, which would allow British river traffic to bypass Spanish-held New Orleans.[8] That effort having failed, Fort Bute was now a decaying sentry post at which Colonel Alexander Dickson, British commander on the Mississippi, had left a garrison of just twenty-three soldiers. Like General Campbell, who ignored his predecessor's advice to concentrate West Florida's limited manpower around Pensacola and Mobile, Dickson elected to sprinkle his 457 regulars and their officers randomly among the Mississippi strong points of Manchac, Baton Rouge, and Natchez.

Gálvez swiftly taught Dickson the folly of that decision. He carried Fort Bute without loss in a morning attack on September 7; then, after a six-day rest to refit, the Spaniards moved on Baton Rouge, fifteen miles farther north.[9]

Fort New Richmond at Baton Rouge was Britain's strongest outpost on the Mississippi. Built on the plantation of two British loyalists in the six weeks before Gálvez appeared, it occupied a high bluff commanding the river in both directions. The Spaniards, strengthened by reinforcements to nearly 2,600 men, laid siege to the redoubt and maneuvered their artillery into position.[10] When they unleashed a three-hour cannonade that breached the walls, killing four defenders and wounding ten, Dickson surrendered Fort New Richmond and 405 prisoners to Gálvez on September 21.[11] "The flower of the Army in West Florida" had been lost, but Campbell in Pensacola still knew nothing of Gálvez's actions.[12]

The Spanish governor had driven a hard bargain, compelling Dickson to surrender his post at Natchez (whose high bluffs formed a position of great natural strength) as part of the Baton Rouge capitulation. Gálvez then dispatched Captain Juan de Villebeuvre to Natchez

with fifty men to occupy stoutly-built Fort Panmure and imprison its garrison. They did so peacefully on October 5, leaving the town's loyalists speechless with fury over Dickson's selling them, in every sense, down the river.[13]

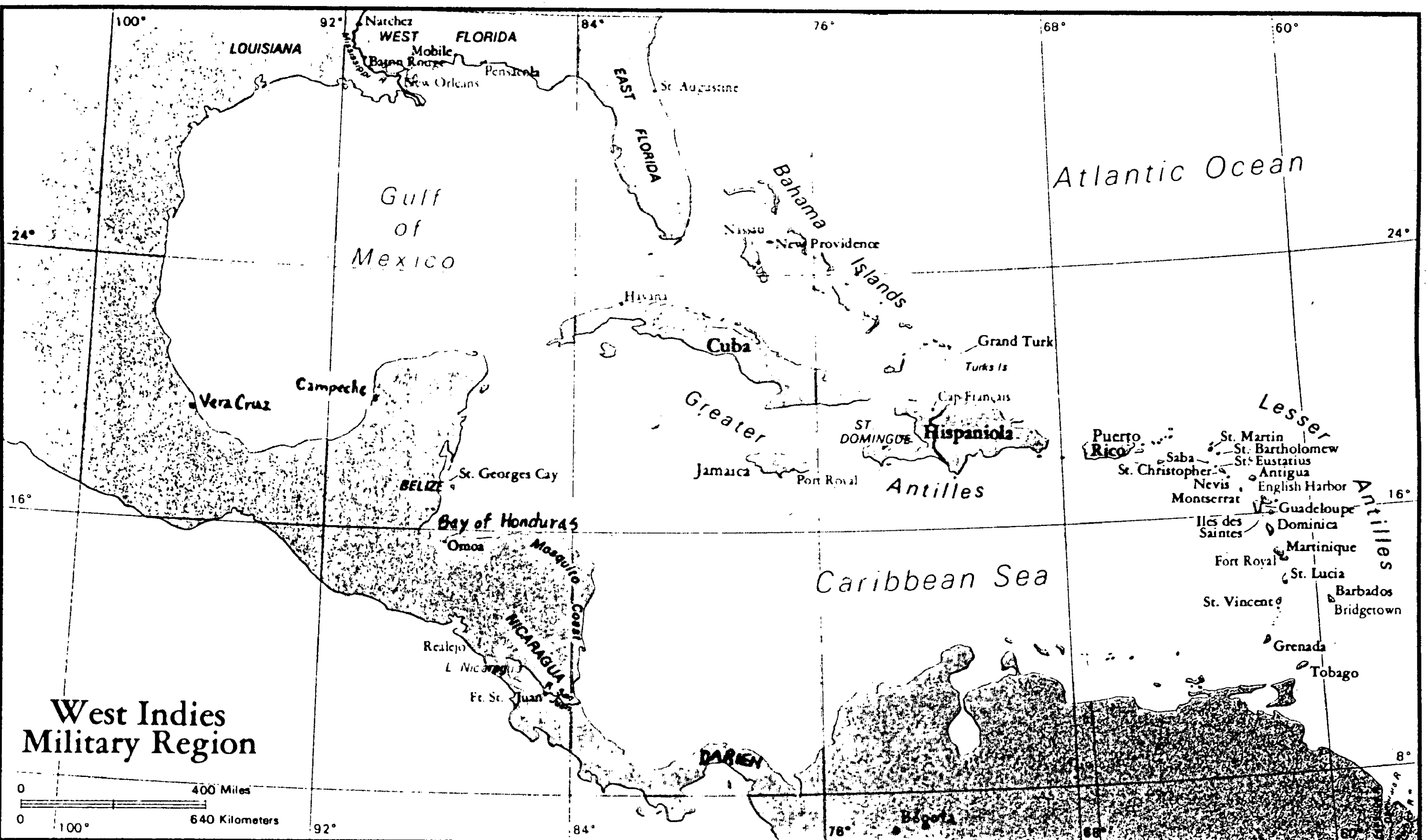
Gálvez's total casualties in this campaign were one man killed and two wounded. In return his army had taken three British forts, eight ships, and 484 prisoners, all in barely a month's time.[14] It was Spain's greatest bargain of the war.

The key to Gálvez's success was Spain's prior ownership of strategically-placed New Orleans. "As to the Territories on the Mississippi," General Campbell observed after the fact, "it appears to me, that they must necessarily belong to the Sovereign who has possession [of] Orleans."[15] Gálvez's lightning campaign made the Spaniards "masters of the part of West Florida of the most real intrinsic value" at negligible cost. It also opened a second front that drew British military might away from the embattled American colonists. Finally, by employing offensive tactics for strategic defense, Gálvez had eliminated the threat of any British strike down the Mississippi toward New Orleans.[16] That city's security protected valuable New Spain to the south.

The Regiment of Spain, 640 additional men from Havana, joined Gálvez in mid-October, but he deemed it too late in the season for further campaigning.[17] After leaving garrisons at his newly-acquired outposts, he returned to New Orleans to plan his next move. The focus of Spain's war drifted southward.

* * *

Gálvez's thrust up the Mississippi was not yet complete when the Spaniards struck another blow in Central America. Just as Gálvez had opened a second front for the British on the Gulf Coast, the Spanish expedition to St. George's Cay created a third on the Spanish



adapted from Lester J. Cappon, et al, Atlas of Early American History: The Revolutionary Era (1976)

Main. A tiny islet off the coast of Belize, St. George's had been the seat of Britain's Honduran logging trade since 1763, a constant thorn in the side of Spanish imperialists.

A Spanish surprise attack by sea on September 15, 1779 captured St. George's, seizing treasure, slaves, and about 100 British prisoners, but soon it became apparent that the post was indefensible by either side. Several days later, the British frigate Pomona appeared almost by accident and sent the Spaniards fleeing.[18]

But the Pomona's arrival was not entirely fortuitous. Her presence so near the Spanish Main reflected London's newly-declared policy of actively harassing and, where possible, seizing Spanish possessions throughout the world. It had long been an article of faith in British military circles that

> Spain is precisely that country against which [England] can at all times contend, with the fairest prospect of advantage and honor. That extensive monarchy, though vigorous at the extremities, is exhausted at the heart...and whatever power commands the ocean, may command the wealth and commerce of Spain....The dominions of Spain from which she draws her principal resources [lie] at an immense distance from the capital and one another.[19]

And Lord George Germain was grimly determined to avoid a "tame defensive war" which he felt would ruin Britain. George III had once insinuated that Germain "lets his imagination run too far... and then reasons upon very slight foundation."[20] As if to prove his sovereign right, ever since learning of Spain's war declaration in June 1779 the colonial secretary had been firing off instructions to his generals across the Atlantic. That very month Germain had concocted a plan to arm the Mosquito Indians of Central America and "encourage them to make Inroads into the Spanish Settlements in the Neighbourhood" of Darien on the Panamanian isthmus. In doing so, he hoped, Britain could foster the establishment of an Indian or creole state there, one "independent of the Spanish Government" and open to

settlement by "Freebooters of all Nations." The chaos that Charles III was abetting within the British empire would thus be visited upon his own colonies to the south.[21]

To indicate where he thought some of these hypothetical freebooters might be found, Germain ordered Clinton in New York to publicize the Darien plan in hopes of enticing American "adventurers" to join the proposed expedition. He was only one of many in the British government in 1779 who imagined that their rebellious subjects—even some in Washington's army—would "return to their Allegiance and flock to the Royal Standard" if the temptation of "acquiring Plunder in the Spanish Dominions" were dangled before them.[22]

Not surprisingly, the quest for riches was what had drawn the Pomona to Central America. The frigate's true destination was the Spanish port of Omoa on the Gulf of Honduras. Dubbed "one of the most unhealthy spots in the universe" by British Captain William Dalrymple, the town was dominated by Fort San Fernando de Omoa, a triangular edifice situated thirty feet from the shoreline.[23] The jungle loomed in its rear. Because Omoa was an important stop for convoys bearing dyestuffs and other goods from Guatemala, Spain had been at "incredible Expence" in erecting the fort. Its construction, reported Dalrymple, "constantly employed 1000 Men at work for 20 years," and by 1779 it bristled with the cannon and muskets of 506 Spanish defenders.[24]

British Commodore John Luttrell had previously sent a schooner to reconnoiter Omoa's defenses and report on the number of Spanish treasure ships, if any, in its harbor. Learning that three register ships lay at anchor there, he sent a naval patrol to shell Fort San Fernando. But the fort proved impregnable from the sea, so on October 10 Luttrell landed Dalrymple and a mixed force of one thousand regulars, marines, Mosquito Indians, and "Baymen" (loggers from neighboring Belize) in a nearby cove. While Luttrell's six ships

continued bombarding the fort from offshore, Dalrymple's men circled behind it and materialized out of the jungle. They immediately surrounded the fort and dug in.[25]

The British had achieved that rarest of military feats: "the greatest harmony," in Dalrymple's words, "between the Sea and Land Forces." Quickly they moved to exploit their success. After a three-day siege, Dalrymple's troops stormed the barricades on the morning of October 20. Thirty Spaniards died bravely resisting the assault and eleven fell wounded, but a full hundred "run away" and vanished among the trees. Later that day, Spanish commanders Desnaux and Dastiex turned over to Dalrymple the fort, its remaining garrison, and all three register ships with 3,000,000 pesetas' worth of treasure in their holds.[26]

Subsequent historians have painted the Battle of Omoa as a "remarkably gallant little affair" for the chivalrous spirit displayed there. Dalrymple himself wrote a glowing report of the victory, calling Omoa "the Key to the Bay of Honduras...an important article in a treaty of peace and in time of War." Perhaps he realized the port's geopolitical importance to Spain; he certainly convinced Germain, who sensed that this minor triumph promised a "fair prospect of success" for Britain on the Spanish Main. The colonial secretary guessed that once the Spanish court got word of Omoa's fall, "there is good reason to suppose the Alarm will be great, and their Attention drawn to that Quarter"—and presumably away from beleaguered West Florida.[27]

In the event, they were both premature. A failure of leadership and the tropical climate saw to that. Dalrymple had orders to destroy Fort San Fernando to free his troops for a campaign in Nicaragua, but instead he garrisoned the place and left Honduras. His garrison rapidly succumbed to assorted jungle diseases. On November 25, at the approach of a "parti-coloured rabble" of Spaniards led by the captain-general of Guatemala, Matías de

Gálvez (father of Bernardo), the seventy-four British survivors abandoned their conquest without firing a shot.[28]

Germain was disgusted with the whole fiasco. "The fort at Omoa should have been demolished as soon as taken," he scolded, "since the captors did not think proper to leave a garrison there sufficient for its defence." Late in the year, an operation contemplated by the Admiralty to subdue Spanish Puerto Rico met a similarly inglorious fate when Britain could not mass sufficient forces to give the project a chance of success.[29]

So ended the campaigns of 1779, Spain's first year of active participation in the American Revolution. Gibraltar lay blockaded, and Gálvez had conquered miles of strategic Mississippi River frontage. But more important, Spain had suffered no net loss in all of her vast dominions worldwide. Given London's plans and Madrid's earlier fears, that in itself was quite a surprise.

* * *

The new year, however, opened on a disastrous note for Spain. Outwardly it seemed optimistic enough: her six-month-long naval blockade of Gibraltar was taking its toll on the garrison, and Britain's five-ship Mediterranean squadron was powerless to break its grip. Only a British force of equal size could revictual the Rock, so Lord Sandwich had dispatched Admiral George B. Rodney late in December 1779 with a convoy and reinforcements. George III had great hopes for the expedition: "If We arrive in time at Gibraltar Spain will not Succeed in that attack which will very probably allay the fury of the Spanish Monarch and make him more willing to end the War." So Rodney attached Rear-Admiral Robert Digby's Channel Fleet to his own and sailed south with twenty-one ships of the line, far more than Spanish or French ministers believed Britain could devote to the expedition. When Rodney's

fleet came upon an eleven-ship Spanish patrol off Cape St. Vincent, 150 miles from Cádiz, on January 16, 1780, the conclusion was inescapable. Don Juan de Langara, the Spanish admiral, allowed the British ships to maneuver close before he realized his peril. Coppered bottoms, Britain's newest technological innovation, gave Rodney's vessels an edge in speed, and Spain's crewmen were no match for the British either. In a running night battle, Rodney's fleet captured four Spanish warships, drove two more onto the rocky coast, and blew up a seventh bearing eighty guns. The British accomplished the replenishment of Gibraltar and Minorca without further incident.

Sandwich was ecstatic, pointing out that Rodney "had captured more line of battle ships than had been taken in any one action in either of the two last preceding wars." Spanish morale hit its lowest point of the war. But Britain had not achieved her two-to-one advantage without cost. For the remainder of Spain's fleet lay in Cádiz undergoing repairs for the spring's upcoming campaigns, Rodney had exhausted the portion of his fleet that would continue on to America, and his borrowing of the Channel Fleet for six weeks enabled a French fleet under the Chevalier de Ternay to slip out the Channel for America long before British Admiral Graves could refit and give chase. Whatever its short-term moral effect on the two combatants, the battle of Cape St. Vincent set the conditions for a year of Bourbon successes across the Atlantic—a year that would see Spanish grand strategy begin to pay great dividends geopolitically.[30]

The allied offensives of 1780 did not begin auspiciously. Spain's policy of self-interest without heed of friend or foe was manifest again on February 26, when Aranda requested that France redirect her new expeditionary force for America from Rhode Island to Georgia. Implicit in this suggestion was the awareness that a French army (and fleet of transports) in

the South could best serve Spanish designs on Florida and the Bahamas. Vergennes turned down Aranda's request, citing a lack of safe harbors and his concern about a British descent on nearby Charleston. This fear was soon borne out, as General Sir Henry Clinton besieged the city that spring with troops shipped south from Newport. South Carolina governor John Rutledge pleaded with Havana to send a Spanish fleet and army to relieve Charleston, but to no effect.[31] Clinton daily drew the noose tighter until General Benjamin Lincoln's 5,400-man garrison surrendered on May 12, 1780. Spanish parsimony in this case was self-defeating in the extreme. Many of the soldiers in Charleston had gathered there in preparation for an attack on East Florida to deliver it to Spain, as Congress had promised and Juan de Miralles had repeatedly prodded the delegates to remember.[32]

But Spain's military planners were too taken with their own projects to mourn a lost opportunity in the Carolinas. Gálvez had been given the option of attacking Pensacola or Mobile on the Gulf Coast of British West Florida. Mobile could stand without Pensacola but not the other way around, he decided, and accordingly set his sights on Mobile's dilapidated Fort Charlotte. Campbell in Pensacola was also uncertain of Gálvez's next target, and fear for his capital paralyzed him until it was too late.[33]

With 754 men, Gálvez left New Orleans in January 1780 and sailed for Mobile Bay. After riding out a hurricane and bolstered by a reinforcement of 1,412 men from Havana the next month, he overran Mobile's principal outpost and appeared before Fort Charlotte on March 1. In a demand for surrender, Gálvez threatened to make the defenders "suffer all the extremities of war" if they tried the patience of his troops with a "useless and inopportune resistance." But the garrison's commander, Captain Elias Durnford, retorted that despite their numerical disadvantage, his men had no intention of giving up without a fight. The

Spaniards dug in.[34]

Campbell finally awoke to Mobile's danger and sent help, but Gálvez's naval control of Mobile Bay forced the British and Indian relief party to trek overland through malarial bayous to reach the besieged stockade. This effort—Campbell's only glimmer of initiative in the two-year war in West Florida—proved too little, too late, and the rescuers turned back to Pensacola having accomplished nothing. After a two-week siege climaxed by a Spanish cannonade, Fort Charlotte fell to Gálvez on March 14, 1780. Once again Spain's losses were negligible: 8 men killed and 7 wounded to achieve the capture of 284 prisoners, 35 cannon, and the conquest of the second city in West Florida.[35]

Campbell complained with some justification that "one single frigate would have prevented our late disaster." But against the combined Bourbon fleets in the Gulf, Britain could not maintain even a local superiority of force at sea—a vital prerequisite for the protection of her port garrisons. Her chief Caribbean base at Port Royal was nearly twice the distance from West Florida that Havana was, and Admiral Parker's hoarding of ships there to protect Jamaica had further exposed Florida's coast, not for the last time.[36]

So uplifting was the effect of Mobile's fall on Spanish morale that Gálvez boasted to a gathering of Choctaw Indians that he would not leave Britain "a foot of land in West Florida in a few months."[37] Even in their rhetoric, Spaniards spoke the language of territory.

Their British foes, in contrast, were interested in trade and influence. London had long toyed with the idea that an expedition to Central America could force its way through Darien (Panama) or Nicaragua to the Pacific Ocean, thereby securing "a safe and easy Communication with the Western Coast of America across the Isthmus."[38] So upon learning of the initial success of the Omoa enterprise, Germain had written the governor of Jamaica,

John Dalling, that he was sending three thousand reinforcements for "the obtaining possession of the River St. John, and the Lake Nicaragua, & opening a Communication through them with the South Sea at Reja Lejia [Realejo]." As a diversion, Germain suggested a feint against Guatemala.[39]

The Fort San Juan expedition of 1780 proved far different in actual execution. Governor Dalling, a glory hunter, chose not to wait for the detachment from Britain to arrive, but launched his own assault on the Spanish Main in February. Its commander, Major John Polson, had hoped to enlist the support of friendly Mosquito Indians, but several weeks of recruiting yielded nothing and wasted valuable 'dry season' campaigning time. Polson's party then struggled up the treacherous Río San Juan on the 24-gun frigate Hinchinbrook, captained by Horatio Nelson. After taking a small outpost by storm, they reached Fort San Juan on Lake Nicaragua by April. The lethal climate wiped out much of the 500-man force en route, and more died during the three-week siege that followed.[40]

Finally, the British opened a six-day bombardment and Fort San Juan's resistance crumbled. General Juan de Ayssa surrendered the "Castle" with its 235 defenders to Polson on April 29, 1780, but there the British campaign crested. For immediately afterward began a "long Continuance of the Rainy and Pestilential Seasons" that decimated Polson's force. Reinforcements sent from Jamaica also succumbed to heat and disease; though Britain had by now landed 1,600 men on the Spanish Main, a fort in the Nicaraguan wilderness was to be their sole conquest. Far from "helping to divert a part of the force of Spain from the prosecution of this cruel war" as its planners intended, the expedition was fast becoming a hole down which British treasure kept flowing with no prospect of victory. Of the promised force from Britain, which arrived in July, a mere 1,350 survived the scurvy- and fever-ridden

Atlantic passage in any condition to fight. In any case, Dalling needed these troops immediately to defend Jamaica against a new Franco-Spanish threat from St. Domingue. By late August, the remnants of the San Juan expeditionary force had largely retreated to the Atlantic coast, hoping to continue after the rains subsided. But Dalling admitted defeat in November and ordered the survivors back to Jamaica (though Germain, ever the optimist, still wanted them used against New Orleans). Even evacuation proved costly for Britain, however, as a body of Spaniards appeared on January 3, 1781 and struck as the British were destroying the fort. On February 8 the last Englishman finally left the Mosquito Coast bound for Jamaica, thus ending the war on the Spanish Main.[41]

Admiral Rodney saw a trend developing at Omoa and San Juan and worried about the future they implied: "The war in America is now turned to a war of posts, and, unhappily for England, when they have taken posts of infinite advantage, they have been unaccountably evacuated without one good reason assigned."[42] Just as in Florida, operations in Central America consistently took a back seat to the West Indies when resources ran low for either side. Although British historians have condemned the Fort San Juan campaign as "a badly organized and badly conducted affair, a dissipation of force, and a waste of valuable lives" and Germain saw it primarily as a ploy to divert Spanish attention from a British thrust at New Orleans, in truth the tropical climate threw up an insurmountable barrier to any British attempt to penetrate Spain's imperial perimeter south of Louisiana.[43] As her success on the Spanish Main illustrated, not the least of Spain's accomplishments in the war of 1779-1783 was to throw back every challenge hurled at her empire around the globe. The contrast to 1762 was nowhere more vivid than in the difficult game of imperial defense.

Sparsely populated Louisiana faced but one bona fide British attack during this war,

but its successful repulse probably saved New Orleans—and consequently West Florida—for Spain. Once the Mississippi forts fell to Gálvez in 1779, British plans to recover control of the river hinged on an attack from the far north. Spanish-held St. Louis was thus the principal target of an expedition from Michilimackinac, led by Emanuel Hesse, whose 1,000-man force of redcoats and Sac and Fox Indians descended on the town on May 26, 1780. But Lieutenant Governor Fernando de Leyba of Louisiana had posted scouts, so the garrison had three days' advance warning of Hesse's approach. Even so, 68 of the 300 defenders perished in the assault, which Leyba called one of "unbelievable boldness and fury." The Indians inflicted "the most unheard of barbarity" on those unfortunates they caught outside the town's walls; they killed and dismembered 21 paisanos, seized prisoners, and butchered livestock indiscriminately. But once George Rogers Clark's American force appeared, Hesse's Indian allies turned on him and the British fell back to their base in confusion. Leyba died on June 28, and was succeeded by Francisco Cruzat, architect of the 1781 reprisal raid on Fort St. Joseph that would carry Spanish claims to the shores of Lake Michigan.[44]

Thus Gálvez had secured the lower Mississippi for Spain, Leyba and Cruzat its upper reaches. Captain Baltazar de Villiers, commandant of Fort Carlos III at the Arkansas Post, united the two claims on November 22, 1780 by leading a six-man detachment across to the eastern side of the Mississippi and proclaiming Spain's formal possession of its banks "as far as the boundary of the district of Natchez."[45] Whether Spanish strategists actively coordinated such operations or, more likely, they arose haphazardly and only incidentally consolidated Spain's territorial claims, it is clear that geopolitical awareness characterized Spanish planning at all levels in the North American west. For after American troops abandoned their recently-constructed Fort Jefferson in June 1781, Spain could justifiably lay

claim to all trans-Appalachian lands south of the Ohio River...a fact of no small import to Spanish diplomats negotiating the final peace settlement.[46]

Despite the vigor with which Spain parried her numerous thrusts in 1780, Britain persevered in her plan to disrupt Charles III's empire. That summer, a pair of Scots named William Fullarton and Thomas Humbertson had raised two regiments to take part in a plundering expedition against the Pacific coast of Spanish America. This enterprise was approved in full by the Cabinet on August 3, with a projected strength of two thousand men from the home regiments and an equal number of sepoys supplied by the British East India Company.

However, before the Company could be induced to cooperate, its directors insisted on a quid pro quo. An operation must first be mounted against the Spanish islands of Mindanao and Celebes in the Philippines, they argued, since it was doubtful "that any Settlement in Peru, Mexico, or Chili, can be held against the forces of Spain," and a strong British base somewhere in the Pacific was essential to protect the Company's commercial interests. The government had no choice but to acquiesce. On September 30 the secretary of state, Lord Hillsborough, signed an agreement with the Company's directors making the Philippines the primary objective of the project. Preparations went ahead for the troops to sail in December, but manpower and financial needs elsewhere forced British organizers repeatedly to postpone their departure.[47]

The government finally shelved this "South Seas project" for good on December 29, 1780. Again the East India Company had the final word. No longer could the Company afford to lend its ships and sepoys, the directors said; India itself lay suddenly in danger of attack from Ceylon and Sumatra. For at last the Dutch had joined the ranks of Britain's

enemies.[48] That event would mean little enough in the larger scheme of the war, but to the Spaniards it was a godsend. With easier and richer pickings available to Britain among the Dutch possessions of the East, the Philippines, this time, had been saved.

* * *

Amid these military successes in 1780, Spain's imperial fortunes suffered an unexpected shock as civil revolts rocked South America. This continent, untouched by the American Revolution except for sporadic British raids on Dutch Guiana, was for Spain a bottomless and inviolable war chest, but only if she could keep her subjects there in line.

Peru, with its large Indian population and proud Inca heritage, was most ripe for rebellion under the harsh rule of the corregidores. A young descendant of Inca royalty, José Gabriel Condorcanqui, took the name Tupac Amaru II, rallied the Indians to himself in November 1780, and vowed to deliver Peru from its 'enslavement.' That he also professed loyalty to Spain's king and church, and sought primarily to replace the local administration with one sympathetic to Indian concerns, made no difference to Viceroy Don Agustin Jáuregui, who promptly collected a 15,000-man force to crush him. At the height of the revolt, Tupac Amaru had 60,000 followers. However, his movement had a strong flavor of anarchy about it and he himself was a better orator than a soldier. Though he enjoyed some early successes in the field and dominated the provinces around the ancient Inca capital of Cuzco for five months, government troops under General José del Valle won the climactic battle of Cuzco on April 6, 1781 and virtually extinguished the revolt. Tupac Amaru himself was captured, mutilated, then drawn and quartered shortly thereafter.[49]

Spanish dominion over Peru was never seriously jeopardized.[50] But the region's economic value, especially in wartime, justified Madrid in keeping close watch on the

progress of Tupac Amaru's rebellion from the outset. Though unsuccessful, it reminded Spaniards that potential enemies lay within their empire as well as without.

Even as the flames of racial revolt swept across Peru, a simultaneous uprising "of the most serious nature...occasioned by some late oppressive Taxes on the People" threatened Spain's hold on New Granada (now Colombia) in late 1780.[51] The so-called "Comuneros del Socorro," under provincial leaders Juan Francisco Berbeo and José Antonio Galán, were a broad coalition of six thousand creoles, mestizos, blacks, and Indians, whipped into a frenzy of opposition against such local government abuses as forced labor, extortion by tax collectors, ecclesiastical fees, and a ruinous sales tax called an alcabala. Word of the revolution in America, traveling "from mouth to mouth among everyone in the uprising," lent courage to the Comuneros who marched on the capital.[52] Soon after they reached Bogotá, the audiencia there submitted to their demands for tax reform. The mob dispersed almost immediately. Characteristically, the government reneged on its pledge, and the army reasserted its control in August 1781. The ultimate failure of the Comunero movement is less important than its cause: in addition to her ongoing fiscal reforms, Spain had been compelled to raise taxes to finance her war with Britain, and tapped every source in her empire to this end. When corrupt local magistrates exploited the system, as in New Granada, violence ensued.[53] But with a ruthlessness equal to every occasion, the Spanish government maintained control.

FRIENDSHIP FOR SALE:
Spain's Wartime Diplomacy, 1779-1782

> I do not deceive myself any more than you do, Monsieur, that if Spain treats separately it is all up with American independence.
>
> Comte de Vergennes to Montmorin,
> April 21, 1780[1]

Charles III's war declaration on June 16, 1779 was motivated largely by geopolitical concerns. Its impact on the American theatre paled in comparison to France's entry the previous year. And it required fewer force adjustments by Britain. But observers on both sides perceived that unlike the last war, Spain had joined this fight in time to make a difference. While "the event might long have been expected," George III reflected bitterly that "had not Spain now thrown off the Mask...we should have soon found the Colonies sue for pardon." Richard Henry Lee of Virginia agreed that Spanish intervention had turned King George's plans on their head: "Without a miracle now, the Tyrant and his <u>friends</u> must quickly and humbly sue for peace."[2]

Certainly the prospect of having added to their enemies a nation of over nine million people, with the third-largest navy on earth and more than 112,000 men under arms, must have given Britons pause. Combined, the Bourbons could draw on a treasury twice the size of Britain's own and a population three times as large.[3] A Franco-American alliance which was barely containing British power now possessed, in Henry Laurens's words, "a decided superiority adequate to our purposes." And to Thomas Jefferson, Spain's participation

promised the allies "all the certainty of a happy Issue to the present Contest."[4]

Few outside Madrid, however, were prepared for the cynical selfishness that Spain was to demonstrate throughout the American war. At the heart of this behavior lay her pursuit of empire. It has been shown how Spanish military and naval strategy through 1780 reflected Madrid's geopolitical conception of the national interest; in the diplomatic arena, too, the drive to expand and protect her imperial assets dominated Spain's dealings with other governments.

* * *

Madrid's disappointment at the failed invasion of the British Isles in 1779 led to a curious exchange with its enemy that would have resembled a comic opera, had its potential consequences not been so grave. Article III of the Treaty of Aranjuez had bound France and Spain "not to listen to any direct or indirect proposition on the part of their common enemy, without communicating it to each other," but an Irish priest named Thomas Hussey had other ideas.[5]

Hussey, a huge man thirty-eight years of age, had been chaplain of the Spanish embassy in London since 1768. In this capacity he could travel freely between Spain and Britain, even after Ambassador Almodóvar left London following the Spanish declaration of war. Either at Floridablanca's urging or on his own initiative, Hussey arranged a meeting in November 1779 with a secretary to the British Board of Trade and sometime playwright named Richard Cumberland.[6] The subject of their discussion: Britain's price for Gibraltar. Hussey hinted that Spain would offer Nicaraguan territory and the Algerian port of Oran for the Rock, as well as money "almost without limitation." But Cumberland was not authorized to respond.[7] Instead, the next month Lord George Germain dispatched Hussey to Madrid

with a letter indicating Britain's willingness to have Floridablanca open a formal (though secret) negotiation.

Germain hoped to remove Spain from the war by making a separate peace with her, but not at the cost of Gibraltar. To involve the Spaniards in immediate talks, the colonial secretary implied to Hussey that certain Spanish colonies were targeted for imminent attack. Hussey reached Madrid on January 3, 1780 and conferred with Floridablanca, who informed him that Charles III would never drop his pretensions to the Rock. "I plainly see that [Gibraltar]...is the favorite object in the present war," the priest reported to Germain. "The whole nation has it constantly in sight....chiefly with the view of removing the stain of a foreign possession within the kingdom."[8] By January 31, Hussey was back in London.

The British Cabinet met soon afterward and decided that George III might consider exchanging Gibraltar for Puerto Rico, Omoa, Oran, a separate peace, Spain's promise to abandon the American colonists, her renunciation of all ties to France that might involve her in future hostilities with Britain, <u>and</u> more than two million pounds. Hussey promptly wrote Floridablanca on February 16, venturing his opinion that if Spain began negotiations with Britain on the basis of the 1763 Treaty of Paris, the latter would eventually agree to discuss the cession of Gibraltar in return for a separate peace. Subsequently, Floridablanca addressed a meeting of the Spanish Council, which agreed on February 28 to undertake negotiations with the British.[9]

Vergennes was not apprised of Madrid's decision, but after the Spanish navy's catastrophic defeat off Cape St. Vincent in January, he suspected the worst. On March 31 he warned Montmorin, "Anything is possible. Now is the time to redouble your vigilance." His alarm was justified; three days earlier, Hussey had notified Floridablanca that he and

Cumberland, the newly-appointed British plenipotentiary, would sail immediately for Lisbon en route to Madrid. Not until April 14 did the Spanish minister tell Vergennes that negotiations were taking place. Floridablanca's purpose in notifying the French was twofold: to keep his ally's trust, but even more to pressure France to support Spanish campaign plans.[10]

Cumberland and Hussey set sail from Portsmouth on April 28, reaching Lisbon nineteen days later. The Englishman waited there while Hussey rode on to Aranjuez to brief Floridablanca. Arriving on May 28, the priest explained to the foreign minister that Germain had forbidden Cumberland to enter Spain unless he received prior assurance that procuring the cession or exchange of Gibraltar or Minorca was not Madrid's aim. Of course, this was Floridablanca's chief motive for fighting the war in the first place, but Hussey chose to overlook that fact. He beckoned Cumberland onward, rationalizing that the envoy had traveled too far to turn back without giving the negotiation "a fair tryal."[11]

When Cumberland received Hussey's summons on June 6, his path was far from clear. The priest had not given the guarantee he sought; by rights Cumberland should have returned to London. But with his diplomatic reputation at stake and believing that Britain's need for peace transcended the letter of his instructions, he opted to join Hussey in Aranjuez. There Cumberland met Floridablanca, and for two days they talked, the Spaniard referring to Gibraltar at every opportunity, the Englishman changing the subject with equal finesse. Negotiations broke off on June 22, the two men having failed to find any common ground.[12]

They did not meet again until September 2. During this second session, it finally dawned on Cumberland that unless Britain surrendered Gibraltar, peace with Spain would be impossible. (Some in the British Cabinet were then willing to pay that price, but public

opinion forbade it.)[13] Floridablanca grew increasingly frustrated at the stalemate. Finally he elected to bypass Cumberland and deal directly with London through Hussey. On October 14, the priest stood before the British Cabinet and delivered Spain's ultimatum: no Gibraltar, no peace. Madrid had agreed not to mention the Rock in preliminary discussions with Cumberland, Hussey admitted, but Floridablanca had fully intended that a secret arrangement be made simultaneously by which Britain would cede or exchange Gibraltar to obtain peace. For "without such cession or exchange," the minister insisted, "it would be impossible that the peace should be lasting."[14]

By the end of Hussey's speech, Cumberland's masters understood Spain's "trick and chicanery" as clearly as he. Furious at having been hoodwinked so neatly, they resolved that "no further step should be taken in this Business for some time." Two months later, they sent Hussey back to Spain with the British response: that making Gibraltar's return a sine qua non of peace "is in effect to break off the negotiation." When Floridablanca learned of Hussey's report, he would not even let the Irishman come to Madrid to present it.[15] Instead, he ordered him back to London with the reply that the Cabinet's refusal to part with Gibraltar "is to us an undeceiving proof that Great Britain does not desire to be the friend of Spain, nor indeed never can whilst this apple of discord subsists between both nations."[16]

The gamble had failed. On February 14, 1781, Lord Hillsborough recalled Cumberland from Spain. Father Hussey moved to the Austrian Netherlands (Belgium) in September, there to spend the rest of the war. Their effort to reconcile Madrid and London had foundered on the rocks of Spanish acquisitiveness and British fear of popular outrage. The two powers distrusted each other even more now than in 1779. Britain's only consolation was that Cumberland's mission had briefly upset the Bourbons' diplomatic harmony, while

Spain had used the negotiations to secure French assistance in future military operations—of Spain's choosing.[17]

On the world stage of the American Revolution, the Hussey-Cumberland mission was obviously a mere sideshow. But it revealed clearly how expendable the American rebels were in Spain's eyes. To John Adams, the colonies' separation from Britain was far more important to France and Spain than any concession that the British could make, "So that America need not be under any apprehensions of being deserted."[18] He was wrong; for Gibraltar, Spain would do whatever was necessary.

* * *

Spain's determination to obtain Gibraltar at any cost also fueled the Spanish navy's aggressive attitude toward neutral shipping near the Rock. Any vessel passing through the straits after June 1779 might be seized on suspicion of carrying supplies to the besieged British garrison on Gibraltar. Spain's indiscriminate harassment of neutrals brought no reprisals, however, until her coastguards herded the Concordia, a corn-laden merchantman bound for Marseilles, into Cádiz in January 1780. The ship was the property of a Russian company; its seizure prompted an angry letter from Catherine II to Madrid. But Spain compounded the insult the following month by detaining another Russian vessel, the Málaga-bound St. Nicholas, and selling all of its cargo.

Now Catherine ordered the immediate armament of five frigates and fifteen ships of the line to protect her merchant fleet. And to strengthen her voice in defense of neutral shipping, the empress issued a Declaration of Armed Neutrality on February 28.[19] This document invited other European neutrals to join Russia in demanding a narrow definition of contraband for the duration of the American conflict, with freedom of navigation through

belligerents' coastal waters to prevent the warring powers from snatching merchant ships on pretext of chasing smugglers. Denmark and Sweden quickly subscribed to Catherine's plan, followed later by Prussia, Austria, Turkey, and the Two Sicilies. In the end, even Britain's former ally Portugal joined the "League of Armed Neutrality."[20]

Ostensibly, the League was created in response to Spanish provocation, and Floridablanca understandably viewed it as an instrument to thwart his country's ambitions. He therefore ordered more liberal regulations for neutral trade on March 13, then dismissed the St. Nicholas affair as an accident and released it and most other neutral ships held in Cádiz.[21] Besides its predictable effect of placating the Russians, this course furthered Spain's maritime interests. The nation lacked sufficient merchant shipping to meet its needs, thus the use of neutral vessels would allow Spaniards to obtain raw materials with both military and peacetime utility. The delivery of such goods was precisely what Britain sought to end by arguing for a broad definition of contraband.[22]

As the League gained adherents and strength through 1780, it became obvious that its target was not Spanish expansionism, but British seapower. By January 1781, a dismayed Lord Sandwich forecast that if Catherine and her League initiated active hostilities against George III, the British empire would disintegrate and "we shall never again figure as a leading power in Europe." Floridablanca noted the same shift of focus and gleefully took full credit for the formation of the Armed Neutrality.[23]

Struggling to break out of its growing isolation, Britain offered to cede Minorca to Catherine II. The North ministry calculated that in defending the island against an expected Spanish attack, Russia would likely be drawn into the fray—on the side of Great Britain. While Catherine appreciated the prospective benefits of a Mediterranean colony to Russia,

the risk of war was equally plain. So she refused the cession, protesting, "The bride is to beautiful; they want to deceive me."[24] The League retained its anti-British orientation for the remainder of the war.

* * *

The Armed Neutrality arrayed most of Europe in hostile wariness toward Britain, but the United States hoped for a more positive commitment from the power most likely to intercede in its behalf. On September 7, 1779, a new French minister, the Chevalier de la Luzerne, rose in Congress and read a letter announcing Spain's declaration of war.[25] The delegates reacted at once. To plead America's case for Spanish recognition, they selected John Jay, their thirty-three-year-old president from New York, to go to Madrid and win over Floridablanca. Jay and his private secretary William Carmichael set sail on October 20 aboard the frigate Confederacy. Three months later they docked in Cádiz, and on April 4, 1780 a mule-drawn carriage drew Jay into the Spanish capital.[26]

From a practical standpoint, Congress might have made a happier choice. Jay spoke not a word of Spanish; and as Floridablanca was equally unskilled in English, Carmichael had to act as interpreter between them. But a language barrier was the least of Jay's problems. During Jay's voyage across the Atlantic, Charles III in Madrid had decided not to recognize American independence until the British monarch had done so. Consequently, the Spanish court which Jay would follow between its four seasonal residences for two years never received him formally as the accredited representative of a foreign power.[27]

But Jay persisted, and after drafting a voluminous report on "the civil and military state of the American provinces" for Floridablanca, he obtained an audience with the Spanish minister on May 11 at Aranjuez. Floridablanca listened as Jay argued the merits of a potential

Spanish alliance with the United States. Then he replied in geopolitical terms. The one obstacle to such a treaty, he said, "arose from the Pretensions of America to the Navigation of the Mississippi." Spain had previously granted the rebels free use of the river—as a temporary measure—to bolster their war effort against Britain. Jay's instructions encouraged him to obtain permanent free passage for Americans on the Mississippi, as well as a river port on Spanish soil, below the thirty-first parallel. Such expectations made Floridablanca uneasy, since he knew that Charles III would never relinquish (or consent to share) Spanish rights to that river.[28]

Early in Jay's mission, it became clear that Spain sought exclusive possession of the Gulf of Mexico as well.[29] Americans took less exception to that claim, for plainly Madrid's defensiveness about gulf navigation was calculated "to prevent the united States [and others] from giting too near their Strong Box" of Mexico. But the Mississippi was the sole outlet to the sea for American farmers in the trans-Appalachian region. Forbidding them to use it would stifle the colonists' westward expansion and, by implication, their prosperity. As Jay informed one Spanish agent, "The Americans, almost to a man, believe that God Almighty has made that river a highway for the people of the upper country to go to the sea by."[30]

His conviction on this point would sustain Jay through protracted financial hardships. Floridablanca tried to break Jay's resistance to Spanish demands by withholding payment on his bills until Jay agreed to surrender America's claims on the Mississippi. But the American, already miffed that Spain had declared war "in a manner not very civil to our independence" and was raising British hopes by her delay in recognizing the United States, grew daily more convinced that "we should retain and insist upon our right" to the river's navigation.[31]

By September 1780, however, Jay acknowledged that the impasse over the Mississippi

was the primary obstacle to a Spanish-American treaty.[32] The Spanish government was coming to the same view and (hoping also to pressure British agent Richard Cumberland into greater compliance over Gibraltar) decided to make an overture to Jay through Don Diego de Gardoqui, a Bilbao merchant. Gardoqui offered the United States $150,000 in credit, obliquely predicating the loan on American flexibility on the Mississippi question.[33] With this proposition on the table, Floridablanca invited Jay to a meeting at San Ildefonso on September 23. That evening, when Jay broached the subjects of alliance and the Mississippi as usual, the Spanish minister showed some irritation. To the American's request for a treaty on the basis of the Franco-American pact of 1778, Floridablanca retorted that that was impossible; French and Spanish interests in America were so different that separate agreements would be necessary. Besides, he added, Charles III was insulted that the French government had neither informed him of, nor invited him to sign, the 1778 accord. Therefore Spain would make an alliance with the rebels at a time of her own choosing. With regard to the Mississippi, Floridablanca continued angrily, "unless Spain could exclude all Nations from the Gulph of Mexico, they might as well admit all." He personally ranked the Mississippi's navigation as "the principal Object to be obtained by the war, and <u>that obtained</u> he should be perfectly Easy whether or no Spain procured any other cession." Not surprisingly, the meeting ended on a note of rancor.[34]

By late 1780 the fortunes of war had deserted the Americans. Cornwallis roamed at will through the South, brushing aside any rebel detachments that dared oppose him. Far away in Paris, Franklin blithely predicted that Madrid would be above using the colonists' distress to pressure them into yielding important objectives. Nor should Congress allow them to. Consider the Mississippi River question, he went on:

> Poor as we are, yet as I know we shall be rich, I would rather agree with [Spain] to buy at a great Price the whole of their right on the Mississippi, than sell a Drop of its Waters. A neighbour might as well ask me to sell my street Door.[35]

Jay knew the Spaniards better and had no expectation that they would sell, but the point soon became moot anyway. For Georgians and South Carolinians in Congress feared the imposition of a uti possidetis peace at any moment. In November they moved to authorize Jay to barter away America's right to the Mississippi, in exchange for Spain's recognizing American independence and increasing her financial support. James Madison fought hard to retain the existing orders and thereby protect Virginia's charter rights to the Mississippi. But the Georgians' and Carolinians' panic carried the day. When the military situation did not improve measurably in the ensuing months, Congress issued new instructions to Jay on February 15, 1781, permitting him to negotiate away America's claims to the western river, provided a free port were made available to her citizens somewhere along its length.[36]

It seemed a heavy price to pay for alliance with a power already embroiled in the war. "No other Congress will surrender all as this has to an ally," growled Governeur Morris, and Jay concurred:

> There was and is little reason to suppose that such a cession would render [Spain's] exertions more vigorous or her aids to us much more liberal....The cession of this navigation will, in my opinion, render a future war with Spain unavoidable, and I shall look upon my subscribing to the one as fixing the certainty of the other.[37]

Nevertheless, when word of the new policy reached him in July, he faithfully transmitted it to Floridablanca. His demands finally met, the Spaniard stalled for another two months before receiving Jay at San Ildefonso on September 19, 1781; there he asked the American to put on paper "the outlines of the proposed treaties" of alliance. Jay presented these three days later, conceding America's abandonment of her Mississippi River claims below 31° north

latitude and offering mutual guarantees of territory in exchange for Spanish recognition of the United States and formal military alliance with them.[38] The problem of justifying the relinquishment of the Mississippi navigation to its constituents "appeared to Congress in a serious Light," Jay wrote. Because its loss could only be compensated by the advantages of overt Spanish alliance and recognition, he reasoned,

> if the acceptance of it should, together with the proposed alliance be postponed to a general Peace, the United States will cease to consider themselves bound by any Propositions or offers which I may now make in their Behalf.

This final, crucial stipulation was Jay's own. Congress had given up the river without conditions, but eagerly embraced Jay's addendum when he reported it.[39]

Events proved that Jay had acted wisely indeed. For the rest of the year "the most profound silence respecting our propositions" reigned in Madrid. By January 1782 even Franklin in Paris was frustrated. "I am much surpris'd at the dilatory reserved Conduct of your Court," he told Jay. "I think they are shortsighted & do not look very far into Futurity, or they would seize with Avidity so excellent an Opportunity of securing a Neighbour's Friendship, which may hereafter be of great consequence to their American Affairs."[40] Clearly, the government of Charles III had more serious difficulties with American independence than simply the navigation of a river.

More distant onlookers such as John Adams found Madrid's delaying tactics "totally incomprehensible," but Franklin grew increasingly certain that Spain did not think American friendship worth cultivating. In March 1782, six months after offering the Mississippi to Floridablanca, Jay wrote to Franklin expressing his disgust:

> As to this Court their system...with Respect to us, has been so opposite to the obvious Dictates of sound Policy that it is hard to devine whether any Thing

> but Experience can undeceive them. For my Part I really think that a Treaty with them daily becomes less important to us.[41]

His mission to Spain had been "one continued series of painful perplexities and embarrassments," and Jay concluded at last that America should settle for her existing treaty with France. The news of Pouré's 1781 raid on Fort St. Joseph, breaking at the same time, swung Congressional leaders at home to Jay's point of view. "I beleive with you," Secretary for Foreign Affairs Robert R. Livingston told him, "that the Court of Madrid does not wish to enter into engagements with [us] during the war." Spain's insatiable appetite for territory, combined with her truculence at the negotiating table, had cooled the ardor of her most persistent suitors.[42]

By the end of April, Franklin, too, had heard enough excuses. "Spain has taken four Years to consider whether she should treat with us or not," he wrote Jay. "Give her Forty. And let us in the mean time mind our own Business."[43] Jay could do more good at his side in the coming negotiations with the British, Franklin believed, so by mutual agreement they terminated the fruitless mission to Madrid.

Late in June 1782, Jay arrived in Paris to begin the arduous work of winning peace.[44]

ALMOST PERFECT:
Spain's Climactic Campaigns, 1781-1782

> Spain being now at war with Great Britain to gain her own objects, she doubtless will prosecute it full as vigorously as if she fought for our objects.
>
> John Jay to the President of Congress, October 3, 1781[1]

Early in the autumn of 1780, James Madison wrote a letter to a friend in which he analyzed Spain's war effort and found it sadly misdirected. "It would be much more for the credit of that nation as well as for the common good," he reasoned, "if instead of wasting their time & resources in these separate and unimportant enterprizes, they would join heartily with the French in attacking the Enemy where success would produce the desired effect." Spain's adventures in Nicaragua and Louisiana were hardly calculated to win the approval of a young rebel politician from Virginia. But the following year, Spanish forces would undertake a series of offensives that even Madison later admitted had brought "substantial advantages" to his country.[2]

As 1781 began, Spain's leaders knew that their resources were dwindling, and with them Spain's momentum. Vergennes made it clear that the French felt the same imperative: "Everything urges us to end the war; the means for waging it daily decrease, and the European situation may change at any moment."[3]

Unknown to the Bourbons, one British statesman was even then drafting a proposal

to lure Russia into the war, to act exclusively against Spanish interests. Richard Oswald's scheme initially called for Russian forces sailing from Siberia "to make a compleat conquest of the Spanish settlements on the coast of [South America]," and eventually of most of Mexico and Peru as well. By April 1781 he had modified his idea to include five or six thousand Russian troops garrisoning New York—freeing redcoats there for operations against the Spaniards in Nicaragua—while Britain granted Catherine II a free hand in Mexico and California. Neither plan ever received governmental sanction, but both demonstrate that Britons viewed the vulnerability of Spain's empire as a bargaining chip with which to attract potential allies and to frighten Madrid into seeking peace.[4]

Spanish operations in North America got under way slowly in 1781. The capture of Fort St. Joseph on February 12 was Spain's only military encounter of the winter. Her inertia in America stemmed from two sources: a late spring and Madrid's preoccupation with European affairs. Gibraltar in particular looked promising for Spanish arms. Britain's garrison there had withstood eighteen months of siege and had received no replenishment since Rodney's convoy the previous winter. Floridablanca's treaty with the sultan of Morocco in January 1781 cut Gibraltar's 7,000 defenders off from food and munitions. But more important militarily, it also deprived them of any news about Spanish plans against the Rock, and simultaneously allowed Spain to redeploy some troops then garrisoning Ceuta and Melilla.[5]

The Spanish navy expected Britain to attempt another relief of Gibraltar. Thirty-two ships of the line from Cádiz took up station near the Rock on February 6, this time prepared to challenge a sizable British convoy. Indeed, they outnumbered Vice-Admiral George Darby's fleet of twenty-eight, which left Portsmouth on March 13 escorting ninety-seven

supply ships bound for Gibraltar and hundreds of merchantmen for the West Indies. But bad timing nullified Spain's best efforts. Her fleet, carrying two months' provisions, had not counted on foul weather delaying Darby's arrival. In April the entire Spanish force hurriedly put into Cádiz to resupply, but as they lay at anchor on the twelfth, the British convoy sailed past them and reached Gibraltar unmolested.[6] Twice now, Britain had revictualed the Rock without loss; but what was unforgivable, the Spanish navy then let Darby slip out of Gibraltar Bay and return to England without firing a shot. The passivity for which Spain was notorious had cost her again.

In the larger scheme of the war, Darby's expedition and the force it required hurt Britain deeply, although Spain herself did not reap the benefits. For when Darby elected to take his entire fleet to Gibraltar, he left no squadron to guard the Channel in his absence. This oversight enabled French admiral the Comte de Grasse to depart Brest in March with twenty-six ships of the line for the Caribbean and ultimately for America, where that fleet would decide the climactic battle of Yorktown. Opposition leaders in Parliament maintained afterward that Darby should have dispatched part of his force directly to the West Indies, as Rodney had done in 1780, before sailing for Gibraltar. But the British admiralty rightly expected a substantial Spanish blockade around the Rock, and only through Darby's good fortune did his fleet appear unduly large for the task at hand.[7] Eventually, Darby did send some warships to convoy the West Indies merchant fleet, but only after Gibraltar was safe. The British captains could not make good the delay, however, and Britain's consequent weakness in the Americas was to make 1781 her most disastrous year of the war.[8]

* * *

Meanwhile, the pendulum of Spain's war swung back to America. Throughout the

winter of 1781, Bernardo de Gálvez had readied his forces for an amphibious assault on Pensacola. His luck up to this point had not been good. The previous autumn he had launched a coordinated attack on the city with forces from both Louisiana and Cuba, but on October 20 a hurricane scattered the sixty-seven ships from Havana all over the Gulf of Mexico, from Campeche to New Orleans.[9] Disheartened, Gálvez gave up for the winter.

By February 1781 he had organized for another try. His 1,315 men boarded transports in Havana on the fourteenth, sailed northward two weeks later, and forced an entrance into Pensacola Bay on March 9 with Gálvez's flagship San Ramón leading the way.[10] Taken by surprise, the British shore batteries had permitted a Spanish landing; now Gálvez could bring the weight of his superior forces to bear. Rapidly, his troops entrenched around Fort George.

All this time, General John Campbell sat inside the fort and did nothing. Thinking of Lord George Germain's prewar warning that "the Floridas must not be left exposed to any sudden attack," Campbell must have mused ruefully that he had faced no other type for the past year and a half. To him, West Florida was merely "an ill-fated corner of His Majesty's dominions," forgotten by London, New York, and Jamaica alike.[11]

The troops under his command certainly were not hand-picked for vigorous campaigning. Back in 1778, Germain had sensed the threat Spain posed to West Florida and ordered General Clinton in New York to dispatch 3,000 soldiers to St. Augustine and Pensacola. Although West Florida was clearly in greater danger of attack from New Orleans and Havana, Campbell arrived in Pensacola with less than half of that detachment. Those troops he did receive were a polyglot, ragtag force of Waldeck Germans, British regulars, and loyalists from Maryland and Pennsylvania—1,220 men in all. Together with Pensacola's male

civilians and Negroes, 500 Indians, and 279 seamen off the troopships, they made a garrison of some 1,800 defenders.[12] These troops, in Germain's view, were not sent to Florida simply to await a Spanish attack. He wanted them used, particularly against New Orleans. Once Spain entered the war, Germain lectured colonial officials on the need for action. "The vast Extent and enormous Expence of the War will not admit of dilatory or languid Movements," he declared in 1780, but the exhortation was lost on Campbell, who had no speed in him.[13]

Nor did the attitude of his superiors in New York and Jamaica help matters. Despite repeated injunctions from Germain to look to the safety of the Floridas and warnings from Campbell that "we shall soon have a hostile visit made us," Clinton insisted that Pensacola was "in perfect safety" and continued to hoard British troops in New York.[14] Admiral Sir Peter Parker, too, considered West Florida a low priority. And because its protection depended primarily on the British fleet at Jamaica, Parker's neglect proved ultimately more serious than Clinton's.[15]

As weeks slipped by, Gálvez lengthened his siege lines and amassed troops. A detachment marching overland from Mobile added 905 men later in March, followed by a flotilla from New Orleans carrying 1,637 troops in sixteen vessels. On April 19, Pensacola's lookouts spied twenty-two ships approaching; it was a combined force from Havana bringing 1,600 Spanish and 725 French regulars, along with 1,504 sailors. When this contingent disembarked three days later, Gálvez's strength stood at 7,686 men.[16] Never in the war had Spain enjoyed such numerical superiority over her opponent.

Spanish and French gunners rained a constant bombardment on Fort George as their infantry pushed its siege works closer day by day; but the British garrison held firm until May 8. On that "unfortunate morning" a stray Spanish shell exploded near a British powder

magazine in an important redoubt known as the 'Half-moon.' Seventy-two men perished instantly as the redoubt erupted in flames, and British resistance collapsed when Gálvez's veterans poured through the gap in the fort's defenses. Campbell surrendered Pensacola—and with it West Florida—the next day.[17]

So stunning was the impact of the Half-moon's destruction that British losses on the whole were quite light: ninety died and forty-six were wounded. The Spaniards suffered heavier casualties—Gálvez himself was among the wounded—but proportionally their loss was minuscule.[18] At surrender ceremonies on May 9, 1781, Gálvez paroled his 1,013 prisoners to the British port of Campbell's choosing, on condition that the troops not transfer to Jamaica or St. Augustine (both Spanish objectives) or serve "against Spain or her allies" until exchanged. Given such freedom, and the fact that Spain and the United States were technically not allied, Campbell logically opted to rejoin Clinton in New York.[19]

This fresh proof of Spain's cynical self-interest raised a howl of protest from Americans, especially New Yorkers such as John Jay. In self-righteous anger Jay chastised Floridablanca for condoning bare-faced treachery, and for once the haughty Spanish minister apologized. "It was ill done...[and] very unexpected," he admitted, and promised to order his generals to parole future British captives to Europe.[20]

Though the furor over the Pensacola garrison soon subsided, and Campbell's troops saw no action after arriving in New York, this incident did provide a revealing glimpse of Spanish thinking.[21] Of course, it was ironic that Gálvez, a supporter of the colonists' cause, should find himself the agent of their latest betrayal by Spain. But he left Campbell that fateful loophole out of carelessness, not malice, a fact that suggests how pervasive an influence Madrid's self-serving, expansionist world view exercised on Spanish leaders

everywhere. Officials like Gálvez internalized what Alexander Hamilton called Spain's "narrow & jealous" policies so completely that they became second nature.[22]

The aftermath of the battle of Pensacola illustrated the differing values attached to the port by each side.[23] British General Campbell was disgusted at the utter lack of support he received from any quarter. "What interpretation can the whole bear," he grumbled, "but that [West Florida] was considered no object of national concern, and left as a gewgaw to amuse and divert the ambition of Spain and prevent it from attending to objects of greater moment and importance." Truly, the colony appeared not to matter to Britain except as a base from which to attack New Orleans. Economically it was a drain on British resources, and its defense was difficult (and therefore neglected by Admiral Parker in Jamaica). In many ways it was for Britain what Louisiana was to Spain: strategically important to restrain rival empires, but otherwise worthless.[24]

Spaniards, on the other hand, were wild with joy at the news of Pensacola's fall. In Havana, three days of celebrations, Te Deums, and rifle salutes showed how much Gálvez's victory meant for Spanish morale. The government had treated West Florida as the high priority it was, calling in ships from Havana, troops and money from Mexico, and even a regiment from the siege of Gibraltar to ensure its conquest. Naval and military coordination reached a level unsurpassed by Spaniards in the war, prompting Campbell to marvel at the obvious "importance of the conquest in the estimation of Spain."[25]

Some modern historians treat Gálvez's campaign against Pensacola less as part of the American Revolution than as a separate Anglo-Spanish conflict. Yet Britain's diversion of troops from other American theaters to West Florida, the resources she invested (and ultimately wasted) in strengthening Fort George, and the 147 artillery pieces she lost to Spain

at Pensacola's fall combined to cripple her war effort in America in 1781, especially in the southern colonies.[26]

* * *

Within six months the effects of that British weakness became resoundingly clear at Yorktown. Spain's contribution to the allied campaign there was both strategic and financial. Again Bernardo de Gálvez, newly promoted to supreme command of the Bourbon forces in the West Indies, played a crucial part. Washington and the Comte de Rochambeau, planning to strike at Cornwallis in Virginia, had written the Comte de Grasse, the French admiral in St. Domingue, requesting naval support. Rochambeau also asked de Grasse to bring 1,200,000 livres in specie to pay the French army. The latter sensed a chance for decisive intervention against the British in America and proposed to take France's entire Caribbean fleet of twenty-eight ships of the line north to Chesapeake Bay. Spanish Vice-Admiral José Solano helped by shifting a Spanish squadron to Cap-Français to protect the French merchantmen left in port.[27]

Gálvez had the power to block this decimation of his naval strength. Yet he not only permitted it, but he also gave de Grasse 3,000 French regulars who had been on loan to Spain. His aide, Francisco de Saavedra, worked closely with de Grasse in devising a strategy for the Chesapeake campaign.[28] Then, to obtain the needed funds, Saavedra and Solano turned to the people of Havana. They answered their appeal by raising 1,500,000 livres in just one day. On August 5, 1781, laden with troops and silver, de Grasse sailed northward.[29]

In that same month, another Bourbon armada was threatening the English Channel.[30] Though it, too, failed to land an invasion force, by its presence it prevented Britain's navy from matching French strength in the American theater. As a result, de Grasse easily

mastered his two British opponents in the Battle of the Capes on September 5, and within seven weeks, Yorktown fell.

Flushed with ambition after this spectacular victory, Washington begged de Grasse to stay and assist in the capture of British-held Charleston and Savannah. "Whatever efforts are made by the Land Armies," he observed, "the Navy must have the casting vote in the present contest." Furthermore, he noted, the season was perfect for campaigning in the South, and such a combination of forces would not easily be amassed again.[31] But de Grasse could not tarry in American waters beyond October, for the Spaniards insisted that he return to the Caribbean to prepare for a combined Bourbon assault on Jamaica in 1782.[32]

So the same Spaniards whose aid had made Cornwallis's defeat possible now prevented his conquerors from making more of their unique opportunity. Jamaica was a purely Spanish objective, yet Solano had made no threatening moves, or even feints, in its direction during the three months of de Grasse's absence.[33] Madrid had no strategic interest in the events transpiring at Yorktown; in fact, de Grasse's whole Virginia adventure seemed to Spain a mere distraction from the serious business of subduing Jamaica and East Florida. Only Gálvez's personal interest in the project led him to release French ships and troops to take part in it.

But whatever the reason, the plan worked to perfection. At Yorktown and nowhere else, the American, French, and Spanish forces cooperated harmoniously, and the results were suitably world-historic.[34] Except for some isolated frontier skirmishes, the war on the North American continent was over, and Spain had played its part in ringing down the curtain.

* * *

Even before West Florida fell to Spain in May 1781, Floridablanca had turned his

attention back to Europe. A great plan was afoot to clear out that infamous "nest of pirates," British-held Minorca.[35] That the island had not been targeted earlier in the war was a welcome surprise to its governor, General James Murray; but Spanish patrols had cruised its waters for years, filling Murray and his garrison of 2,700 with a grim sense of foreboding. Long before Spain entered the conflict, the British on Minorca had imagined themselves in imminent danger of attack.[36] But from a Spanish viewpoint, Minorca had neither the strategic importance nor the emotional symbolism of Gibraltar, Spain's primary objective. It was, as Floridablanca had said, a den for English privateers, and the humiliation of its loss in 1708 still rankled in Spanish hearts. Its principal harbor, Port Mahon, was called "the finest and most convenient in the world." Yet the military threat that the island posed to Spain was negligible, and Britain's tenure there depended entirely on her retaining Gibraltar as Minorca's lifeline.[37] The Rock therefore seemed a logical focus for Spanish operations.

But Madrid hatched plans in the spring of 1781 for an expedition against Minorca. Two distinct motives dictated this choice of objective. First and most important, British diplomats had recently sounded the Russian court about buying Catherine II's mediation efforts by cession of the island to Russia. That news leaked to Madrid, spurring Floridablanca's desire to seize Minorca while it remained in British hands. Second, the Spanish minister wished to count a Mediterranean operation—close to home and therefore chiefly a selfish objective—as Spain's contribution to the Bourbons' European campaigns for 1781.[38] Once he persuaded Charles III of these twin virtues of his scheme on March 13, preparations for the attack went ahead in absolute secrecy, even from the French whose cooperation was essential to its success.[39]

Minorca's defenses certainly looked formidable enough. In Port Mahon lay the key

to the island, Fort St. Philip, which Murray felt that he had done everything in his power to make impregnable. To his request for supplies in 1779 Germain had responded by adding two battalions and surplus provisions to Rodney's fleet replenishing Gibraltar in January 1780. The supplies got through to Minorca; the soldiers did not, thanks to General George Eliott at Gibraltar, who detained them in the belief that his post was the more important to Britain.[40]

So the garrison was well-stocked but unsuspecting as Spain amassed ships and manpower for the expedition. Their point of departure was to be Cádiz, rather than a Mediterranean port, to deceive British spies into predicting a blow against the West Indies or Gibraltar. They certainly fooled John Jay, and the Comte de Vergennes knew nothing about their objective until June 29.[41]

The expeditionary force sailed on July 23, 1781, escorted by forty-nine French and Spanish ships of the line bound for the English Channel. The Duc de Crillon, a French general in the service of Spain, led the force that landed on Minorca a month later and caught its defenders completely by surprise. Murray's men narrowly escaped a rout on that first day, saving themselves only by a hasty retreat behind the walls of Fort St. Philip.[42]

Crillon's troops should have made short work of Murray's four battalions, but Floridablanca's planners had relied so heavily on deception and superior numbers that they had sent no siege weapons with the expedition. Consequently, summer slipped into late fall as the Spaniards ringed the fortress and waited for artillery to arrive. It looked as if another stalemate like Gibraltar was in the making. But by November 11, just as Murray was gaining confidence that "Crillon will find Fort St. Philip's a harder nut to break than he imagines," the Frenchman had the guns he needed to begin the siege in earnest. Nearly 4,500 French troops had joined him in the interim; added to 10,000 Spaniards and Bourbon control of the western

Mediterranean, they sealed Murray's fate unless London could somehow bolster his overmatched garrison by a sizable reinforcement.[43]

The political will to succor Minorca was there, but the means were lacking.[44] In the autumn of 1781, Britain could not muster the ships to run the Spanish blockade around Port Mahon, so Murray was left to fend for himself. In the absence of any relief from home, he could hold out only as long as his men and supplies did. As at Pensacola, a stray mortar shell proved the British garrison's undoing at Minorca. This one destroyed the magazine containing Fort St. Philip's medical stores, leaving the defenders helpless when scurvy appeared early in 1782. Militarily the Bourbons had made scarcely a dent in the fort's defenses, while Murray had taken only 208 battle casualties. But after his final attempt to break out on February 4 failed, the British commander could count only 660 troops healthy enough to fight.[45]

These odds were too overwhelming even for Murray, who on February 6, 1782 surrendered Minorca to Crillon and his army. The Spaniards demolished Fort St. Philip and paroled the English prisoners, with the same conditions that Campbell had received at Pensacola—but this time Madrid stipulated that they return under Spanish supervision to a British port in Europe.[46] Floridablanca wanted no repetition of John Jay's carping on Spanish duplicity toward America.

Thus Charles III won another long-sought objective to crown a triumphant year for Spanish arms. Spain's conquest of Minorca combined all the elements that she had used successfully earlier in the war: shrewd single-minded planning, surprise, sea power, and the ability to secure French cooperation for her own ends. Among the amphibious operations of the eighteenth century, it was Spain's one textbook campaign. The outcome—recovery of a treasured Spanish outpost—pleased the revanchists in the government, while their king

rejoiced in the small number of Spanish casualties.[47]

From anyone's perspective Minorca was a glorious victory, yet its major result would complicate and prolong the entire War of American Independence. For it convinced Madrid to attempt an all-out assault on Gibraltar.[48]

* * *

If anything is surprising about Spain's final attack on the Rock, it is that she waited so long to strike a decisive blow. Gibraltar's recovery had been Madrid's primary reason for entering the war; it absorbed for three years the bulk of Spain's naval resources; its high priority in the minds of Charles III and Floridablanca soured their relations with France; and its very nearness made it a festering sore—impossible to overlook—that distracted Spanish strategists from projects of greater military consequence in the Channel and the Americas.[49]

To an impartial observer, Gibraltar was simply a chunk of limestone occupying two square miles on the periphery of Europe. Its only function in the eighteenth century was to protect the Mediterranean trade; and as its strength was purely defensive, Britain could never use Gibraltar as a beachhead from which to threaten the Spanish mainland.[50] But its continuance in British hands since 1704 was an ongoing source of humiliation to the proud Bourbon who reigned in Madrid. Clearly, beyond strategic considerations there was a strong emotional component to what historians have labeled "a Spanish obsession" with regaining the Rock.[51]

From the day the first Spanish shell flew into Gibraltar in July 1779, the fortress became a magnet for Spain's troops, materiel, and warships because Floridablanca sensed that Britain would never cede the Rock voluntarily. Faced with the Spanish minister's resistance to cooperating with France elsewhere as long as Gibraltar remained British, the Comte de Vergennes gloomily called the Rock "an excellent ally of England."[52] American leaders were

more caustic about Spain's fixation on Gibraltar: James Madison dubbed it Madrid's "hobby horse," while John Adams scowled, "What is the importance of it? A mere point of honor! a trophy of insolence to England, and of humiliation to Spain!"[53]

The Rock's defenders, for their part, liked their chances. Led by General George Eliott of Havana fame, the garrison had numbered 5,512 when hostilities with Spain opened. Reinforcements landed with Rodney's and Darby's relief convoys had swelled their ranks to 7,000 men by the time Spain launched her final assault in 1782. These troops combined offensive élan (proven when they sallied from the Rock in November 1781 to spike the Spanish guns) with a defensive armament (663 artillery pieces and 5 warships) that promised to make any Bourbon effort to dislodge them a costly enterprise.[54]

Spain was up to the challenge, or so her leaders thought. Beginning with 15,000 men besieging Gibraltar in 1779, she had, in three years, amassed nearly 40,000 troops from all over Europe. In 1782, overall command of the siege fell to the Duc de Crillon, fresh from victory at Minorca. He saw the futility of bombarding the fortress from Spanish land batteries and ships anchored two miles distant, a tactic which for a year had made Spain the butt of jokes in the English press. The impossibility of a landward invasion, too, was readily apparent.[55]

So Crillon held a competition for ideas through which he might conquer the Rock. It was won by the Chevalier d'Arcon, a French engineer who proposed the construction of ten floating batteries, equipped with an elaborate fireproofing system and bearing a total of 152 heavy cannon. These guns, pounding Gibraltar from half a mile offshore, would surely destroy the garrison's power to resist. In the six months it took to build the odd weapons, an allied fleet of forty-nine ships gathered in Algeciras Bay to support them.[56]

Finally, on September 13, 1782, the great assault took place, but it expired in utter failure eighteen hours later. The British responded to d'Arcon's batteries with a hail of red-hot cannonballs, which burned and sank all ten of the immovable craft, killing 1,500 of their crewmen. Attackers and garrison exchanged forty thousand rounds of shot and shell on this day alone, but the finality of Spain's defeat was indisputable.[57]

Glumly the besiegers reverted to a blockade, for the possibility remained that starvation might accomplish for them what cannon had not. But even this hope perished a month later, as Admiral Lord Richard Howe at the head of thirty-four British ships of the line sailed unopposed into Gibraltar's harbor on October 16. Again Córdoba's Spanish vessels lay passive as a British convoy unloaded men and supplies that would sustain the Rock for another year. This time the combined fleet, keeping a respectful distance, dueled briefly with Howe on October 20 as he was departing, but there was no hiding the fact that after three successive letdowns, Spain's 'blockade' existed in name only.[58]

In the larger arena of the American Revolution, Gibraltar occupies a prominent place because of the opportunity costs Spain inflicted on herself elsewhere to ensure its capture. John Adams was not alone in concluding that the "immense force" that the Rock siphoned away from Spanish power could have been used far more profitably in other arenas. He felt, understandably, that "the American seas" would have been a better place for Spain to win Gibraltar from Britain. But anywhere a Spanish army and fleet of even half the size that besieged the Rock might have gone, they would have had a momentous impact on the war. As it was, Gibraltar's greatest effect on the Revolution was to divert British fleets to its relief each winter, which seriously compromised their campaigns in America each succeeding spring.[59]

* * *

The news of Spain's failure before Gibraltar reached England on September 30, cheering the public but bringing scant relief to a government nervous about the fate of its richest Caribbean colony, Jamaica. The conquest of this island, vaguely sought by Madrid since Spain's entry into the war, had been actively planned since August 30, 1780. At that time Floridablanca had anticipated that an invasion force of 20,000 to 24,000 men and 46 to 50 ships of the line (nearly half of these French) would be required to achieve this object during the 1781 campaign.

De Grasse's absence in North American waters for much of that year had postponed the attack until 1782, and when the plans were completed in October 1781, they were less ambitious than Madrid had envisioned at first. Floridablanca had ordered forces from Cádiz, Havana, Puerto Rico, and Santo Domingo—11,000 men in all, with 4 ships of the line—to rendezvous with the French at Cap-Français in late December. The attack was slated for March 1782, with the land forces under Gálvez's command, the fleets under de Grasse's.[60]

Lord North's government, then in its last days, had dreaded a massive Bourbon descent on Jamaica since 1779; Sandwich lived "in constant Apprehension of hearing that the blow is allready struck." On learning that Gálvez and de Grasse planned to meet, forming a flotilla of over 12 warships and 18,000 troops who could have only one target in the West Indies, the First Lord had commissioned Admiral Rodney to prevent this union. Rodney at that time was dangerously ill, but he had accepted the assignment and readied his fleet at St. Lucia to meet de Grasse.

Gálvez suffered some delays in reaching the rendezvous but pushed on, arriving to find no sign of de Grasse, nor even news of his whereabouts. The details, when he received

them, were grim. De Grasse had left Martinique for St. Domingue on April 8, but after skirmishing with the British for three days near a cluster of islets called The Saints, he had been crushed on April 12, 1782 in the climactic naval battle of the American war. Besides costing France five ships of the line and de Grasse his freedom, this historic defeat ended conclusively any Bourbon attempt to invade Jamaica in 1782.[61]

Nevertheless, Gálvez had made good use of the interruption. Quickly he laid plans to conquer British East Florida and the nearby Bahama Islands. Besides closing off the Gulf of Mexico to foreign encroachment for the first time since 1763, Spain's capture of these territories would slam shut the northbound channel preferred by British vessels leaving Jamaica for America and Europe.[62] This, in turn, might even make Jamaica expendable in Britain's eyes and convince her to barter it for peace.

British East Floridians had lived since 1779 in fear of imminent assault by Spaniards from Havana. At the beginning of 1782 a mere 436 redcoats and 300-odd militia stood ready to defend the colony. Its capital, St. Augustine, was strongly fortified but inhabited mostly by transplanted Minorcans of uncertain loyalty. And with Governor Patrick Tonyn battling his own military commander for control over East Florida's defense, the path before Gálvez seemed clear. His intelligence service even learned that Minorcans from south of St. Augustine would help him. But for reasons not fully explained, Gálvez had spared East Florida and turned instead against the Bahamas.[63]

Uncharacteristically, Gálvez had declined to lead the raid on New Providence, the chief Bahamian island, in person. Instead he had deputized Juan Manuel de Cagigal, the captain-general of Cuba, to take 2,500 troops along with 3 American frigates and seize the port of Nassau there. This Cagigal had done without delay, reaching Nassau on May 6, 1782

and so intimidating its garrison of 348 men that their governor, General John Maxwell, surrendered two days later without having fired a shot.[64] Though Spain's tenure in the Bahamas proved to be temporary, Cagigal's success there had raised hopes for the coming expedition to Jamaica.

After Spain's defeat at Gibraltar, planning for that invasion resumed. This time it was aided by the French, who wished to coax the Spaniards away from further vain efforts against the Rock. The plan reverted to the large-scale attack Floridablanca had sought in 1780. When gathered to strike, this force was to include 25,000 soldiers and 75 ships of the line under Admiral d'Estaing.[65]

Britons thus had good reason to worry, both in London and in the Caribbean. Despite the progress of peace negotiations, fears persisted in Parliament that a gigantic Bourbon armada was about to seize Jamaica, which would destroy Britain's position in the West Indies forever. Floridablanca played on these concerns and even exaggerated the British claims, hoping—as always—to achieve some concession without risking a battle. But the signing of the preliminary peace accords intervened on January 20, 1783, leaving the recovery of Jamaica, like that of Gibraltar, an unfulfilled Spanish dream.[66]

The significance of these Jamaica plans to Spain's war effort is twofold. First, the projected campaign of 1782 led directly to de Grasse's disaster at The Saints and the loss of Bourbon naval mastery over Britain for all time. But a second point is even more telling. In plotting, as though it were its right, the recovery of a colony lost 125 years earlier, and from which all ties to Spain had been obliterated, Madrid gave a final proof that irredentism and imperial expansion were the twin forces driving Spanish policy in the American Revolution.

A DIALOGUE OF MAPS:
Spain and the Peace Negotiations, 1782-1783

> All nations it is to be feared will wait for Spain, and thus prolong the evils of war to unnecessary lengths.
>
> John Adams to John Jay,
> March 28, 1781[1]

In the peace talks of 1782-1783, Spain remained the wild card she had been during the war, wrecking several French and British proposals before finally agreeing to a peace settlement which still saw her gain more land than any other combatant except the new United States. Not that her fickleness and adamancy were unexpected; both Frenchmen and Americans who had dealt with Madrid foresaw the trouble Spain would cause in the negotiations. It was only the manner and extent of her acquisitiveness that awaited demonstration.

As early as February 1780, the Comte de Montmorin had predicted complications were Spain to join France at a peace conference. A meeting with Floridablanca in March 1782 only strengthened him in that opinion, as the Spaniard's distaste for the Americans flared into open contempt. Shouting repeatedly that the rebels would always be English at heart, Floridablanca frightened Montmorin into warning Vergennes about

> the absolute carelessness or even the repugnance of Spain to the establishing the independence of America. If it is so marked now, what will it be when Spain succeeds in taking Gibraltar? Then the war will have no other object than that same independence, which she now regards with so much indifference and perhaps fear. I confess, monsieur, that this idea torments me.[2]

As a peace conference grew imminent, American diplomats realized the danger implicit in this Spanish attitude. Before leaving Madrid, John Jay had counseled Secretary Livingston that France was ready for a peace, but Spain was not; Charles III's eyes were "fixed on Gibraltar." Livingston, intensely absorbed in the western lands question, was pessimistic about Madrid's store of goodwill toward the United States. "Spain may flatter herself with the hopes of gaining that at a general peace by the favor of the mediators which she is unwilling to purchase of us by the smallest concession," he observed. But "the weak claims which Spain may set up from the conquest of a few inconsiderable posts [e.g., Fort St. Joseph]...only serve as arguments of unbounded ambition without establishing a right."[3] After all, Livingston queried a short time later,

> Will it consist with the dignity of his Catholic majesty to ask, for the short space in which he has been engaged in the war, not only Gibraltar, but the two Floridas, the Mississippi, the exclusion of Great Britain from the trade to the Bay of Honduras; while the other branch of the house of Bourbon, who engaged early in the controversy, confines her demands to the narrowest limits?

He thought not.

Yet those points and more appeared in a note of May 24, 1782, from Floridablanca to Aranda, authorizing the ambassador to open peace negotiations with Britain and listing numerous Spanish desiderata. John Adams spoke for many when he said in June, "I fear that Spain, who deserves the least, will demand the most."[4]

* * *

No sooner had John Jay reached Paris than he found himself once again confronting the Spanish government, this time in the person of Aranda. The Conde, who impressed Jay as "frank and candid," had instructions from Floridablanca to discuss treaty matters with the

American but not to conclude any agreement without first clearing it with Madrid.[5]

With this caveat in mind, Aranda received Jay in his study on Saturday morning, August 3, 1782. Carefully acting the part of a private nobleman rather than a Spanish negotiator, the Conde opened the meeting by spreading out on a table a French edition of John Mitchell's 1755 map of North America. To get a broad sense of where an eventual Spanish-American boundary might be established, he asked Jay where he would draw the dividing line in the west. Without hesitation, the American put his finger on the origin of the Mississippi and traced the river's course down to the thirty-first parallel, just north of New Orleans.

Astonished, Aranda inquired if Jay's idea was to rob Spain of West Florida. Not only was it historically a Spanish possession, he pointed out, but Gálvez had just spent three years winning the colony back from the British. There followed a legalistic squabble about colonial charters versus rights of conquest, after which Jay departed, inviting Aranda to mark his own proposed boundary on the map. The Spaniard sketched a red line from western Lake Erie to where the Kanawha River met the Ohio, then southward to a lake in western Georgia, east of the Flint River. "The idea that I carried in extending...[such] an authoritative line," he noted in his diary, "was to see the Americans come to more moderation."[6]

The response he provoked on sending the map to Jay a few days later was anything but moderate. Aranda's line, Jay exploded, lay nearly as far from the Mississippi as it did from the Atlantic Ocean. Jay showed the map to Franklin, who asserted, "My conjecture of that court's design to coop us up within the Allegany Mountains is now manifested." Together they appealed to Vergennes against the magnitude of Spain's claims.[7] In answer, the French minister offered his services and those of Joseph-Matthias Gérard de Rayneval,

his English-speaking undersecretary, as mediators. On August 25 Vergennes asked Aranda whether Spain would insist on the red line as a boundary. On hearing that she would not (as long as the Mississippi remained inviolate), Vergennes proposed moving its Erie-Ohio segment westward, to the mouth of the Wabash River. To this Aranda assented with reservations, but later, when Rayneval suggested a line even further west, he balked. Such a border would bring the colonists too close to the Mississippi, the Spaniard argued.[8]

Through the end of August, discussions wore on, Aranda alternately regaling his guest with tales of secret Spanish aid to America and coaxing him to exercise his plenipotentiary status to secure for his nation a firm border in the west.[9] But neither man was willing to budge further on the boundary issue. Jay finally terminated the conference on September 10, whereupon he and Aranda both turned to the British for more promising negotiations. American diplomats considered themselves well quit of the Spaniards, for as Lafayette put it, "Untill the Spanish Pencil is transported three Hundred Miles West Ward, There is No doing Any thing towards Settling a treaty With that Nation."[10]

* * *

The Spanish government faced an awkward prospect as it entered negotiations with Britain in Paris that September. While perfectly sincere about bargaining for the recovery of their various objectives (all of them territorial), Charles III and Floridablanca wanted Aranda, their sole representative, to hedge on the fate of Gibraltar, the greatest prize of all. Crillon's great assault on the Rock was expected at any moment, and carried every hope of succeeding.[11]

Ironically, at that point Spain might well have won Gibraltar at the conference table. The new British ministry under the Earl of Shelburne, mindful of the costs attached to

maintaining the Rock during the war, was prepared to cede it to Spain if a suitable equivalent could be found in the West Indies. From Britain's perspective, lush Puerto Rico was the logical choice.

But the Spaniards would not hear of it. Floridablanca rejected an exchange of Puerto Rico as impossible; the most he would permit Aranda to offer was the Spanish enclave of Oran on the Algerian coast. The ambassador decided to approach Shelburne using the French envoy Rayneval as his intermediary. When the Frenchman presented the idea of an Oran-for-Gibraltar trade in London, telling Shelburne that Charles III rated Oran an even finer harbor than Port Mahon in Minorca, the British minister was incredulous. "I upheld the impossibility of ceding [Gibraltar for Oran] ever so strongly," he informed George III on September 13, "that I could form no guess about their disposition regarding Puerto Rico." The king was in complete agreement, replying, "That Oran is a good port is quite new to Me, and I certainly doubt it...Porto Rico is the object we must get for that fortress."[12]

The notion of Oran as an equivalent for Gibraltar perished on September 30 as the news of Eliott's heroic defense reached London. At once Britain's negotiating posture stiffened. The surprise in London was that much greater, therefore, when on October 6 Aranda submitted to British negotiator Alleyne Fitzherbert a statement of Spanish peace terms identical to the one he had offered before Crillon's catastrophic defeat. Gibraltar, Minorca, West Florida, and the expulsion of British loggers from Central America were still Spain's absolute conditions for ending the war.[13] Furthermore, Aranda told the startled Fitzherbert, Puerto Rico and Cuba were the "limbs of Spain," and would never be sacrificed to British demands for an equivalent for Gibraltar. The American war had taught him the value of those islands, Aranda confided to Floridablanca:

> We must imagine that sooner or later in [Spanish] America there will occur revolutions like those of the English colonies, and that it is most important that it be bound to the island capitals of Cuba and Puerto Rico, which by virtue of their firm establishments will come to be the only worthwhile possessions and thereupon will serve to bridle the continent.[14]

The calculating realpolitik subscribed to by high-ranking Spaniards like Aranda was one reason the Spanish islands of the West Indies never came under serious threat of attack during this war. Madrid knew their importance and defended them accordingly.[15]

* * *

British statesmen were flabbergasted at Aranda's ultimatum. In disbelief, they dispatched Fitzherbert to the French delegation to learn "whether the exorbitant Demands of Spain are likely to be adhered to by that Court." Vergennes professed himself shocked at the extravagant terms but saw no means of altering them. Hastily he impressed on Fitzherbert his conviction that "Spain should not continue to impede the Progress of a Pacification" and added that he felt Madrid was secretly prepared to accept much less than it was asking. There was no reason, he assured the furious Englishman, that Spanish greed must unravel the delicate web of agreements that France and Britain had thus far assembled.[16]

Indeed, by early November the French and British had resolved all their differences except the fate of tiny Dominica in the West Indies. With the American commissioners embarked on private negotiations with Britain, there arose the possibility (earlier French promises notwithstanding) that Spain might soon be left alone to face an enemy boasting superior naval power and having nothing to distract it from ravaging her empire at will. Suddenly Floridablanca demonstrated a willingness to barter. On October 30, he had sent Aranda instructions to offer France the Spanish part of Hispaniola; in exchange, the French should find an equivalent among their own possessions to cede to Britain, who would in turn

give Gibraltar to Spain. Aranda presented this scheme to Vergennes a week later, with the suggestion that sacrificing Corsica might fulfill France's part of the arrangement.[17]

Vergennes reacted swiftly, rejecting the Corsican proposal out of hand. The last thing Paris wanted was to see the British fleet acquire a base as near to France's southern coast as Britain itself was to her north. Vergennes could not so easily condemn the transfer of Spanish Santo Domingo to French control, however. True, the colony was undeveloped and presently useless. But if he refused it, he suspected that Floridablanca would promptly offer Santo Domingo to the British in a direct trade for Gibraltar. (In fact, that had been the Spaniard's first instinct; as early as October 20 he had authorized Aranda to make such a trade.)[18] So at least one aspect of Floridablanca's proposition remained on the table.

The British government, too, showed new signs of flexibility. Heartened by Vergennes' prediction that Spain would make peace for a more reasonable price than she had first demanded, the Cabinet met on November 7 to consider what Britain might pay to end the war. However, its conclusion—that West Florida could be ceded to Spain and that British loggers in Honduras might be more restricted in their activities—was as unrealistic as the Spanish ultimatum had been, given Spain's conquest of Minorca and the Bahamas as well as West Florida.[19] And the cession or exchange of Gibraltar was not mentioned.

At about this time, Benjamin Franklin, discussing Anglo-American terms in Paris with Richard Oswald, inquired of the British commissioner how the European peace talks were progressing. Oswald replied that he feared Spain would pose the greatest obstacle to a treaty. When Franklin hinted that Britain might accept trade privileges in the Spanish Indies as an equivalent for the Rock, Oswald countered forcefully that nothing but territory—Puerto Rico in particular—would suffice for that purpose.[20]

Nearby at Versailles, Vergennes' frustration mounted. Spain would not make peace without Gibraltar; Britain refused to consider its exchange. Now that the Bourbons' great assault had failed, the French minister had to break the impasse before Britain's Parliament reconvened on November 26.[21] For once the popular clamor to retain the Rock commenced, no British ministry would dare abandon it. The Spaniards were already threatening to seize Jamaica in 1783; another year's fighting loomed if Vergennes did not move quickly.

In desperation, he ordered Rayneval back to London on November 15 to learn what Britain would demand in exchange for Gibraltar. Shelburne received Rayneval on the evening of the twentieth, and they talked through the night. Finally the prime minister decided that his government would consider parting with the Rock if Spain returned all the territories she had captured during the war <u>and</u> arranged to give Britain either Puerto Rico, Martinique and St. Lucia, or Guadeloupe and Dominica. As before, Puerto Rico headed Britain's list of preferences. Now, however, if Spain refused to yield it, France would have to sacrifice her own islands to close the deal.[22]

Rayneval sent a courier to notify Vergennes at once of Shelburne's offer, then followed him across the Channel. He and Vergennes confronted Aranda on November 28 in Paris. For seven hours they bullied and cajoled the Spanish ambassador. Gibraltar could not be taken by force, they insisted, and Spain's chances of capturing Jamaica (to trade it for the Rock) diminished every week as Britain reinforced it. Finally, the Frenchmen's entreaties had their effect. An exhausted Aranda wrote down a compromise whereby Spain would restore Minorca—but not West Florida—to Britain and cede Santo Domingo to France if the latter gave up Guadeloupe and Dominica, in return for Gibraltar. Spain also expected the British to evacuate their Central American logging settlements.[23]

Seizing the new propositions, Rayneval hurried back to London. There Shelburne had enjoyed comparable success, convincing the Cabinet to postpone Parliament's opening until December 5 and winning the king's and the Cabinet's support for his terms, despite vehement protests by Viscount Keppel and the Duke of Richmond. These two nobles, hawkish and imperialistic in the best of times, were particularly aggrieved because the Cabinet had approved generous peace terms for the Americans a few days earlier.[24] To knuckle under to the Bourbons as well by handing over Gibraltar—at any price—struck them as an infamous act of betrayal. Little did Keppel or Richmond realize how dramatically their position would be strengthened by Britain's signing of a preliminary peace treaty with the United States on November 30, 1782. That act was to exert a powerful effect on the courts of Versailles and Madrid and, most of all, on the British public.

* * *

The lone item in the Anglo-American preliminaries which concerned Spain grew out of John Jay's unpleasant memories of Madrid.[25] Back in October, Jay had remained angry enough at the Spaniards to suggest that Britain employ her 20,000 troops still in North America to recapture West Florida from them. Such a campaign would simultaneously have hastened the evacuation of British-held New York and Charleston, while freeing Americans living in the Mississippi valley from Spanish domination of the river's mouth. Perceiving these advantages, Franklin had quickly fallen in with Jay's proposal; he cautioned only that troops from New York's garrison not be used directly against Pensacola lest Spain suspect American complicity in the attack.[26]

Although planning went no further that month, the prospect of Britain recovering West Florida loomed very real throughout the autumn of 1782. Jay's second draft of a

tentative Anglo-American peace treaty even included a secret "Separate Article" addressing that possibility:

> [I]n Case Great Britain at the conclusion of the present War shall recover or be put in Possession of West Florida, the Line of North Boundary between the said Province and the United States shall be a Line drawn from the Mouth of the River Yaz[oo] where it unites with the Missisippi [sic] due East to the River Appalachicola.[27]

This condition, retained in the preliminary Anglo-American treaty signed in Paris on November 30, translated the southern boundary of the western United States almost a hundred miles north of the 31° north parallel, where British diplomats agreed it should lie if Florida remained in Spanish hands.[28]

The Yazoo's mouth had, in fact, marked West Florida's northern border since 1764, but ownership of the land south of that point was no longer Britain's to negotiate. By offering America the territory below the Yazoo line, Richard Oswald neatly ignored the fact of Gálvez's conquests in 1779. If put into effect, the treaty would even have handed the post of Natchez to the Americans without Spain's consent. Of course, no power in the war was <u>less</u> likely to acquiesce in its hard-won prizes being disposed of so cavalierly, and when Congress disclosed the terms of the Anglo-American preliminaries, Madrid at once voiced a loud protest against the 31° line.[29]

Not content with dealing away Natchez, Oswald also granted America a western boundary on the Mississippi and a full share in his nation's right—established in 1763—to navigate that river freely. At least on paper, then, Britain had given the United States clear access to precisely that waterway which Floridablanca, Aranda, and Rayneval had striven so diligently to prevent their reaching. This cession aroused such animosity in Spain that Madrid closed the Missisipi to American shipping in 1784.[30]

For reasons that will presently become clear, the Separate Article did not figure in the definitive Anglo-American peace treaty.[31]

* * *

Rayneval arrived in London with Aranda's note early on December 3 to a reception vastly different than he had anticipated. Rumors of the government's intention to deal away Gibraltar had met leaks about the one-sidedness of the American peace preliminaries to create a storm of popular resistance to any cession of the Rock. Nevertheless, the Cabinet met that day and approved the exchange of Gibraltar with Spain. Since Madrid refused to yield West Florida, Trinidad, Minorca, and the Bahamas were now to be demanded in addition to Guadeloupe and Dominica. In a fury Keppel and Richmond denounced the plan, the former threatening to resign if it were carried out. Richmond, for his part, told George III the following day that he had accepted the American terms only to permit a harder line to be taken against the Bourbons. He did not think anything could compensate Britain for the loss of Gibraltar, "<u>the brightest jewel of the Crown</u>."[32] When Parliament reopened on December 5, Lord North rose in the Commons to argue the same point. While he would not state categorically that the Rock must under no account be given up, North felt its uniqueness should be fully recognized.

> He believed, there were few things in the possession of Spain that could form an adequate compensation for the loss of Gibraltar; she might indeed give territory infinitely more extensive, and of more intrinsic value; but could she give any other impenetrable fortress?

Charles James Fox spoke out with equal force against the proposed cession. In the war just ending, he said, "Gibraltar had been of infinite use to this country, by the diversion of so considerable a part of the force of our enemies." That fortress, in his opinion, "was to be

ranked among the most important possessions of this country; it was that which gave us respect in the eyes of nations; it manifested our superiority."[33]

The withering criticism leveled at Shelburne's propositions took the Cabinet by surprise and stunned Rayneval. In despair he wrote to Vergennes seeking direction about Gibraltar. "Without that unhappy fortress," Rayneval had felt for some time, "peace with Spain would be infinitely easy." Vergennes knew this better than anyone, and the signing of the Anglo-American preliminaries now gave him a fresh inspiration. With the American commissioners' action a fait accompli, he could now inform Madrid with a clear conscience that their precipitate and unexpected rapprochement with Britain had revived British spirits and dealt a crippling blow to Spain's hopes of recovering Gibraltar under any circumstances. He authorized Rayneval to ask Shelburne what Britain was prepared to yield if France could somehow induce Spain to back away from its demand for the Rock.[34]

This was more than wishful thinking on Vergennes' part. Unknown to him and days before the British and Americans had signed their pact, Floridablanca had sensed a shift in the wind. Swallowing hard, he had admitted to Aranda on November 23, "It seems that the whole obstacle to the conclusion of peace is Gibraltar." Accordingly, he went on, Charles III would like to know "what compensation or what considerable advantage Spain could draw from the treaty, if perchance he should make the sacrifice of giving up such a desire."[35] When Rayneval posed this question to Shelburne on December 10, it was the Earl's turn to be astonished. He had not counted on Madrid to listen to reason. Recovering himself the next day, Shelburne suggested to the king that, in place of Gibraltar, Britain might offer Spain both Floridas (or a West Florida with liberal boundaries) and Minorca. At noon on the eleventh, the Cabinet met to discuss the proposals as Rayneval waited anxiously in the next room.

Three hours later Lord Grantham, Shelburne's foreign secretary, came out to notify the French envoy of their decision. The peace terms to be offered to Spain were simple: the cession of Minorca and both East and West Florida. In return, Spain must restore the Bahamas to Britain and guarantee the right of British loggers to cut wood in Central America under regulations. Finally, France would be required to hand back Dominica.[36]

From a Spaniard's perspective it was a paltry offer. In essence, the Cabinet acknowledged the conquests that Spanish arms had made and sought to buy back one lost colony, the Bahamas, at the price of East Florida.[37] Virtually nothing else would change. British statesmen, therefore, were understandably skeptical whether Madrid would agree to their conditions. Indeed, they had failed to convince even their own monarch that their course was best. George III contended that "Peace is not compleat unless Gibraltar be exchang'd with Spain," and proposed to Shelburne that if Britain must retain the Rock in any case, "Spain should have the two Floridas, or Minorca, but I would wish if possible to be rid of Gibraltar, and to have as much possession in the West Indies as possible."[38] The king was willfully ignoring public opinion here, a luxury that his prime minister could ill afford. Rayneval wrote Vergennes on December 12 begging him to prevail on Spain to accept the new British proposal. Otherwise, he predicted, Shelburne's government would fall and all hope of a quick peace would vanish. At the same time, Rayneval left Shelburne no doubt that France was eager for Madrid "to close on any terms."[39]

That was certainly Vergennes' motive for calling Aranda to Versailles on the morning of December 16, hours after Rayneval's dispatch arrived. By stressing the critical importance of an immediate settlement for both Bourbon courts and presenting Britain's proposed equivalents for Gibraltar, Vergennes hoped to enlist the ambassador's cooperation in

petitioning Madrid to make peace on the basis of that offer. He little dreamed that Aranda was invested with the power to decide for Spain on his own responsibility.

In point of fact, the Conde had no such license. Nevertheless, flourishing Floridablanca's memorandum of November 23 that inquired what compensation Spain might obtain for Gibraltar, Aranda took it upon himself to accept the British terms on behalf of his king.[40] Perhaps he placed a higher premium on the Gulf of Mexico (whose ownership he thereby recovered for Spain) than on Gibraltar as a guarantor of his nation's future welfare. Certainly he sensed in Paris, as one could not from Madrid, the belligerent temper of the British public and Shelburne's tenuous hold on power. Whatever the reason and however unauthorized his action, Aranda effectively ended the war in the instant it took him to respond.

His answer cheered Vergennes immeasurably. The following day, the French minister informed Montmorin of the settlement and brimmed with ideas about how best to make Aranda's agreement palatable to the Spanish court. With ample justification he lauded Spain's reacquisition of the Floridas as an achievement that would secure the mouth of the Mississippi, and by extension New Spain itself, against Anglo-American expansionism for years to come. Yet he surely presumed on Madrid's credulity when he emphasized Spain's good fortune in obtaining Minorca rather than Gibraltar. No amount of rationalizing could soften that blow.

Privately, Vergennes was simply relieved that France had not been forced to sacrifice vital sugar islands, rumors of which had deeply tarnished his popularity in Paris. And as for other French interests, was it not Britain's continuing occupation of Gibraltar that poisoned her relations with Spain and threw the latter into France's arms in times of crisis? The

Convention of Aranjuez notwithstanding, Vergennes had every reason to wish the Rock in British hands.[41]

Meanwhile in London, the authors of the all-important proposal had resigned themselves to a long wait. Shelburne and his Cabinet took it for granted that the Spanish court would need to be consulted on an issue of such magnitude. They were therefore stunned when Rayneval appeared on December 19 to report that Spain had accepted their eleventh-hour offer of a peace without Gibraltar. King George rejoiced that a peace formula had finally been arrived at, but he could not resist pointing out for the record, "I should have liked Minorca, the two Floridas and Guadaloupe better than this proud Fortress,...in my opinion source of another War, or at least of a constant lurking enmity."[42] If only he had shown such foresight in 1775.

The last court to learn of Aranda's unexpected decision was his own. The news that their ambassador had withdrawn Spain's demand for Gibraltar was a terrible shock to Charles III and Floridablanca, particularly the latter, who had now thought better of his order directing Aranda to seek equivalents. On December 18 he rescinded it, but the damage had been done. Vergennes' flimsy defense of Aranda's course mollified Floridablanca not at all. Nor did his explanation that the American commissioners' accord with the British had toughened London's stand, forcing France to settle for less than she had hoped to extract in the negotiations. In a huff, the Spanish minister declared that Vergennes' ministry "was too precipitate in beginning the war, and was equally so in their endeavours to conclude it." His Catholic Majesty was equally disappointed. In January 1783 he wrote to his nephew, Louis XVI, that "my ambassador, knowing my heart's tender sentiments for you, has allowed himself to exceed my orders and pursue peace negotiations without insisting on the cession

of Gibraltar."[43] American independence and Gibraltar in British hands were hardly the objects that Charles III had entered the war to achieve.

With such exasperation the overriding sentiment throughout Madrid, it was by no means certain that the Spanish court would ratify Aranda's acceptance of the British terms. After all, the fleet at Cádiz was still making preparations to conquer Jamaica. But with Gibraltar defiant and France begging for peace, Spain's prospects for further territorial gains looked bleak. Midway through January her government sullenly approved the terms that Aranda had independently accepted for it. He and Fitzherbert met at Versailles on January 20 to sign the preliminary treaty that ended the fighting.[44]

The Spanish court ratified the agreement with little dissent, but Floridablanca carefully avoided thanking Aranda for his role in concluding it. Trying to emphasize its gains, the chief minister publicly hailed the treaty as Spain's most successful in two centuries, but it was unpopular both at the court and among the Spanish people because it had failed to secure Gibraltar, their main objective in the war. Not that Charles III had given up his claim to the Rock. Floridablanca wrote after the war, "We have given way on the matter of Gibraltar only for the moment. We must get it back whenever we can, either by negotiation or by force if war occurs."[45] Anyway, he insisted, by recovering the Floridas and closing the Gulf of Mexico to foreign penetration once again, Spain had won a major foreign policy objective.[46]

Exactly what she had acquired in "the Floridas" was unclear. Both the preliminary treaty and the later definitive version were maddeningly vague on that issue. Certainly Spain was not bound by the terms of the Anglo-American preliminaries, and by right of conquest she might regard the Floridas as stretching northward as far as the Tennessee and Ohio Rivers.[47] Like the Mississippi River question, this problem would haunt future diplomats.

American statesmen of that day believed that Spain had profited handsomely by the peace settlement. "The two Floridas and Minorca are more than a quantum meruit for what this power has done," John Adams sneered. Lafayette expressed regret that the Floridas had fallen to Spain. "For ever the Spaniards Will Be Extravagant in their territorial Notions," he explained, "and Very jealous of the Encrease of American Wealth and Power. But it is Good Policy for us, to Be Upon friendly terms With them."[48]

That would be no easy task, as Madrid had little use for its new neighbors. Aranda worried about "the menace of the revolutionary spirit represented by the United States," and Floridablanca made it plain that he considered American independence a "misfortune." Only at Lafayette's insistence did he finally invite William Carmichael, John Jay's former secretary, to a diplomatic corps dinner on February 22, 1783. Six months later, on August 23, Charles III received Carmichael officially as the chargé d'affaires of the United States of America.[49]

Distasteful as that reception may have been for the king, it marked the beginning of a constructive relationship between two undisputed victors of the American Revolution. One key to the United States' success in the war had been that the colonists took to heart Washington's admonition: "We shall find ample employment in defending ourselves without meditating conquests." Spain, too, was successful (by her own lights) because her leaders meditated virtually nothing else. From the war's opening shots in 1775 through Aranda's bold gamble in December 1782, it was Lafayette who best characterized the spirit that compelled the Spaniards to act as they did. "They labour Under fits of territorial Madness," he said.[50]

With the signing of the definitive Treaty of Paris on September 3, 1783, the madness ended.

* * *

By then Charles III had but five years to reign. Aged seventy-two and content that his gains in the American war had added luster to the glory of the realm, the king died quietly on December 14, 1788. The Spanish empire stood at its greatest extent in two centuries.

NOTES TO THE TEXT

Prologue

1. A. P. Nasatir, "The Anglo-Spanish Frontier in the Illinois Country during the American Revolution, 1779-1783," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, XXI (Oct. 1928), 343; Edward G. Mason, "The March of the Spaniards Across Illinois," Magazine of American History, XV (1886), 463; Daniel McCoy, "Old Fort St. Joseph," Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society (MPHS) Collections, XXXV (1907), 548; "Census of the Post of St. Joseph," June 30, 1780, ibid., X (1887), 406-407; John E. McDowell, "Therese Schindler of Mackinac: Upward Mobility in the Great Lakes Fur Trade," Wisconsin Magazine of History, LXI (Winter, 1977-1978), 126; J. Leitch Wright, Jr., Anglo-Spanish Rivalry in North America (hereafter Anglo-Spanish Rivalry), 131; Jean Baptiste Malliet to Francisco Cruzat, Jan. 9, 1781, in Lawrence Kinnaird, ed., "Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794," Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1945, Volume II, 414; Cruzat to Esteban Miró, Aug. 6, 1781, ibid., 432; Cruzat to Bernardo de Gálvez, Jan. 10, 1781, in Kinnaird, "The Spanish Expedition Against Fort St. Joseph in 1781, A New Interpretation," Mississippi Valley Historical Review (MVHR), XIX (Sept. 1932), 187-188.

2. Gen. Frederick Haldimand to Gen. H. Watson Powell, April 11, 1781, in "The Haldimand Papers," MPHS Historical Collections, XIX (1891), 618; Cruzat to Miró, Aug. 6, 1781, in Kinnaird, ed., "Spain in the Mississippi Valley," II, 432. In 1781, St. Joseph was the nearest British fort to Spanish St. Louis (Mason, "The March of the Spaniards Across Illinois," 462).

3. George Paré, "The St. Joseph Mission," MVHR, XVII (June 1930), 48; Cruzat to Miró, Aug. 6, 1781, in Kinnaird, ed., "Spain in the Mississippi Valley," II, 431-432. Cruzat described the Spaniards' encampment as being "two leagues [i.e. 7 miles] from St. Joseph."

4. Orville W. Coolidge, "Address at the Dedication of the Boulder Marking the Site of Ft. St. Joseph," Michigan Historical Collections, XXXIX (1915), 287-288; Paré, "The St. Joseph Mission," 46; Daniel McCoy, "Old Fort St. Joseph" (in which he notes that Paulette Meillet [sic] led the 1778 raid), 548. In the summer of 1779, Col. George Rogers Clark organized a 250-man expedition under Capt. James Shelby to seize the "Considerable Stores" housed at Fort St. Joseph and demolish the post, but the mission aborted when French volunteers withdrew for lack of shoes (George Rogers Clark to Thomas Jefferson, Sept. 23, 1779, in Julian P. Boyd et al., eds., The Papers of Thomas Jefferson [hereafter Jefferson Papers], III, 89).

5. Nasatir, "The Anglo-Spanish Frontier," 320, 321; and "The Legacy of Spain," in William

S. Coker and Robert R. Rea, eds., Anglo-Spanish Confrontation on the Gulf Coast during the American Revolution (hereafter Anglo-Spanish Confrontation), 9; Juan de la Villebeuvre to Bernardo de Gálvez, June 24, 1780, in Kinnaird, ed., "Spain in the Mississippi Valley," II, 378-379.

6. Arent S. De Peyster to Haldimand, Jan. 8, 1781, in "The Haldimand Papers," MPHS Collections, X (1887), 450-451; Cruzat to Bernardo de Gálvez, Jan. 10, 1781, in Kinnaird, "Spanish Expedition," 187; Clarence W. Alvord, "The Conquest of St. Joseph, Michigan, by the Spaniards in 1781," Michigan Historical Magazine, XIV (1930), 407, 409.

7. Cruzat to Miró, Aug. 6, 1781, in Kinnaird, ed., "Spain in the Mississippi Valley," II, 432; Daniel McCoy, "Old Fort St. Joseph," 545.

8. Quotation from Cruzat to Miró, Aug. 6, 1781 in Kinnaird, ed., "Spain in the Mississippi Valley," II, 433. See also L. H. Beeson, "Fort St. Joseph—The Mission, Trading Post and Fort," in MPHS Historical Collections, XXVIII (1897), 184-185.

9. "Spanish Act of Possession for the Valleys of the St. Joseph and Illinois Rivers, February 12, 1781," in Kinnaird, ed., "Spain in the Mississippi Valley," II, 418.

10. Cruzat to Miró, Aug. 6, 1781, in Kinnaird, ed., "Spain in the Mississippi Valley," II, 433; Assimut and De Peyster at Indian Council at Detroit, March 11, 1781, in "The Haldimand Papers," MPHS Historical Collections, X (1887), 453-455; Theodore Roosevelt, The Winning of the West, II, 179; Alvord, "The Conquest of St. Joseph," 413, 414.

11. "Spectacular success": Nasatir, "Legacy of Spain," 10; Kinnaird also calls it a "spectacular and successful Spanish military operation" ("Spain in the Mississippi Valley," II, xxix-xxx). For Cruzat's authorization, see Nasatir, "The Anglo-Spanish Frontier," 349; and Cruzat to Bernardo de Gálvez, Jan. 10, 1781, in Kinnaird, "Spanish Expedition," 188-189. For approval from Madrid, see José de Gálvez to Bernardo de Gálvez, Jan. 15, 1782, in Reuben Gold Thwaites, "British Regime in Wisconsin," Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, XVIII (1908), 430-432. Thwaites calls it "improbable" that Madrid had any prior role in the expedition's planning (ibid., 431 n.40), and Alvord agrees ("The Conquest of St. Joseph," 414).

12. Jay to Robert Livingston, April 28, 1782, in Francis Wharton, ed., The Revolutionary Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States (hereafter Rev. Dip. Corr. U.S.) V, 363-364; Franklin to Livingston, April 12, 1782, ibid., 300.

13. Nasatir, "Legacy of Spain," 10. Nasatir points out (p. 11) that Cruzat also authorized the expedition to prevent Spain's own Indian allies from learning of Spain's relative weakness in the Illinois country and defecting to the British side. See also Cruzat to Miró, Aug. 6, 1781,

in Kinnaird, ed., "Spain in the Mississippi Valley," II, 433, and Cruzat to Bernardo de Gálvez, Jan. 10, 1781, in Kinnaird, "Spanish Expedition," 188-189. Christopher Ward (The War of the Revolution, II, 862) compares Pouré's achievement (and motives) to George Rogers Clark's audacious capture of Fort Sackville, Vincennes, in February 1779, and Paré ("St. Joseph Mission," 47) suggests Clark's campaign as a possible inspiration for Cruzat.

14. The sole exception was Fort George, Pensacola, which Governor Bernardo de Gálvez of Louisiana captured after amassing a huge force over a period of months.

15. To illustrate the sharp divergence of opinion among experts on this fundamental question, the two best-known diplomatic historians of the Revolution hold diametrically opposing views of Spain's influence on the American victory (see Samuel Flagg Bemis, The Diplomacy of the American Revolution [hereafter Diplomacy], 111; and Jonathan R. Dull, A Diplomatic History of the American Revolution [hereafter Diplomatic History], 112-113).

Chapter One

1. Jonathan R. Dull, The French Navy and American Independence: A Study of Arms and Diplomacy, 1774-1787 (hereafter French Navy), 133.

2. Luis Angel García Melero, ed., La Independencia de los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica a Través de la Prensa Española: Los Precedentes (1763-1776), 244 n.1.

3. Ignacio Rubio Mañe, "The Impact of the American Revolution on Spain: Summary of Remarks," in The Impact of the American Revolution Abroad, 167; Vera Lee Brown, "Studies in the History of Spain in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century," Smith College Studies in History (hereafter "Studies"), XV (Oct. 1929-Jan. 1930), 15; John D. Bergamini, The Spanish Bourbons: The History of a Tenacious Dynasty, 87; Max Savelle, The Origins of American Diplomacy: The International History of Angloamerica, 1492-1763, 487. The death in 1760 of Charles's queen, a member of an anti-French house, further opened the way to renewal of the Compact (Harold Livermore, A History of Spain, 336).

4. Livermore, ibid., 336-337; Ian R. Christie, Wars and Revolutions: Britain 1760-1815, 46; Brown, "Studies," 63-64 n.3; Sir Charles Petrie, King Charles III of Spain: An Enlightened Despot, 109.

5. Wright, Anglo-Spanish Rivalry, 108; David Syrett, "The British Landing at Havana: An Example of an Eighteenth-Century Combined Operation," The Mariner's Mirror, LV (1969), 325; George Hills, Rock of Contention: A History of Gibraltar, 310; Albemarle to Amherst, Aug. 18, 1762, in David Syrett, ed., The Siege and Capture of Havana, 1762, 292-293; Petrie, 108; Maj.-Gen. William Keppel to Adm. Sir George Pocock, July 30, 1762, in Syrett,

Siege, 272-273; Syrett, Siege (introduction), xxxiv. Solar de Breille, the Sardinian envoy, is quoted in Savelle, 504.

6. Vincent T. Harlow, The Founding of the Second British Empire, 1763-1793, I, 75-76. The BEIC wanted permanent possession of the island of Mindanao as compensation for supplying the majority of the funds for the expedition (ibid., 77).

7. Petrie, 108-109; Geoffrey W. Rice, "Great Britain, the Manila Ransom, and the First Falkland Islands Dispute with Spain, 1766," International History Review, II (1980), 389; Nicholas Tracy, "The Capture of Manila 1762," The Mariner's Mirror, LV (1969), 311, 312, 315. Admiral Mahan argues that British success in the Manila expedition "depended entirely upon the fleet" (Alfred Thayer Mahan, The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783 [hereafter Influence of Sea Power], 279).

8. Harlow, I, 76-77; Rice, 390; Petrie, 109.

9. Livermore, A History of Spain, 337; Ernle Bradford, Gibraltar: The History of a Fortress, 66; Wright, Anglo-Spanish Rivalry, 108. Other articles of the 1763 Treaty of Paris that affected Spain are listed in Savelle, 507 n.313.

10. Alexander DeConde, This Affair of Louisiana, 27-28.

11. A. Temple Patterson, The Other Armada: The Franco-Spanish Attempt to Invade Britain in 1779, 40.

12. Harlow, I, 28.

13. Ibid., 30; Julius Goebel, Jr., The Struggle for the Falkland Islands: A Study in Legal and Diplomatic History, 275-277.

14. DeConde, 33; Hillsborough to Gage, Jan. 2, 1771, in Clarence Edwin Carter, ed., The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage with the Secretaries of State, 1763-1775 (hereafter Gage Correspondence), II, 122-123.

15. Wright, Anglo-Spanish Rivalry, 119; DeConde, 33. New Orleans was very lightly defended in 1771, with only 350 Spanish regulars in its garrison (Gage to Hillsborough, April 2, 1771, in Gage Correspondence, I, 293).

16. Harlow, I, 30-31.

17. Ibid., 31; Hillsborough to Gage, Jan. 22, 1771, in Gage Correspondence, II, 125.

18. Goebel, 338; Bergamini, 96.

19. Aranda became ambassador by royal order on June 23, 1773 (Manuel Conrotte, La Intervención de España en la Independencia de los Estados Unidos de la América del Norte, 15 n.1). For French expectations of his role, see Louis XVI to Charles III, July 12, 1773, in Conrotte, 223.

20. M. S. Anderson, "European Diplomatic Relations, 1763-1790," in A. Goodwin, ed., The New Cambridge Modern History, vol. VIII: The American and French Revolutions, 1763-93, 266-267.

21. Ian R. Christie and Benjamin Labaree, Empire or Independence, 1760-1776, 149, 150.

22. Nicholas Tracy, Navies, Deterrence, and American Independence: Britain and Seapower in the 1760s and 1770s (hereafter Navies), 121. This news occasioned great relief in official circles, since some British statesmen feared O'Reilly's secret expedition was destined for Ireland, where Spain could capitalize on Britain's troubles in America. O'Reilly himself, in fact, later boasted that he could conquer Ireland with just 30,000 men. (See Bergamini, 97; and Petrie, 160).

23. William C. Atkinson, A History of Spain and Portugal, 242; Rhea Marsh Smith, Spain: A Modern History, 250; Dauril Alden, "The Marquis of Pombal and the American Revolution," The Americas, XVII (July 1960-April 1961), 371; Louis Bertrand and Sir Charles Petrie, The History of Spain, 429; Brown, "Studies," 10 n.9; Bergamini, 97.

24. "Undeclared War" so called by Alden, 370 n.5. See Tracy, Navies, 120; Bemis, The Diplomacy of the American Revolution, 42; Dull, Diplomatic History, 70; Livermore, A History of Spain, 341; Dull, French Navy, 63 n.27; Alden, 370 (which dates Pombal's dispatch to Britain on Nov. 28, 1775); Brown, "Studies," 82; Stetson Conn, Gibraltar in British Diplomacy in the Eighteenth Century, 179; Livermore, A New History of Portugal, 161-163.

25. Vergennes to the Marquis d'Ossun (French ambassador to Madrid), Oct. 31, 1774, in Edward S. Corwin, French Policy and the American Alliance of 1778, 61. See Bemis, Pinckney's Treaty: America's Advantage from Europe's Distress, 1783-1800 (hereafter Pinckney's Treaty), 8; Dan Lacy, The Meaning of the American Revolution, 169. Lord George Germain guessed correctly that Howe's victory at Long Island, which had caught "the attention of every power in Europe," would defuse the crisis brewing between Spain and Portugal (Germain to Gen. William Howe, Oct. 18, 1776, in Alden, 376 n.25).

26. Corwin, 85-86.

27. Conn, 179; R. M. Smith, 250; Dull, French Navy, 63, 75; Corwin, 104; J. Lynch, "The

Iberian States," in Goodwin, ed., New Cambridge Modern History, VIII, 371. Vergennes surmised correctly that Spain's capture of Saint Catherine would upset London "because it must facilitate the reconciliation between the Courts of Madrid and Lisbon" (Vergennes to Marquis de Noailles, June 7, 1777, in B. F. Stevens, comp., Facsimiles of Manuscripts in European Archives Relating to America 1773-1783 [hereafter Facsimiles], XVI, No. 1546).

28. Livermore, A New History of Portugal, 238, 239; Bergamini, 97; Petrie, 140, 162.

29. Spain returned Saint Catherine and some disputed land along the Amazon River to Portugal, and acquired Sacramento and two islands (Annobon and Fernando Pó) off western Africa (R. M. Smith, 250; Bertrand and Petrie, 429).

30. Petrie, 162.

31. Lawrence S. Kaplan, Colonies into Nation: American Diplomacy, 1763-1801, 100, 98; Petrie, 162.

32. Antony Preston, David Lyon, and John H. Batchelor, Navies of the American Revolution, 135; "Introduction," in Sir John Fortescue, ed., The Correspondence of King George the Third from 1760 to December 1783 (hereafter Corr. George III), IV, xv; Lord North to the King, July 12, 1778, ibid., IV, 178. Keppel had been second in command of the naval squadron during the 1762 Havana campaign (Syrett, Siege, 17 n.4).

33. Piers Mackesy, The War for America, 1775-1783, 210.

34. Keppel to Earl of Sandwich, July 29, 1778, in G. R. Barnes and J. H. Owen, eds., The Private Papers of John, Earl of Sandwich, First Lord of the Admiralty, 1771-1782 (hereafter Sandwich Papers), II, 128.

35. Preston, Lyon, and Batchelor, 135.

36. A. T. Mahan, The Major Operations of the Navies in the War of American Independence (hereafter Major Operations of the Navies), 91. See also W. M. James, The British Navy in Adversity, 156; and Patterson, 39.

Chapter Two

1. Corwin, French Policy and the American Alliance of 1778, 161.

2. Gaceta de Madrid, Aug. 27, 1776, in Melero, ed., La Independencia de los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica a Través de la Prensa Española, 297.

3. Corwin, 179 n.10.

4. J. Leitch Wright, Jr., Florida in the American Revolution (hereafter Florida), 61; Conrotte, La intervención de España en la Independencia de los Estados Unidos de la América del Norte, 24. Lord North did not allow Grimaldi's honest professions of sympathy to deceive him into thinking that Spain would pass up the opportunity to gain at Britain's expense. See Lord North to the King, Jan. 5, [1776,] in Fortescue, ed., Corr. George III, III, 327.

5. Thomas Paine, Common Sense, 35; John Fiske, The American Revolution, II, 132.

6. Samuel Flagg Bemis, The Hussey-Cumberland Mission and American Independence (hereafter Hussey-Cumberland Mission), 2; Vergennes to Members of the French Cabinet, March 12, 1776, in William Bell Clark, ed., Naval Documents of The American Revolution (hereafter Naval Documents), IV, 966; Vergennes, "Considerations on the Affair of the English Colonies in America," March 12, 1776, ibid., IV, 967-969; Kaplan, Colonies into Nation: American Diplomacy, 1763-1801, 98.

7. Horace St. Paul (secretary to ambassador Stormont) to Lord Weymouth, May 1, 1776, in Clark, Naval Documents, IV, 1078; Conrotte, 293; Aranda to Grimaldi, June 7, 1776, in Yela Utrilla, España ante la Independencia de los Estados Unidos, II, 8. Aranda received authorization to make the loan on July 12, 1776, and the money itself on August 5 (Yela Utrilla, II, pp. 12,,13). See also DeConde, This Affair of Louisiana, 33.

8. Philip Stevens to Vice Admiral Robert Man, May 31, 1776, in Clark, Naval Documents, VI, 391-392; Prince Masserano (Spanish ambassador to England) to Marquis de Grimald[i], Sept. 27, 1776, ibid., VI, 613-614; Bemis, Diplomacy of the American Revolution, 44.

9. Marquis de Grimaldi to Count de Aranda, Dec. 9, 1776, in Clark, Naval Documents, VII, 785; Wright, Florida, 64; Congressional Instructions to agent [in France], Sept. 24, 1776, in Worthington Chauncey Ford et al., eds., Journals of the Continental Congress 1774-1789, V, 816; Royal Instructions, Dec. 23, 1776, in James A. Robertson, "Spanish Correspondence Concerning the American Revolution," Hispanic American Historical Review (HAHR), I (1918), 304; José de Gálvez to Bernardo de Gálvez, Dec. 24, 1776, in Clark, Naval Documents, VII, 805. The first to discuss a possible transfer of Pensacola were American Capt. George Gibson and the previous Louisiana governor, Luis Unzaga, who met in New Orleans in 1776 (Jack D. L. Holmes, "French and Spanish Military Units in the 1781 Pensacola Campaign," in Coker and Rea, eds., Anglo-Spanish Confrontation, 154 n.6).

10. Dull, Diplomatic History, 56; Congress to the Court of Spain, Jan. 2, 1777, in Conrotte, 224; Benjamin Franklin to the Committee of Secret Correspondence, Jan. 4, 1777, in Clark, Naval Documents, VIII, 508.

11. Bemis, Pinckney's Treaty, 12, 13; Petrie, King Charles III, 168; Lord Grantham to Lord Weymouth, Aug. 11, 1777, in Clark, Naval Documents, IX, 567.

12. Letter of Feb. 3, 1777, quoted in Corwin, 109.

13. Kaplan, 100; Bemis, Pinckney's Treaty, 10; Petrie, 180; Francisco Morales Padrón, Spanish Help in American Independence, 23.

14. Benjamin Franklin to Conde de Aranda, April 7, 1777, in Clark, Naval Documents, VIII, 749-750; Morales Padrón, 26. Not every American was eager to see Spain embroiled in the war: Samuel Adams considered her an obstacle to Nature's "design" that the United States should possess the Floridas, and Oliver Pollock, the New Orleans merchant, urged Colonel George Rogers Clark to seize West Florida lest the Spaniards enter the war and conquer it first (Wright, Florida, 65; DeConde, 35).

15. Corwin, 227-228 n.10; [Anonymous,] Letter No. 3, Aug. 1777, in CO 5/253, p. 537; Bernardo de Gálvez to Captain Thomas Lloyd, May 11, 1777, in Clark, Naval Documents, VIII, 949; [Anonymous,] Letter No. 5 (Aug. 19, 1777), and No. 7 (Aug. 26, 1777) in CO 5/253, pp. 538 and 539 respectively.

16. "Floridablanca's Reply to the Memorial of the American Commissioners," Oct. 17, 1777, in Stevens, Facsimiles, XIX, No. 1725.

17. Vergennes to Montmorin, Dec. 13, 1777, quoted in Corwin, 136, and Page Smith, A New Age Now Begins, II, 1052. See also Vergennes to Montmorin, April 3, 1778, in Corwin, 137.

18. Dull, French Navy, 94, 86; Howard H. Peckham, The War for Independence: A Military History, 91; Montmorin to Vergennes, Dec. 23, 1777, in Stevens, Facsimiles, XX, No. 1792.

19. Lord North to the King, Jan. 6, 1778, in Corr. George III, IV, 5; Morning Post, April 13, 1776, in Lutnick, The American Revolution and the British Press, 132; Purdie's Virginia Gazette, Sept. 13, 1776, in Clark, Naval Documents, VI, 812; Independent Chronicle (Boston), Feb. 13, 1777, ibid., VII, 1187; South-Carolina and American General Gazette (Charlestown), Feb. 20, 1777, ibid., VII, 1251.

20. Montmorin to Vergennes, Jan. 5, 1778, in Stevens, Facsimiles, XXI, No. 1821; Montmorin to Vergennes, Jan. 28, 1778, ibid., XXI, No. 1850.

21. Dull, Diplomatic History, 94, 168-169. On March 9, 1778, Louis XVI wrote to Charles III that "I would wish to have the opinion of Your Majesty [about whether to sign the treaty],...but the circumstances did not permit me to wait." The Spanish king sullenly replied,

"I should abstain to decide an opinion. I have no doubt...Your Majesty has taken all the necessary measures in such critical circumstances: especially as the least omission could produce the most fatal consequences" (Conrotte, 225-226).

22. James W. Cortada, Two Nations Over Time: Spain and the United States, 1776-1977, 7; Fiske, II, 133. If France forced Spain into the war merely to fulfill her obligations under the Bourbon Family Compact, Floridablanca warned Montmorin in March 1778, Spanish participation would be halfhearted and restricted to auxiliary operations (Dull, French Navy, 111, 113).

23. Thomas Perkins Abernethy, Western Lands and the American Revolution, 203; Bendiner, The Virgin Diplomats, 137; Kaplan, 120; Bemis, Diplomacy, 95, 99. At one point in 1778, Miralles and Conrad-Alexandre Gérard approached Congress to see if America would consider selling to Spain the land rebel forces had conquered in the Illinois country (Richard B. Morris, The Peacemakers: The Great Powers and American Independence [hereafter Peacemakers], 221).

24. Kathryn Trimmer Abbey, "Spanish Projects for the Reoccupation of the Floridas during the American Revolution," HAHR, IX (1929), 269 n.12; Bemis, Pinckney's Treaty, 333; DeConde, 34. See also Lord George Germain to Gov. Peter Chester, Aug. 5, 1778, in K. G. Davies, ed., Documents of the American Revolution, 1770-1783 (hereafter Documents), XV, 178-179.

25. Report of Col. Stuart, May 2, 1778, in CO 5/253, p. 534.

26. Aranda to Floridablanca, April 4, 1778, in Yela Utrilla, II, 251; Dull, French Navy, 118, 126; Petrie, 170.

27. Lord Stormont to Lord Weymouth, Dec. 14, 1777, in Stevens, Facsimiles, XX, No. 1813. On June 22, 1778, Montmorin had pondered Spain's motives in sponsoring a peacemaking convention and concluded, "The moderation affected to-day will to-morrow make way for an ambition that will cause more embarrassment than Spanish assistance will pay for" (Corwin, 180).

28. Lord North to the King, July 12, 1778, in Corr. George III, IV, 178; The King to Lord North, Oct. 13, 1778, ibid., IV, 208.

29. Proclamation of Charles III, June 22, 1779, in Conrotte, 229; Petrie, 178.

30. Washington to the President of Congress, Nov. 11, 1778, in John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources 1745-1799 (hereafter Writings of Washington), XIII, 236; Hamilton to Maj. Gen. Alexander McDougall, Nov. 8,

1778, in Harold C. Syrett, ed., The Papers of Alexander Hamilton (hereafter Hamilton Papers), I, 578; Montmorin to Vergennes, Nov. 12, 1778, in Corwin, 177.

31. Corwin, 188 (quoted); Dull, French Navy, 136-137.

32. Patterson, The Other Armada, 42; Dull, French Navy, 136. On December 14, 1778, Montmorin put the case succinctly for Vergennes: "It seems to me...that the issue of the moment is reduced to whether the King [Louis XVI] wishes to engage in a war whose objective will be changed by Spanish intervention, and whose duration will therefore become uncertain, or whether His Majesty would prefer to bear the burden of hostilities alone, save for a little feeble assistance from that power" (Patterson, 42).

33. Bemis, Pinckney's Treaty, 35 n.48; Robert R. Rea, "British West Florida: Stepchild of Diplomacy," in Samuel Proctor, ed., Eighteenth-Century Florida and Its Borderlands, 70; Richard W. Van Alstyne, Empire and Independence: The International History of the American Revolution, 217; Gérard to Vergennes, Jan. 28, 1779, in Wharton, Rev. Dip. Corr. U.S., VI, 167-168. The following year Gérard's successor, the Chevalier de la Luzerne, reiterated France's support for the Spanish contention that the United States' western boundary followed the line established by the Proclamation of 1763, and that Spain was free to conquer any land she could to the west of that line (Communications of the honorable the French Minister to a Committee of Congress at a Second Conference, Feb. 2, 1780, ibid., III, 489).

34. Gregg L. Lint, "Preparing for Peace: The Objectives of the United States, France, and Spain in the War of the American Revolution," in Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, eds., Peace and the Peacemakers: The Treaty of 1783, 39; Gérard to Vergennes, Feb. 17, 1779, in Corwin, 255.

35. Lieut.-Gov. Henry Hamilton to Frederick Haldimand, Jan. 24, 1779, in Davies, Documents, XVII, 49; Montmorin to Vergennes, Feb. 28, 1779, in Corwin, 191.

36. Patterson, 40.

37. Mackesy, The War for America, 279; Dull, French Navy, 155-156. See also Patterson, 43-44.

38. V. G. Kiernan, "Sunrise in the West: American Independence and Europe," in Owen Dudley Edwards and George Shepperson, eds., Scotland, Europe, and the American Revolution, 29; Dull, French Navy, 132, 136-137; Van Alstyne, 168.

39. The King to Lord North, March 30, 1779, in Corr. George III, IV, 317; Bemis, Hussey-Cumberland Mission, 7.

40. Petrie, 180; Bemis, Diplomacy, 172, 83.

41. Lutnick, 143.

42. Dull, French Navy, 142; Conrotte, 231-234. See also Bemis, Pinckney's Treaty, 14.

43. Conrotte, 234. To give the pact a semblance of balance, France obtained Spain's reciprocal promise to fight until Britain demolished her fortifications at the French port of Dunkerque, but this was a point of marginal importance to both signatories (ibid., 234-235). Floridablanca tried to place Minorca and East Florida on a par with Gibraltar as objectives whose capture was a prerequisite for peace, but France rejected the idea (Dull, French Navy, 143).

44. Cortada, 8; Don Higginbotham, The War of American Independence: Military Attitudes, Policies, and Practice, 1763-1789, 232, 424; Corwin, 205; Dull, French Navy, 142. Significantly, in the peace negotiations of 1782, American commissioner John Jay stated explicitly that his country would not continue the war to help France's ally Spain achieve her war aims (Morris, Peacemakers, 344).

45. Montmorin to Vergennes, May 17, 1779 (quoted), in Corwin, 215-216; Albert W. Haarmann, "The Spanish Conquest of British West Florida, 1779-1781," Florida Historical Quarterly, XXXIX, No. 2 (Oct. 1960), 108. See also Bemis, Diplomacy, 108. The distinction between co-belligerents and allies would prove convenient to Spain when war came. Madrid used it to justify its refusal to permit any direct military cooperation between its forces and those of anti-monarchical rebels (Conrotte, 80; Abbey, "Spanish Projects," 279).

46. Gérard to the President of Congress, May 27, 1779, in Wharton, Rev. Dip. Corr. U.S., III, 195; J. Horace Nunemaker, "Louisiana Anticipates Spain's Recognition of the Independence of the United States," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXVI (1943), 762.

47. Isabel de Madariaga, Britain, Russia, and the Armed Neutrality of 1780, 100; Patterson, 58; The King to Lord North, June 22, 1779, in Corr. George III, IV, 370; John A. Tilley, The British Navy and the American Revolution, 132.

48. William Wardlaw (British secret service agent) to [Lord George Germain], June 8, 1779, in Historical Manuscripts Commission, Report on the Manuscripts of Mrs. Stopford-Sackville, Of Drayton House, Northhamptonshire (hereafter Stopford-Sackville MSS), I, 323; Livermore, A History of Spain, 341-342; Patterson, 76; Wright, Anglo-Spanish Rivalry, 127. Although Britain would make no overt moves against the Philippines in the American Revolution, some of Germain's correspondents did advise him to do so (see C. Mitchell to Germain, June 18, 1779, in Stopford-Sackville MSS, II, 129).

49. James, 173; Patterson, 76; Lord North to the King, [June 15, 1779], in Corr. George III, IV, 357; Petrie, 181, 182; Madariaga, 100; Dull, French Navy, 150; Conrotte, 73. For the text of the Spanish manifesto declaring war, see T. C. Hansard, Parliamentary History, XX, 877-879.

50. "Debate in the Lords on the King's Message respecting the Spanish Manifesto," June 17, 1779, in Hansard, Parliamentary History, XX, 881; "Debate in the Commons on the King's Message respecting the Spanish Manifesto," June 16, 1779, ibid., XX, 896-897; Lutnick, 143; John Randolph to Thomas Jefferson, Oct. 25, 1779, in Jefferson Papers, III, 117.

51. Mario Rodríguez, "The Impact of the American Revolution on the Spanish- and Portuguese-Speaking World," in The Impact of the American Revolution Abroad, 104.

52. Conrotte, 237; Wright, Anglo-Spanish Rivalry, 127. For comparison, in 1761 Spain's navy had 100 ships total, 60 of them ships of the line (Mahan, Influence of Sea Power, 292).

53. The King to Sandwich, Sept. 13, 1779, in Corr. George III, IV, 433; Mahan, Influence of Sea Power, 452. On the unwritten two power standard, see Barbara W. Tuchman, The First Salute, 168.

54. [Sandwich,] "Thoughts upon Naval Measures to be taken...," Sept. 14, 1779, in Corr. George III, IV, 441.

55. James, 156; Preston, Lyon, and Batchelor, 115. On Spain's shipbuilding program, see "Floridablanca's Reply to the Memorial of the American Commissioners," Oct. 17, 1777, in Stevens, Facsimiles, XIX, No. 1725; and report of David Hartley, M.P., in "Debate on the Budget," May 31, 1779, in Hansard, Parliamentary History, XX, 821. By 1780, Spain's navy had grown to include 141 vessels, among them 62 ships of the line (G. T. Garratt, Gibraltar and the Mediterranean, 71). On the quality of Spanish ships, see Hills, 312. Sir Charles Petrie (King Charles III, 184) and John Bergamini (The Spanish Bourbons, 99) agree that Spanish warships were better built than those of Britain.

56. Patterson, 63; Mahan, Major Operations of the Navies, 125.

57. Preston, Lyon, and Batchelor, 115; Mackesy, 285; Mahan, Major Operations of the Navies, 125; Van Alstyne, 198. In July 1782, Spain had only one copper-bottomed ship in her entire navy (Dull, French Navy, 291).

58. In 1779, for instance, 36 Spanish warships were on station in North America and the Caribbean; 9 patrolled South American waters; 4 anchored in the French port of Brest; and 18 ringed Gibraltar. This left 64 free to refit in or operate from Spain's home ports (Conrotte, 237).

59. Mahan, Influence of Sea Power, 460; "peninsula-hugging fleet" quoted from Bemis, Diplomacy, 181; Dull, French Navy, 182, 170-171.

60. James, 305.

61. George Washington to Henry Laurens, Nov. 14, 1778 (quoted), in Writings of Washington, XIII, 256; Washington to the President of Congress, Nov. 11, 1778, ibid., XIII, 231.

62. Montmorin quoted (1781) in James, 304; William T. Hutchinson et al., eds., The Papers of James Madison (hereafter Madison Papers), II, 64 n.2; Mahan, Influence of Sea Power, 366; Dull, French Navy, 181.

63. John Adams to William Carmichael, May 12, 1780, in Charles Francis Adams, ed., The Works of John Adams (hereafter Adams, Works), VII, 164; Hartley, in "Debate on the Budget," May 31, 1779, in Hansard, Parliamentary History, XX, 820-821; Viscount [Augustus] Keppel in "Debate in the Lords on the Preliminary Articles of Peace," Feb. 17, 1783, ibid., XXIII, 394. In a sense Keppel was right, for Spain lacked the forests to produce good shipbuilding timber domestically, and for a time had even negotiated to purchase some frigates from the Americans (Brown, "Studies," 29; Jared Ingersoll to the President of Pennsylvania [Joseph Reed], Oct. 4, 1780, in Edmund C. Burnett, ed., Letters of Members of the Continental Congress [hereafter Letters], V, 405; Richard B. Morris, ed., "The Jay Papers I: Mission to Spain," in American Heritage, XIX, No. 2 [Feb. 1968], 88, 89). These negotiations bore little fruit, as Congress had no money to invest in shipbuilding and Spain would not provide the necessary capital. See John Jay to Floridablanca, March 2, 1782, in Yela Utrilla, II, 352.

64. Dull, French Navy, 98.

65. Mahan, Major Operations of the Navies, 125, and Influence of Sea Power, 480; Peckham, 126. Chief among those who downplay the navy's importance in this war is W. M. James (The British Navy in Adversity, 427). Jonathan Dull argues, however, that its significance as a "fleet in being" greatly altered British strategy and force dispositions (French Navy, 183 [quoted], 98).

66. Intelligence, Sept. 4, 1779, in Sandwich Papers, III, 94-95.

67. Sandwich Papers, III, 6; Peter Osborn (secretary to Sir Charles Hardy) to Sandwich, July 4, 1779, ibid., III, 35; Patterson, 62.

68. Van Alstyne, 168. Lafayette was among the waiting French troops, assigned to a place of honor in the vanguard of the invasion (Morris, Peacemakers, 28).

69. Bendiner, 149; Van Alstyne, 168; Sandwich Papers, III, 6; Mackesy, 294.

70. The King to Sandwich, July 8, 1779, in Sandwich Papers, III, 41; ibid., III, 8; Peter Osborn to Sandwich, Aug. 12, 1779, ibid., III, 57.

71. Tuchman, 166; Lutnick, 153; Lester J. Cappon et al., eds., Atlas of Early American History: The Revolutionary Era, 1760-1790, 56.

72. Tilley, 133; Mahan, Major Operations of the Navies, 117; Sandwich Papers, III, 7.

73. The ship blundered into their fleet on August 16 while searching for Hardy (Sandwich Papers, III, 8 n.1).

74. Tilley, 133; Sandwich Papers, III, 8. For a British civilian perspective, see John Randolph to Thomas Jefferson, Oct. 25, 1779, in Jefferson Papers, III, 116.

75. Lord North to Sandwich, Sept. 7, 1779, in Sandwich Papers, III, 96-97. Lord George Germain reassured his American commander-in-chief with equal optimism, "Our Fleet is...in most excellent Condition....I do not therefore think we have much to apprehend from the Attempt should they make it, especially as the Season of the Year is now so far advanced" (Germain to Clinton, Sept. 27, 1779, in CO 5/263, pp. 85-86). See also Lutnick, 155.

76. Tilley, 133; Sandwich Papers, III, 9.

77. Van Alstyne, 170, 171; Bertrand and Petrie, The History of Spain, 431.

78. Sandwich Papers, III, 8.

Chapter Three

1. Stevens, Facsimiles, XXII, No. 1873.

2. Washington to Robert Morris, Oct. 4, 1778, in Fitzpatrick, ed., Writings of Washington, XIII, 22.

3. Washington to President of Congress, Nov. 11, 1778, ibid., 236.

4. Fiske, The American Revolution, II, 134.

5. Bertrand and Petrie, The History of Spain, 431.

6. "Debate in the Commons on the Preliminary Articles of Peace," Feb. 17, 1783, in Hansard, Parliamentary History, XXIII, 450; Earl J. Hamilton, War and Prices in Spain, 1651-1800 (hereafter War and Prices), 179, 215.

7. Ibid., 86; Lord George Germain to Sir Henry Clinton, Sept. 27, 1779, in CO 5/263, p. 86; [Amherst,] "Proposals humbly offered to the King regarding the Services of the Troops," Sept. 15, 1779, in Fortescue, ed., Corr. George III, IV, 446. Hamilton states (p. 85) that between 1750 and 1800, Spain produced over half of the entire world output of precious metals. Partly for this reason, she did not allow the use of foreign coins in her dominions (John J. McCusker, Money and Exchange in Europe and America, 1600-1775--A Handbook, 98).

8. Hamilton, War and Prices, 160. "Pennyless pocket" quote from Lloyd's Evening Post, Sept. 20, 1780, in Lutnick, The American Revolution and the British Press, 180. Between 1778 and 1780, Spain borrowed two million florins at Amsterdam (Hamilton, War and Prices, 78). Concerning popular contributions, see Bergamini, The Spanish Bourbons, 98, and R. M. Smith, Spain: A Modern History, 251.

9. Grimaldi to Vergennes, March 14, 1776, in Bemis, Diplomacy of the American Revolution, 91 n.24; Lynch, "The Iberian States," in Goodwin, ed., New Cambridge Modern History, VIII, 371; R. M. Smith, 252; The King to Lord North, Nov. 17, 1777, in Corr. George III, III, 495.

10. Beaumarchais to Arthur Lee, June 26, 1776, in Wharton, Rev. Dip. Corr. U.S., II, 98; Kaplan, Colonies into Nation, 92; DeConde, This Affair of Louisiana, 33-34. Although Gálvez loaned Pollock 74,087 pesos from 1778 to 1780, in the same period he spent three times that amount on presents for the local Indians (Kinnaird, ed., "Spain in the Mississippi Valley," II, xxvii). Jay begged Floridablanca for funds on at least nine occasions after his arrival in Europe, including a barrage of six requests in the summer of 1780 alone. His letters from June 9, 1780 to March 14, 1782 are reproduced in Yela Utrilla, España ante la Independencia de los Estados Unidos, II, 307-308, 313, 314, 317-318, 320, 322, 323, 333, 351, 353-354.

11. Jay to Benjamin Franklin, Sept. 8, 1780, in Morris, ed., "Jay Papers," 93; Hamilton to Robert Morris, April 30, 1781, in Syrett, ed., Hamilton Papers, II, 616.

12. William Carmichael to President of Congress, May 11, 1780, in Morris, "Jay Papers," 87.

13. Vice-Admiral Marriott Arbuthnot to Vice-Admiral Sir Peter Parker, Oct. 20, 1779, in Davies, ed., Documents, XVII, 234; Hamilton, War and Prices, 80.

14. Mario Rodríguez, "The Impact of the American Revolution on the Spanish- and

Portuguese-Speaking World," in The Impact of the American Revolution Abroad, 105. The expeditions to Algiers and Buenos Aires alone, wrote the Marquis d'Ossun, had consumed the Spanish finance minister's reserve funds (Ossun to Vergennes, Oct. 9, 1777, in Stevens, Facsimiles, XIX, No. 1719).

15. Bemis, Pinckney's Treaty, 334; Bemis, Diplomacy, 111; Cortada, Two Nations Over Time, 10-11. Thomas Perkins Abernethy notes that important supplies reached America through Spanish-held New Orleans (Western Lands and the American Revolution, 197). Many of Spain's munitions shipments to the American rebels were transferred through the trading company of Gardoqui and Sons, headquartered in Bilbao (Wright, Anglo-Spanish Rivalry, 122).

16. Dull, French Navy, 316; Charles Gibson, Spain in America, 180. John Jay's secretary wrote that the Great Siege alone cost Spain 32,000,000 piasters (William Carmichael to Robert Livingston, Sept. 29, 1782, in Wharton, Rev. Dip. Corr. U.S., V, 784).

17. Hills, Rock of Contention: A History of Gibraltar, 325; Petrie, King Charles III, 192; Garratt, Gibraltar and the Mediterranean, 74. As a good-faith gesture, Mohammed also deposited a large amount of cash in Spain and opened Morocco's ports to Spanish shipping (Petrie, 186). This evidence refutes the claim of some historians that Madrid bribed the sultan to guarantee his support (see Garratt, 74; and Ernle Bradford, Gibraltar: The History of a Fortress, 96).

18. Mahan, Major Operations of the Navies, 157-158; R. Coupland, The American Revolution and the British Empire, 7, 24-25; Dull, French Navy, 193; Mackesy, The War for America, 357. In 1781, Admiral Córdoba led a Spanish squadron that captured another twenty-four British merchantmen traveling under armed escort, during a violent English Channel gale (John Harbron, "Spain's Forgotten Naval Renaissance," History Today, XL [Aug. 1990], 32).

19. Richard Herr, The Eighteenth-Century Revolution in Spain, 146; Abbey, "Spanish Projects for the Reoccupation of the Floridas," 266; José de Gálvez to the Governor of Havana, Sept. 20, 1776, in Clark, ed., Naval Documents, VI, 607-608; Nasatir, "The Legacy of Spain," in Coker and Rea, eds., Anglo-Spanish Confrontation, 2; Wright, Anglo-Spanish Rivalry, 122.

20. Benjamin Franklin, Silas Deane, and Arthur Lee to Ponte de Lima (Portuguese ambassador), April 26, 1777, in Wharton, Rev. Dip. Corr. U.S., II, 307; C. R. Boxer, The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 1415-1825, 196; Brown, "Studies," 92; Tracy, Navies, 120.

21. Hamilton, War and Prices, 78-80. On Spain's attempt to borrow from France (a request rejected by French treasury director Jacques Necker), see James Madison to Joseph Jones,

Dec. 5, 1780, in Madison Papers, II, 223.

22. Bergamini, 94; Hamilton, War and Prices, 78-79; Dull, French Navy, 297 n.11. The actual amount of the June issue was 14,799,900 pesos (Hamilton, War and Prices, 80).

23. Hamilton, War and Prices, 55, 160; 218; 208 (Table 13 and Chart VIII), 215 (Table 14), 216, 225. William Carmichael estimated the depreciation rate of paper money between 12 and 16 percent (William Carmichael to Robert Livingston, Sept. 29, 1782, in Wharton, Rev. Dip. Corr. U.S., V, 784).

24. Brown, "Studies," 62; H. E. Egerton, The Causes and Character of the American Revolution, 131; Hamilton, War and Prices, 196.

25. Fiske, II, 132; José Rodulfo Boeta, Bernardo de Gálvez, 28; Rodríguez, "Impact of the American Revolution on the Spanish- and Portuguese-Speaking World," 105; Bergamini, 94.

26. Peggy K. Liss, "The Impact of the Treaty of Paris on Spanish America," in Prosser Gifford, ed., The Treaty of Paris (1783) in a Changing States System, 148.

27. Bergamini, 100; Hamilton, War and Prices, 152.

28. Vergennes to Montmorin, May 31, 1782, in Dull, French Navy, 298.

Chapter Four

1. Bemis, The Diplomacy of the American Revolution, 78-79.

2. James, The British Navy in Adversity, 188. On June 21, 1779, Spain began a siege of Gibraltar which was to last 1,322 days (Sir William G. F. Jackson, The Rock of the Gibraltarians, 179).

3. Kathryn Trimmer Abbey, "Spanish Projects for the Reoccupation of the Floridas during the American Revolution," HAHR, IX (1929), 274.

4. James Bruce to John Pownall, Oct. 16, 1777, in Davies, Documents, XIV, 226. Theodore Roosevelt called Gálvez "one of the very few strikingly able men Spain has sent to the western hemisphere during the past two centuries" (Winning of the West, II, 177).

5. Gálvez was forewarned in a directive of May 18, to be exact (see Haarmann, "The Spanish Conquest of British West Florida, 1779-1781," Fla. Hist. Qtly., XXXIX [Oct. 1960], 109); Kathryn Abbey, "Efforts of Spain to Maintain Sources of Information in the British Colonies

before 1779," MVHR, XV (June 1928), 63; Wright, Anglo-Spanish Rivalry, 128; Wright, Florida, 67. George III himself was among the first in Britain to call for the seizure of New Orleans from Spain (The King to Lord North, March 3, 1778, in Fortescue, ed., Corr. George III, IV, 46); and once war with Spain began, Germain made its conquest a vital strategic priority (Germain to Clinton and Germain to Gen. John Campbell, both June 25, 1779, in Davies, Documents, XVII, 150, 153).

6. On the Aug. 9 notification and for quotation, see Gen. John Campbell to Germain, Dec. 15, 1779, in CO 5/237, pp. 258-259. On the war announcement, see J. Barton Starr, Tories, Dons, and Rebels: The American Revolution in British West Florida (hereafter Tories), 150-151. On the correct date of Gálvez's announcement, see Gen. John Campbell to Germain, Sept. 14, 1779, in Davies, Documents, XVII, 216. On the people's response, see Jack D. L. Holmes, "French and Spanish Military Units in the 1781 Pensacola Campaign," in Coker and Rea, eds., Anglo-Spanish Confrontation, 154 n.2. On Charles III's recognition of the United States, see Nunemaker, "Louisiana Anticipates Spain's Recognition of the Independence of the United States," La. Hist. Qtly., XXVI (1943), 768-769.

7. Gen. John Campbell to Germain, Sept. 14, 1779, in Davies, Documents, XVII, 216; A. T. Mahan, The Life of Nelson, I, 25; Wright, Florida, 76; Robin F. A. Fabel, "West Florida and British Strategy in the American Revolution," in Samuel Proctor, ed., Eighteenth-Century Florida and the Revolutionary South, 60. Captured Spanish documents confirmed Parker in his fears that d'Estaing planned to strike at Jamaica in 1779 (Vice-Admiral Marriott Arbuthnot to Parker, Oct. 20, 1779, in Davies, Documents, XVII, 234).

8. Starr, Tories, 151; Morales Padrón, Spanish Help in American Independence, 35 (his "thirty-five leagues" equals 120.8 statute miles). On the Iberville canal project, see Gage to Hillsborough, May 7, 1771, in Gage Correspondence, I, 298; and Gen. John Campbell to Gen. Sir Henry Clinton, Feb. 10-March 21, 1779, in Davies, Documents, XVII, 60.

9. Starr, Tories, 153-154; Wright, Florida, 76, 77. General Thomas Gage had declared the Mississippi forts indefensible because of poor communications with Pensacola, and in 1766 urged their abandonment (Starr, Tories, 153). Only in retrospect did Campbell realize his mistake: "The Spaniards...in case of their being first apprized of the commencement of Hostilities...must in all human probability... conquer & overpower, especially the Western Division, as they can march to it by Land, before the Eastern Division is aware of the danger" (Gen. John Campbell to Germain, Dec. 15, 1779, in CO 5/237, pp. 261-262).

10. Haarmann, 111-112; Gen. John Campbell to Germain, Dec. 15, 1779, in CO 5/237, pp. 270-271.

11. Starr, "'Left as a Gewgaw': The Impact of the American Revolution on British West Florida," in Samuel Proctor, ed., Eighteenth-Century Florida: The Impact of the American

Revolution, 19; WO 36/4, pp. 30, 31.

12. Gov. Peter Chester to Gov. Patrick Tonyn, Nov. 7, 1779, in Starr, Tories, 159 n.3; Gen. John Campbell to Germain, Dec. 15, 1779, in CO 5/237, pp. 259-260.

13. Robert V. Haynes, The Natchez District and the American Revolution, 121-122, 124; Starr, "'Left as a Gewgaw,'" 19; Kinnaird, ed., "Spain in the Mississippi Valley," II, xxviii; Jack D. L. Holmes, "Juan de la Villebeuvre: Spain's Commandant of Natchez During the American Revolution," Journal of Mississippi History, XXXVII (1975), 102-103; Cappon et al., eds., Atlas of Early American History, 53.

14. Haynes, 126.

15. Gen. John Campbell to Germain, March 24, 1780, in CO 5/237, p. 337.

16. Gen. John Campbell to Gen. Sir Henry Clinton, Sept. 11, 1779, in Starr, Tories, 145; Boeta, Bernardo de Gálvez, 94; Haarmann, 114.

17. Gen. John Campbell to Germain, Dec. 15, 1779, in CO 5/237, pp. 270-271.

18. Cappon et al., 53; Enclosure in Gov. John Dalling to Germain, Oct. 29, 1779, in Stopford-Sackville MSS, II, 275-276; James, 167-168.

19. J[ohn] Campbell, Lives of the British Admirals, IV, 193, 234.

20. Germain to Lord North, Sept. 13, 1779, in Stopford-Sackville MSS, II, 142; The King to Sandwich, June 26, 1779, in Sandwich Papers, III, 30. Eventually, Germain convinced almost the entire Cabinet that a defensive war would prove "highly prejudicial" to British interests (Lord Stormont to the King, Dec. 24, 1779, in Corr. George III, IV, 533).

21. Germain to Dalling, June 17, 1779, in CO 5/263, pp. 62-63, 64-65. One handy incidental effect of this stratagem was that such a new state would likely be open to free trade, and thus relieve Britain of the need to resort to smuggling to tap the markets and the vast wealth of the Spanish Main. (See "The Object of the War of 1779," [author unknown, July 1779,] in Stopford-Sackville MSS, II, 134-135; and Harlow, The Founding of the Second British Empire, I, 104.)

22. Germain to Clinton, June 25, 1779, in Davies, Documents, XVII, 150; Germain to Clinton, Sept. 27, 1779, in CO 5/263, p. 86. For others in London with similar views, see [Amherst,] "Proposals humbly offered to the King regarding the Services of the Troops," Sept. 15, 1779, in Corr. George III, IV, 446; and Richard Cumberland to Germain, Nov. 20, 1779, in Stopford-Sackville MSS, I, 327.

23. William Dalrymple to Germain, Oct. 21, 1779, in CO 5/237, p. 195; WO 34/253 (Map No. MPH 8).

24. William Dalrymple to Germain, Oct. 21, 1779, in CO 5/237, pp. 198-199; WO 36/4, p. 142.

25. James, 168; Cappon et al., 53; William Dalrymple to Germain, Oct. 21, 1779, in CO 5/237, p. 190.

26. William Dalrymple to Germain, Oct. 21, 1779, in CO 5/237, p. 198; Capt. William Dalrymple to Charles Jenkinson, Secretary at War, Oct. 22, 1779, in WO 1/51, p. 321; WO 36/4, pp. 142, 143; James, 168. British casualties at Omoa totaled 6 killed and 14 wounded (Enclosures in Dalling to Germain, Nov. 15, 1779, in Stopford-Sackville MSS, II, 277-278).

27. James, 169; William Dalrymple to Germain, Oct. 21, 1779, in CO 5/237, p. 199; Germain to Clinton, Jan. 19, 1780, in Davies, Documents, XVIII, 36; Germain to Dalling, Jan. 4, 1780, in CO 5/263, p. 118.

28. James, 169; Boeta, 36; Mackesy, The War for America, 335; Dalling to Germain, Dec. 28, 1779, in Stopford-Sackville MSS, II, 280.

29. Germain to Dalling, April 5, 1780, in Stopford-Sackville MSS, II, 285; Germain to the Lords of Admiralty, Dec. 7, 1779, in CO 5/263, p. 102; Arturo Morales-Carrión, "Puerto Rico: The Breakdown of Spanish Exclusivism," in Charles W. Toth, The American Revolution and the West Indies, 124.

30. The King to Lord North, Dec. [20,] 1779, in Corr. George III, IV, 526; Mahan, Major Operations of the Navies, 121, 123, 125; Dull, French Navy, 171, 172, 173, 178, 205; Mahan, Influence of Sea Power, 358; Mackesy, 322-323, 333, 514; Sandwich to Rodney, March 8, 1780, in Sandwich Papers, III, 206. Rodney himself credited the coppered bottoms for his success, declaring them "absolutely necessary. Without them we should not have taken one Spanish ship" (Rodney to Germain, Jan. 27, 1780, in Stopford-Sackville MSS, II, 153).

31. Dull, French Navy, 180 n.6; Conrotte, La intervención de España, 92, 93; Ward, The War of the Revolution, II, 698.

32. Wright, Anglo-Spanish Rivalry, 129-130; Wright, Florida, 112; [Juan de] Miralles to Congress, Nov. 24, 1779, in Wharton, Rev. Dip. Corr. U.S., III, 413; Miralles to José de Gálvez, Feb. 1, 1780, in Yela Utrilla, España ante la Independencia de los Estados Unidos, II, 275. See also Abbey, "Spanish Projects," 279 n.44, and Bemis, Diplomacy, 103 n.19.

33. Bernardo de Gálvez to Navarro, Oct. 6, 1779, in Abbey, "Spanish Projects," 283;

Campbell to Germain, Feb. 12, 1780, in CO 5/237, p. 339. Campbell had depicted the fort and barracks at Mobile as "almost a scene of ruin and desolation" (Campbell to Clinton, Feb. 10-March 21, 1779, in Davies, Documents, XVII, 63).

34. Bernardo de Gálvez to Elias Durnford, March 1, 1780, and reply of Durnford (same date) in Conrotte, 237-238.

35. James, 240-241; Starr, Tories, 167, 168; Starr, "'Left as a Gewgaw,'" 19. Spanish casualties are listed in WO 36/4, p. 156.

36. Gen. John Campbell to Germain, March 24, 1780, in Davies, Documents, XVIII, 66; Wright, Florida, 81. In fairness to Parker, his orders at this time bound him explicitly to look to "the immediate Safety of that valuable and important Island," Jamaica, before rendering any assistance to Generals Campbell and Dalling at Pensacola and Port Royal, respectively (Germain to Lords of the Admiralty, June 25, 1779, in CO 5/263, p. 67). Clinton, too, understood that "The first and grand object is...the safety of Jamaica, the next the protection of Pensacola" (Clinton to Germain, Sept. 26, 1779, in Davies, Documents, XVII, 222).

37. Alexander Cameron to Germain, July 18, 1780, in Davies, Documents, XVIII, 121.

38. Germain to Dalling, June 17, 1779, in CO 5/263, p. 64. If such a crossing could be effected, wrote Sir John Dalrymple, "England might very well put up with the loss of America, for she would then exchange an empire of dominion which is very difficult to be kept for an empire of trade which keeps itself" (Sir John Dalrymple to Germain, March 1, 1780, in Stopford-Sackville MSS, II, 159).

39. Germain to Dalling, Jan. 4, 1780, in CO 5/263, p. 119. See also Lord Stormont to the King, Dec. 24, 1779, in Corr. George III, IV, 534. Realejo was a fine Pacific Ocean port used by Spain. An added attraction of Germain's route was its origin on the Indian-controlled Mosquito Coast; no time or lives would be wasted establishing a beachhead under Spanish fire (Vera Lee Brown, "Anglo-Spanish Relations in America in the Closing Years of the Colonial Era," HAHR, V [1922], 351).

40. James, 167, 241; Mahan, The Life of Nelson, I, 26-27; Petrie, King Charles III, 209-210.

41. Brig. Gen. Archibald Campbell to Germain, June 3, 1780, in CO 5/238, p. 24; WO 36/4, pp. 148-149; Germain to Dalling, Oct. 30, 1780, in CO 5/263, p. 193; R. A. Humphreys, "Richard Oswald's Plan for an English and Russian Attack on Spanish America, 1781-1782," HAHR, XVIII (1938), 96; Mackesy, 336, 337; Germain to Gen. John Campbell, Nov. 1, 1780, in CO 5/263, p. 195; Cappon et al., 54.

42. Rodney to Germain, Dec. 22, 1780, in Stopford-Sackville MSS, II, 192.

43. Petrie, 210; James, 241; Germain to Gen. John Campbell, Nov. 1, 1780, in CO 5/263, p. 195.

44. Quotations, scouts, and garrison size from De Leyba to Governor [Gálvez], June 8, 1780, in A. P. Nasatir, "St. Louis During the British Attack of 1780," in New Spain and the Anglo-American West, I, 246-247. See also Alvord, "The Conquest of St. Joseph," 404-405; Nasatir, "The Legacy of Spain," in Coker and Rea, Anglo-Spanish Confrontation, 8-9; Nasatir, "Anglo-Spanish Frontier," 320, 321; [De Leyba,] "Estado que manifiesta los muertos, herid^{s}, y Pricioner^{s}, Con esepcion de Claz^{s} del Pueblo de Sn. Luis de Ylin^{s}" (May 28, 1780), in Nasatir, "St. Louis," 249-250; Kinnaird, "The Western Fringe of Revolution," Western Historical Quarterly, VII (1976), 267-268; Nasatir, "St. Louis," 240. Even before Gálvez's campaign, Germain had ordered Gen. Haldimand to "assemble...large Bodies of Indians...and reduce the several Posts occupied by the Spaniards in the Illinois Country" (Germain to Haldimand, June 17, 1779, in CO 5/263, p. 66). See also Fabel, "West Florida and British Strategy," 65. Conrotte notes that of St. Louis' 300 Spanish defenders, only 29 were regular soldiers (La Intervención de España, 96).

45. Stanley Faye, "The Arkansas Post of Louisiana: Spanish Domination," La. Hist. Qtly., XXVII (1944), 662; quotation from Kinnaird, "Western Fringe of Revolution," 269.

46. Fort Jefferson had been built on the Mississippi, five miles below the mouth of the Ohio River, by George Rogers Clark in early 1780. Besides commanding the trade of the region, wrote one of Clark's officers, the post "might Serve as a Check to any Incroach-ments from our present Allies the Spaniards...whose fondness for engrossing Territory might otherwise urge them higher up the River upon our side than we would wish." But in the face of Chickasaw Indian attacks that summer, American troops began to desert and settlers to leave. Despite Oliver Pollock's efforts to resupply the garrison from New Orleans, the fort was evacuated June 8, 1781 "for want of Provisions" (Jefferson Papers, III, 279n; Kinnaird, "Western Fringe of Revolution," 267; Col. John Todd to Thomas Jefferson, June 2, 1780, (quoted) in Jefferson Papers, III, 416; Faye, "Arkansas Post," 661; John Montgomery to Thomas Jefferson, Jan. 8, 1781, in Jefferson Papers, IV, 319-320; ibid., IV, 321n).

47. Mackesy, 374; Harlow, I, 108, 104-106 (quotation p. 105).

48. Mackesy, 379-380; Harlow, I, 110.

49. Bergamini, 100; Bernard Moses, Spain's Declining Power in South America, 1730-1806, 190, 191, 195-196; Petrie, 219-222. Tupac Amaru issued the decree proclaiming himself 'Inca' of Peru, Chile, and Buenos Aires on Dec. 23, 1780 ("Peruvian Manuscripts Collected by J. R. Poinsett in So. America," MS. No. 1, in American Philosophical Society Library).

50. Throughout the revolt three 64-gun warships lay at anchor in Lima (Dull, French Navy, 364-376).

51. Andrew Elliot to [William Eden,] Sept. 14, 1780, in Stevens, Facsimiles, VII, No. 1891.

52. Morales Padrón, 40; Moses, 210, 221; Gibson, Spain in America, 180; quotation from [Manuel Antonio Flórez,] Viceroy of New Granada, cited by Liss, "The Impact of the Treaty of Paris on Spanish America," in Gifford, ed., The Treaty of Paris (1783) in a Changing States System, 149. In 1781, Venezuelan official José de Abalos suggested to Madrid that the "vehement desire for independence" shown by the Comuneros and Peruvians had been a consequence of "the sad and lamentable rising in the United States of North America" (Rodríguez, "The Impact of the American Revolution on the Spanish- and Portuguese-Speaking World," 103; Liss, "The Impact of the Treaty of Paris on Spanish America," 149).

53. R. A. Humphreys, "The Development of the American Communities Outside British Rule," in Goodwin, ed., New Cambridge Modern History, VIII, 405. Both Conrotte (p. 108) and Moses (p. 207) draw a causal connection between the revolt in Peru and the later one in New Granada. The Comuneros at one point tried to involve Britain, sending an emissary to London in May 1781, but their rising was squelched before he could secure aid (Moses, 215).

Chapter Five

1. Bemis, The Hussey-Cumberland Mission and American Independence, 105.

2. The King to Lord North, June 16 and June 22, 1779, in Fortescue, ed., Corr. George III, IV, 358, 369; Richard Henry Lee to Thomas Jefferson, Sept. 20, 1779, in Boyd et al., eds., Jefferson Papers, III, 88.

3. B. R. Mitchell, European Historical Statistics 1750-1970, 23 (interpolated for population estimate, and correlated by Goodwin, ed., New Cambridge Modern History, VIII, 714); Conrotte, La Intervención de España, 83 (see pp. 235-236 for details about various branches of the army); Holmes, "French and Spanish Military Units in the 1781 Pensacola Campaign," in Coker and Rea, eds., Anglo-Spanish Confrontation, 154-155 n.7.

4. Minute of Henry Laurens in Congress, July 14, 1779, in Ford et al., eds., Journals of the Continental Congress, XIV, 835; Jefferson to Bernardo de Gálvez, Nov. 8, 1779, in Jefferson Papers, III, 167.

5. Conrotte, 232.

6. Bemis, Hussey-Cumberland Mission, 12, 13, 15, 46.

7. Richard Cumberland to Lord George Germain, Nov. 19, 1779, in Stopford-Sackville MSS, I, 327.

8. Mackesy, The War for America, 316; Bemis, Hussey-Cumberland Mission, 20; Thomas Hussey to Germain, Jan. 8, 1780, in Stopford-Sackville MSS, I, 330.

9. Bemis, Hussey-Cumberland Mission, 22, 32-33, 34-35; Conn, Gibraltar in British Diplomacy in the Eighteenth Century, 192. Ironically, it was during this period that Arthur Lee assured John Jay, who was attempting a second American mission to Madrid, that "You will not be embarrassed by intrigue, at least none of Spanish origin..." (Arthur Lee to Jay, March 17, 1780, in Richard B. Morris, ed., John Jay: The Making of a Revolutionary —Unpublished Papers 1745-1780, 745).

10. Bemis, Hussey-Cumberland Mission, 62, 45; Mackesy, 372. Floridablanca's gambit succeeded to a great extent: France immediately promised the Spaniards increased assistance in the siege of Gibraltar and in any operations the latter might undertake against Minorca (Bradford, Gibraltar: The History of a Fortress, 95).

11. Bemis, Hussey-Cumberland Mission, 51, 52, 54, 49, 56-57.

12. Ibid., 58-59, 74, 74 n.16. John Jay, the American minister in Madrid, followed Cumberland's progress with interest, but doubted that he would achieve anything: "I am not apprehensive that Spain will make a separate Peace, but I by no Means think it prudent to recieve [sic] the Spies of Britain into their Capital, and even into their Palaces" (Jay to Francis Dana, Aug. 19, 1780, in Morris, John Jay: The Making of a Revolutionary, 807).

13. Ibid., 88-89; Mackesy, 382. Lord Hillsborough, one of the ministers favoring the relinquishment of Gibraltar, confessed later that "so far as he was concerned it would please him if it were ceded to Spain, but that he would not dare to advise it to the King, for if the Nation should revolt this advice might cost him his head" (Hussey to Floridablanca, Dec. 28, 1780, in Bemis, Hussey-Cumberland Mission, 95).

14. Bemis, Hussey-Cumberland Mission, 92-93; Hills, Rock of Contention: A History of Gibraltar, 324; Floridablanca to Thomas Hussey, Jan. 20, 1781, in Stopford-Sackville MSS, I, 338.

15. Richard Cumberland to Germain, Feb. 11, 1781, in Stopford-Sackville MSS, I, 340; Bemis, Hussey-Cumberland Mission, 94; Hussey to Floridablanca, Dec. 28, 1780, ibid., 95.

16. Floridablanca to Hussey, Jan. 20, 1781, in Stopford-Sackville MSS, I, 338-339.

17. Bemis, Hussey-Cumberland Mission, 95-96, 110; Hills, 325; Conn, 197.

18. John Adams to the President of Congress, Aug. 23, 1780, in Wharton, Rev. Dip. Corr. U.S., IV, 41.

19. Dull, French Navy, 184; Madariaga, Britain, Russia, and the Armed Neutrality of 1780, 156, 157-158; Bemis, Hussey-Cumberland Mission, 23 n.16.

20. Higginbotham, The War of American Independence, 237; Coupland, The American Revolution and the British Empire, 6; Kaplan, Colonies into Nation, 133. The initial tripartite coalition made up the bulk of the League's armed might. Added to Russia's thirty ships of the line, the Danish and Swedish navies formed a combined fleet eighty-four warships strong by mid-1781 (Dull, French Navy, 185 n.25; Petrie, King Charles III, 193).

21. Madariaga, 168; Dull, French Navy, 195. On April 18, 1780, Madrid emphasized its intention to respect all neutral flags at sea, provided that other powers steered clear of blockaded Gibraltar (Madariaga, 185).

22. Madariaga, 60, 62.

23. Madariaga, 284; Petrie, 193. See also Dull, French Navy, 185-186.

24. R. A. Humphreys, "Richard Oswald's Plan for an English and Russian Attack on Spanish America, 1781-1782," Hispanic American Historical Review, XVIII (1938), 98; Lord Stormont to the King, March 21, 1780, in Corr. George III, V, 36; Madariaga, 286, 298. In June 1780 another of London's pipe dreams—an invitation to Russia to conquer Spain's Mediterranean island of Majorca—died quietly in the wastebasket of Sir James Harris, Britain's sensible minister in St. Petersburg (Madariaga, 239-240).

25. Bemis, Pinckney's Treaty, 21; Comte de Vergennes to M. Gérard, June 29, 1779 (letter presented in Congress), in Wharton, Rev. Dip. Corr. U.S., III, 310.

26. Morris, John Jay: The Making of a Revolutionary, 15; Morris, ed., "The Jay Papers I: Mission to Spain," in American Heritage, XIX, No. 2 (Feb. 1968) (hereafter "Jay Papers"), 8, 86; Yela Utrilla, España ante la Independencia de los Estados Unidos, I, 416. Jay was elected minister to Spain by vote of Congress on Sept. 27, 1779 (Morris, John Jay: The Making of a Revolutionary, 651 n.3).

27. Morris, "Jay Papers," 87; Bendiner, The Virgin Diplomats, 153; Corwin, French Policy and the American Alliance of 1778, 319. When Floridablanca finally deigned to receive Jay in Madrid, it was with the stipulation that the American not appear in "a public character" that might imply Spanish recognition of the rebel colonists (Floridablanca to Jay, Feb. 24, 1780, in Morris, John Jay: The Making of a Revolutionary, 738). For details on the Spanish court's mobility, see Jay to Robert R. Livingston, May 23, 1780, ibid., 758.

28. Morris, "Jay Papers," 87; William Carmichael to President of Congress, May 11, 1780, ibid., 88; DeConde, This Affair of Louisiana, 38; "Instructions to the minister plenipotentiary for negotiating with the court of Spain," Sept. 28, 1779, in Journals of the Continental Congress, XV, 1119.

29. Carmichael to the Committee of Foreign Affairs, May 28, 1780, in Wharton, Rev. Dip. Corr. U.S., III, 737. Carmichael's later reports to that committee (Sept. 25 and Nov. 28, 1780, ibid., IV, 71 and 165) reinforce this impression. At one point Floridablanca actually told Jay that the exclusive navigation of the Gulf of Mexico was more important to Spain than Gibraltar itself (John Jay to the President of Congress, Oct. 3, 1781, ibid., IV, 739).

30. Governeur Morris to John Jay, Jan. 20, 1782, in Morris, ed., John Jay: The Winning of the Peace—Unpublished Papers 1780-1784, 125; John Collins to Nathanael Greene, Feb. 22, 1780, in Edmund C. Burnett, ed., Letters of Members of the Continental Congress, V, 47; Drew R. McCoy, "Benjamin Franklin's Vision of a Republican Political Economy for America," William and Mary Quarterly (WMQ), 3d Ser., XXXV (1978), 622, 623; Morris, "Jay Papers," 95.

31. Van Alstyne, Empire and Independence, 183; Morris, The Peacemakers: The Great Powers and American Independence, 223; Jay to John Adams, June 4, 1780, in Morris, John Jay: The Making of a Revolutionary, 765. Jay wrote Vergennes asking for funds to defray his personal expenses, and in August 1780 he complained bitterly to Montmorin about Floridablanca's treatment of him (Van Alstyne, 183; Morris, "Jay Papers," 91). John Adams would later inform Jay from his vantage point in Leyden that Spain's "delay in acknowledging our independence, contributes amazingly to the indecision of the [Dutch] republic" as well as buoying British spirits (Adams to Jay, March 28, 1781, in Adams, Works, VII, 385. See also Adams to Benjamin Franklin, April 16, 1781, ibid., VII, 389-390).

32. Jay to Benjamin Franklin, Sept. 8, 1780, in Morris, "Jay Papers," 93. Spanish diplomatic recognition of the United States was also taking longer than expected to achieve. Jay informed John Adams that "This Court seems to have great Respect for the old adage 'festina lente' [hasten slowly]—at least as applied to our Independence" (Jay to Adams, June 4, 1780, in Morris, John Jay: The Making of a Revolutionary, 765). But the resolution of this issue, like that of a possible treaty, hinged on prior settlement of geopolitical differences between the two governments.

33. Morris, "Jay Papers," 94. Floridablanca had vowed, after his second inconclusive meeting with Cumberland, that the day the Englishman left Spain without an agreement on Gibraltar, "he would immediately treat with Mr. Jay, and acknowledge him" (Hussey to Cumberland, Sept. 10, 1780, in Bemis, Hussey-Cumberland Mission, 92).

34. William Carmichael to President of Congress, [1780,] in Morris, "Jay Papers," 95; John

Jay to Samuel Huntington, Nov. 6, 1780, in Morris, John Jay: The Making of a Revolutionary, 830-831. At this meeting, Floridablanca said disingenuously that Spain had rejected Cumberland's unsolicited overtures and that "Congress might rely on his Majesty's determination never to give up or forsake America," but Jay left highly skeptical of Spain's motives and suspicious of her intentions. "What the Plan of this Court is with respect to us, or whether they have any is with me very doubtful," he wrote. "If Spain is determined that we shall be Independent, why not openly declare so and thereby diminish the hopes and Endeavors of Britain to prevent it? She seems to be desirous of holding the Balance, of being in some sort of Mediatrix, and of courting the offers of each by her supposed Importance to both" (Jay to Huntington, Nov. 6, 1780, ibid., 826, 833).

35. Franklin to Jay, Oct. 2, 1780, in Morris, "Jay Papers," 94.

36. James Madison to Joseph Jones, Nov. 25, 1780, in Hutchinson, Rachal, et al., eds., Madison Papers, II, 202; Lance Banning, "James Madison and the Nationalists, 1780-1783," WMQ, 3d Ser., XL (1983), 233; Morris, "Jay Papers," 95; Bendiner, 166. For details of Madison's concerns, see Virginia Delegates in Congress to Thomas Jefferson, Dec. 13, 1780, in Jefferson Papers, IV, 203.

37. Governeur Morris to John Jay, June 17, 1781, in Morris, John Jay: The Winning of the Peace, 86; John Jay to the President of Congress, Oct. 3, 1781, in Wharton, Rev. Dip. Corr. U.S., IV, 743.

38. Jay to Floridablanca, July 2, 1781, in Yela Utrilla, II, 340-341; Morris, Peacemakers, 242.

39. Propositions of John Jay to Floridablanca, Sept. 22, 1781, in Yela Utrilla, II, 346-347; Morris, Peacemakers, 243.

40. Jay to Franklin, Nov. 21, 1781, in Corwin, 325; Franklin to Jay, Jan. 19, 1782, in Smyth, ed., Writings of Franklin, VIII, 365-366.

41. John Adams to Lafayette, April 6, 1782, in Adams, Works, VII, 565; Franklin to Jay, March 16, 1782, in Smyth, Writings of Franklin, VIII, 399; Jay to Franklin, March 29, 1782, in Morris, John Jay: The Winning of the Peace, 145.

42. Higginbotham, 236; Livingston to Jay, April 28, 1782, in Morris, John Jay: The Winning of the Peace, 163.

43. Franklin to Jay, April 22, 1782, in Morris, "Jay Papers," 96.

44. Dull, Diplomatic History, 139-140.

Chapter Six

1. Wharton, ed., Rev. Dip. Corr. U.S., IV, 743.

2. James Madison to Edmund Pendleton, Oct. 3, 1780, in Hutchinson, Rachal, et al., eds., Madison Papers, II, 109; Madison's "Notes on Debates," March 19, 1783, ibid., VI, 364.

3. Vergennes to [Montmorin,] Feb. 14, 1781, in Mackesy, The War for America, 386.

4. Humphreys, "Richard Oswald's Plan for an English and Russian Attack on Spanish America, 1781-1782," HAHR, XVIII, 95-97, 100; Bendiner, The Virgin Diplomats, 211-212.

5. Garrison strength noted in Jackson, The Rock of the Gibraltarians, 179. For results of the Spain-Morocco treaty, see Hills, Rock of Contention: A History of Gibraltar, 325; and Petrie, King Charles III, 186.

6. Mackesy, 389; Dull, French Navy, 221; Mahan, Influence of Sea Power, 361.

7. Mahan, Influence of Sea Power, 361; Mackesy, 393.

8. Given its momentous after-effects, the second relief of Gibraltar merits Jonathan Dull's description of it as "one of the war's decisive operations" (French Navy, 224).

9. Fabel, "West Florida and British Strategy in the American Revolution," in Proctor, ed., Eighteenth-Century Florida and the Revolutionary South, 62; [Bernardo de Gálvez,] Diario de las operaciones, in N. Orwin Rush, The Battle of Pensacola, 41.

10. Starr, Tories, 195; Gen. John Campbell to Germain, May 7, 1781, in Davies, Documents, XX, 136; Petrie, 207.

11. Germain to Clinton, March 8, 1778, in Davies, Documents, XV, 59; Gen. John Campbell to Germain, May 12, 1781, ibid., XX, 140.

12. Secret Instructions to General Sir Henry Clinton, March 21, 1778, in Stevens, Facsimiles, XI, No. 1069; Fabel, "West Florida and British Strategy," 54; Starr, Tories, 190, 192. Campbell had a habit of crying wolf where his Indian allies were concerned, calling them up and sending them home with a frequency that annoyed Indian agent Alexander Cameron. Cameron wanted Britain's Choctaw and Chickasaw warriors kept at Fort George. "Had my advice been regarded by General Campbell in time," he said later, "instead of having 500, I should have had 2000 Indians to oppose the Spaniards at the siege of Pensacola" (Alexander Cameron to Germain, May 27, 1781, in Davies, Documents, XX, 150).

13. Germain to Gov. John Dalling, Oct. 30, 1780, in CO 5/263, p. 195.

14. Germain to Clinton, Nov. 4, 1778, in Davies, Documents, XV, 240. Quotes are from Gen. John Campbell to Germain, Sept. 22, 1780, ibid., XVIII, 175; and Clinton to Germain, Sept. 20, 1780, ibid., XVIII, 172. See also Fabel, "West Florida and British Strategy," 66.

15. Fabel, "West Florida and British Strategy," 54, 66; Gage to Hillsborough, March 9, 1771, in Gage Correspondence, I, 291-192. The extent of Parker's assistance to Campbell in 1781 was to send warning of Gálvez's departure from Havana...a warning that reached Pensacola a scant three days before the Spaniards did (Alexander Cameron to Germain, May 27, 1781, in Davies, Documents, XX, 149).

16. Starr, Tories, 195, 201-202, 205, 206; Campbell to Germain, May 7, 1781, in Davies, Documents, XX, 136, 137.

17. Gen. John Campbell to Clinton, May 12, 1781, in Rush, The Battle of Pensacola, 104; WO 36/4, p. 41.

18. Starr, Tories, 211; Conrotte, La Intervención de España, 100. Gálvez reported Spanish casualties as 95 killed, 202 wounded (Diario de las operaciones, in Rush, The Battle of Pensacola, 84).

19. Article I of the "Artículos de capitulación" in Conrotte, 243-244; Gen. John Campbell to Germain, May 12, 1781, in Davies, Documents, XX, 140.

20. Wright, Florida, 115; John Jay to the President of Congress, Oct. 3, 1781, in Wharton, Rev. Dip. Corr. U.S., IV, 743.

21. Starr, Tories, 212 n.42. Clinton himself made the decision not to use the Pensacola troops before their exchange (Haarmann, "The Spanish Conquest of British West Florida, 1779-1781," Fla. Hist. Qtly., XXXIX [Oct. 1960], 133).

22. [Alexander Hamilton,] "Continental Congress Remarks on the Provisional Peace Treaty," March 19, 1783, in Syrett, ed., Hamilton Papers, III, 295.

23. An interesting exception to the monotonous string of Spanish successes in West Florida was a temporary setback in the spring of 1781, known as the `Natchez Revolt.' Early in April a group of British loyalists approached General Campbell for commissions to foment an uprising against Spanish rule in Natchez. Hard-pressed by the Franco-Spanish siege, Campbell authorized the rebellion in hopes of diverting Spanish might away from Pensacola. The loyalists, under Captain John Blommart, attacked Fort Panmure at Natchez on April 22, and by a clever ruse induced the 76-man Spanish garrison under Villebeuvre to capitulate on

May 4. Unfortunately, Campbell's surrender of Pensacola five days later nullified their accomplishment. When troops from Baton Rouge restored Spanish control over Natchez on June 23, they jailed Blommart and the other instigators of the revolt. (See Gen. John Campbell to Germain, July 21, 1781, in Davies, Documents, XX, 194; Holmes, "Juan de la Villebeuvre," Jour. Miss. Hist., XXXVII, 108-110; Haynes, The Natchez District and the American Revolution, 136, 137; and Gilbert C. Din, "Loyalist Resistance after Pensacola: The Case of James Colbert," in Coker and Rea, eds., Anglo-Spanish Confrontation, 159.)

24. Gen. John Campbell to Clinton, May 21, 1781, in Starr, "'Left as a Gewgaw,'" in Proctor, ed., Eighteenth-Century Florida: The Impact of the American Revolution, 27; Fabel, "West Florida and British Strategy," 65; John Francis McDermott, "Some Thoughts on Britain and Spain in West Florida during the Revolution," in Proctor, ed., Eighteenth-Century Florida and the Revolutionary South, 91.

25. Conrotte, 101; Holmes, "French and Spanish Military Units," in Coker and Rea, 147, 155 n.15, 151; Gen. John Campbell to Germain, May 7, 1781, in Davies, Documents, XX, 138.

26. Starr, Tories, 241, 243; Conrotte, 100 (in which he notes that Britain spent £72,000 on Pensacola's fortifications since April 1781); Nasatir, "Legacy of Spain," in Coker and Rea, 13.

27. Rochambeau to de Grasse, May 31, 1781, in Corwin, French Policy and the American Alliance of 1778, 311; Mahan, Influence of Sea Power, 345; Dull, French Navy, 244. Corwin declares: "That [de Grasse] was able to come at all to the coast of North America...was due to the fact that...Solano was not yet ready for active operations" against British islands in the Caribbean (p. 312). A similar analysis appears in Mackesy, 419.

28. Dull, French Navy, 243-244; Mackesy, 419.

29. The loan from Havana was later repaid. See Nasatir, "Legacy of Spain," in Coker and Rea, 14; Conrotte, 109-110; Dull, French Navy, 245.

30. This second Bourbon armada, consisting of 30 Spanish and 18 or 19 French ships of the line, left Cádiz on July 23, 1781, convoyed transports bearing 14,000 troops past Gibraltar to launch an attack on Minorca, and then sailed for the English Channel, swinging far out to sea in order to achieve surprise. British Vice-Admiral George Darby, defending the Channel, posted his 30 ships in Torbay on August 24 and awaited the Bourbons' attack. (That Darby had so many ships to work with owed something to Spain's failure to contest his relief of Gibraltar in April.) French admiral the Comte de Guichen wanted to engage Darby at once, but at a council of war the Spaniards and the commander-in-chief, Córdoba, overruled him and opted to prey on British convoys instead of challenging the fleet directly. Even this plan failed through Córdoba's impatience, however, and on September 5 he ordered the allied fleets to return to their home ports. Again the Franco-Spanish naval coalition in Europe had

put on, in Mahan's words, "a great display of force, without producing the slightest result." Nevertheless, this armada did influence events in America. In company with a Dutch fleet in the North Sea, it frightened the British admiralty out of dispatching ships from its Home Fleet across the Atlantic where they were needed. Only three British ships of the line, of some three dozen then in Europe, reached American waters in 1781. (See Mahan, Influence of Sea Power, 361-362, and Major Operations of the Navies, 188-189 [quotation on p. 189]; Germain to Clinton, Oct. 12, 1781, in Davies, Documents, XX, 240; Dull, French Navy, 237, 246.)

31. Washington to de Grasse, Oct. 28, 1781 (quoted), in Writings of Washington, XXIII, 285; Washington to de Grasse, Oct. 20, 1781, ibid., XXIII, 249.

32. Dull, French Navy, 246, 244; Mackesy, 414; Van Alstyne, Empire and Independence: The International History of the American Revolution, 201; Corwin, 312.

33. Dull, French Navy, 248 n.32.

34. Dull, Diplomatic History, 120; James, The British Navy in Adversity, 427.

35. Floridablanca to Aranda, July 27, 1781, in Conrotte, 105.

36. Murray had written Germain as early as August 27, 1776: "Unless we soon finish the business in America our neighbours cannot be so wanting to themselves as not to strike" (Stopford-Sackville MSS, I, 370). See also Murray to Germain, Nov. 14, 1778, ibid., I, 371; Mackesy, 397; and Murray to Germain, Oct. 15, 1779, in Stopford-Sackville MSS, I, 372.

37. Dull, French Navy, 232; Conn, Gibraltar in British Diplomacy in the Eighteenth Century, 261. Quotation from Lord North, "Debate in the Commons on the Preliminary Articles of Peace," Feb. 17, 1783, in Hansard, Parliamentary History, XXIII, 449.

38. Madariaga, Britain, Russia, and the Armed Neutrality of 1780, 285, 301; Dull, French Navy, 232. British ministers first proposed a cession of Minorca on January 3, 1781 ("Minute of Cabinet" in Fortescue, ed., Corr. George III, V, 178). In return they wished Catherine to threaten armed intervention unless the Bourbons agreed to make peace on the basis of the 1763 Treaty of Paris (Lord Stormont to the King, Jan. 17, 1781, ibid., V, 185-186). See also Mackesy, 383-384.

39. Madariaga, 301 n.33; Petrie, 197-198. It was just as well the French were not consulted, for their diplomats believed Minorca's conquest would be difficult at best, and Vergennes himself thought it impossible (Dull, French Navy, 232).

40. Murray to Germain, March 14, 1779 and Oct. 15, 1779, both in Stopford-Sackville MSS,

I, 372; Sir George MacMunn, The American War of Independence in Perspective, 267; Mackesy, 323.

41. Petrie, 197-198; Dull, French Navy, 233. Jay wrote to Silas Deane on June 16, 1781: "Spain [is] going to do something great, if we may judge by appearances. I allude to the armament preparing to sail from Cadiz. Gibralter is supposed to be the Object..." (Morris, ed., John Jay: The Winning of the Peace—Unpublished Papers 1780-1784, 85). The British garrison at Gibraltar, had it not been held incommunicado by the Spanish blockade that summer, might have transmitted valuable intelligence to their comrades on Minorca, for some of the Spanish troops gathering in Cádiz had been borrowed from those units besieging the Rock (Bradford, Gibraltar: The History of a Fortress, 115; Jackson, 162).

42. Mackesy, 397; Morris, ed., John Jay: The Winning of the Peace, 85 n.1; Dull, French Navy, 235.

43. Mackesy, 438 n.4; Petrie, 198; Murray to Hillsborough, Nov. 12, 1781 (quoted), in CO 174/14, p. 7; Dull, French Navy, 267 n.27; James, 306. How 4,500 French soldiers became so heavily committed to the taking of a purely Spanish objective is not entirely clear, but it appears that Floridablanca insisted on their employment at Minorca before he would release a comparable number of Spanish troops to the West Indies to participate in the following year's attack on Jamaica—also a Spanish war aim. (See Dull, French Navy, 235-236.)

44. On at least two occasions that year, the Cabinet resolved to send out warships, provisions, and between 700 and 1,000 soldiers; but there is no evidence that anything ever came of these plans. See "Minute of Cabinet," Sept. 27, 1781, in Corr. George III, V, 287; and "Minute of Cabinet," Nov. 1, 1781, ibid., V, 296.

45. Petrie, 198; Mackesy, 438; "An eye-witness account of the capture of Minorca and of the taking of the castle at Mahón," in W. N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley, ed., Spain Under the Bourbons, 1700-1833: A Collection of Documents, 161; WO 36/4, p. 56; Murray to Hillsborough, Feb. 16, 1782, in CO 174/14, p. 38.

46. CO 174/14, p. 35; Dull, French Navy, 323; "An eye-witness account of the capture of Minorca..." in Hargreaves-Mawdsley, 161.

47. Dull, French Navy, 267. While later historians have attributed Britain's loss of Minorca to factors ranging from localized naval weakness (Mahan, Influence of Sea Power, 474) to a shortage of lemons (Mackesy, 438), contemporary Britons wanted a scapegoat. They found one in Murray, whom the Crown court-martialed after his lieutenant governor, Gen. Sir William Draper (the victor at Manila in 1762), accused him of "flagrant Misbehaviour, in the Exercise of his Command, as well as of culpable neglect..." ("Proclamation of George III, 16th Oct. 1782," in WO 30/35, p. 293). For the basis of their dispute, see Draper to Hillsborough,

Oct. 29, 1781; Murray to Draper, Jan. 16 and 22, 1782; and Murray to Hillsborough, Feb. 16, 1782 (CO 174/14, pp. 15, 71, 72, and 54-55, respectively).

48. Dull, French Navy, 269.

49. Bemis, The Diplomacy of the American Revolution, 110; Conrotte, 81. Bemis, in fact, implies that the quest for Gibraltar by itself "explains Spain's part in the diplomacy and in the military operations of the American Revolution" (Diplomacy, 77).

50. Adam Smith, Wealth of Nations, II, 192. Vincent Harlow testifies to Gibraltar's shortcomings as a naval base in the Revolutionary era (The Founding of the Second British Empire, I, 361).

51. Harlow, I, 313. See also M. A. Jones, "American Independence in Its Imperial, Strategic and Diplomatic Aspects," in Goodwin, ed., The New Cambridge Modern History, VIII, 501; and Mackesy, 355.

52. Bradford, 75; Vergennes quotation from Dull, French Navy, 226 (see also Mahan, Influence of Sea Power, 461).

53. Madison to Edmund Pendleton, Jan. 23, 1781, in Madison Papers, II, 297; Adams to Secretary Livingston, Sept. 23, 1782, in Adams, Works, VII, 639. Adams, at least, harbored no illusions that Spain would recover Gibraltar by force of arms: "They will make a horrid noise with their artillery against the place; but this noise will not terrify Elliot, and Gibraltar will remain to the English another year, and Lord Howe return to England, and all Europe will laugh..." (ibid.)

54. "Monthly Return of the several Corps in the Garrison of Gibraltar, 1st June 1779," in WO 34/213, p. 18; Jackson, 179; Hills, 310; Bradford, 109, 71; James, 188. Among Gibraltar's defenders were 1,342 Hanoverians, comprising three battalions which George III had long ago ordered sent there to replace British regulars needed for service in America (Garratt, Gibraltar and the Mediterranean, 78; "Memorandum by the King," Aug. 5, 1775, in Corr. George III, III, 240).

55. Bradford, 78, 121, 115. The heterogeneity of the besieging force was as impressive as its size. Besides 12,000 French troops, the Spaniards employed units from Ireland, Flanders, Holland, Switzerland, Savoy, Naples, and even a squadron of Maltese cavalry. (Petrie, 199; John D. Stewart, Gibraltar: The Keystone, 104.) On the failure of the Bourbons' previous tactics, see Stewart, 101. Typical of Fleet Street's sarcasm was the Morning Chronicle's assertion on July 31, 1781 that Spain's fruitless efforts to take Gibraltar had already cost her "more than would have subdued a whole province" (Lutnick, The American Revolution and the British Press, 1775-1783, 181).

56. Stewart, 102; Mackesy, 482; Dull, French Navy, 308; Mahan, Influence of Sea Power, 363. Of the combined fleet, 35 ships of the line were Spanish and 14 French (Dull, French Navy, 310 n.18).

57. Stewart, 102; Mackesy, 438; Bradford, 126. As they had done throughout the siege, the naval and land forces of Spain failed to support one another properly during this attack (Bradford, 92; Mackesy, 438). Lafayette, who in midsummer had nurtured hopes that the Spaniards would combine "So Many Means...that it is Said they will Succeed" could afterward only lament "the foolish, Ridiculous issue of the Attempt Against Gibraltar" (Lafayette to Alexander Hamilton, June 29, 1782, in Hamilton Papers, III, 96; Lafayette to John Adams, Oct. 6, 1782, in Stanley J. Idzerda and Robert Rhodes Crout, eds., Lafayette in the Age of the American Revolution: Selected Letters and Papers, 1776-1790 [hereafter Lafayette Papers], V, 61).

58. Mahan, Influence of Sea Power, 365; Dull, French Navy, 310; Mackesy, 484; Garratt, 80-81.

59. Adams to William Carmichael, May 12, 1780, in Adams, Works, VII, 164; Mackesy, 381; Conn, 263. Mahan, in his most sweeping testimony to its importance, states that Gibraltar "affected, directly or indirectly, the major operations throughout the world, by the amount of force absorbed in attacking and preserving it" (Major Operations of the Navies, 120-121).

60. Bemis, Diplomacy, 213; Fabel, "West Florida and British Strategy," 56; Dull, French Navy, 197, 249, 250, 253; Conrotte, 107.

61. [Sandwich,] "Thoughts upon Naval Measures," Sept. 14, 1779, in Corr. George III, IV, 438; Dull, French Navy, 244; Mahan, Influence of Sea Power, 429; Wright, Florida, 95; Conrotte, 107. Gálvez also could learn nothing of his expected Spanish contingents from Cádiz and Havana (Conrotte, 107-108). On the battle of The Saints, see Cappon et al., eds., Atlas of Early American History, 55; and Tuchman, The First Salute, 293-295.

62. Cappon et al., 52. Of greater concern to the Americans, Britain's loss of East Florida would also make Georgia a frontier. As the British well knew, this would seriously endanger their hold on that colony (Lieut.-Gen. Earl Cornwallis to Clinton, July 14, 1780, in Davies, Documents, XVIII, 118-119).

63. Wright, Florida, 83, 96; Mackesy, 490; Gov. Patrick Tonyn to Germain, Dec. 31, 1781, in Davies, Documents, XX, 290-291; Lee Kennett, ed., "A French Report on St. Augustine in the 1770's," Florida Historical Quarterly, XLIV (July-Oct. 1965), 133. The St. Augustine garrison had earlier numbered 1,000 regulars, as well as 900 militia and Indians, but most of these had gone north in 1778 with Gen. Augustine Prevost in his successful campaign against Savannah (Kennett, 134-135; Mackesy, 275).

64. WO 36/4, pp. 82, 83; Michael Craton, "Ten Sergeants and Two Drummers: The Bahamas and the Disruption of Empire," in Toth, The American Revolution and the West Indies, 148; Petrie, 214.

65. Dull, French Navy, 309, 288, and Diplomatic History, 156.

66. Mackesy, 489. The letter of Captain Thomas Spry to Rear Admiral Rowley, Sept. 27, 1782 (CO 318/9, pp. 629-630) illustrates the suspicions of one British officer in the West Indies, while the Duke of Grafton claimed in Parliament that "there were in Cadiz bay 60 sail of the line, ready for an expedition to the West Indies....to be joined by others from the Havannah with troops on board. There were likewise 17,000 troops from the island of St. Domingo ready for embarkation against Jamaica....The [British] fleet in the West Indies would not have been equal to that..." ("Debate in the Lords on the Preliminary Articles of Peace," Feb. 17, 1783, in Hansard, Parliamentary History, XXIII, 393-394). That Floridablanca inflated these numbers even further is evident in Corwin, 357 n.36. The Spanish minister's scaremongering was not purely for effect, however, for he sincerely relished the thought of recovering such a valuable irredenta, and believed the upcoming expedition could succeed (see Mackesy, 506).

Chapter Seven

1. Adams, Works, VII, 385.

2. Dull, French Navy, 181; Montmorin to Vergennes, March 30, 1782 (quoted) in Wharton, Rev. Dip. Corr. U.S., V, 288.

3. Jay to Robert R. Livingston, April 28, 1782, in Corwin, French Policy and the American Alliance of 1778, 335 n.5; Livingston to Jay, April 16, 1782, in Henry P. Johnston, ed., The Correspondence and Public Papers of John Jay, II, 188.

4. Livingston to Jay, April 27, 1782, in Wharton, Rev. Dip. Corr. U.S., V, 334; Conn, Gibraltar in British Diplomacy in the Eighteenth Century, 200; Adams to Benjamin Franklin, June 13, 1782, in Adams, Works, VII, 597.

5. Morris, The Peacemakers: The Great Powers and American Independence, 305; Bemis, Pinckney's Treaty, 30.

6. "Diary of Aranda," in Yela Utrilla, España ante la Independencia de los Estados Unidos, II, 355-357; Morris, Peacemakers, 306.

7. Morris, Peacemakers, 306; Franklin to Robert R. Livingston, Aug. 12, 1782 (quoted), in

Smyth, ed., Writings of Franklin, VIII, 579-580; Bemis, Pinckney's Treaty, 31.

8. "Diary of Aranda," in Yela Utrilla, II, 358, 360, 364.

9. Ibid., 361-363. Aranda knew it was in Spain's interest to settle the boundary question soon. Time was working against his country, as thousands of American settlers poured into the disputed territories every year. Already Aranda was coming to the realization that he would voice in 1783: "This Federal Republic was born a pygmy and needed the support of Spain and France to achieve independence. The day will come in which it will grow into a giant. Then it will forget the benefits received from the two powers and will think only of its own enlargement" (Boeta, Bernardo de Gálvez, 137).

10. Morris, Peacemakers, 327, 395; Lafayette to John Adams, Oct. 6, 1782, in Lafayette Papers, V, 61.

11. Dull, French Navy, 292; Jackson, The Rock of the Gibraltarians, 177. Vergennes still hoped that Spain would confine herself to moderate demands. He wrote Montmorin on Sept. 7, "Let us not lose the occasion if it presents itself to end a war honorably, a war promoted less by ambition than to reestablish ourselves in that position of equality becoming to great powers" (Morris, Peacemakers, 327).

12. Harlow, The Founding of the Second British Empire, I, 329, 333; Dull, French Navy, 292; Arturo Morales-Carrión, "Puerto Rico: The Breakdown of Spanish Exclusivism," in Toth, The American Revolution and the West Indies, 125. See also Shelburne to the King, Sept. 15, 1782; and The King to Shelburne, Sept. 16, 1782, in Fortescue, ed., Corr. George III, VI, 128, 129. On October 21, 1782, Lord Grantham, the former British ambassador to Spain and now Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, snorted that Oran was "a port which nothing but pride has hitherto hindered the Court of Spain from abandoning" (Harlow, I, 344).

13. Kaplan, Colonies into Nation, 142; Conn, 210.

14. Morris, Peacemakers, 392; Aranda to Floridablanca, Oct. 4, 1782 (quoted), in Bemis, Pinckney's Treaty, 39 n.3.

15. Another, more mechanistic reason derived from the Spanish colonies' leeward position in the West Indian archipelago (see Mahan, Influence of Sea Power, 462).

16. Lord Grantham to the King, Oct. 20 and [Nov. 3], 1782, in Corr. George III, VI, 147 and 150; Dull, French Navy, 315; Harlow, I, 344-345.

17. Conn, 215, 212; Harlow, I, 346. See also Dull, "Vergennes, Rayneval, and the Diplomacy

of Trust," in Hoffman and Albert, eds., Peace and the Peacemakers: The Treaty of 1783, 122.

18. Harlow, I, 346, 347, 348; Conn, 211-212. British planters in the West Indies also had reason to fear France's acquisition of Spanish Santo Domingo. They argued that with their existing plantations on Hispaniola, the French would soon be able to corner the world market on sugar (Rayford W. Logan, "St. Domingue: Entrepôt for Revolutionaries," in Toth, The American Revolution and the West Indies, 107).

19. "Minute of Cabinet," Nov. 7, 1782, in Corr. George III, VI, 152.

20. Conn, 201.

21. Mackesy, The War for America, 507; Hansard, Parliamentary History, XXIII, 203.

22. Bemis, The Diplomacy of the American Revolution, 245; Mackesy, 507; Shelburne to the King, Nov. 20, 1782, in Corr. George III, VI, 158.

23. Morris, Peacemakers, 398, 399; Dull, French Navy, 323; Mackesy, 507. Aranda had told the British negotiators from the beginning that Spain would not part with West Florida under any conditions (Rea, "British West Florida: Stepchild of Diplomacy," in Proctor, ed., Eighteenth-Century Florida and Its Borderlands, 75-76).

24. Morris, Peacemakers, 399; Hansard, Parliamentary History, XXIII, 204; The King to Shelburne, Nov. 21, 1782, in Corr. George III, VI, 159; Mackesy, 507.

25. Jay increasingly distrusted the French as well, principally for their undisguised attachment to Madrid. As John Adams observed, "Mr. Jay....don't like any Frenchman....[He said] They want to play the western lands, Mississippi, and the whole Gulf of Mexico into the hands of Spain" ("Adams' Journal of Peace Negotiations," Nov. 5, 1782, in Wharton, Rev. Dip. Corr. U.S., V, 849).

26. Rea, "British West Florida," 74; Harlow, I, 305, 306. Both authors speculate that it was Oswald who planted the idea in Jay's mind and allowed the American to formulate it as his own (Rea, p. 74; Harlow, I, p. 304), although Morris (Peacemakers, p. 344) attributes the scheme solely to Jay.

27. Separate Article of Preliminary Peace Treaty, Nov. 30, 1782, in Dull, Diplomatic History, 174. See also Morris, Peacemakers, 352, 353.

28. Rea, "British West Florida," 75; Theodore Roosevelt, The Winning of the West, II, 379-380.

29. Wright, Florida in the American Revolution, 113, 122.

30. Gregg L. Lint, "Preparing for Peace: The Objectives of the United States, France, and Spain in the War of the American Revolution," in Hoffman and Albert, eds., Peace and the Peacemakers, 50; DeConde, This Affair of Louisiana, 40. Not until Pinckney's Treaty in 1796 did Spain grant American citizens free navigation of the Mississippi.

31. The virulent anti-Spanish sentiment that gave birth to the Separate Article in November would mellow substantially by March 1783 when Congress debated whether to ratify the preliminary treaty. Speakers from all regions denounced the treachery implicit in the Article's secretiveness. In the end Congress agreed with James Madison that the Separate Article "would be regarded by the impartial world as a dishonorable alliance with our enemies against the interests of our friends" (Madison's "Notes on Debates," March 19, 1783, in Madison Papers, VI, 364. Hugh Williamson of North Carolina moved on the same day that Commissioners Adams, Franklin, and Jay be told that Congress disapproved the Separate Article, the subject of which "does not appear to Congress of such Importance as to risque the confidence of a great and good ally" [Ford et al., eds., Journals of the Continental Congress, XXIV, 193]. Earlier, Robert R. Livingston had condemned the Article because "the territory it cedes is of little importance...but it is extremely well calculated to sow the seeds of distrust and jealousy between the United States and their allies....This article would...fully justify Spain in making a separate peace without the least regard to our interest" [Livingston to President of Congress, March 18, 1783, in Wharton, Rev. Dip. Corr. U.S., VI, 314]). They did not yet know that Britain had ceded all of Florida to Spain in January, making the Article's conditions inoperative in any case.

32. Mackesy, 507, 508; Harlow, I, 355; Dull, Diplomatic History, 157; Conn, 220; Morris, Peacemakers, 401; The King to Shelburne, Dec. 5, 1782 (quoted), in Corr. George III, VI, 172.

33. "Debate in the Commons on the Address of Thanks," Dec. 5, 1782, in Hansard, Parliamentary History, XXIII, 239-240, 251.

34. Morris, Peacemakers, 399; Page Smith, A New Age Now Begins, II, 1738; Kaplan, 143; Harlow, I, 358.

35. Conn, 223.

36. Shelburne to the King, Dec. 11, 1782, in Corr. George III, VI, 180; Harlow, I, 359; "Minute of Cabinet," Dec. 11, 1782, in Corr. George III, VI, 182.

37. Dull, Diplomatic History, 157. Although Article V of the Anglo-Spanish peace preliminaries was to restore to Britain "the islands of Providence and the Bahamas, without

exception," and Article VII of the definitive treaty would reaffirm that transfer, their intent was preempted by the efforts of Col. Andrew Deveaux of South Carolina's loyalist militia and a band of his fellow exiles in St. Augustine. On April 14, 1783, before news of the peace had reached East Florida, Deveaux and two hundred British loyalists aboard two brigantines landed at Nassau on New Providence Island. Five hundred Spaniards and four armed galleys defended Fort Montagu there, and Governor Antonio Claraco y Sauz twice refused Deveaux's demand to surrender. Thereupon Deveaux trained eight heavy cannon and twenty lighter pieces (from the captured galleys) on the fort and repeated his demand. Claraco surrendered New Providence, its garrison and stores on April 18. This bloodless conquest earned Deveaux a commendation from the governor of East Florida, and even George III was impressed (Translation of the Preliminary Articles of Peace, Jan. 20, 1783, in Hansard, Parliamentary History, XXIII, 352; Conclusive Peace-Treaty between His Catholic Majesty and His Britannic Majesty, Sept. 3, 1783, in Hargreaves-Mawdsley, ed., Spain Under the Bourbons, 167; Cappon et al., eds., Atlas of Early American History, 55; Craton, "Ten Sergeants and Two Drummers: The Bahamas and the Disruption of Empire," in Toth, The American Revolution and the West Indies, 149; The East-Florida Gazette, April 26-May 3, 1783, enclosed in Gen. Guy Carleton to Lord North, June 17, 1783, in CO 5/110, p. 75; WO 36/4, pp. 98, 99; Gov. Patrick Tonyn to Thomas Townshend, May 15, 1783, in Davies, Documents, XXI, 169; Lord North to Gen. Carleton, Aug. 8, 1783, in CO 5/110, pp. 140-141).

38. Hills, Rock of Contention: A History of Gibraltar, 352; The King to Lord Grantham, Dec. 11, 1782, in Corr. George III, VI, 182-183; The King to Shelburne, Dec. 11, 1782, ibid., VI, 183. George explained to Shelburne, "Minorca I should not willingly give up, because if Port Mahon was made a free port, it might draw again into our hands the Mediterranean Trade." (Ibid.)

39. Morris, Peacemakers, 403; Shelburne to the King, Dec. 14, 1782, in Corr. George III, VI, 186.

40. Morris, Peacemakers, 404; Conn, 229; Dull, "Vergennes, Rayneval, and the Diplomacy of Trust," 126; Bemis, Diplomacy, 246.

41. Harlow, I, 360; Mackesy, 506; Conn, 236; Jackson, 177.

42. Hills, 352; The King to Lord Grantham, Dec. 19, 1782, in Corr. George III, VI, 192.

43. Morris, Peacemakers, 404; Conn, 233, 236; Petrie, 214.

44. The text of the Preliminary Articles of Peace may be found in Hansard, Parliamentary History, XXIII, 351-354.

45. Bemis, Diplomacy, 247; Garratt, Gibraltar and the Mediterranean, 102; Jackson, 178.

46. Morris, Peacemakers, 457. On February 28, 1783, British Home Secretary Thomas Townshend wrote Governor Patrick Tonyn announcing East Florida's imminent cession to Spain and urging him to have its inhabitants settle their affairs. Their reaction was predictable. One St. Augustine loyalist bitterly labeled this news "the severest shock our feelings have ever had to struggle with. Deserted as we are by our King, banished by our country, what resource is left us in this combination of calamities?" Eventually, many moved to the Bahamas or returned to England. In June 1784 the new governor of Spanish East Florida, Vicente Manuel de Zéspedes y Velasco, departed Havana with 460 troops aboard fifteen ships. Reaching St. Augustine's bar on the twenty-sixth, Zéspedes landed in his new capital the next morning, and formally took over the colony for Spain on July 12. The only British subjects who chose to remain were 450 Minorcans living at New Smyrna (Thomas Townshend to Governor Patrick Tonyn, Feb. 28, 1783, in Davies, Documents, XXI, 158; M. Tattnall to John Street, May 30, 1783, ibid., XXI, 173; Wright, Florida, 135; John D. Ware, "St. Augustine, 1784: Decadence and Repairs," Florida Historical Quarterly, XLVIII [Oct. 1969], 180-181; Petrie, 216).

47. DeConde, 39. See also Wright, Florida, 114, and Anglo-Spanish Rivalry, 133.

48. John Adams to Secretary Livingston, Jan. 22, 1783, in Adams, Works, VIII, 26; Lafayette to Robert R. Livingston, Feb. 5, 1783, in Lafayette Papers, V, 87.

49. Liss, "The Impact of the Treaty of Paris on Spanish America," in Gifford, ed., The Treaty of Paris (1783) in a Changing States System, 149; Morris, Peacemakers, 423; Nunemaker, "Louisiana Anticipates Spain's Recognition of the Independence of the United States," La. Hist. Qtly., XXVI, 768-769.

50. Washington to Maj. Gen. Benjamin Lincoln, April 15, 1780, in Fitzpatrick, ed., Writings of Washington, XVIII, 263; Lafayette to Robert R. Livingston, March 2, 1783, in Lafayette Papers, V, 106.

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VITA

Michael J. Devine

Born in Meadowbrook, Pennsylvania, October 5, 1964. Graduated from Council Rock High School, Newtown, Pennsylvania, 1982. Graduated from Harvard University, A.B. magna cum laude, 1986; Princeton University, graduate study in politics, 1986-1987; London School of Economics, M.Sc. in International Relations, 1988; College of William and Mary, M.A. coursework completed 1988-1989. Obtained M.D. degree from Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, in 1993, and completed a surgical internship at Lehigh Valley Hospital, Allentown, Pennsylvania, 1993-1994.

Married Christine Ann Styrna, June 1993. Currently an orthopaedic surgery resident at the University of Virginia Medical Center.