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The Role of Spain in the American Revolution:  
An Unavoidable Strategic Mistake

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## **Executive Summary**

**Title:** The Role of Spain in the American Revolution: An Unavoidable Strategic Mistake.

**Author:** Major Jose I. Yaniz, Spanish Marine Corps.

**Thesis:** Spain played a significant role in the outcome of the American Revolution by providing economic support and opening war fronts to fight the British in Europe and North America. Spain's support for the revolutionaries was a strategic mistake for its government, for it was not in Spain's national interests as a colonial power to do this.

**Discussion:** Neither France nor Spain helped the North American colonies to gain independence from Great Britain for altruistic reasons. Instead, both countries were eager to retaliate against Great Britain, which had become the undisputed global power after these countries' defeat in the Seven Years War and the resulting Treaty of Paris of 1763. However, Spain, unlike France, still possessed extended and rich territories throughout the two American continents. This caused Spain to cautiously approach involvement in the American Revolution. Being a colonial power like Britain, Spain did not want the seed of independence to spread throughout its own colonies; therefore the country never officially recognized U.S. independence during the time of the American Revolution. Instead, and as a result of the Bourbon Family Compact with France, Spain declared war on Great Britain in 1779, but it would never fight within the Thirteen Colonies.

Nevertheless, and despite the inherent risk, Spanish ports were opened to American ships, and Spain provided, initially by secret means through Paris and New Orleans and later on in a more straight way, financial support to the American cause in the form of money and supplies since 1776. Spanish money also financed expeditions such as De Grasse's Fleet in 1781 and the Washington's army on its march to the south that were decisive in the Yorktown victory. Moreover, Spain fought the British in the Spanish areas of interest, including West Florida, Central America, the Caribbean, and Europe, thereby opening several fronts which the British could not simultaneously manage, and threatening vital sea lines of communications of the global naval power.

By helping the colonies, Spain helped create a postwar geo-political situation that would become the beginning of the end of its own western hemisphere empire. First, Spain became the main obstacle for the North American expansion to the west and south. Second, the American Revolution became an example that independent movements in the Spanish colonies would soon follow.

**Conclusion:** By complying with the Bourbon Family Compact, Spain helped the American Revolution succeed and waged a war against Britain that provided Spain ephemeral gains. However, in the long term, Spain laid the groundwork for the collapse of the Spanish Empire. Ironically, the Spanish contribution to the American Revolution has been generally neglected by the Americans except for specialists in that field of study.

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## Preface

"The Role of Spain in the American Revolution: An Unavoidable Strategic Mistake" is the result of many hours of reading and seminar discussions about the American Revolution in the Operational Art Course at the Command and Staff College at Marine Corps University. During this time, I realized that the Spanish participation in the United States' War for Independence, although known and documented in Spain, too often has been unknown, incorrect, or simply omitted in British, French, and American sources.

However, the significance and importance of Spain waging war against Britain was clear for some of the most prominent revolutionaries at the time of the American Revolution. For example, George Washington, to name one, wrote to Major General John Sullivan: "*I have the pleasure to inform you that Spain has at length taken a decisive part...It is to be hoped that this formidable junction of the House of Bourbon will not fail of establishing the Independence of America in a short time.*"<sup>1</sup> Indeed the countries did not fail, although just one took credit for the victory. According to Frank de Varona<sup>2</sup>

"There are many possible explanations for these glaring historical omissions. One reason may be that American historians have inherited the traditional British dislike of Spain. It may stem from the fact that Spain declared war on Great Britain in June 1779 as an ally of France but not of America. The United States invasion of Florida, the Texas conflict, and the war against Mexico and Spain during the 19<sup>th</sup> century may account for the biased reporting. One wonders if the "Black Legend" propagated by Great Britain to discredit Spain at the peak of its glory in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, persists to the present. Or it may just be a case of simple historical neglect. Regardless of the reason, this historical injustice must be corrected."

Fortunately, this situation is changing slowly. Lately, especially after the bicentenary of U.S. Independence, many historians on both sides of the Atlantic have immersed themselves in the overwhelming amount of available material on the subject in the Spanish Archives. As

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<sup>1</sup> John C Fitzpatrick. *Writings of George Washington, Vol.16: to Major General John Sullivan. Head Quarters, West Point, September 3, 1779. The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources 1745-1799.* (Washington Resources at the University of Virginia Library. URL :<http://etext.virginia.edu/washington/fitzpatrick/>)

<sup>2</sup> Frank de Varona is the editor of the journal *Hispanic Presence in the United States: Historical Beginnings* (Miami: The National Hispanic Quincentennial Commission, Mnemosyne Publishing Company, 1999.), a collection of articles edited on the 500 anniversary of the discovery of America. He is also the author of the article "Spain and Hispanic America: Forgotten Allies of the American Revolution" in this same journal.

the historian Thomas E. Chavez stated, "The documentary material is so plentiful in Spain that there is enough work to last many historians a lifetime."<sup>3</sup>

The modest intention of this paper is to collaborate in correcting that gap and to demonstrate that the Spanish participation in the American Revolution was, in the international context, decisive in helping the colonies to win their independence from Great Britain. Ironically, however, it was to Spain's detriment in the long term. To do so, I will go through the timeline of the American Revolution and assess how Spanish decisions and actions affected British strategy and, thereby, the developments that took place in the Thirteen Colonies from 1776 to 1783. I will also argue that Spain, a colonial power with vast and rich possessions on both American continents, risked much in this enterprise: If Spain were on the victorious side, an independent United States would set an undesirable precedent for the Spanish colonial empire in North, Central, and South America; also, in a post-independence era, Spain would be an obstacle for American expansionism. If defeated, Spain could lose more territory in Europe and on the American continents. However, the Bourbon Family Compact obligated Spain with commitments to France, and the Spanish Crown answered the call. Madrid thus took an unavoidable political strategic mistake.

Each theater of operations in which Spanish forces fought the British, West Florida, Central America, the Caribbean, and Europe, deserves a thorough and comprehensive tactical and operational analysis itself. Thereby, contrasting decisions and strategic goals with the final achievements on the ground and their significance could the overall Spanish strategy be deemed. Likewise, the Spanish financial contribution to the American Revolution deserves a thorough analysis.

I would like to thank Spanish Army Lt. Col. Guerrero Acosta for generously sharing his work with me, answering my request for help, and putting me on the track for available

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas E Chavez. *Spain and the Independence of the United States. An Intrinsic Gift* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002).

bibliographic and research material. To Dr. Mark H. Jacobsen and Dr. John W. Gordon for their knowledgeable lectures about the American Revolution, thank you. And especially to Dr. Donald F. Bittner, for his time, patience, and advice, as well as for providing me thoughtful perspectives to improve this work.

Finally, I dedicate this work to my wife, Susana, and my children, Sofia and Ignacio, for their love, patience, support, and all the weekends we could have gone somewhere else but did not.

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Note to the reader

**COMPARATIVE EFFORT IN THE MAIN AMERICAN REVOLUTION ACTIONS**

**Saratoga (October 17, 1777)**

British troops (Burgoyne) .....	7,500 men
North American troops .....	17,000 men
British prisoners .....	5,700 men

**Yorktown (October 19, 1781)**

British troops (Cornwallis) .....	7,250 men
North American troops (Washington) .....	9,500 men
<b>French troops (Rochambeau).....</b>	<b>7,000 men</b>
British prisoners .....	7,247 men

**Campaign in the Gulf of Mexico (sep 1779 – may 1781)**

British troops (Campbell) .....	3,500 men
Indians Allies (Cameron).....	500 – 1,000 men
<b>Spanish troops (Gálvez).....</b>	<b>8,100 men</b>
<b>French troops (Boiderout).....</b>	<b>691 men</b>

    British prisoners:

Operations in Mississippi/Mobile .....	955/307 men
Siege of Pensacola.....	1,400 men
Lucayas (Nassau-Bahamas).....	460 men
<u>Total (not including militia, etc) .....</u>	<u>3,122 men</u>

1. No allied troops at Saratoga.
2. More Spanish troops were in the Gulf of Mexico campaign than there were French troops ashore at Yorktown.
3. This illustrates Spain's contribution to the colonists cause – and one that has been generally forgotten.

Source: Jose Manuel Guerrero Acosta. *Forgotten Soldiers from the Other Shore of the Ocean* (Madrid: Spanish Army Institute of Military History and Culture, 2006), 23.

## INTRODUCTION

The general perception of the American Revolution is as an internal and geographically framed struggle between the “original thirteen colonies” and Great Britain, with the external and invaluable support of France. However, in order to understand the overall result of the conflict, it is essential to assess its international dimension where several other key characters played a significant role in the events that occurred in North America between 1775 and 1783. Spain was one of these.

By the time of the American Revolution, Spain ruled the most geographically extensive empire in the history of the world.<sup>1</sup> Not being one of the most powerful nations, but having to administer and defend such an immense territory, the Spanish crown risked much by declaring war on the most powerful nation of the time. However, Spain, one of the British primary enemies since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, also had numerous issues with Britain in Central America, Florida, Minorca, and, especially, Gibraltar. Therefore, Spain found itself at a political crossroad where any path had little to win and much to lose. On one hand, Spain, though joyful of Britain’s colonial problems, was a colonial power herself; thus, to embrace the revolutionary ideas of the thirteen colonies along the Atlantic seaboard would have been totally opposed to Spanish policy and national interest. If the rebels were successful, the threat of the revolutionary seed might spread to New Spain (Mexico), Central, and South America, where Spain possessed vast and rich territories. On the other hand, to stay neutral, or even a very unlikely alliance with Britain, would have meant to break the dynastic treaty of mutual support with France, known as the Bourbon Family Compact; if this occurred, Britain might defeat France and strengthen even more its world status, and Spanish honor and international credibility would be questioned. Eventually, the Spanish Crown took the only arguable possible sound decision: to declare war to Britain as an ally of France, but without

recognizing the independence of the rebellious colonies. This was a decision that many historians have questioned, for it seemed to relegate Spanish participation to a secondary role.

However, the Spanish contribution, both military and economic, would be significant, if not decisive, for the success of the American Revolution. Spanish economic aid not only provided fundamental help during the first years of the revolution, but also would be vital for the success of operations as important as Yorktown. Furthermore, the Spanish soldier fighting in the Nicaragua jungle, the sailor of the Spanish fleet laying siege to Gibraltar, or the Spanish Marine landing on the shores of Pensacola, were as important to the American cause as the Continental and French soldiers fighting in Yorktown. Altogether, they forced the British to overstretch her forces and fight on multiple fronts all around the world.

### **THE SPANISH ROAD TO THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION**

After the Seven Years War (1756-1763), France lost all her possessions on the mainland of North America, in addition to its holdings in India and some African colonies. Spain ceded Florida to the British and Uruguay to Portugal, but received New Orleans and the French Louisiana territory west of the Mississippi River. The British, the most favored by the Treaty of Paris (1763) with London's acquisition of New France and Florida, controlled all North American territory east of the Mississippi, except for New Orleans. Furthermore, they had become, with an unmatched navy, the foremost colonial power in the world. In the next few years, France sought a chance to improve its colonial and maritime position while regaining its lost international credibility. This basically set the international stage before the American Revolution.<sup>2</sup>

By the summer of 1775 the British Secretary at War, Lord Dartmouth, noted the British initial strategy of subjugating the American revolutionaries lacking a large enough army to do it by land. As he wrote, the effort "should be entirely naval, that the principal ports of America should be occupied as naval bases, that the external and coasting trade of the

Colonies should be cut off, and that occasional predatory expeditions should be made upon the enemy's stores and depots of merchandise."<sup>3</sup> This, together with the alleged mass of American loyalists, was deemed adequate to suppress the uprising. Soon, reality showed this initial strategy would not have the effect they sought.

The American victory at Saratoga on 17 October 1777 was critical in inducing France to conclude a treaty with the thirteen colonies that was signed on 6 February 1778. This brought France into the war. With this, Britain needed to adjust their strategy to meet this new important threat, mainly the French fleet, which could dispute the hitherto unarguable British naval superiority on the American east coast. British forces were widely dispersed and the French involvement turned the local conflict into an international war.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the British knew that, after France, Spain's entry into the war was just a matter of time.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, Spain was involved in an armed conflict with Portugal, caused by the never-ending dispute over colonization limits in Brazil. In 1776, Spain dispatched one of its largest fleets ever to the Americas, where it smashed British smuggling operations along the Brazilian coast and retook Uruguay from the Portuguese.<sup>6</sup> This situation ended on 1 October 1777 with the Treaty of San Ildefonso. Article One established a permanent peace between both countries, on land and sea, anywhere in the world. With this, Spain kept Portugal, a traditional British ally, out of the international conflict Spain was about to enter.<sup>7</sup>

The Spanish initial position before the American Revolution was cautious and secretly supportive. Spain was going through a process of economic, military, and administrative reforms that were starting to pay dividends throughout the country as well as in its colonies.<sup>8</sup> However, the King of Spain, Carlos III, knew that the Bourbon Family Compact, a treaty of alliance between the related ruling families of Spain and France,<sup>9</sup> compelled Spain to wage war on Britain, and hence to support the American cause. First, Spain attempted to settle the conflict through mediation, making "the independence of the United States the preliminary

article to a general pacification.”<sup>10</sup> But that effort failed, and on 12 April, the Spanish State Minister, Count of Floridablanca, and the French Ambassador, the Count of Montmorin, signed the Secret Agreement of Aranjuez by which Spain would declare war to Great Britain. This also sought to guarantee Spanish national interest.<sup>11</sup> Basically, Spanish policy goals were to eliminate British presence in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean, whose smuggling activities and raids were permanently threatening Spanish possessions and the “treasure fleet,”<sup>12</sup> and in the Mediterranean to recover Minorca and especially Gibraltar, a “thorn” in the heart of mainland Spain. On 21 June 1779, when Carlos III thought Spain was ready to become directly involved in the conflict, he declared war on Great Britain in fulfillment of the treaty with France.<sup>13</sup>

#### **SPANISH AID BEFORE THE WAR DECLARATION TO BRITAIN**

Even long before the Agreement of Aranjuez, Spain was already sending aid to the American revolutionaries. The first tangible assistance from both France and Spain was a gift of two million livres tournois in 1776 (See Appendix D), one from each nation. Spanish undercover aid was mainly channeled through the merchants Diego de Gardoqui in Bilbao, and the Franco-Spanish dummy corporation Rodriguez Hortalez & Cia in Paris. The latter is the reason many American historians too often have attributed financial aid from this company to France.<sup>14</sup> This company handled the shipment of significant amounts of weaponry and various kinds of supplies to the thirteen colonies in 1776, financed by both France and Spain.<sup>15</sup> From Spain between 1776 and 1778, 7,944,806 reales were contributed as financed aid to the rebelling American colonists.<sup>16</sup>

But financial aid was also provided from the Spanish colonies. Luis de Unzuaga, Governor of Louisiana (1770-1777), and his successor, Bernardo de Galvez, would provide gunpowder, guns, and other vital supplies. This came from Havana to the American rebels through the agent Oliver Pollock in New Orleans.<sup>17</sup> As an example, a shipment to Captain

George Gibson proved vital in preventing the British from capturing Fort Pitt.<sup>18</sup> Later on, this outpost and Spanish supplies from New Orleans would be critical to the Continental Army and the successful campaign of General George Roger Clark in the Ohio Valley and Illinois country.<sup>19</sup>

The first official diplomatic contact between the thirteen American colonies and Spain occurred in Paris on 29 December 1776. There, Benjamin Franklin, Arthur Lee, and Silas Deane met the Count of Aranda, Spanish Ambassador in Paris, who arranged for Lee's visit to the Spanish Court. To avoid susceptibilities from the British in the Madrid Court, the meeting between Lee and Grimaldi, former state minister and representative of Carlos III, was held in Burgos on 4 March 1777. Later, a second meeting took place on 13 in Vitoria. As a result of those encounters, Spain promised more supplies and preferential treatment for American ships in the Spanish ports. However, official recognition of the independence of the thirteen colonies did not occur, nor did direct Spanish involvement in the conflict.<sup>20</sup>

Soon, another action occurred. Juan de Miralles and Francisco Rendon were sent by the Spanish Crown as observers to the thirteen colonies. They arrived in Philadelphia in July 1778 and, henceforth, coordinated the arrival of the Spanish help to the Americans and facilitated trade between Havana and the thirteen colonies.<sup>21</sup> In April 1779, Miralles reported the Minister of the Indies, Jose de Galvez y Gallardo, that the "Americans would cede any territory conquered by Spain in Louisiana, and do so without placing any condition on navigation on the Mississippi River."<sup>22</sup>

The British were aware of Spain supplying the rebelling colonies with money and gunpowder as early as 1776.<sup>23</sup> By the end of 1778, the British Parliament, with France already in the war and anticipating Spain about to become an open enemy, provided for an army establishment of 121,000 men, 24,000 of them foreigners, besides 40,000 embodied militia, to

face this worldwide war.<sup>24</sup> But still, the British strategic center of gravity remained its naval power, relying upon their maritime superiority to impose their will wherever necessary.<sup>25</sup>

The British knew that new fronts were about to be opened and strived accordingly to prepare their positions in Europe, the West Indies, Florida, and Central America. However, they lacked the manpower and resources to operate simultaneously in so many theaters. Basic options were few: concentration, keeping a joint naval land force strong enough to strike where needed, vs. dispersion to reinforce British colonies and outposts. Lord George Germaine, British Secretary of State for America, opted for the second.

Moreover, British strategic interests regarding Spanish possessions reflected London's diverse interests. In Europe, Gibraltar dominated the only gate to the Mediterranean, while Minorca provided an excellent harbor for trade and commerce in that sea. In the West Indies, its sugar, indigo, and spices all very valuable at that time,<sup>26</sup> while the endless European struggle for the dominance of the windward islands provided an strategic advantage.<sup>27</sup> In Central America, the struggle for the wood-cutting rights with Spain was significant for a naval power, together with suspected British aspiration over the Panama isthmus.<sup>28</sup> In Florida, the British outposts there provided excellent forward bases to conduct operations against the coveted New Orleans for the control of the Mississippi River, and to threat the most important Spanish sea line of communication linking Cartagena de Indies, Veracruz, Havana, and Spain. With regard to Florida, it was that "...the stations in Florida, which were of no value, commercial or strategical, and were most unhealthy for the troops."<sup>29</sup> However, one of the first British decision was to reinforce Pensacola.<sup>30</sup> By the end of 1778, a force of over five thousand British troops under Major General James Grant also sailed from New York to the West Indies.

## **21 JUNE 1779: SPAIN DECLARES WAR ON BRITAIN**

Spanish strategy, considering the overstretched scenario Britain had to face, was that of attrition. Being a colonial power with vast territories overseas, the Spanish strategic center of gravity was its navy. However, British superior naval technology and skills would cause the Spanish Navy to adopt, in general terms, a defensive strategy, protecting convoys and transporting troops rather than provoking a decisive naval engagement which, in case of Spanish defeat, would have a tremendous negative impact on the security of its colonies. The blockade of Gibraltar would be the exception. On the other hand from the very beginning, Spanish land strategy was clearly offensive in every theater. This had a major impact on British efforts ashore.

In the European theater, Gibraltar, commanded by General George Eliott, was a fortified position with 494 cannons, defended by 4,646 soldiers, and had supplies for four months.<sup>31</sup> Reckoned impregnable, Floridablanca's initial order was to establish a strong sea and land blockade, with General Martin Alvarez de Sotomayor in charge of the land operations and Admiral Antonio Barcelo commanding the naval operations. By the end of November 1779, as a result of the bad weather, the Spanish Navy was dispersed. Luis de Cordoba's Fleet was in Cadiz, Barcelo's in Ceuta, and Langara's in the Mediterranean. Ultimately, the blockade was ineffective; also, by the end of December, Admiral Sir George Rodney's fleet was sent from the Island of Wight to help Gibraltar.<sup>32</sup>

Furthermore, the British Government had no intention to surrendering Minorca, where improvements were also carried out but no reinforcements were available at the time. In the West Indies, Barbados was always worth holding as a depot and because of its position windward of Martinique. About the outposts in Florida, though burdensome and strategically useless according to some British historians, Germaine wanted to use them to conduct an attack on New Orleans. For this purpose, Brigadier John Campbell was dispatched to Pensacola by General Sir Henry Clinton, Commander in Chief in North America, at the end



of 1778, with a battalion of Waldeckers, German mercenaries, and two battalions of Provincial Infantry.<sup>33</sup>

But what concerned the British the most was the plan to invade southern Britain through Portsmouth with a combined French-Spanish expeditionary force. During the second half of 1779, Floridablanca insisted to Aranda on the need to carry out this enterprise, one he considered more worthwhile than the costly siege to Gibraltar.<sup>34</sup> In July, a combined Franco-Spanish fleet of 66 ships of the line sailed for a few weeks through the English Channel threatening Plymouth. However, the decision to attack was not made and the combined fleet was finally driven away by an easterly gale. Henceforth, Britain would have to take into consideration the serious threat of an invasion of her mainland. The Admiralty thus kept the British Channel fleet in home waters fixed and alert.<sup>35</sup>

In North America, Bernardo de Galvez, Governor of Louisiana, had been preparing for the war since his arrival in the region in 1776. He finally received the official declaration of war against the British in the middle of August 1779. Aware of the British plans to attack New Orleans with reinforcements from Canada and Pensacola, he decided to seize the initiative. Thus, instead of staying in defensive positions in the city, Galvez organized a force to launch a surprise attack against Fort Manchac, on the east side of the Mississippi River, on 7 September, capturing about 20 redcoats.<sup>36</sup> Afterwards, Galvez, retaining the momentum, advanced quickly on Baton Rouge, north from Manchac, where he arrived on 12 September although with his force reduced to half of its initial strength. There, he found a field fortification manned by about 400 British and Waldeck soldiers, as well as 150 armed settlers and negroes, with 13 guns. It would have required several weeks to reduce the British stronghold by conventional siege methods. But he masterly resorted to deception, and on the night 20 September he ordered a battery to be erected and exchanged fire with the British defenders as a diversion. Meanwhile, his men were building another battery within range of

the fort. On 21 September, under the close range of Spanish artillery fire, Fort Baton Rouge capitulated in three hours with 375 Waldeckers German mercenaries and British soldiers surrendering. Its commander, Colonel Alexander Dickson, also ceded Fort Natchez as part of the capitulation. In summary, the victorious Spanish Mississippi Campaign seized the three forts mentioned above, capturing more than 500 British soldiers as well as 21 officers, including Colonel Dickson, the commander of the British outposts on the Mississippi River. Galvez, combining speed and surprise, eliminated the British presence on the lower Mississippi and hence the close threat to New Orleans. A new war front was opened, and both, George Washington to Miralles in his Headquarters in Morristown, and Louis XVI to Carlos III, sent their compliments for the successful campaign in the Mississippi River.<sup>37</sup>

Meanwhile, the British were preparing an offensive campaign in Central America. Since the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, one of the major needs in Jamaica was wood for construction and repairs at its naval base. For that purpose, they had established outposts on Yucatan and Campeche, and then along the Belize Coast, Gulf of Honduras, and Tinto River. After the Seven Years War and the Treaty of Paris, the British were supposed to reduce their fortified positions in Honduras and Roatan Island. Instead, they refused and indeed improved all their positions. On 1779, before the imminent declaration of war, the British planned to seize Fort San Fernando de Omoa, a key position on the Honduras Coast. Afterwards, they planned to penetrate through St. John's River, between Nicaragua and Costa Rica, seize Fort Inmaculada, and reach the Pacific Ocean through the lakes Nicaragua and Managua. In that way, they would have cut the Spanish America in two.<sup>38</sup> Both Britain and Spain knew war was a distinct probability, and prepared accordingly.

On the other hand, the Spanish crown strategy for Central America was basically to expel the British from Honduras. The Captain General in Guatemala, Matias de Galvez, father of Bernardo de Galvez, received an order to attack immediately after he was notified of the

official declaration of war. However, the British struck first with Commodore John Luttrell and an small fleet of 12 ships, several transports, and a force of 1,250 men, seizing the Fort of Omoa on 20 October 1779.<sup>39</sup> Matias' reaction was immediate: by the end of November, he organized an expedition from San Pedro Sula and retook the fort. The war front in Central America was thus opened.

### **1780: MOBILE AND FIRST ATTEMPTS FOR PENSACOLA.**

British strategy for 1780 was: British Jamaican forces were responsible not only for the maintenance and aid to the detachments at Pensacola and Mobile, but also with conducting an offensive expedition against Central America. The latter involved, if successful, the establishments of posts across the whole width of the isthmus. Meanwhile, it was Admiral Rodney's duty to deal with the French fleet to the windward and on the American coast; and it was General Clinton's task to conquer Carolina.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, Major General John Vaughan was appointed commander in chief to the West Indies. Although he was left a free hand, Germaine strongly recommended the recovery of Grenada and St. Vincent as objectives of prime importance, plus an attack on Puerto Rico. Britain was starting to shift its main effort to the West Indies, to the detriment of operations in the thirteen colonies.

In Europe, on 16 January 1780, Rodney's fleet defeated Juan de Langara's fleet (the "Moonlight Battle" off Cape St. Vincent),<sup>41</sup> breaking the Spanish blockade to Gibraltar. The failure of the blockade became a strategic turning point for Spain.<sup>42</sup> Carlos III decided to shift the Spanish main effort to America and exploit Galvez's initial success. Although the siege of Gibraltar would continue, both by land and sea,<sup>43</sup> the Spanish Minister of War, the Count of Ricla, submitted an important report on 20 February about the new strategy in America. This would be sending a strong naval force, commanded by Jose Solano, with 11,000 soldiers to consolidate the conquests in the Mississippi, seize Mobile and Pensacola, invade Jamaica and

the Bahamas, and expel the British from Central America.<sup>44</sup> If this maritime strategy succeeded, restitution of Gibraltar to Spain could occur in an eventual later peace treaty.

Meanwhile, Bernardo de Galvez wanted to maintain his momentum and attack Fort Carlota in Mobile. Although he knew that Pensacola was the main objective, he planned to use Mobile as a base for the operations against Pensacola. For this, he organized a convoy comprised of 12 vessels (two frigates and ten lesser ships) and 800 soldiers; he also expected additional reinforcements from La Havana. However, bad weather conditions caused several ships to run aground or sink. Although all the troops got ashore, a considerable amount of artillery, supplies, and ammunition were lost. Furthermore, he also had to oppose an unexpected enemy: authorities in Havana, who feared a British counterattack and reckoned Havana more valuable than the operation in Florida.<sup>45</sup> Despite this, once the reinforcements arrived,<sup>46</sup> though fewer than requested in strength, Galvez decided to attack Fort Carlota before the imminent arrival of a British relief force from Pensacola.<sup>47</sup> He succeeded, for on 13 March, Colonel Elias Durnford, British commander of Fort Carlota, surrendered with more than 300 troops, mainly Germans.

Afterwards, Galvez met Solano in Havana,<sup>48</sup> where he learnt about the new Spanish strategy establishing America as the main theater of operations and giving him the trust and the means to carry out the Royal Mandate there. After Mobile, Galvez' next objective was Pensacola. However, that enterprise could not be carried out without the reinforcements and the fleet from Havana. Juan Bonet, the naval commander in Cuba, had already received a royal reprimand for his slowness in supporting operations in Mobile and Pensacola. Therefore, Bonet's fleet set off for Pensacola on 7 March.<sup>49</sup> However, disagreement between Galvez and Bonet about how to conduct the operation made the first attempt to capture Pensacola to fail.<sup>50</sup>

As expected, the British counteroffensive occurred soon. On 26 May 1780, a force comprised of 300 British soldiers and 900 Indians attacked Saint Louis on the west bank of the Mississippi.<sup>51</sup> Lt. Col. Fernando Leyva, commander of the post, resisted the attack with his 29 soldiers and 281 militiamen, dying later on.<sup>52</sup> That was an example of what would be the trend along the Mississippi during 1780: continuous attacks on the forts and outposts from the British in Pensacola and their Indian allies. Once again, the offensive seemed to be the best option, and several combined Spanish-American-Indian expeditions to the upper Mississippi were organized at the end of 1780 and early 1781. The last one reached as far as Lake Michigan, seizing the British Fort of Saint Joseph (in what is now Indiana) on 12 February 1781.<sup>53</sup> With that expedition, the British-Spanish rivalry for the Mississippi River ended, leaving Spain in control of the western side of the river and the eastern side below the Ohio River junction; above the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi River, the control of that side of the river was shared with the Americans.

On October, a second expedition<sup>54</sup> with Solano's reinforcements was ready to depart from Havana for Pensacola. However, once the fleet was heading towards its objective, between 16 and 22 October a terrible hurricane dispersed all the ships throughout the Gulf of Mexico. The damage to the fleet was so severe that this second attempt to attack Pensacola had to be cancelled. Galvez would learn afterwards that Rodney's fleet had also been beaten by the same hurricane near Barbados Island.

Meanwhile, Spain had organized several expeditions in Central America, seizing the British outposts of Siriboya, Quepriva, and Ministrie along the Honduras Coast. However, the British were not completely inactive and struck back capturing Fort Inmaculada on the St. John's River.<sup>55</sup>

Nonetheless and as a result of the invasion threat to Jamaica, the British adopted a more defensive attitude, and stopped pushing upriver along the St. John's River. On 3 January

1781, an expedition commanded by Captain Tomas de Julia, retook Fort Inmaculada. With that action, the British were expelled from the St. John's River, having lost 500 soldiers during this relatively unknown campaign. Although four new regiments were raised in England to reinforce the West Indies posts, disease was decimating British forces and during the last quarter of 1780, eleven hundred men from seven and a half battalions in Jamaica died outright, while half of the three thousand there were sick.<sup>56</sup>

### **1781: PENSACOLA AND YORKTOWN.**

In 1781, the British were so overstretched that, "the drain of men was so heavy in North America, in the West Indies, and in the East Indies, that it was difficult to keep the ranks filled."<sup>57</sup> Again, after the hurricane season, Rodney's fleet sailed back to the West Indian Islands, arriving at St. Lucia in December 1780. In January 1781 three new regiments arrived at Barbados and Vaughan embarked a sufficient force, escorted by Rodney, to capture St. Eustatius on 3 February. At Pensacola, British General Campbell seized the initiative and, apart from preparing the defense of Pensacola, also sent an expeditionary force to recapture Mobile. That attack took place on the dawn of 7 January 1781.<sup>58</sup> After a ferocious Spanish defense of The Village, the British expeditionary force withdrew to Pensacola.

With the British defeated at Mobile and the fleet ready in Havana, Galvez started 1781 with the goal of capturing his biggest enterprise: Pensacola, the last British strongpoint in West Florida. However, disagreement came from Havana, where commanders gave greater priority to reinforcing first New Orleans and then Mobile. Nevertheless, the situation would change when Galvez received a Royal Order on 12 February, directing him to replace Navia as the General Commander of the Troops; seize Pensacola; expel the British from the Gulf of Honduras; defend Portobello, Caracas, and Cartagena; and, if possible, seize Jamaica. Carlos III showed with this order his trust in and support to Galvez' operations.

Although the Royal Order clearly specified a minimum of 4,000 troops to undertake the attack on Pensacola, Galvez left Havana with a force of only 1,467 men. In his mind, Spain had to capitalize on the momentum and retain the initiative before British reinforcements could reach Pensacola. Otherwise, the natural features and fortified positions there would demand a very high price in Spanish blood. However, he had previously sent messages to Piernas, Interim Governor of New Orleans, and to Ezpeleta, the Commander in Mobile, to reinforce his expedition with whatever military forces they could provide. By the time the new expeditionary force set sail for Pensacola, good news was received about a new entrant in the war against Great Britain: The Netherlands. Then, on 8 May 1781, after two months of fierce fighting, the strongest joint Spanish force employed in North America during the war captured Pensacola. With this, Britain presence in West Florida ended (**for details see Appendix F**).

As early as 1777, the Minister of War, the Count of Ricla, realized that in order to carry out the Jamaica invasion the French Port of Guarico, located on the north coast of Santo Domingo, 500 km from Jamaica, would play a significant role. At the end of 1780, France and Spain agreed to conduct a combined operation to invade Jamaica.<sup>59</sup> Francisco de Saavedra was appointed as the Royal Commissioner to Havana in order to coordinate the operations in America, and specifically the expedition to Jamaica.<sup>60</sup> On 18 June 1781, Saavedra received a Royal Order to proceed to Guarico and coordinate with French Admiral the Comte de Grasse. This conference would focus on future combined operations between France and Spain, specifically the Spanish contribution to the French Fleet to support the American operations in Yorktown and the invasion of Jamaica.

On 18 July, Saavedra met De Grasse aboard the ship *La Ville de Paris* in Guarico. De Grasse's fleet<sup>61</sup> had 5,000 men for an operation designed by General Rochambeau in order to intercept, and maybe corner, Lord Cornwallis' Army in Virginia. However, to ensure the

commerce in the Caribbean and protect rich convoys which were soon to arrive to Guarico, he needed to leave at least four ships of the line plus some frigates in the area. De Grasse proposed to Saavedra to add five or six Spanish ships of the line to his fleet at Chesapeake Bay. However, Spain still had not officially recognized the American Independence, hence he could not authorize that. Instead, he proposed de Grasse to take all the French ships for that expedition, while the Spanish Fleet would protect Guarico and the French commerce in those waters. These terms were agreed and a combined plan of operations was signed on 21 July.<sup>62</sup>

Moreover, the French Fleet was short of money to undertake such an enterprise in the Chesapeake Bay. Hence, de Grasse requested from Saavedra part of the 500,000 pesos he had aboard the ship *Palmier* originally destined for Puerto Rico and Santo Domingo. As a result of the dramatic French situation, Saavedra agreed to deliver 100,000 pesos to restore the fleet. This was not enough for the enterprise but Saavedra not having the authority to give more, hence both De Grasse and Saavedra decided to bring the issue to Havana. Once in that port, Saavedra learnt that the Royal Treasury was running out of money as a result of recent expeditions, and the ships from Veracruz carrying more money had not yet arrived. After discussing the issue with Cagigal and the quartermaster Urriza, they decided to resort to the people in Havana. They succeeded in collecting 500,000 pesos in six hours.<sup>63</sup> That money was given on 17 August 1781 to Traversay, Captain of the ship *Aigrette*, who afterwards joined de Grasse's fleet on his way to Yorktown.

That was not the only money de Grasse would receive from Spain for the Yorktown campaign. On 23 August, another French ship arrived at Havana to collect one million pesos, as ordered by the King Carlos III, for de Grasse's fleet in Yorktown. By the end of that October, Rochambeau wrote to Aranda to thank him for the Spanish ships protecting Guarico and the money from Havana.<sup>64</sup>



In summary, Spain financed de Grasse's expedition and provided the money to pay Washington's army during its march to Yorktown. Furthermore, it assumed French naval duties in the Caribbean and thus allowed the whole de Grasse's fleet to sail for Yorktown at full strength. In words of Sir John Fortescue, "The immediate cause of the disaster was of course the arrival of de Grasse in such immense strength. No one dreamed that he would carry all his ships with him to America... The blow was, on the whole, perhaps the heaviest that has ever fallen on the British Army, and to all intent it put an end to the war in America."<sup>65</sup> And Spain, though neglected in most history books, helped to make it happen.

After the defeat in Yorktown, Britain realized that victory over the American rebels called for a price it could not afford. The effort also might endanger the whole British Empire. Henceforth, Britain would maximize her efforts to strike back in the West Indies to stand on the best position possible in an eventual peace treaty.

But by the end of 1781, Spain would start to pay the price for her support of the American Revolution: several uprisings occurred throughout Central and South America Spanish possessions.<sup>66</sup> The lack of money and the need to send troops to suppress those uprisings would cause Bernardo de Galvez to delay the expedition to Jamaica. Meanwhile, in Versailles, Aranda, on 3 November, signed the Convention about Western Indies Operations; this established clear combined command relationships for the operation: the French troops assigned to Jamaica would be under the command of Bernardo de Galvez, whereas Solano's fleet would be under that of De Grasse.

In the European theater, Admiral George Darby's fleet<sup>67</sup> had broken the blockade of Gibraltar on 12 March for the second time in less than a year. Spain finally decided to take action in Minorca, whose British pirates had bankrupted the Spanish commerce in the Mediterranean. The General Duke of Crillon submitted a plan to Floridablanca requesting a strong fleet to ensure naval superiority and 7,000 soldiers to conduct the invasion.

Furthermore, the siege to Gibraltar should continue and all the preparations should take place in Cadiz as part of a deception plan to mislead the British as whether the objective of the expedition was Gibraltar or Jamaica. On 17 June, Carlos III signed the Royal Order appointing Crillon as the commander of the expedition.

On 21 July, the expedition of 7,464 soldiers aboard 46 transports, sailed for Minorca from Cadiz. Luis de Cordoba's fleet, with its 50 ships of the line and accompanying frigates, protected the convoy. Minorca was governed by the British General James Murray and defended by 2,400 British troops. On 19 August, the first troops landed on Mesquida Beach, north of Mahon, and seized the capital, the Ciudadela, and the forts around the Port of Fornells. Afterwards, the expeditionary force started the siege of the most important strongpoint of the island: the Castle of San Felipe.

#### **1782: MINORCA, HONDURAS, BAHAMAS, AND GIBRALTAR.**

Finally, on the morning of 4 February 1782, after a month of artillery fire over the Castle of San Felipe, a white flag fluttered over it. Minorca was Spanish again, putting more pressure on the British to negotiate the peace. The combined Spanish-French victory in Minorca would be welcomed in the European Courts of Madrid, Versailles, and Vienna.

In America, the Spanish forces had successfully accomplished most of the Carlos III orders for the American operations. The threat to New Orleans had vanished; Mobile and Pensacola were Spanish; Caracas, San Juan in Puerto Rico, Cartagena and Portobello had been defended from British attack, and important victories had been achieved in Central America. Only two objectives were still pending: Jamaica and the Bahamas.

Bernardo de Galvez was at this point Commander-in-Chief of the American operations; under him Solano, the Commander of the Navy, and Juan Cagigal, the Commander of the Army, had replaced Bonet and Navarro, respectively. Galvez placed Cagigal in charge of the Bahamas expedition, who hired the American Alexander Guillon with his fleet to protect the

Spanish transports.<sup>68</sup> Galvez, together with Solano, would be focused on the most important expedition at this moment: Jamaica. On February 1782, Galvez, together with Saavedra, moved to Guarico to prepare for the expected expedition. Later on, on 10 April, part of Solano's fleet arrived at Guarico with 64 transports, seven ships of the line, and seven frigates.

By November 1781, the British had deployed 3,360 soldiers and 13,000 militia to defend Jamaica. The British fleet in charge of protecting its waters, commanded by Sir Peter Parker, being Joshua Rowley his advisor and squadron chief, was comprised of 20 ships of the line and six frigates. However, an unexpected event would drastically alter the situation. On 12 April 1782, while sailing for Guarico from Fort Royal, de Grasse's fleet would be defeated by Rodney's at Saintes Island. This provided the British the needed naval superiority in the Caribbean. A few severely damaged French ships reached Guarico, while Admiral de Grasse was captured and sent to Jamaica. The British established a blockade first of Guarico and later of Havana. By the end of 1782, Galvez had in Guarico around 30,000 troops. But the British dominance of the Caribbean prevented any attempt against Jamaica.

However, knowing of Rodney's victory over de Grasse and his intention to sail west to stop the Franco-Spanish invasion of Jamaica, Cagigal realized that the chance was perfect to undertake the expedition to the Bahamas. On 22 April, the American-Spanish fleet set sail for Nassau with eight ships of the line and 2,500 soldiers on 57 transports. John Maxwell, British governor of the Bahamas, though well defended in Nassau, expected the attack from northeast. Instead, it came from the northwest canal, hence he was totally taken by surprise and eventually capitulated on 8 May, just one year after Pensacola.<sup>69</sup>

In Central America, Matias de Galvez continued with his operation. He captured Fort George on Roatan Island on 16 March, and Fort Quepriva and Fort Criba, on the mouth of the Tinto River, on 3 April. However, Rodney's victory over de Grasse not only would affect

operations in the Caribbean but also in Central America. Once the threat to Jamaica was reduced, the new governor in Jamaica, Archibald Campbell, sent an expeditionary force to retake Quepriva and Criba, succeeding in recapturing both by the end of August.

By August 1782, from the initial Spanish objectives, only Gibraltar and Jamaica resisted. Spain wanted to seize Gibraltar before the peace agreement, knowing that its defenders were exhausted and well aware of the difficulties inherent in negotiating its recovery in the recent past. The last Spanish attempt occurred in September, and this used a new invention: the floating batteries.<sup>70</sup> However, it ended in the same final result: failure, as Gibraltar remained British.

### **1783: PEACE TREATY OF PARIS.**

The preliminary agreement for a peace treaty was signed in Versailles on 20 January 1783. Although Carlos III tried to negotiate the return of Gibraltar to the Spanish Crown by other means, those efforts proved to be fruitless. The final peace treaty between Great Britain and Spain was signed in Versailles by Aranda and the Duke of Manchester on 3 September 1783. Spain retained Minorca and West Florida, received East Florida, and established limits for the cut of wood in Campeche. The Bahamas were returned to Britain and Gibraltar remained British – as it still is in 2009.

### **CONCLUSION**

Clausewitz said that “war is therefore a continuation of policy by other means.”<sup>71</sup> The American Revolution had its international dimension, hence became another episode in the eternal struggle of rivalries and balance of powers among the European countries, while the American rebels fought to obtain their independence. However, both France and Spain were to play significant roles in the American victory. The American Revolution revealed a weakness in the British Empire that the relative strengths of the Bourbon monarchies

exploited with success: the British could not defend their interests and possessions everywhere.

The fact of the matter is that Spain, while obviously seeking to protect her national and colonial interests, played a significant, if not decisive, role in the events that led to the United States independence. Being a colonial power, it risked much more in this war than any other power except Britain herself. Opening several operational fronts, the Spanish Crown drastically diminished the employment of British forces that could have been used to suppress the revolutionaries in the Thirteen Colonies. More than 11,000 men were sent from Spain to attack the southern border of British North American possessions, actually more than the total number of troops sent by France to fight in the northern colonies during the war. It disrupted British strategy as a whole and forced London to maintain and reinforce its garrisons in Florida and Jamaica. During the time of the American Revolution, Spain not only fought the British on the North American Continent, but also in Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Bahamas, Jamaica, Minorca, and Gibraltar. Adding to that the French attacks in India, Hudson Bay, Sierra Leone, Western Indies, and North America, the British found themselves fighting a global war, as well as facing the threat of a combined Spanish-French invasion to the British homeland.

Furthermore, and without having any allegiance or treaty with the rebelling colonists, from the beginning Spain provided supplies and economic support to the revolutionaries. However, most of this in subsequent was attributed to France or simply neglected in the American history. The victory at Yorktown was key for the American colonies success, with de Grasse's fleet providing naval superiority at a timely moment, partially thanks to the money and supplies provided by the Spanish in the Caribbean. This is a example of the importance of the Spanish contribution to the success of the American Revolution.

Ultimately, Spanish ephemeral benefits only led to future friction and struggles with the United States, while the seed of independence soon spread along her own American colonies. This would eventually result in the demise of Spain as a colonial power in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As Sir John Fortescue stated, "Spain assured to herself the speedy revolt and loss of her colonial empire."<sup>72</sup> The Count of Aranda, Spanish Ambassador to France and representative of Spain in the signature of the Treaty of Paris, in a letter to Carlos III in 1783, foresaw, with astonishing accuracy, the fate of Spain in America: "This Federal Republic was born a pigmy, as such, it needed the aid and strength of two powerful states like Spain and France to accomplish its independence. The day will come when it will grow up, become a giant and be greatly feared in the Americas. Then it will forget the benefits that it had received from the two powers and only think in its own aggrandizement."<sup>73</sup>

During Washington's inaugural parade in New York in 1789, Diego de Gardoqui, first Spanish Ambassador to U.S., stood to his left, while the only foreign warship in the port was the *Galveztown*,<sup>74</sup> both clear symbols of the American recognition, by that time, of the Spanish contribution to its independence. But history has a convenient memory, and soon in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the role of Spain in the American Revolution would be forgotten.

## Notes

**Note to the reader:** quotations from Eric Beerman's book, *Spain and the U.S. Independence*, are author's translation.

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<sup>1</sup> "During the XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII, and XIX centuries, we must remember that Spain discovered, explored, dominated, and colonized the most extensive territorial empire in the history of the world. Her dominions extended all around the globe and included the majority of the western hemisphere." Robert H. Thonhoff, *Spain and the American Revolution: Spain's Vital Role in the Fight for Independence* (American Spirit, Daughters of the American Revolution, March/April 2002), p.2.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas E. Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States. An Intrinsic Gift* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), p.7.

<sup>3</sup> "This, it was thought, would bring the revolted Colonies speedily to reason and induce them to listen to proposals for conciliation". John W. Fortescue, *History of the British Army. Vol. III. 1763-1793* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1902), pp.167-168.

<sup>4</sup> "Setting aside India, there were troops in America at New York, on the Delaware, in Florida, Quebec, Halifax, and on the Lakes; in the West Indies at Jamaica, Grenada, St. Vincent, Tobago, Bermuda, and the Bahamas; in the Mediterranean at Gibraltar and Minorca." ". Fortescue, *History of the British Army. Vol. III. 1763-1793*, p.249.

<sup>5</sup> "Great Britain could sail sixty six ships of the line while France had fifty three ready to go... England had another fourteen ships of the line that only needed crews....Spain's navy of fifty ships of the line and its land army in the Americas would become indispensable." Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States. An Intrinsic Gift*, p.78.

<sup>6</sup> Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States. An Intrinsic Gift*, pp.11 & 43.

<sup>7</sup> Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States. An Intrinsic Gift*, p.64

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<sup>8</sup> Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States. An Intrinsic Gift*, p.7.

<sup>9</sup> "The Spanish wish to recover Gibraltar and Minorca was always present since their lost to the Spanish Crown in the Utrecht Treaty (1713). It is very likely that had Great Britain agreed to discuss and facilitate Spanish demands, Spain had not been so close to France along the XVIII century." Eric Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence* (Madrid: Arguval-Mapfre, 1992), p.249.

<sup>10</sup> "The letter was read to Congress on February 12 and it stated that the king of Spain had made the independence of the United States the preliminary article to a general pacification....He then enumerated Spain's territorial claims, but noted that if mediation resulted in a quick settlement, Spain would have no claim upon the U.S. or upon the Floridas". Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States. An Intrinsic Gift*, pp.128-129.

<sup>11</sup> "Some of the articles in that agreement dealt with future military operations and the expected favorable results for Spain of a peace treaty: 1) restitution of Gibraltar; 2) restitution of Minorca; 3) British expulsion from the Mississippi River; 4) Mobile's possession; 5) restitution of Pensacola and all the Florida coast, and 6) revocation of British privileges established on the Treaty of Paris in 1763 over the Campeche Coast and their expulsion from the Honduras Coast". Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.41-42. "France and Spain also agreed that French troops would fight in the rebelling thirteen colonies while Spanish forces would concentrate in its own territory". Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States. An Intrinsic Gift*, p.133.

<sup>12</sup> "The treasure fleet sailed from Veracruz to Spain, laden with the wealth of American silver mines and East Indies material goods. Many times these fleets stopped in Havana, which had become one of the richest, if not the richest American city." Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States. An Intrinsic Gift*, p.35.



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<sup>13</sup> "Spain needed time to strengthen itself as well as to develop a policy with which to deal with Great Britain... This concept of time, specifically the patience necessary to take advantage of time, was a lesson that Carlos III learned from the Seven Years War when he hurriedly committed his unprepared country." Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States. An Intrinsic Gift*, p.19.

<sup>14</sup> Don Higginbotham, *The War of American Independence. Military Attitudes, Policies, and Practice 1763-1789* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), p.233.

<sup>15</sup> "216 brass cannons, 209 gun-carriages, 27 mortars, 29 couplings, 4,000 tents, 12,826 shells, 30,000 guuns, 30,000 bayonets, 30,000 suits, 51,134 rifle bullets, and 300,000 pounds of powder were purchased with French and Spanish money 50/50 through Hortalez Company . This shipment should be sent by ship through a French port, via Bermudas to Boston." Thomson Buchanan Parker, "Spain: Forgotten Ally of the American Revolution." (*The Journal of American History*, Vol.64, No.1, 1977), pp.27-31.

<sup>16</sup> Archivo Histórico Nacional. File 3898. 28 October 1794, as cited in Frank de Varona, *Spain and Hispanic America: Forgotten Allies of the American Revolution* (Miami: Mnemosyne Publishing Company, 1993), p.100.

<sup>17</sup> Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States. An Intrinsic Gift*, pp.29-31.

Buchanan Parker, "Spain: Forgotten Ally of the American Revolution." pp.123-150.

<sup>18</sup> "Unzaga's timely shipment saved Wheeling and Fort Pitt from British capture. Without those key bases of operation, George Roger Clarks could not have succeeded in his campaign of 1778 in the Ohio River Valley". Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States. An Intrinsic Gift*, p.31.

<sup>19</sup> "Spanish money and supplies flowing through New Orleans under Bernardo de Galvez's supervision became so extensive that Spanish money had completely boosted Continental

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currency and had become fairly commonplace among the colonies". Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States. An Intrinsic Gift*, pp.107-108.

<sup>20</sup> "Lee received 50,000 pesos from Spain at once, in April 81,000 livres tournois, and in June another 100,000." Varona, *Spain and Hispanic America: Forgotten Allies of the American Revolution*, p. 98. "Spain permitted American privateers to use her own and her colonies' ports. For example, the small fleet of seven ships of Alexander Guillon from South Carolina was repaired, armed, and given food and other supplies in Havana in 1778 at a cost of 64,424 pesos. Juan de Miralles assumed financial responsibility for the repairs of Gillon's ships." Varona, *Spain and Hispanic America: Forgotten Allies of the American Revolution*, p.100.

<sup>21</sup> Thonhoff, *Spain and the American Revolution: Spain's Vital Role in the Fight for Independence*, p.2. "Miralles arrived in Philadelphia where he moved into a house at 242 South Third Street." Varona, *Spain and Hispanic America: Forgotten Allies of the American Revolution*, p.101.

<sup>22</sup> This information was contained in letters sent by Miralles to Jose de Galvez through Navarro, Governor of Havana, in May 1779. It is unknown whether this was a formal agreement or an informal understanding to induce Spain to wage war on Britain. Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States. An Intrinsic Gift*, p.133.

<sup>23</sup> Fortescue, *History of the British Army. Vol. III. 1763-1793*, p.197.

<sup>24</sup> Fortescue, *History of the British Army. Vol. III. 1763-1793*, p.289.

<sup>25</sup> British total number of ships of the line (60 or more guns) went from 131 on January 1775 to 174 on January 1783. To that, it has to be added the number of frigates and other ships (between 20 and 60 guns) that went from 98 to 198 on the same dates. William L. Clowes, *The Royal Navy. A History. Vol.III* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company, 1898), p. 328.

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<sup>26</sup> "Kingston, because of its commerce, possibly was more important to Great Britain than Boston, New York or Philadelphia. And even less argument would ensue over the relative importance of Great Britain's West Indian trade relative to the troublesome and costly North American colonies." Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States. An Intrinsic Gift*, p.37.

<sup>27</sup> For further information see Fortescue, *History of the British Army. Vol. III. 1763-1793*, pp. 261-263.

<sup>28</sup> "The isthmus at Panama gave Great Britain access to the Pacific Ocean. Of all the European countries, Spain was the only one sailing across the Pacific and benefiting from its trade and natural wealth. Great Britain's ally, Portugal, traded in the East Indies, but like England, used the traditional route around Africa to get there... England would be an unwelcome competitor of Spain's for the Oriental trade. This development would impact Mexico and the West Indies as well as severely change Spanish revenues at home." Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States. An Intrinsic Gift*, p.39.

<sup>29</sup> Fortescue, *History of the British Army. Vol. III. 1763-1793*, p.249.

<sup>30</sup> "He (Howe) was then (21 March) to detach three thousand more men, fully equipped with artillery and stores, to St. Augustine and Pensacola." Fortescue, *History of the British Army. Vol. III. 1763-1793*, p.250.

<sup>31</sup> "Improvements of Gibraltar defenses had started as far back as in 1775, and Elliott's arrival had even infused more vigor into the work of fortification, proving the British interest on keeping the position under any circumstance." Fortescue, *History of the British Army. Vol. III. 1763-1793*, pp.298-299.

<sup>32</sup> "Rodney, as commander of the Headwind British Fleet in the Antilles, set sail from Saint Helen's Harbour for Gibraltar on Christmas Day." Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.264.

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<sup>33</sup> Fortescue, *History of the British Army. Vol. III. 1763-1793*, pp.301-302.

<sup>34</sup> Letter from Floridablanca to Aranda, El Escorial, 25 Nov 79, as cited in Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.57.

<sup>35</sup> Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States. An Intrinsic Gift*, p.149.

<sup>36</sup> "Galvez organized an small army comprised of 667 men, including Oliver Pollock, American Congress agent, together with 7 other Americans. Moreover, he recruited 160 Indians in his way to the fort. He also had an small fleet, comprised of 4 ships loaded with 10 cannons and ammuniton, sailing through the Mississippi River to support the operation." Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, pp.46-49. "That force put in a melting pot by Galvez was the first multiracial army in northern America. Galvez also succeeded in recruiting in the German and Acadian settlements which lay upstream. He rejoined the column with 600 more whites and blacks, and 160 Indians, raising his army's total to 1,427." Jose M Guerrero, *Forgotten Soldiers from the Other Shore of the Ocean* (Madrid: Spanish Army Institute of Military History and Culture, 2006), p.4.

<sup>37</sup> Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, pp.55-57.

<sup>38</sup> Fortescue, *History of the British Army. Vol. III. 1763-1793*, p.303. Gaceta de Madrid, 05 July 82, as cited in Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.238.

<sup>39</sup> "The first goal in the British strategy had been won, and the spoils included the aforementioned three million pesos found in two botas anchored in Omoa's harbour." Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States. An Intrinsic Gift*, pp.152-153.

<sup>40</sup> Fortescue, *History of the British Army. Vol. III. 1763-1793*, p.304.

<sup>41</sup> "The adversity made Luis de Cordoba's Fleet to go back to Cadiz, and Langara's being crossing the Strait of Gibraltar with only 11 ships of the line and some frigates, when he met Rodney's Fleet. On 16 January, he saw the British Fleet made up of 21 ships of the line, several frigates, and a large convoy, heading Gibraltar. Following the orders to prevent any

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British help to Gibraltar, Langara fought Rodney's larger fleet and was defeated in one of the key battles of the war." Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.264. "Langara's gallant effort, along with the bad weather, dismantled one-third of Rodney's ships-of-the-line and scattered most of the rest... As a result of damage inflicted on Rodney's fleet, Great Britain spent most of the rest of 1780 refitting and organizing its American and European fleets."

Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States. An Intrinsic Gift*, pp.141-143.

<sup>42</sup> "Since the war declaration, Spain tried to seize Gibraltar through a blockade. But after Juan de Langara's Fleet defeat on 16 January 1780 and the subsequent British reinforcement of the Rock, Carlos III reasoned that Spanish forces would be more worthwhile in America than in a costly siege of Gibraltar." Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.67.

<sup>43</sup> "There were 12,000 men between infantry and cavalry, plus 4,000 militia men from Cadiz dedicated to the siege of Gibraltar." Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.252.

<sup>44</sup> Count of Ricla Report to send a force to America, El Pardo 20 Feb 1780. Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.68. "On 28 April 1780, Solano sailed from the Spanish port of Cadiz commanding the biggest armada ever sent by Spain to America. The fleet was comprised of 12 ships of the line, two frigates, one chambequin, and one paquebote, together with 100 transports, 38 merchant ships, all Spanish except for three French and two Americans. Moreover, 11,000 of the best Spanish infantry soldiers were aboard plus supporting artillery and their supplies, as also, two regiments to reinforce Puerto Rico and Havana. General Navia was in command of the Army troops. The expedition was organized in 7 columns, protected by the ships San Luis, Astuto, San Agustin, Arrogante, San Francis de Paula, Gallardo, San Nicolas de Bari, San Francisco de Asis, Velasco, San Genaro, Dragon y Guerrero; the frigates Santa Rosalia and Santa Cecilia; the chambequin Andaluz; and the paquebote San Gil." Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, pp.70-73.

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<sup>45</sup> “Especially the admirals Bonet and Calvo also disliked having to follow the plans of a younger officer, whom they considered ill prepared in naval affairs, and resented his achievements, always under the influence of his powerful uncle.” Guerrero, *Forgotten Soldiers from the Other Shore of the Ocean*, p.6.

<sup>46</sup> “The balandra Terrible, the frigate Caiman, the paquebote San Pio, and the bergantin Santa Teresa with 500 men.” Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.85.

<sup>47</sup> “General Campbell was on his way with 1100 men from Pensacola. He did not arrive in time to avoid the Spanish victory.” Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.92.

<sup>48</sup> “The initial goal of the Spanish fleet was to join the French fleet commanded by the Count of Guichen, while avoiding the British fleet commanded by Admiral Rodney that was preparing to ambush the Spanish fleet south of Martinique. This ended, after Solano evading Rodney, with the meeting taking place in Fort-de-France between Martinique and Dominique on 9 June. Both the Spanish and French fleets re-supplied and prepared for combat during their stay, always watching for any sign from Rodney’s fleet. On 5 July, the combined fleet sailed to Puerto Rico, where troops and artillery were disembarked. Afterwards, it continued to western Cuba where both fleets split on 21 July, the Spanish heading to Havana, and the French proceeding back to Guarico. Once in Havana, Solano sent reinforcements to Guatemala and an escort with the merchants ships to Mexico. Although the expedition accomplished successfully its initial objectives, 471 died and 2,398 were ill as a result of diseases.” Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.78.

<sup>49</sup> “The fleet was comprised of 16 war ships and 26 transports, with 3,756 officers and sailors plus 2,148 ground troops.” Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.98.

<sup>50</sup> “Both commanders had different views on how Pensacola should be attacked. Galvez wanted a sea and land joint operation exploiting both Galvez’s forces from Mobile and Bonet’s Fleet. Nevertheless, Bonet decided to act on his own, forcing the entrance to

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Pensacola with 21 ships on 27 March, and surprising General Campbell's men, who had just returned from their long unsuccessful march to help Mobile. But the British surprise was even bigger when, after two days waiting for the landing and the attack, the Spanish Fleet returned to Havana without any apparent reason. Meanwhile, Galvez, with his force still in Mobile Bay, insisted in carrying out the attack before Pensacola could be reinforced with troops from Jamaica. Finally, with Bonet's Fleet in Havana and not having enough forces to carry out the expedition, he decided to postpone it. Galvez was very angry with the attitude of some military commanders in La Havana, and very specially when he learnt about Bonet's lost chance to seize Pensacola." Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, pp.102-103.

<sup>51</sup> "Lord George Germain, the British Secretary of State for the colonies, ordered General Frederick Haldimand, commander of British forces in Canada, to defeat the Americans and the Spaniards establishments on the Mississippi River. Patrick Sinclair, the lieutenant governor of Michilimackinac in northern Michigan, received the task of organizing the expedition. By the middle of February 1780, he reported that an assemblage of Menominee, Sioux, Sac, and Fox Indians would be gathered to join a British regiment at the mouth of the Wisconsin River on March 10." Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States. An Intrinsic Gift*, p.179.

<sup>52</sup> "Cartabona would be appointed commander of that position, resisting all the enemy attempts to seize it." Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.61.

<sup>53</sup> "Expedition commanded by the Captain Eugene Pourcee, from the Saint Louis Cavalry Company." Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.63.

<sup>54</sup> "13 war ships and 51 transports with 4000 troops." Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.106.

<sup>55</sup> Beerman mentioned in his book that one of the British reasons to seize that strip along the St. John's River was to build a canal, but without providing further information or sources.

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“A British expedition sailed for the St. John’s River from Jamaica on 3 February, with the objective of seizing the Fort Inmaculada (or Fort St. Juan), 100 kilometers upriver. Once again, the British focused on Nicaragua with the purpose of occupying a strip from the Caribbean to the Pacific to build a canal. The expedition was commanded by Captain Polson, and made up of 400 soldiers and 600 Sambo-Miskito Indians, amongst whose officers was a young Horacio Nelson. On 11 March (or April) the British started an artillery attack to the fort, one that lasted for 18 days. After a brave defense, Juan de Aysa, the commander of the fort, decided to surrender it due to a lack of supplies and ammunition. Matias had already reacted to the British offensive, first building a new fort, San Carlos, upriver from the Inmaculada Fort, and defended by 500 soldiers; and second, organizing an expedition to retake Inmaculada.” Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.241.

<sup>56</sup> Fortescue, *History of the British Army. Vol. III. 1763-1793*, p.341.

<sup>57</sup> Fortescue, *History of the British Army. Vol. III. 1763-1793*, p.344.

<sup>58</sup> “That force, commanded by Col. Hanxleden, was comprised of 200 soldiers and 400 Indians. Col. Johan Ludwig Wilhelm von Hanxleden was the commander of the 3rd Waldeck Regiment that arrived in New York in October 1776. These troops served in Fort Washington and in the Staten Island defence. The Regiment, including 24 officers, 650 infantrymen, and 14 artillerymen, was sent to Pensacola in October 1778.” J. Holmes, *Alabama’s Bloodiest Day of the American Revolution: Counterattack at The Village, January 7, 1781* (*Alabama Review*, XXIX, 3, 1976), pp.208-219, as cited in Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p. 115.

<sup>59</sup> Letter from Count of Aranda to Floridablanca, Paris, 27 Nov 80, as cited in Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.189.

<sup>60</sup> “The Royal Order 22 Jun 80 appointed Saavedra, trusted man of Jose de Galvez and Indian Secretary Officer, as the Royal Commissioner to La Havana to coordinate war operations in



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America, and specifically in Jamaica. On his way to La Havana, he was captured by the British on 16 November and taken to Jamaica. Without knowing the importance of this prisoner, and taking him for a Spanish trader, he was released on 2 January 1781. During his time in the island, he got valuable information for the projected invasion.” Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, pp.188-189.

<sup>61</sup> “De Grasse’s fleet was made up of 27 ships of the line (1 of 110 cannons, 5 of 80, 19 of 74, and 2 of 64) and 6 frigates. Adding the small fleet of Monteil, the number raised to 31 ships of the line.” Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.193.

<sup>62</sup> “The Combined Plan of Operations had the next issues: 1) help the Americans, beating the British Fleet, and expelling the British troops from the centre provinces as Virginia; 2) expel the British from the Headwind Islands, where they threatened French and Spanish possessions; and 3) conquer Jamaica, British power center in the Caribbean.” Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.194.

<sup>63</sup> “Part of that money was borrowed from a few Cuban families, and to be returned once the Veracruz fleet would arrive to La Havana. The rest came from the Regiments Funds in La Havana.” Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.197.

<sup>64</sup> Rochambeau to Aranda, New York, 24 Oct 81. AGS, E, book 171, as cited in Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.199. “Grasse himself later wrote that the victory at Yorktown on 19 October 1781 happened because of the money supplied by Havana. That money, he wrote, might in truth be regarded as “the bottom dollars” upon which the edifice of American independence was raised.” Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States. An Intrinsic Gift*, p.203.

<sup>65</sup> “Rodney reckoned that he would take at most ten, and supposed that by sending fourteen ships with Hood, and ordering six more, which for some reason never came, from Jamaica, he

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had made ample provisions against all contingencies." Fortescue, *History of the British Army*. Vol. III. 1763-1793, p.395.

<sup>66</sup> "Some of the examples of those uprisings were Natchez; Comuneros of San Gil; Tupac Amaru in Peru; and Caracas, Maracaibo, San Cristobal, Merida, La Grita, and Cumana in Venezuela." Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.200.

<sup>67</sup> "Darby's Fleet was made up of 28 ships, 10 frigates, and 97 transports to help and supply Gibraltar". Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.251.

<sup>68</sup> "Guillon commanded a fleet of eight ships of the line and 12 transports from South Carolina. He got 10 pesos and four reales per monthly ton until eight days after the conquest of Bahamas, including a gratification for the surrender." Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.176.

<sup>69</sup> "Maxwell's garrison was made up of 612 men, 519 cannons, 11 corsairs ships, 137 North American ships, 14 Spanish, 24 French, and 1 Dutch." Beerman, Eric. *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.180.

<sup>70</sup> "The floating batteries were invented by the famous French engineer Jean Claude D'Arcon Le Michaud (1733-1806). Ten of those batteries were built using old ships of 600 to 1,400 tons. 6 to 24 cannons were set up in every of them. Crillon was not for the use of those new devices, preferring a combination of land and sea attacks that would occur between 8 and 11 September, without any further improvement in the situation. Finally, on 12 September, Luis de Cordoba's Fleet arrived at Gibraltar with its 50 ships. The night after, they decided to use the naval gunfire to deceive the British and move the floating batteries closer. But the ruse did not work, and the British concentrated all their fire over those batteries. It became evident that their armor and the fire system were not good enough for this purpose, and most were lost that night." For further information see Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.269.

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<sup>71</sup> Karl von Clausewitz. *War, Politics, and Power* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1962), p.136.

<sup>72</sup> Fortescue, *History of the British Army. Vol. III. 1763-1793*, p.496.

<sup>73</sup> Aranda Memorial. Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States. An Intrinsic Gift*, p.212.

<sup>74</sup> "The Basque Diego de Bardoqui was the first Spanish Ambassador to the United States (1784-89)". Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.184.

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URL: <http://etext.virginia.edu/washington/fitzpatrick/>  
Washington's original letters, including the period of the American Revolution. In some of these letters, Washington expressed the vital importance of the international dimension of the conflict for the American cause, and specifically the important role of Spain in the war against Great Britain.

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URL: [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?esbib:2:./temp/~intlidl\\_nOgO::](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?esbib:2:./temp/~intlidl_nOgO::)  
Galvez' diary on the Battle of Pensacola.

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Beerman, Eric. *Spain and the U.S. independence*. Madrid: Arguval-Mapfre, 1992.  
This book has been a very fortunate discovery and the core of most of the information obtained for this work. Based on primary sources, it thoroughly assesses the Spanish activities both in America and Europe during the period of the American Revolution (1775-1783). It is written in Spanish.

Chavez, Thomas E. *Spain and the Independence of the United States. An Intrinsic Gift*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002.  
Quoting the book description in its cover, with which I totally agree, "Based on primary research in the archives of Spain, this book is about United States history at its very inception, placing the war in its broadest international context. In short, the information in this book should provide a clearer understanding of the independence of the United States, correct a longstanding omission in its history, and enrich its patrimony. It will appeal to anyone interested in the history of the Revolutionary War and in Spain's role in the developments of the Americas."

Clowes, William L. *The Royal Navy. A History. Vol.III*. London: Sampson Low, Marston and Company, 1898.  
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Chapters 10 to 12 narrates the significance and political consequences of the Seven Years War (1756-63), the period before the thirteen colonies rebellion, the American Revolution (1775-83), and its aftermath, for both the British and the Spanish colonial empires.

Flagg Bemis, Samuel. *The Diplomacy of the American Revolution*. New York: 1935.

Interesting book about the diplomacy during the American Revolution. However, written before 1935, it provides an uncompleted view of Spanish diplomacy, using as sources just the monograph "España ante la Independencia de los Estados Unidos", by Yela Utrilla.

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Wood, W.J. *Battles of the Revolutionary War. 1775-1781*. Chapel Hill, N.C. USA: Da Capo Press, 1995.

Detailed description of the different battles that occurred in the thirteen colonies from 1775-1781.

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Guerrero Acosta, Jose Manuel. *Forgotten Soldiers from the Other Shore of the Ocean*.

Madrid: Spanish Army Institute of Military History and Culture, 2006.

Short essay mainly focused on the Galvez' campaign in West Florida, providing thorough details about the different operations. It also provides interesting tables

regarding known Spanish financial aid and forces involved in the different Spanish operations in America.

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Short but very complete article about the Spanish role in the American Revolution, dealing with financial aid, diplomatic relationships, and a summary of the Spanish military campaigns between 1779 and 1783.

## Appendix A: Maps and Figures.

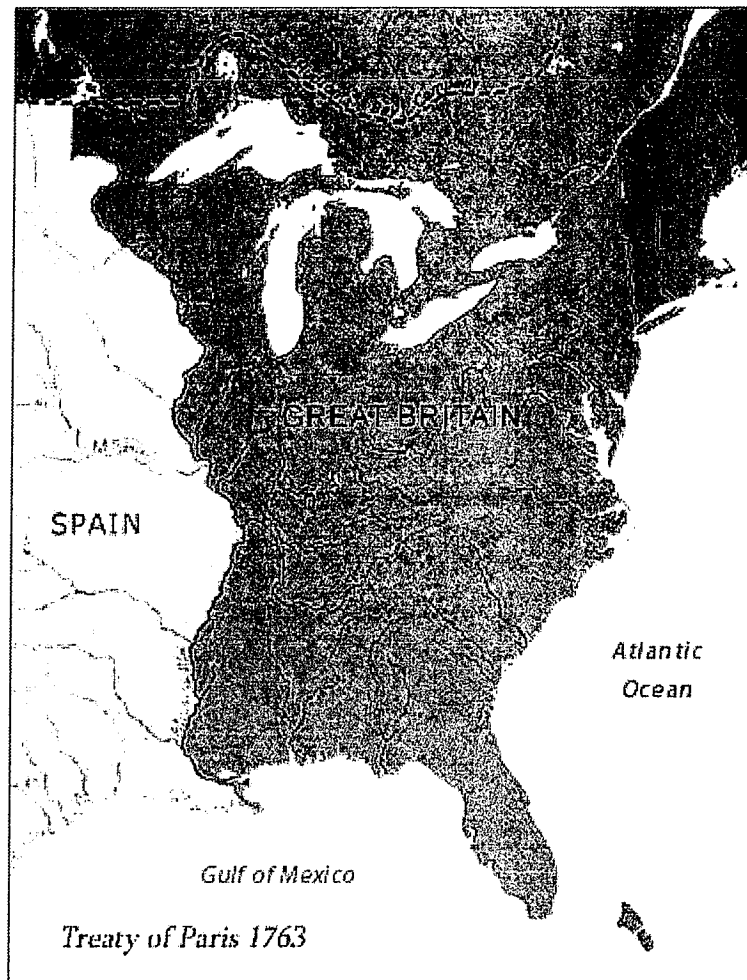


Fig. 1. North American British possessions. Treaty of Paris 1763.  
(Source: <http://international.loc.gov/intldl/fiahtml/map5.html>)

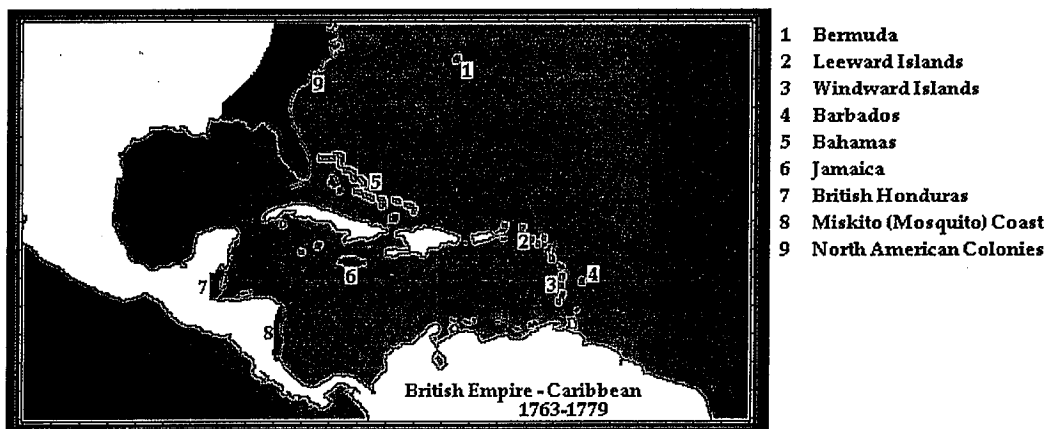


Fig. 2. Caribbean and Central America British possessions. Treaty of Paris 1763.  
(Source: <http://www.zum.de/whkmla/histatlas/centramerica/haxcamerica.html>)



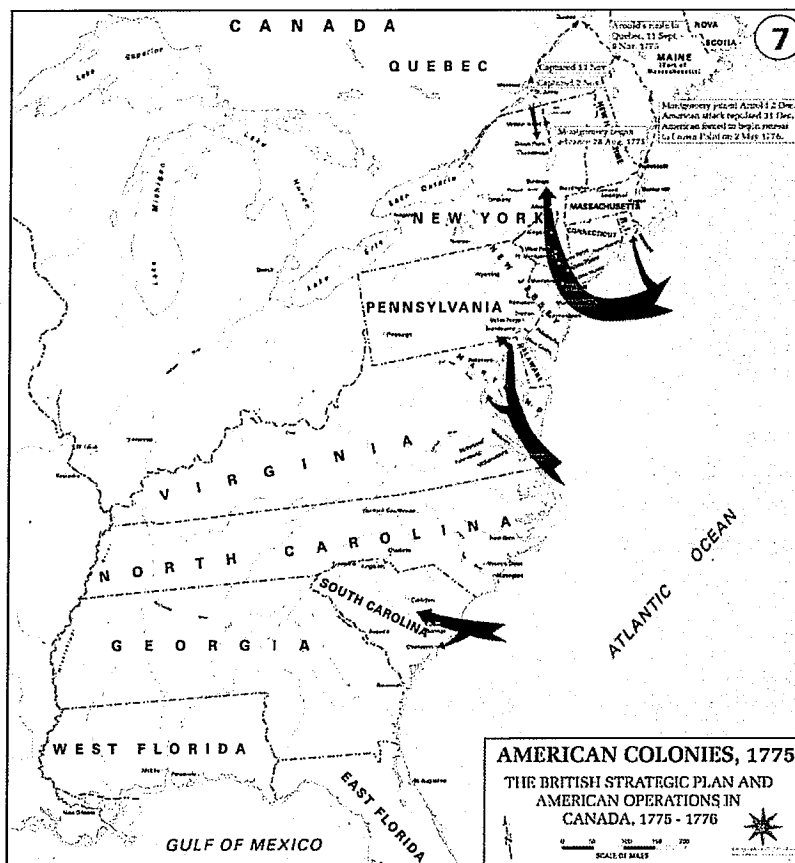


Fig. 3. British strategic plan for the thirteen colonies 1775.  
(Source: <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/socst/ghgonline/units/5/u5c.html>)

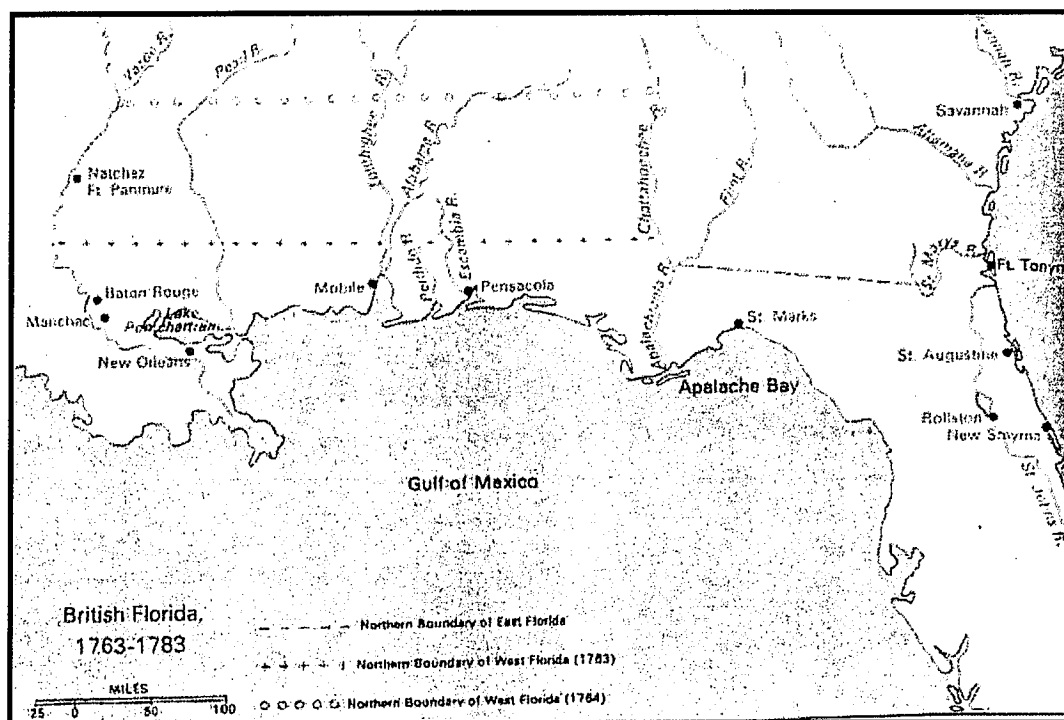


Fig. 4. New Orleans and environs. 1763-1783  
(Source: Thomas E. Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the U.S. An Intrinsic Gift*, p.170)

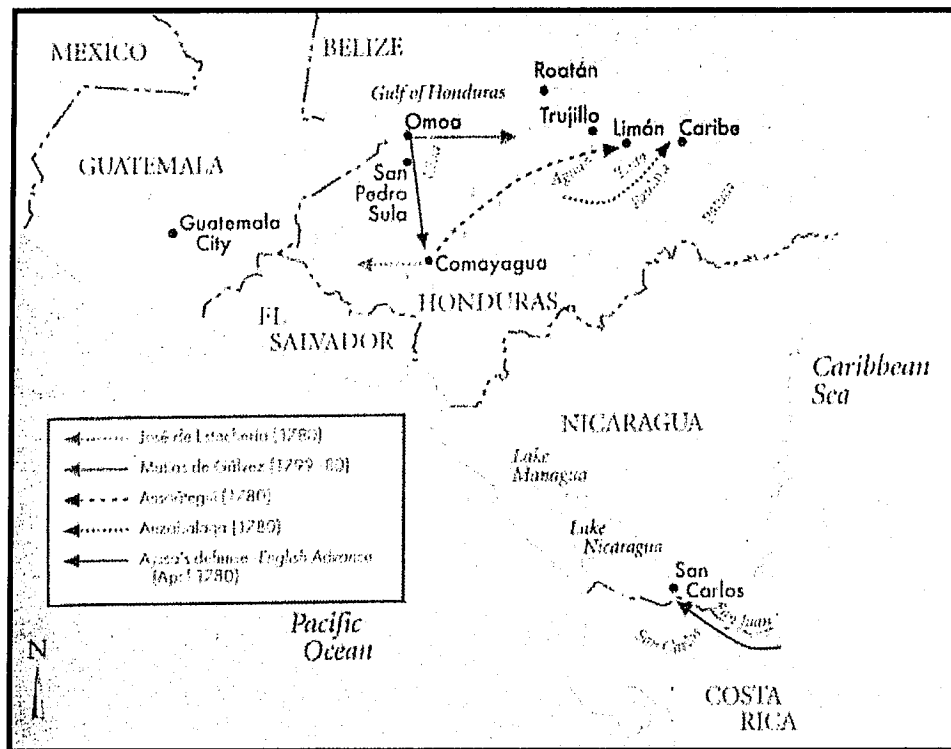


Fig. 5. Early campaigns in Central America (1779-summer 1780).  
(Source: Thomas E. Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the U.S. An Intrinsic Gift*, p.155)

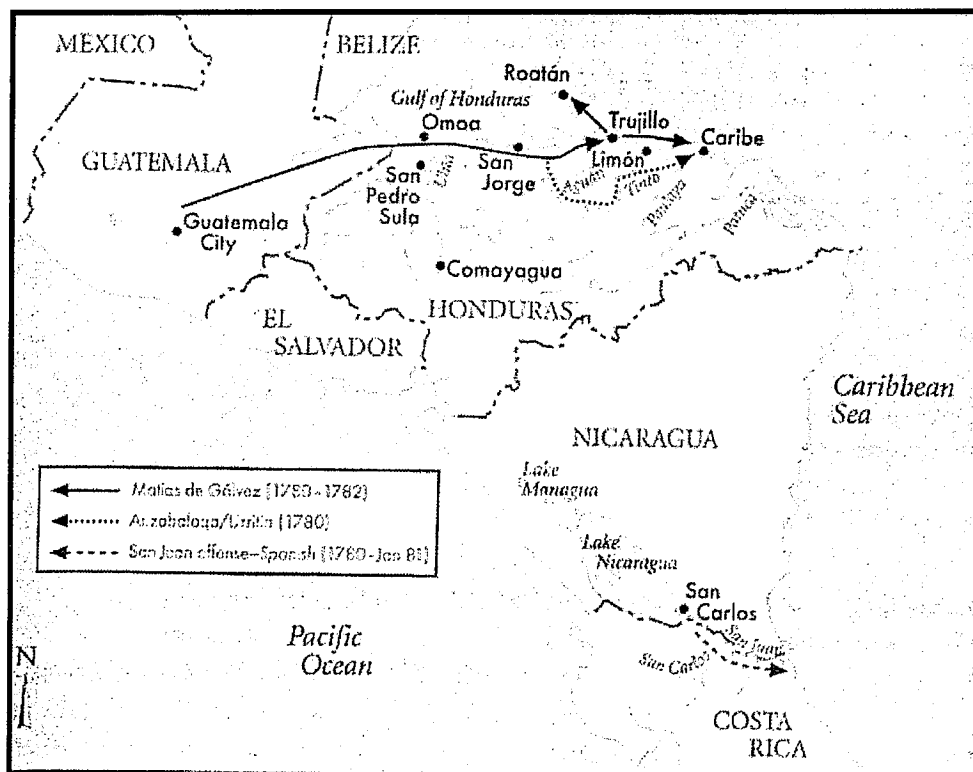


Fig. 6. Later campaigns in Central America (summer 17780-1782).  
(Source: Thomas E. Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the U.S. An Intrinsic Gift*, p.159)

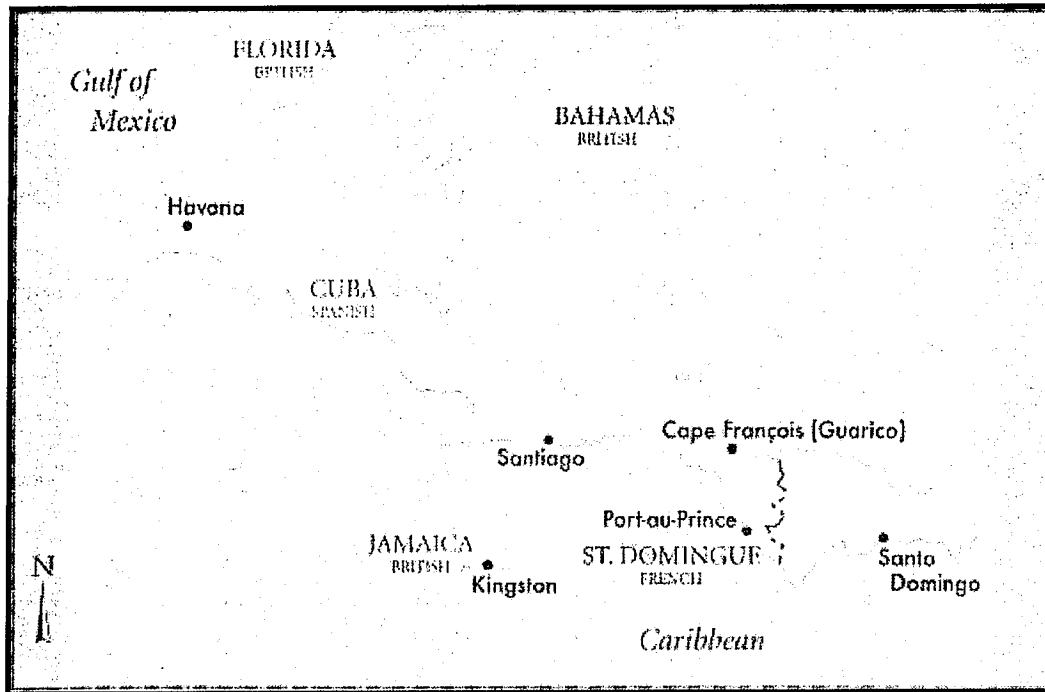


Fig. 7. The West Indies.

(Source: Thomas E. Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the U.S. An Intrinsic Gift*, p.35)

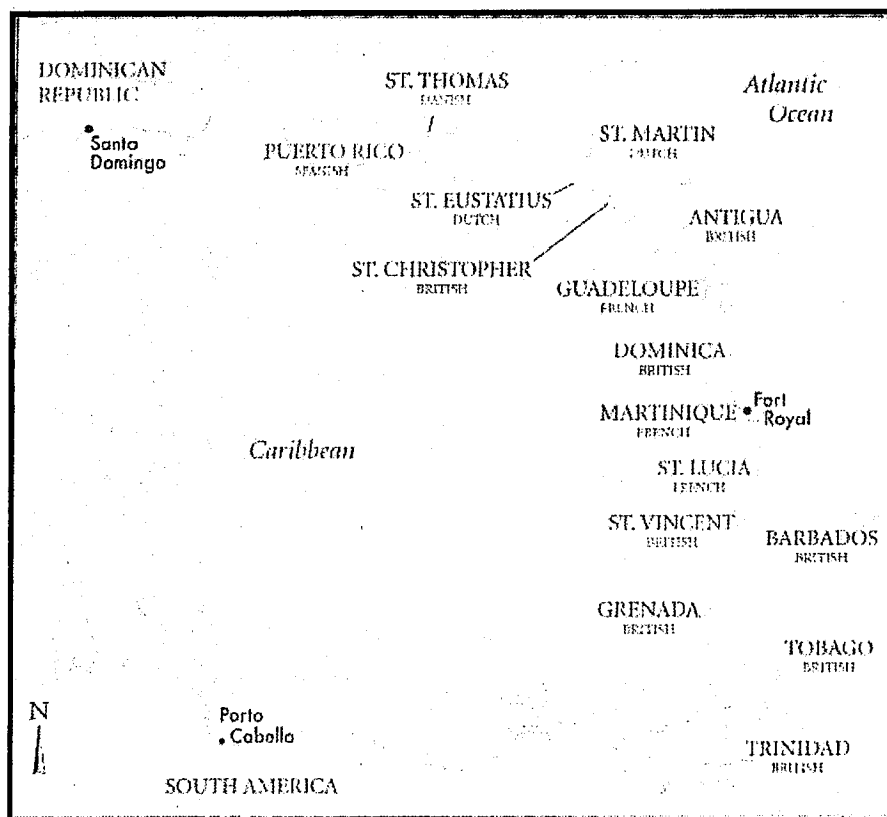


Fig. 8. The Leeward and Windward Islands.

(Source: Thomas E. Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the U.S. An Intrinsic Gift*, p.36)

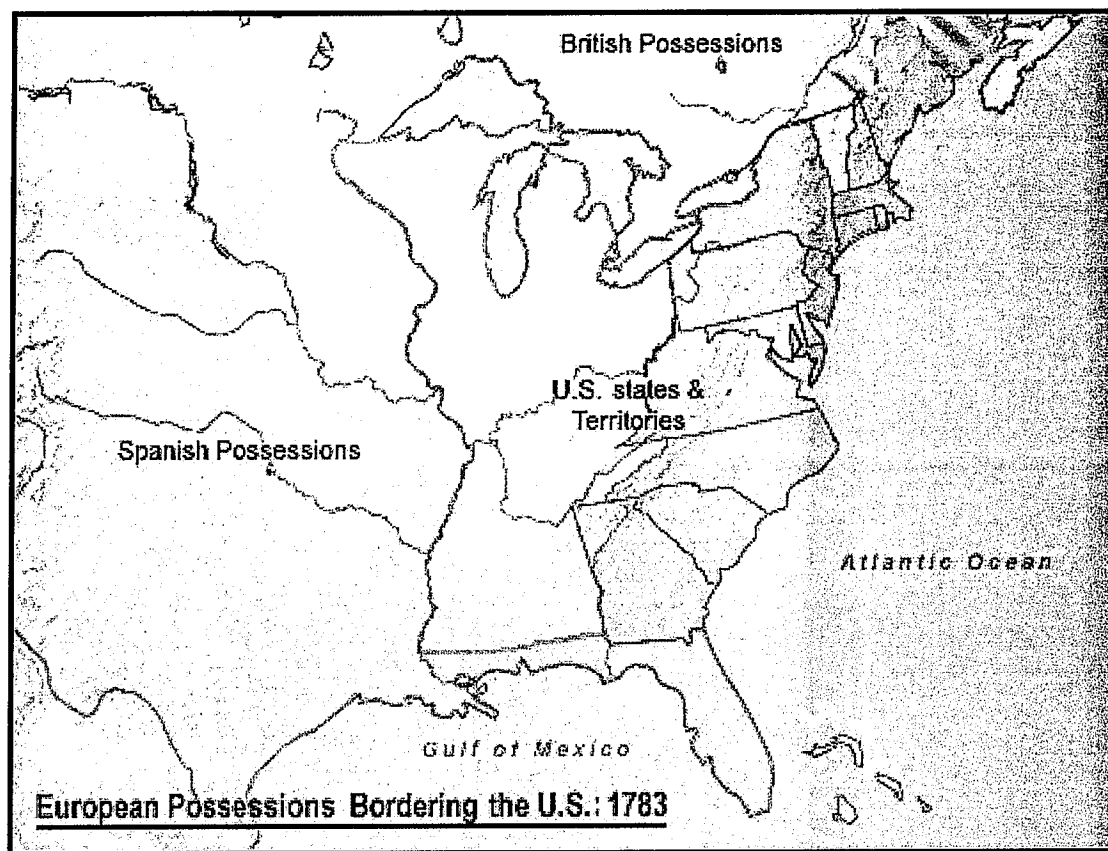


Fig. 9. Geopolitical North America after peace treaty 1783.  
 (Source: <http://www.uoregon.edu/~maphist/english/US/map04.html>)

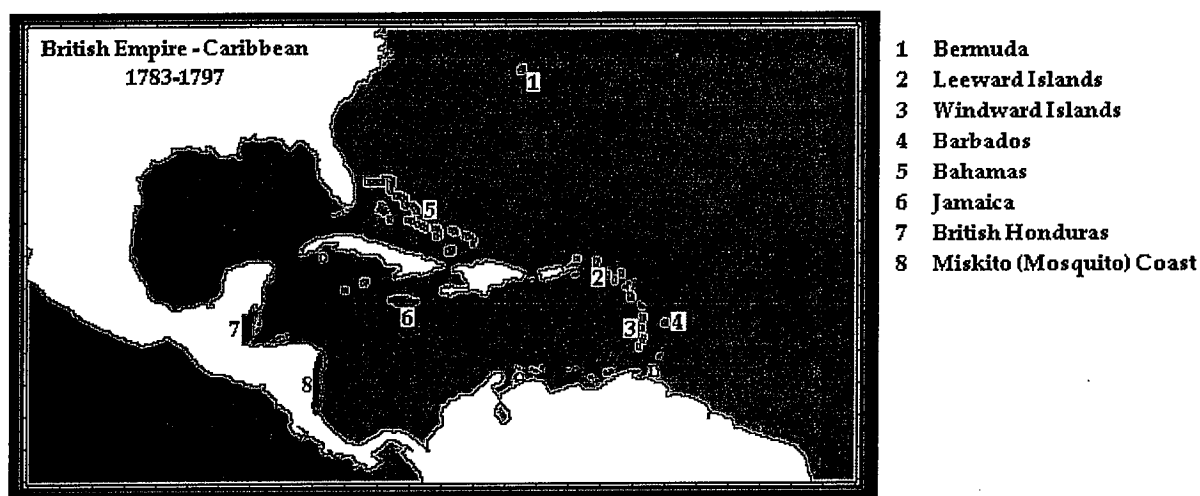


Fig. 10. Caribbean and Central America British possessions 1783.  
 (Source: <http://www.zum.de/whkmla/histatlas/caribbean/haxbrempcaribbean.html>)



Fig. 11. Spanish American Empire 1783

## Appendix B: Basic Chronology

### 1775

April 19	Battles of Lexington and Concord.
June 15	Washington named Commander in Chief, assumes command July 03.
August 23	George III declares colonies in rebellion.

### 1776

March 17	British evacuate Boston.
August 02	Declaration of Independence signed.
September 17	British occupy New York City.

### 1777

September 26	Howe occupies Philadelphia.
October 17	Gen. Burgoyne surrenders at Saratoga.

### 1778

February 06	U.S.-French alliance signed.
June 28	Battle of Monmouth.
December 29	British occupy Savannah.

### 1779

12 April	Treaty of Aranjuez between France and Spain.
21 June	Spain declares war against Great Britain in favor of the American Colonies.
07 September	Bernardo de Galvez seizes Bute de Manchac Fort
21 September	British capitulation of New Richmond Fort in Baton Rouge. Afterwards surrender of Panmure de Natchez Fort on October the 5 <sup>th</sup> .
28 November	Matias de Galvez reconquers San Fernando of Omoa Fort in Honduras

### 1780

16 January	Rodney's British fleet defeats Juan de Langara fleet in the siege of Gibraltar.
14 March	Carlota Fort capitulation to Galvez in Mobila.
28 March	Bonet's attempt to invade Pensacola.
8 April	Count of Ricla, Plan for Operations in America
28 April	Solano's expedition departure from Cadiz heading La Habana for the American Campaign
May 12	Charleston falls to British.
26 May	Attack to San Luis in "Illinois" (now Missouri).
11 July	Arrival of first French troops to the Colonies.
16 October	Second expedition from Havana to Pensacola meets a hurricane.
20 December	Britain declares war to Holland.

## 1781

03 January	Spanish reconquest of Inmaculada Fort in the San Juan River, Nicaragua
07 January	British attack to The Village in Mobile.
12 February	Spanish expedition and seizure of San Jose Fort at the Michigan Lake.
March 02	Articles of Confederation adopted by 13 <sup>th</sup> state.
16 March	"Comuneros" rebellion at San Gil and other locations in South America.
22 April	Natchez inhabitants uprising against Spain and seizure of Panmure Fort
08 May	Pensacola is seized by Bernardo de Galvez.
21 July	Saavedra provides money to the French Fleet to go to Yorktown.
July	Galvez sends reinforcements to put down the uprisings in South America.
19 October	Lord Cornwallis surrenders in Yorktown.

## 1782

04 February	The British garrison surrenders to the Earl of Crillon in Minorca.
16 March	Spanish conquest of Roatan Island in Honduras.
04 April	Seizure of Criba River Fort (renamed Inmaculada Concepcion) in Honduras
12 April	De Grasse's fleet is defeated by Rodney's fleet near Guadalupe Island.
08 May	Seizure of the Bahamas by Cagigal.
13 September	Floating batteries failure in Gibraltar.
November 30	Preliminary peace signed between Britain and U.S.

## 1783

07 January	Bernardo de Galvez is replaced by the Count of Estaing as Chief of the Spanish Army in America.
20 January	Preliminary agreement for a peace treaty between Great Britain and Spain.
April 19	U.S. Congress ratifies treaty.
01 June	Galvez evacuates the army from Guarico.
03 September	End of the war and Paris Peace Treaty signature.

## Appendix C: Microbiographies

**Aranda, Count of (Pedro Pablo Abarca de Bolea),** (Siétamo, Huesca, 1718- Épila, Zaragoza 1798), was a Spanish statesman and diplomat. He was captain in the Spanish Army and fought in the War of Austrian Succession. As he had been severely wounded in combat in 1743, he temporarily left the military and traveled through Europe. He studied the Prussian Army and lived in Paris, where he met Diderot, Voltaire and D'Alambert and studied the Encyclopedical and Enlightenment movements. He was appointed ambassador to France in 1773, where he stayed till 1792. In Paris, analyzing the situation created after the United States won its independence, he drafted a projected Commonwealth for the Spanish Empire: three independent kingdoms (Peru, *Tierra Firme* (New Grenada and Venezuela) and Mexico) with three Spanish *infantes* in their thrones. The Spanish king would remain as the Spanish Emperor. In 1792, he returned to Spain to replace the Count of Floridablanca as secretary of State.



**Bonet, Juan Bautista.** Naval Chief of Cuba 1774-81. He was born in 1709 in La Valetta, Malta, being his father navy captain. He was chief of the naval forces in the Pacific for Peru and Chile. Military Order of Santiago in 1777. Lt. General of the Navy in 1779 and in the siege of Gibraltar in 1781. He died in Cartagena in 1786.

**Cagigal, Juan M.** Captain General of Cuba during the war. He was born in Santiago de Cuba in 1738, being his father governor of the city. He participated in the expeditions to Argil (1775), Santa Catalina (1776), and Havana, Pensacola, and Bahamas. He was prosecuted and imprisoned in Cadiz in 1785, in relation with Francisco Miranda and the Bahamas expedition. Rehabilitated by Charles IV in 1789 and absolved in 1799. He fought the French between 1793-95. He died in Valencia in 1811.

**Floridablanca, Count of (José Moniño y Redondo).** He was the reformist chief minister of King Carlos III of Spain, and also served briefly under Carlos IV. He was arguably Spain's most effective statesman in the eighteenth century. He was born at Murcia in 1728 as the son of a retired army officer. He was rewarded with the title "Count of Floridablanca" in 1773 for succeeding in obtaining the support of the Pope in suppressing the Jesuits. Floridablanca was named chief minister in 1777. As master of Spain's foreign policy, Floridablanca sought prominently to restore the economic well-being of Spain. He concluded trade agreements with Morocco and the Ottoman Empire and believed that good relations with United Kingdom were key to Spain's growth. In spite of this, he was drawn reluctantly into the American Revolution on the side of the rebels. With a better grasp of reality than Charles Gravier, the comte de Vergennes, his French counterpart, Floridablanca gathered resources to build his naval fleet and land forces while isolating Britain through diplomacy before involving Spain in the American war. The war went well for Spain and Floridablanca succeeded in restoring much of Spain's prestige during the conflict. Floridablanca strove to carve out an independent foreign policy for Spain, distancing the country from France which Spain had been a virtual satellite of since the War of the Spanish Succession. When Napoleon marched against Spain in 1808, there was a public outcry for Floridablanca to lead the





country in resistance. He accepted the call and became the President of the Supreme Central and Governmental Junta but, at the age of eighty, his strength failed him and he died at Seville on November 20 that year.

**Galvez y Madrid, Bernardo de. Viscount of Galveston and Count of Gálvez** ( 23 July 1746, Málaga, Spain—30

November, 1786, Mexico City) He arrived in New Spain, then Mexico, in 1762. As a captain, he fought the Apaches, with his Opata Indian allies. In 1772, he returned to Spain in the company of his uncle, José de Gálvez. Later, he was sent to Pau, France with the Cantabria regiment. There, he learned to speak French, which served him well when he became governor of Louisiana. In 1777, he was sent to Louisiana, as a colonel and interim governor of the province. In 1779, he was promoted to brigadier. He practiced an anti-British policy as governor, taking measures against British smuggling and promoting trade with France. He also established free trade with Cuba and Yucatán. He founded Galvez Town, in 1778. Gálvez carried out a masterful military campaign and defeated the British colonial forces at Manchac, Baton Rouge, and Natchez in 1779. In 1780, he recaptured Mobile from the British at the Battle of Fort Charlotte. His most important military victory over the British forces occurred on 9 May, 1781, when he attacked and took by land and by sea Pensacola, the British capital of West Florida. The American Revolution ended while Gálvez was preparing a new campaign to take Jamaica. Gálvez returned to Spain, in 1783, and fought in the campaign in the Netherlands. The following year he was sent back to the Indies, this time as governor and captain general of Cuba. Shortly after he arrived in Havana, his father, Matías de Gálvez y Gallardo (then the viceroy of New Spain), died. Bernardo de Gálvez was named to fill the position. He died on 30 November, 1786, in Tacubaya (now part of Mexico City).



**Galvez y Gallardo, Jose de (marqués de Sonora),** (1720,

Macharavialla, 1787, Aranjuez, Spain) was a Spanish lawyer, a colonial official in New Spain (1764-1772) and ultimately Minister of the Indies (1775-1787). He was one of the prime figures behind the Bourbon Reforms. José de Gálvez was a lawyer in the French embassy in Madrid and secretary of Marqués Jerónimo Grimaldi at the time of the Family Compact of 1761. Gálvez arrived in New Spain in 1761 in the capacity of a minister of the Council of the Indies. José de Gálvez returned to Spain in 1772, where he was a member of the General Council on Commerce, Coinage and Mining, a governor in the Council of the Indies, and a councilor of state. Carlos III made him Marqués de Sonora, and in 1775 Minister of the Indies. In that position he continued to work reorganizing the northern parts of New Spain.



**Galvez, Matias** (1725, Macharaviaya, Spain—November 3, 1784, Mexico City) was a Spanish general, governor of Guatemala (from April 1779 to April 3, 1783), and viceroy of New Spain (from April 29, 1783 to November 3, 1784). In Guatemala, Gálvez showed himself an active administrator and a good organizer. He repulsed the British in San Fernando de Omoa, in the Bay of Honduras, but



because of the distance and the scarcity of resources, he was not able to aid Fort San Juan, Nicaragua, which fell to the English. However the English were forced to surrender it on January 5, 1781. Matías de Gálvez died in Mexico City in 1784

**Gardoqui, Diego.** (November 12, 1735, Bilbao, Spain - d. 1798, Madrid, Spain) The fourth of eight children, was the financial intermediary between the Spanish Court and the Colonies during the American Revolutionary War, meeting with John Jay on various occasions. After the Revolution he became Spain's envoy to the United States. He arrived in New York in the Spring of 1785. Gardoqui continued as Spain's Minister to the United States until his death in 1798. In 1977, the Spanish Crown, in commemoration of the Bicentennial of the United States, presented a statue of Don Diego de Gardoqui to the City of Philadelphia. The statue currently stands in Logan Square.



**Saavedra de Sangronis, Francisco.** (1746 – 1819) Francisco Saavedra was born in Seville, Spain, in 1746, and trained as a doctor. He served alongside Bernardo de Gálvez in Spain's military campaign at Algiers in the 1770s, and through him changed career to work in Spain's Ministry of the Indies, principally as a financial planner. In 1780 he was sent to try and sort out the Spanish administration at Havana in Cuba, with the additional task of working alongside Gálvez once more, to retake Florida from British control. He helped to organise, and actually took part in Gálvez' successful siege of Pensacola. In July, at the request of the Minister (José de Gálvez, Bernardo's uncle), Saavedra, who spoke and wrote French fluently, met in the French colony of St. Domingue with Admiral de Grasse to discuss the best ways of using the large French fleet he had brought across the Atlantic, and they agreed a plan for the following year, known as the Grasse-Saavedra Convention. First priority was to aid the French and American forces in the United States, preferably by attacking the British force in Virginia under Lord Cornwallis. Next was to regain control of Caribbean islands captured by the British. He was appointed Finance Minister in 1797, and the following year, Minister of State. However, his health was failing, so shortly afterwards he retired to Andalucia, only to come back to service in 1810 when Napoleon's French forces invaded Spain. He died on 25 November 1819.



Sources: Eric Beerman, *Spain and the U.S. Independence*, pp. 291-296

## Appendix D: Economic Contribution

### KNOWN SPANISH AID TO THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

The total financial contribution by Spain and her colonies is difficult to calculate. At the beginning, aid was covert or going through second parties. Financial assistance came to the thirteen colonies through various countries in Europe, as well as from New Spain, Louisiana, and Cuba. The table below shows a summary of the most important known financial Spanish contribution to the American cause.

DATE	CONCEPT	COMPANY	ROUTE	CURRENCY
1776	216 brass cannons 209 gun-carriages 27 mortars 29 couplings 12,826 shells 51,134 bullets 30,000 guns with bayonets 4,000 tents and 300,000 of gunpowder 30,000 suits	Fictitious company Hortalez et Cia created in Paris to send France and Spanish aid to the thirteen colonies. Beaumarchais was appointed supervisor reporting to Vergennes and Aranda.	Through Paris to U.S using the Bermuda route.	1 million livres tournoises (another million provided by France)
Total Spanish assistance by the Spanish Government in Madrid during the years 1776, 1777, 1778 (National Historical Archives. File 3898. 28 Oct 1794)	Money, weapons and supplies	Diego de Gardoqui	Through Paris – Madrid – Bilbao – Cadiz - Barcelona	7,944,906 reales and sixteen maravedis vellin
March 1777	10,000 pounds of powder to Captain Gibson	Unzaga, Governor of Louisiana. Royal Order 24 December 1776	New Orleans	2,400 dollars
In the course of 1777	Stockings, shoes, blankets, shirting, medicines,	Galvez to Oliver Pollock	New Orleans	100,000 dollars

	quinine,...			
Summer 1778	Different kind of supplies to George Rogers Clark	Vigo	Saint Louis	18,000 dollars
End 1778	Fill out and arm a captured British ship for Willing	Galvez	New Orleans	15,948 pesos fuertes
Early 1779	Different kind of supplies to the troops in Illinois	De Leyba, Vigo, and Charles Gratoit	Saint Louis	48,400 dollars
March 1779	To Alexander Guillon to enlarge his squadron	Juan de Miralles	From Havana to Philadelphia	576,960 dollars
November 1780 to March 1782	Bills to John Jay	Gardoqui		17,892 \$ 51,083 pesos fuertes 20,000 pesos fuertes 89,083 pesos fuertes
February 1781	Clothes bought in Cadiz	Harrison	Cadiz	12,000 pesos fuertes
September October 1781	Money to finance French Expedition to Yorktown	Francisco Saavedra	Havana and Sto. Domingo	1,600,000 pesos fuertes

(Sources: Thomas E. Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States. An Intrinsic Gift*; Eric Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*; Thomson Buchanan Parker, "Spain: Forgotten Ally of the American Revolution.")

Only taken into account this documented aid (and without considering other factors as, for instance, the numerous assistance to American ships in Spanish ports both in America and Europe), Spanish economic help ranged somewhere in between \$ **3,479,879** (currency exchange rate by the time of the American Revolution: 1 peso = 1 dollar = 8 reales = 40 livres tournoises )<sup>1</sup> and more than **85 million dollars** (1 peso = 40 dollars = 20 reales)<sup>2</sup> depending on the different exchange rates provided by different sources. The United States paid Spain \$248,098 in 1795, in full payment of its debt.<sup>3</sup>

Higginbotham stated that "it is estimated that the French's government's total financial contribution to the United States amounted \$ 8,167,500 compared to \$ 611,328 in Spanish contributions."<sup>4</sup> Obviously, he was unaware of the information provided by Spanish archives about this topic.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas E. Chavez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States. An Intrinsic Gift*, p.224, Appendix 3.

<sup>2</sup> Buchanan P. Thomson, *Spain: Forgotten Ally of The American Revolution*, pp.244-245.

<sup>3</sup> "This amount was based on the rate of exchange then prevailing, thirteen to seventeen years after the loans had been made." Buchanan P. Thomson, *Spain: Forgotten Ally of The American Revolution*, p.244.

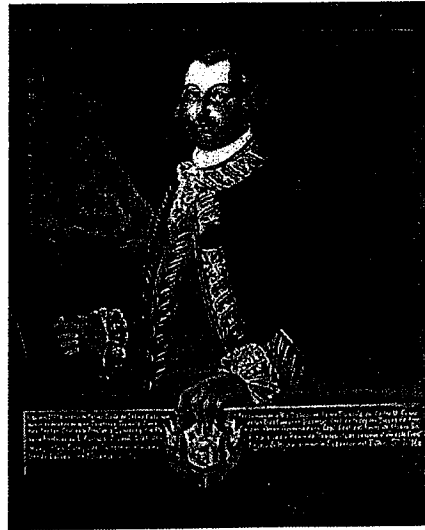
<sup>4</sup> Don Higginbotham, *The War of American Independence. Military Attitudes, Policies, and Practice 1763-1789*, p.235.

## Appendix E: PENSACOLA

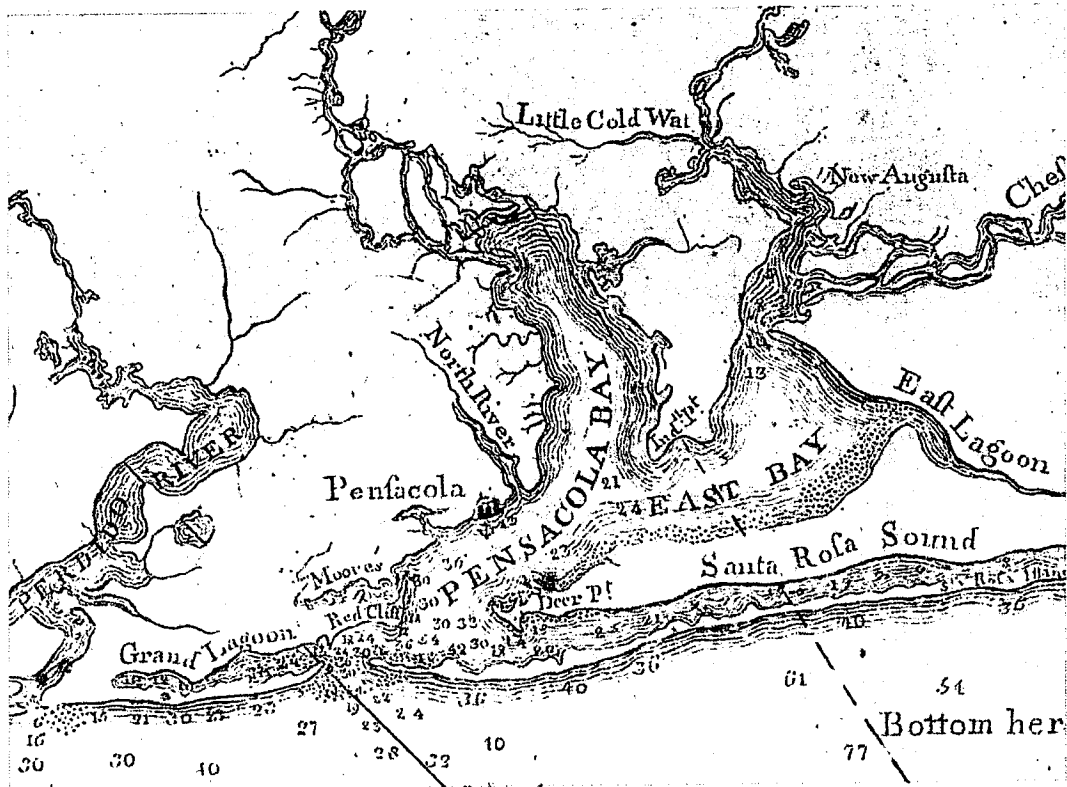
### PENSACOLA 1781

Galvez' plan was to land in Santa Rosa Island and attack the British battery in Siguenza Point at the entrance of the bay. This could facilitate the naval maneuver without risking a crossed fire between Red Cliffs and Siguenza forts. 1,315 troops landed in the night of 9 March and initiated the advance towards Siguenza.

Surprisingly, and after a long march, the Spanish realized that the fort was abandoned and in very poor conditions.<sup>1</sup> From some prisoners taken the day after, the Spaniards learnt that Pensacola itself was defended by 1,800 soldiers.<sup>2</sup>



To force the entrance to the bay, the fleet faced two main problems: a sandbar which prohibited the big warships from entering the bay, and the British artillery batteries in the Red Cliffs Fort. Despite the efforts to lighten and reduce the draft of the ships, the naval maneuver was still very dangerous and Calvo, the Navy Commander, was reluctant to risk his ships. Galvez was also afraid of a change in the weather that could cause the fleet to sail off and abandon the troops ashore on Santa Rosa Island. Furthermore, every new day in that dangerous coast without forcing the entrance to the bay meant less food and water, and more chances of having to face the expected British reinforcements from Jamaica. Finally, on the afternoon of 18 March, Galvez made the decision to force the entrance aboard the Galveztown,<sup>3</sup> together with the Valenzuela and two cannon boats. The British artillery battery on Red Cliffs opened fire against the small fleet commanded by Galvez, who stayed on the quarterdeck of the Galveztown, where everybody could see him, throughout the naval maneuver. Once Siguenza Point



was overcome, the four ships turned east and anchored under the protection of the Siguenza Fort, whose excited soldiers had observed all the operation and cheered their commander. At the end, the damages caused by the British artillery to the small fleet were minimal,<sup>4</sup> but what was definitely damaged was the pride of the Spanish Navy officers within Calvo's fleet.<sup>5</sup> Finally, the day after, Calvo's fleet followed Galvez's example and forced the entrance of the bay through the same track with a similar overall result: light damage to some of the ships caused by the British artillery. Only Calvo himself aboard the most powerful ship of the fleet, the 70 gun San Ramon, remained outside of the bay, because of the draft of that ship. Finally, he sailed back to Havana.

On 22 March, Ezpeleta arrived to Aguero Point inside the bay, with the 900 soldiers reinforcement from Mobile. One day later, an 18 ship fleet from New Orleans commanded by Aguirre, successfully entered the bay under the artillery fire from Red Cliffs. As a result of these reinforcements, the ground forces in Aguero Point available

for the siege of Pensacola were finally comprised of 1,300 from Havana, 905 from Mobile, and 1,348 from New Orleans.<sup>6</sup>

Since his arrival in 1779, Campbell realized that he had to improve the defenses of Pensacola in order to resist a Spanish attack. He had built Fort George on a hill out of Pensacola, and to protect the fort from the higher ground one kilometer to the northwest, he constructed there the Queen's Redoubt. Between both, he would build the circled Prince of Wales Redoubt.

The Spanish movement to the proximity of Fort George would illustrate how hard and long the seizure of Pensacola was meant to be. Almost on a daily basis, the expeditionary force suffered dozens of casualties, mainly as a result of the Indians attacks to the camps and sporadic British skirmishes from the fort. In fact, Galvez himself was wounded on 12 April in one of those skirmishes. Still, gradually, the siege crept closer to the fort.

However, unexpected good news would reinforce the morale of the expeditionary force. On 19 April, a mighty fleet appeared over the horizon, making everybody to think that the expected British Fleet from Jamaica had arrived. But fortune was on Galvez' side, for what had arrived at Pensacola was Solano's Fleet with dozens of transports and 1,600 soldiers, most of them veterans from the failed siege of Gibraltar. Furthermore, Solano brought 15 warships to protect the entrance to Pensacola Bay, hence the British naval threat was no longer a concern for Galvez. In conjunction with Solano's Fleet, four French frigates with 725 soldiers arrived to support the operation.<sup>7</sup>

Galvez' ground forces increased considerably with those reinforcements, complemented by 1,700 marines and sailors from Solano's Fleet. He now had nearly 8,000 men. Around of the Bay the Allies strength added up to 14,000 men well armed and supported, with a mighty fleet protecting the bay.



Galvez, advised by Cagigal and Alderete, planned a simultaneous combined bombardment using the ground artillery in the trenches and the naval gunfire from the bay. The British, realizing the danger of the situation, conducted a counterattack over the trenches at dawn on 4 May, surprising the Spaniards and causing more than 40 casualties but to no ultimate effects. The gunfire exchange continued for several more days until the morning of the 8, when a Spanish grenade blew up the British powder magazine on the Half-Moon, killing more than one hundred and facilitating the seizure of that fort.<sup>8</sup>

With the Spanish heavy artillery positioned in the high ground on Half-Moon Fort, and the Navy gunfire from the bay, Campbell realized that his situation was unsustainable. Hence, in a hopeless situation and having fought bravely, Campbell raised the white flag over Fort George at 1500 8 May 1781. Two days later, the capitulation took place, surrendering all Western Florida to the Spanish Crown.<sup>9</sup> After the Spanish victory in Pensacola, the peace negotiations would intensify in Paris, though operations would still continue for almost two years on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

The siege of Pensacola should be considered one of the most important actions of the war against Britain in North America, compared to the main actions of the War of Independence, by the number of troops involved, the days of trench work, and the number of casualties and prisoners taken.

**TABLE 1**

**ORDER OF BATTLE OF THE SIEGE OF PENSACOLA (March 20 – May 10, 1781)**

**SPANISH AND ALLIES** .....TOTAL = 7.874 men

Line Infantry Regiments

Rey .....419 men  
 Príncipe .....257 men  
 Navarra .....672 men  
 Soria .....495 men  
 Flandes .....424 men  
 Hibernia .....467 men  
 Guadalajara .....328 men  
 España .....482 men  
 Aragón .....287 men  
 Mallorca, Toledo (Navy chips crew) .... 49 or 60 men  
 2° de Voluntarios de Cataluña .....331 men

Fijo Regiments

Fijo de La Habana .....244 men  
 Fijo de La Luisiana .....149 men  
 Escuadrón de Dragones (Méjico, España, Habana y Luisiana) .....97 men

Militias

Milicias de La Habana (pardos y morenos libres) .....340 men  
 Milicias de Orleáns (Id.) .....188 men  
 Carabineros de Orleáns .....13 men

Artillery Spanish and French, Army and Navy .....503 men

Marine Infantry Brigade (4 battalions) .....1.394 men

Fortification Sappers (Havana) .....107 men  
 Indians from Chatuez y Talapuez tribes .....60 - 100 men

French Division

Forces from Regiments:  
     Agenois, Orleáns, Poitou, Gatinois, Cambresis, du Cap .....517 men

**BRITISH** .....TOTAL = 2.496 men

Regiment XVI .....135 men  
 Regiment LXVII .....7 men  
 Regiment LX .....200 men  
 Regiment of Waldeck nr. 3 .....351 men  
 Artillery .....62 men  
 Maryland Royalists .....300 men  
 Pennsylvania Royalists .....241 men  
 West Florida Royal Forresters .....600 men  
 Black volunteers .....300 men  
 Dragoons of Maryland and sailors .....300 men  
 Indians Crics (Creeks), Chicasás, .....300 a 500 men

Source: Jose Manuel Guerrero Acosta. *Forgotten Soldiers from the Other Shore of the Ocean* (Madrid: Spanish Army Institute of Military History and Culture, 2006), 24.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> "General Campbell had tried on several occasions to rebuild that fort without success, and now he regretted it. He had focused his efforts essentially in the Red Cliffs Fort and on improving the new three fortifications on the hill over Pensacola. This mistake of not having ready the battery on Siguenza would be decisive for the Spanish success on forcing the entrance to the bay, and the, afterwards, seize of Pensacola." Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.132.

<sup>2</sup> According to Fortescue, the British garrison numbered no more than nine hundred men. Fortescue, *History of the British Army. Vol. III. 1763-1793*, p.351.

<sup>3</sup> "Galvez sent a letter to Captain Calvo telling him that he would sail first to encourage Calvo to follow." Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.140.

<sup>4</sup> "Carlos III added to Galvez coat of arms the Galveztown with the legend "*me alone*". Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.141.

<sup>5</sup> "After Galvez' action, all Spanish Navy captains reported to Calvo requesting permission to force the entrance to the bay. Calvo, still furious with Galvez' attitude, denied it." Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.142.

<sup>6</sup> Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.146.

<sup>7</sup> "Those reinforcements to Pensacola was the consequence of the arrival of the warship San Ramon to La Havana reporting about the difficult situation Galvez was facing in Pensacola. Knowing the total support to this operation ordered by the King, and the threat of the British Fleet from Jamaica, the Junta in La Havana decided to send Solano's Fleet to help Galvez." Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.156.

<sup>8</sup> "Most of the Spanish diaries about the campaign cited this event as happened by chance. However, a German diary of the Waldeckers gave another version. According

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to this diary, an American officer, Corant Cannon, was expelled from the fort for his behaviour by Campbell. In revenge, he provided Galvez information about the location of the powder magazine, where Galvez would concentrate his artillery fire since that moment." Beerman, *Spain and the U.S Independence*, p.163.

<sup>9</sup> "A ceremony of surrender was held beside Fort George. In front of six Spanish grenadier's companies, and a French detachment, General Campbell paraded ahead a column composed of the troops of regiments XVI, LX, marines and sailors, one 3-pounder gun with the flag of frigate H.M.S. Mentor on it, Governor Chester and the city council, artillerymen, two covered wagons, and closing, the Waldeck Regiment with his two flags. After that, the soldiers were ordered to drop the muskets and cartridges to the sand, and the three flags were handed over to the Del Rey grenadiers and Orleans carabinieri." Guerrero, *Forgotten Soldiers from the Other Shore of the Ocean*, p.12.