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Form Approved  
OMB No. 0704-0188

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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 17-04-2013		2. REPORT TYPE Master of Military Studies Research Paper		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) September 2012-April 2013	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Annual 1921: The Reasons for a Disaster				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER N/A	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER N/A	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER N/A	
6. AUTHOR(S) Moreno, Rafael, Major Spanish Marine Corps				5d. PROJECT NUMBER N/A	
				5e. TASK NUMBER N/A	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER N/A	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) USMC Command and Staff College Marine Corps University 2076 South Street Quantico, VA 22134-5068				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER N/A	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S) N/A	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) N/A	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES N/A					
14. ABSTRACT The summer of 1921 brought grief and the pain to many homes in Spain. The news, which arrived from Melilla, filled with consternation the entire society of the time. A virtually unknown leader, Abd-el-Krim, led a general uprising in the Rif, that in just 15 days, killed about 9,000 Spanish and humiliated the nation. What happened there was called "The Annual Disaster". These days changed drastically the Spanish presence in Morocco and had a decisive influence on the policy, the army, and the Spanish society, in the following years. To understand a disaster like this, it is worth analyzing the geostrategic conditions that accompanied the Spanish intervention in Morocco at the beginning of the Twentieth Century, so it is necessary to study how the colonization action of these territories occurred, and how the situation of the Spanish Army was at that time. With this background established, the reader can understand how the military campaign was designed, and what mistakes were made at the operational and tactical levels. Annual, the biggest Spanish military disaster in Africa, was due to a combination of political, social and military factors that occurred in Spain in the first quarter of the Twentieth Century. This disaster could have been avoided or reduced with the adoption of the right measures in the strategic, operational, and tactical level.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Military Failure, Insurgency, Colonization, Campaign, Spain, Morocco, Rif,					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 59	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Marine Corps University
a. REPORT Unclass	b. ABSTRACT Unclass	c. THIS PAGE Unclass			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code) (703) 784-3330 (Admin Office)

*United States Marine Corps  
Command and Staff College  
Marine Corps University  
2076 South Street  
Marine Corps Combat Development Command  
Quantico, Virginia 22134-5068*

MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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**TITLE:**  
Annual 1921:  
The Reasons for a Disaster

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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AY 12-13

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Date: 17 April 2013

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Date: 17 April 2013

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Title:** Annual 1921: The Reasons for a Disaster

**Author:** Major Rafael Moreno, Spanish Marine Corps

**Thesis:** Annual, the biggest Spanish military disaster in Africa, was due to a combination of political, social and military factors that occurred in Spain in the first quarter of the Twentieth Century. This disaster could have been avoided or reduced with the adoption of the right measures in the strategic, operational, and tactical level.

**Discussion:** In the summer of 1921, Spain suffered a major military defeat at the hands of an enemy smaller in number, with less material means, and a weak organization. Often, the reasons for this disaster have been focused exclusively on the military failures, especially those committed by the commander responsible for the eastern protectorate, General Silvestre.

To understand a disaster like this, it is worth analyzing the geostrategic conditions that accompanied the Spanish intervention in Morocco at the beginning of the Twentieth Century, so it is necessary to study how the colonization action of these territories occurred, and how the situation of the Spanish Army was at that time.

With this background established, the reader can understand how the military campaign was designed, and what mistakes were made at the operational and tactical levels.

To complete the study, the author has highlighted some conclusions that can be applied to any of the current or future conflicts, in the fight against the insurgency and in an asymmetric conflict.

**Conclusion:** With a clear national policy on Africa and the social support to this policy, with the detailed design of the campaign and the coordination of the whole military effort in the protectorate, and with an army with moral and leadership, Annual, the biggest Spanish military disaster in Africa, could be avoided or reduced.

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## *Preface*

Command and Staff College provided me with a unique opportunity to receive a Masters of Military Studies, while investigating a topic which has called my attention for many years. I was able to investigate the causes which led to Spain's greatest military disaster in the twentieth century. The Annual disaster, which killed 9,000 Spanish soldiers in a few days, was the culmination of a process of national decomposition, which had begun the century before. My family roots come from the city of Melilla in North Africa and this personal history has led to a great interest in the Spanish presence in Morocco, and resulted in my reading a great deal about this area.

I would like to thank Dr. Paul D. Gelpi, for his time, patience, and advice, as well as for providing me a different perspective to improve this work. To LtCol. John Dobes, my Military Faculty Advisor, for encouraging me to address the MMS enterprise and for his support during the whole academic year, thank you. I also want to take this opportunity to thank the tireless work of the staff of Leadership Communication Skills Center, Stase Rodebaugh and Andrea Hamlen, who helped me in all my writing assignments during this course, and especially in the correction of this Master.

My most profound thanks goes to my family; my wife Auxi, and my children, Pedro and Rafa, for their understanding and support. The many hours of study and writing have often come at their expense. Thanks for your love, patience, understanding and support. Without you, nothing makes sense.

## **Introduction**

During the Nineteenth Century, Spain went from being a colonial power to becoming a second order country. In 1898, she lost her last overseas possessions in a traumatic way. This loss had a great influence and a very negative impact on all the areas of the Spanish society at the beginning of the Twentieth Century. After returning from Cuba and the Philippines, the army and the governors of Spain only had their memories and the chance to start a new adventure in Morocco.

The summer of 1921 brought grief and the pain to many homes in Spain. The news, which arrived from Melilla, filled with consternation the entire society of the time. In a few days almost all the forces of the Commander of Melilla, with its General at the top, were annihilated. A virtually unknown leader, Abd-el-Krim, led a general uprising in the Rif, that in just 15 days, killed about 9,000 Spanish and humiliated the nation. What happened there was called "*The Annual Disaster*". These days changed drastically the Spanish presence in Morocco and had a decisive influence on the policy, the army, and the Spanish society, in the following years.

The reasons for this disaster should not be summarized in the lack of aptitude of a General, or the shortage of equipment and preparation of the Spanish Army in Africa. To explain the events that occurred in North Africa in the summer of 1921, the social and political situation of Spain in the first quarter of the Twentieth Century should be studied, the international situation of the major European powers, seeking to expand in Africa, should be analyzed, and the situation of the Spanish army should be understood. At the same time it should be considered how the campaign in the Rif was planned and which tactical factors affected it. Annual, the biggest Spanish military disaster in Africa was due to a combination of politics, socials and military factors that occurred in Spain in the first quarter of Twentieth

Century. This disaster could have been avoided or reduced with the adoption of the right measures in the strategic, operational and tactical level.

## **The Spanish Situation and the Colonialism in Morocco**

### *Spain in the First Quarter of Twentieth Century*

Spain began the century with a political system known as “the Restoration”; this system was created by Antonio Canova Del Castillo.<sup>1</sup> The system was based on the alternation of the two major parties, conservative and liberal, and was supported by the chieftaincy to get the desired result in the elections. The absence of real democracy was a constant factor, and the social response to this system was the birth of nationalisms and the increase of the social unrest. There was a large separation between the society and its representatives, and the citizens were not represented in the institutions. Politicians became a new social class with only one goal, to remain in power. It is at this point when the news from the loss of the colonies came to Spain.<sup>2</sup> The loss of the last Spanish overseas colonies, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, was a shock for the Spaniard society, which continued thinking that Spain was a world power.

With defeat in the Spanish-American war, Spanish society faced the reality of a nation with a great social and political crisis.<sup>3</sup> The loss of the colonies did not have a significant economic impact,<sup>4</sup> but the society was shocked. The restoration system showed its limitation to confront the country's problems. Spanish thinkers and philosophers began a political tendency known as the “Regeneracionismo”, seeking political and educational reforms in Spain.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, a literary movement known as the "Generation of 98" emerged, which showed very critical of the current political system, and looking to the future, leaving the past behind.<sup>6</sup> But both attempts, at political and social regeneration, failed to transform



Spanish society, or change the political system. The crisis of national identity was becoming bigger and Spain became a country without political direction, and without a vision of state. This tendency remained during all this period and finished with the Republic and the Civil War.

In 1902, Alfonso XIII was proclaimed King of Spain.<sup>7</sup> In this moment he had to face a period of political instability, marked by his permanent political interventionism, by the inner division of the two major parties in the government, and the development of a social opposition to the political regime of the Restoration. During World War I, Spain kept strict neutrality, this was a personal commitment of King Alfonso XIII.<sup>8</sup> With this position Spain had a few years of economic improvement; she was a supplier to the European countries. On the other hand with this neutral position, Spain was left behind the influential group of European countries that emerged at the end of World War I, which designed the distribution of power in the Treaty of Versailles.

In 1917, the poor distribution of benefits and an economic slowdown led to the outbreak of a serious social and political crisis. This crisis had three main elements.

Firstly, it was the military crisis due to the separation of the army from those who were in the peninsula and the militaries in the territories of Africa. The latter got quick promotions and rewards at the expense of his teammates. This situation led to the creation of the military “Juntas”.<sup>9</sup> These Juntas, which began their activities at the beginning of 1916, were a military union movement, not provided for in the Spanish law, and a direct challenge to the government. The main objectives of the military Juntas were to change the promotion by war merit to another of strict seniority, and to increase the defense budget to improve wages and modernization of the army. In 1917 the Liberal government decided to remove them, but the reaction of the army and the King's role in supporting them, forced the government of Manuel García Prieto<sup>10</sup> to resign. After that Eduardo Dato<sup>11</sup> took power and

legalized the Juntas.<sup>12</sup> They began to show interest in participating in political affairs. Violent strikes and protests led the army to abandon the Juntas and their attempts at reform.

The second element of the crisis was political. In June 1917 the Socialist party, the Republican Reformist party, and the Catalan Regionalist League tried to impose on the government to call a new election. President Dato, faced with this threat, closed the Congress and suspended the constitutional guarantees. In this situation the opposition organized a Parliamentary Assembly in Barcelona at the beginning of July 1917, which demanded the calling of elections, as well as measures in the economic and the military sphere. Although this movement represented a small percentage of members<sup>13</sup> (10%) it was a challenge to the political system of the Restoration. As it happened with the military Juntas, social unrest led the Assembly to collaborate with the government.

Finally, there was a great social crisis, manifested in the general strike of August 1917. The revolutionary wave that stretched from the Russian revolution and the economic crisis in Spain, with rising prices and falling wages, increased the labor disputes and the union power, especially socialist (UGT) and anarchists (CNT) ideology. In late March both unions signed an agreement to call a general strike. On 13 August, the general strike began with no end date. The government opted for the suppression of the strike; there were 80 deaths and more than 2,000 arrested. On 8 March 1921, an activist anarchist assassinated President Dato, in response to the repression of the general strike.

All these events happened when Spain developed its colonialism in North Africa. All these factors were directly related to the events that occurred in the summer of 1921 in the Rif.<sup>14</sup> The Restoration was hurt, and the social and the economic situation worsened the scenario. The lack of clear national goals had a direct bearing on the lack of objectives in the occupation of the territories of the Morocco.<sup>15</sup> The policy of neutrality during World War I

produced only a slight economic improvement, which soon became a deep recession, and left Spain isolated from European powers at the end of the World War.<sup>16</sup>

### *The Spanish Colonialism in North Africa*

The America discovery and the imperial policy of the Emperor Carlos V had made that Spaniards did not value North Africa as strategic territory.<sup>17</sup> Spain held her possessions in Africa since the Fiftieth Century, Ceuta, Melilla, Chafarinas, the Rock of Vélez de la Gomera, and the Alhucemas Island, but did not show a clear commitment to continue or expand her domains. Since the loss of the last colonies in the Spanish-American War, the characteristics of Spanish colonialism in Africa changed.

Since the early Twentieth Century, the European powers showed great interest in Morocco. France wanted to expand her possessions in the North of Africa, extending her dominion over the uncharted territory that was between Algeria and the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>18</sup> The British did not want to maintain a presence in this area, but at the same time they did not want to allow that the French government dominated the entire area, or that Tangier, the southern Mediterranean door, would remain in the hands of a European power, that could limit the maritime traffic through the Straits of Gibraltar.

At the same time the situation in Morocco was close to total disintegration as a country. In 1894 the Sultan Mulai Hassan died leaving the throne to his younger son, Mulai Abdel Aziz, who was a child at the time. He was incapable of governing the Moroccan empire and he also had to deal with the aspirations of other candidates for the throne, as El-Roghi.<sup>19</sup> In this situation of instability, that threatened stretching both the limits of the French territories in Algeria and the areas of Spanish sovereignty in the North, the European powers decided to take action.

In 1904, Great Britain<sup>20</sup> and France reached an agreement “Entente Cordiale” that gave both countries, England in Egypt and France in Morocco, full liberty of action. Clause VIII of this agreement stated that “the two Governments, inspired by sincerely friendly sentiments toward Spain, take into particular consideration the interests that Spain has acquired by her geographical position and her territorial possession on the Mediterranean coast”.<sup>21</sup>

The Spanish Government gave his adherence to the Anglo-French Agreement on 3 October 1904. In this agreement Spain was in charge of the North part of Morocco and France of the Southern one (See Appendix A, Map 1). This agreement was reinforced during the Algeciras conference, held in 1906<sup>22</sup> and called by the Sultan of Morocco, at the instigation of Germany, who wanted to have a greater presence in the north of Morocco, as counterpoint to the British and French influence. The ultimate results of the Algeciras Conference were to strengthen the positions of France and Spain in Morocco.<sup>23</sup>

Spain's participation in the colonial adventure in North Africa was almost forced by the Franco-British agreement and the need to not be isolated and away from the European powers. The current international situation was well illustrated by the comment of Lord Salisbury that divided the world into nations living and dying; the living nations were those whose power increased from year to year, and also increased their wealth; on the other side were those who defined as those dead nations, grew weaker, poorer and had less prominent men and institutions, apparently approaching to their destination.<sup>24</sup> The inclusion of Spain in this group was a serious risk of becoming the object of international diplomacy and not a subject, and in this way lost the capacity of taking her own decisions.<sup>25</sup>

Spain also had domestic reasons to intervene in Africa. She was the only country that had held sovereign territories in North Africa since mid-fifteenth century. Moreover, the proximity to Africa<sup>26</sup> had influenced in the necessity for Spain to get involved in the

colonization. The risk of allowing any European power to establish territories just 14 kilometers from the Iberian Peninsula was very high, including the possibility that the communication between the peninsula and the Spanish territories in Africa were cut.<sup>27</sup> Also in Spain, many strategists held theory that the loss of the colonies in America and Asia was due to the distance to the metropolis, so the conquest of Morocco should be an easy operation. The Army, on the other hand, had the need to restore its lost honor in Cuba and the Philippines. The loss of these colonies had taken away the last chances of active service abroad and thus deprived the army of any opportunity of restoring the loss of prestige which the troops had suffered in the war.<sup>28</sup>

The Spanish society and the public opinion were disinterested in the colonial enterprise and after 1898, opposed to it. The African Imperialism (Africanismo) found its supporters in tiny groups as the Real Sociedad Geográfica, La Liga Africanista Española, etc. but none of these groups had a real influence or big group of followers.<sup>29</sup> The colonization or military intervention in a foreign country was not popular at home and very soon this lack of popular support was showed in the demonstrations against the war in Africa.

On 9 July 1909, a force of Rifians tribesmen attacked a military outpost, that was protecting a group of Spanish workers building a railway to serve the iron mines outside Melilla. Four workers and one sentry were killed; this was the chance that the Spanish colonialists had been anticipating.<sup>30</sup> The military response to this action was the occupation of new positions in the slopes of the Gurugu Mountain and in the shore of the Mar Chica Bay. The situation of those positions was very instable from the very beginning. The Military Governor in Melilla requested for new troops. The government decided to send 40.000 soldiers to reinforce the colonial forces in Melilla. This mobilization led to an anti-war protest that was particularly strong in Barcelona. The authorities suppressed these protests harshly; this period between last of July and beginning of August of 1909 was known as the

“Tragic Week”. This situation showed to the government the difficulty of starting colonialist expansion without the supporting of the public opinion.<sup>31</sup> At the same time in the vicinity of Melilla the situation showed that the occupation of the Rif was not an easy way and a short time operation. On 27 July, one group of Rifians ambushed a Spanish column under General Guillermo Pintos in the Barranco del Lobo (Wolf’s Ravine); the General, 21 officers, and more than 200 soldiers were killed. In response the Spanish took the Gurugu Mountain and assured Melilla.<sup>32</sup>

The campaign of 1909 was the first conducted by Spain after the international agreements of 1904 and 1906, and represented the first time that the public opinion was faced with the reality of the Moroccan problem and with the responsibilities derived from the agreements. This was the first time the Spaniards faced with the Rif forces. These forces, armed with rifles, took advantage of the knowledge of the terrain and always fought on isolated positions using guerrilla techniques. The same process would be the employed twelve years later in the attack against the Spanish eastern front.<sup>33</sup>

Between 1911 and 1912, and with the excuse of performing an operation in retaliation to the attack over a General Staff cartographic unit, Spain began a new campaign that would reach the Kert River (see Appendix A, Map 2). This advance showed to the Spanish forces that as they progressed westward, the Kabyle resistance was higher, especially the Beni Urriagel.<sup>34</sup> The war continued until spring 1912, when the Spanish forces pushed the Rifians across the Kert River and Mizzian, the local sheikh and leader of the revolt, died in the battle.<sup>35</sup>

In November 1912 it had placed the sign of the Spanish-French agreement,<sup>36</sup> which established the areas and responsibilities of the French and the Spanish protectorate. Spain lost Tangier, which was declared as an International Area, but at the same time, the

agreement was of considerable importance. The agreement legalized the position of the Spanish government in Morocco.<sup>37</sup> (See Appendix D.)

The signing of the agreement forced Spain to get involved in the governance and development of her protectorate. But the situation of the Spanish zone, without conditions to allow for economic development, was a huge challenge for the different Spanish governments. There was no social or political recognition of this treaty, and that lack of unity regarding the position of Spain in Morocco continued over the time.<sup>38</sup>

Spain's governments created the figure of High Commissioner, military head of Spain throughout the protectorate, and subordinated to him the General Command of Ceuta, Melilla, and Larache. The period between 1912 and the end of WW I in 1918 was relatively calm and with little progress by Spain. The situation continued in the same way until 1920, when the Spanish troops took Xauen, a site which the High Commissioner considered especially valuable in the protectorate western area, Yebala (See Appendix A, Map 1). Even so the situation of the troops and the military in Africa did not go unnoticed for some media. The editor of the newspaper "*El Sol*" stated "The effect produced by our troops in Africa full of suffering, hungry, sick, and hopeless without material is of a host delivered to a of their own."<sup>39</sup>

The loss of the last colonies overseas was a determining factor in the Spanish's decision to enter in the colonization of Africa. The interest of the Spanish government to not be left out of the influential group of European countries in the early Twentieth Century led the government to accept his presence in North Africa without a clear political objective, in an area with no economical value, and with a society very contrary to begin a new colonial adventure. Spain started from a position of inferiority when compared with to France, which kept the longer and better land. Only the need to stay as an important country in Europe and the desire of the Army to regain the lost glory in Cuba, led the Spanish government to embark

on the colonization of North Africa. Definitely neither politically nor militarily, Spain was prepared to participate in the conquest and pacification of the Moroccan protectorate zone.

### **General Silvestre's Campaign**

On 30 January 1920, the Spanish Government appointed Major General Manuel Fernandez Silvestre (See Appendix B) as General Commander of Melilla. From that moment, and motivated by his disagreement with the slow development of the operations, General Silvestre pushed to the advance a great boost. On 10 March, Silvestre informed General Berenguer about his plan.<sup>40</sup> This plan was to make a deep progression in order to occupy Alhucemas, basing his tactics in a rapid penetration to the target, using the surprise and the lack of preparation of the Rifians.<sup>41</sup>

From that moment, he began a rapid advance (See Appendix A, Map 4), which led him to hold Dar Drius in May, surpassing areas and Kabyles not submitting yet. Between the 9 and the 20 July 1920, the Minister of War, Viscount de Eza,<sup>42</sup> visited Morocco. During this visit General Silvestre, in the presence of General Berenguer,<sup>43</sup> explained to the Minister his plans to continue the operations.<sup>44</sup>

In August, General Silvestre reached Tafersit; his communication line was stretched and weakened dangerously, while he continued operating with the same troops and without reinforcements. In October, he established a pause to his advance and turned to strengthen relations with the Kabiles, beginning to perceive dissension among the Beni-Urriaguel Kabile and the others, which accepted the Spaniard domination. In December he took Monte Mauro without firing a shot.<sup>45</sup> From there, the next objective was to the Tensaman Kabyle and the Kilates mountain range, after that the Beni-Urriaguel Kabile and Alhucemas Bay.<sup>46</sup> In just seven months, the General Silvestre had mastered a territory roughly equivalent to double of what Spain dominated in her settled area.<sup>47</sup>



At the same time that Silvestre acted on the Eastern Front, General Berenguer, High Commissioner and General Commander of Ceuta, was facing a difficult situation on the Western Front. Xauen was attacked by the surrounding Kabyles. General Berenguer decided that he needed to expand his operations on a larger scale in order to solve the problems in his area of responsibility permanently.<sup>48</sup>

General Silvestre advanced into the territory of Tensaman by a long and complicated path, the Annual path. The election of this path was based on political considerations at the request of the Beni-Ulisex Kabyle. On 17 February 1921, he established his most important advanced position in the basin of Annual. The goal of reaching Alhucemas Bay and taming the Rif seemed available to General Silvestre. In a few months General Silvestre performed a penetration of 130 km, from Melilla to the heart of the Rif (See Appendix A, Map 5).

At this time all the advance stopped because the High Commissioner did not want further progress until the political situation in the area close to the Kabyles improved. General Berenguer ordered Silvestre to intensify political action in the area, stopping military action, but at the same time he allowed him to occupy positions close to the front line to improve the safety of Annual position, including the crossing of the Amekran River.<sup>49</sup> But all the progress and the possibility of pacifying the Rif would be broken by the action of the Beni Urriagel Kabyle and its leader Abd-el-Krim (See Annex 3), who opposed the Spanish presence in the central Rif.

## **The Disaster**

### *Abarrán: The First Warning*

In March 1921, the front had been established at the east of the Amekran River (See Appendix A, Map 6), at the gates of the territory of Tensaman Kabyle. The Spaniards had

pacified the kabyles of Beni-Tuzin, Beni-Said, Beni-Ulisex and Metalza. The Spanish troops faced a rebel faction of Tensaman and the Beni Urriaguel Kabyle. At the insistence of Tensaman leaders, who sought their protection, and contrary to the commanders of the indigenous police's views, especially Colonel Morales,<sup>50</sup> and the warnings that spoke of one hostile Harka<sup>51</sup> with 3000 armed men in the area, Silvestre decided to cross the Amekran River and to occupy the Abarrán position.<sup>52</sup> The High Commissioner had authorized the operation, and even he reported to the Defense Ministry by letter on 17 April 1921.<sup>53</sup>

Abarrán was around 9 km. away from Annual. The operation, led by Major Villar, was held on 1 June with a column of 1,461 men. After the occupation, the majority of the force retreated again over Annual. On the mountain, the position was under Captain Salafranca command with 200 indigenous policemen, 50 Spanish soldiers, a battery of four guns and a friendly Harka. Before the bulk unit reached its destination in Annual, the Rifians attacked the force which was garrisoned Abarrán Mountain. The friendly Harka and the indigenous policemen defected and joined the attackers. The Spanish forces suffered 143 casualties (a prisoner) and 76 deserters, and the loss of all material, ammunition, small arms, and artillery.<sup>54</sup>

As a result of the loss of Abarrán, the morale of the Spanish troops suffered a major setback. The news spread to all corners of the Rif and Abd-el- Krim increased his forces with captured weapons and numerous volunteers who came to the unexpected success.<sup>55</sup>

### *Igueriben*

On 4 June, Silvestre and Berenguer met aboard the warship "*Princesa de Asturias*" in the Alhucemas Bay. Following this meeting Berenguer stated that he had found General Silvestre depressed for being the first Spanish General losing guns in Africa,<sup>56</sup> but this was not a big concern. For Silvestre, Abarrán marked the end of their victorious status in the field;

for Abd-el-Krim increased his prestige and the possibility of increasing their forces with new additions of supporters.<sup>57</sup>

Silvestre decided to consolidate the position of Annual, without being overly concerned about the situation.<sup>58</sup> On 7 June, he occupied a position of support, Igueriben, which was 5 km far from Annual. The position was dominated from a neighboring hill, the Hill of the Trees, and lacked natural defenses and water. The natural paths leading to it were cut by deep ravines. Igueriben, commanded by Major Benitez, was fortified and garrisoned with a force of 350 men (see Appendix A, Map 6).

In this occasion, General Silvestre would not let the defense lie in the hands of indigenous soldiers exclusively. The defense forces consisted of two companies of infantry, a machine gun platoon, a mountain battery, a detachment of native police, and an optic station. The position could be supported with artillery from Annual. Since its installation, Igueriben was attacked during random days without direct consequences for the position. These attacks, however, entailed the occupation of the Hill of Trees by the Rifians. From there, they dominated both the position and the road access to it. On 17 July, the Rifians began a full-scale assault and from that moment, the position was cut without possibility of water and ammunition.<sup>59</sup> On 21 July, after five days of siege, in which Silvestre tried unsuccessfully to free the position with columns from Annual,<sup>60</sup> out of ammunition and water and with a heroic resistance, the Rifians captured Igueriben, 320 of its 350 members were killed in its defense.

The fall of Igueriben uncovered the Annual position and the path of retreat to Melilla. The same day 21, General Silvestre, who had returned to Annual the day before, met with the chiefs of the units installed in Annual in his tent, in order to decide what to do. The choices were: to stand there or retreat to a second line in Ben Tieb, collecting all possible positions during the withdrawal. General Silvestre was aware that the attack was imminent, and he knew the limitations of ammunition, so he showed his preference to evacuate the position.<sup>61</sup>

Around 5,000 men were in place (see Appendix G). Silvestre ordered his subordinate commanders to maintain absolute confidentiality about the plan, in order to achieve the surprise over the enemies. At 04.55 hours on 22 July, Silvestre sent a telegram to the Minister of War and the High Commissioner informing them that he withdrew toward Ben Tieb.<sup>62</sup>

### *Annual and Monte Arruit*

At dawn on 22, the Rifians attacked Annual from many points. After a series of contradictory orders the withdrawal columns were organized, first with the wounded, after the Artillery, and later the Infantry. With this situation, the Rifians' attack began; the defense forces were quickly overcome, many of the indigenous forces defected and attacked the Spanish soldiers, Annual fell. That morning at Annual, General Silvestre died, according to all witnesses, suicide.<sup>63</sup>

With the absence of instructions and the image of the retreating column haphazardly, some adjacent positions and the garrison of the Izumar Pass decided to leave their posts and join the retreat. The Rifians were positioned on the route and began to harass and persecute by fire to the column, which even had to force the passage of Izumar employing the reserve, the Cavalry Regiment of Alcántara. The news of the assault and fall of Annual position spread like wildfire throughout the Rif, causing general uprising in the rearguard of Annual.<sup>64</sup> The Rifians surrounded and attacked all the positions and blockhouses, while they cut the path to Melilla.

At Ben Tieb, planned end point of the withdrawal, the column marched panicked without direction or any organization. The troops walked past without stopping direction to Dar Drius. The garrison of Ben Tieb, after destroying the material and ammunition that they could not carry with them, joined the column.<sup>65</sup> Meanwhile, the positions that were isolated were left or falling one by one, with their garrison killed.

When the force reached Dar Drius General Navarro, Deputy General Command of Melilla, assumed the Command.<sup>66</sup> Navarro, faced with the situation of panic, the moral and physical condition of the troops, and the possibility of being cut off at one point so far from Melilla, took the decision to proceed. Some commanders advised General Navarro to stand in that position because there were force available, ammunition, and supplies.<sup>67</sup>

On 23 July, the survivors began the withdrawal from Dar Drius to Monte Arruit, which was reached the 29. During this movement, the situation improved slightly from the previous, but the panic and the harassment of Rifians continued during the march. The flanking and column protection were assigned to the Cavalry Regiment Alcántara. This Regiment was the only unit which maintained order and integrity throughout the retreat. He fought heroically until its total extermination, under the command of LtCol. Primo de Rivera, from its 695 troops, remained only 70 injuries and 5 prisoners.<sup>68</sup>

General Berenguer, warned by the situation and the real possibility about the lost of Melilla, a city of about 53,000 persons,<sup>69</sup> decided to send troops from the western flank and requested for new troops from the Peninsula. On 24 July, on board of the “Ciudad de Cadiz”, two “Banderas” of the Legion, two “tabors” of Regulares de Ceuta and three Infantry Battalions (Borbon, Extremadura and Granada) from the peninsula were sending to reinforce the 1,800 soldiers who remained in Melilla. In total 4,500 troops to protect the city.<sup>70</sup> The presence of these troops helped to calm the populations of Melilla, who were terrified by the news of the disaster.<sup>71</sup>

In Monte Arruit, Navarro, unable to continue the march with the wounded, chose to resist. On 2 August, Nador fell and Monte Arruit was cut. Monte Arruit was besieged with 3,017 demoralized, wounded, and without food and ammunition men inside. On 9 August, Navarro surrendered the position with the permission of the High Commissioner,<sup>72</sup> who proved the impossibility of conducting a rescue operation and totally focused in the defense of Melilla. After the capitulation and surrender of weapons, the Rifians violated the

agreement and about 3,000 Spanish were killed. Navarro and only a few were taken prisoner, to charge a subsequent rescue.

The total number of killed and missing in action during these days is not totally clarified. The most accurate number can be between 7,875 and 8,688.<sup>73</sup>

### **Strategic Considerations**

At the strategic level there are several factors that contributed to the disaster, among them are the following:

Spain's participation in the colonial adventure of Morocco came by the pressures of the European powers (France and Britain), interested in having a weak third country that was folded to their interests, the fear of the Spanish government to remain isolated from the European powers, and the necessity of some sectors of the Spanish society, especially military, to regain its lost prestige in Cuba and the Philippines. Both society and some of the politicians were not interested in the colonization so there was a permanent social rejection against the mobilization and the sending of troops to Africa.<sup>74</sup>

Spain was in a process of political disintegration, with a political system that was not able to translate the needs of Spanish society into a national project. The continuous changes of government prevented this national project from becoming a long term project. The popular support for the government's actions was very low, and the lack of real democracy produced a growing separation between the society and its rulers. Although some attempts were made to regenerate the political situation, they were not deep enough to affect the entire society. If Spain was not able to carry out an effective national policy, similar to other European countries, it seems correct to state that it could not develop a government action in the Northern African territories. Spain's presence in Africa, at that time, had no strategic goals for the country, nor economic or political.

Furthermore, and as a result of the signing of the agreements of 1912, Spain committed to perform a work within her allocated protectorate. This work never had a political or social component.<sup>75</sup> Spain did not try to improve the living conditions of the Kabyles, so she did not invest in infrastructure, education or essential services. Spain just tried to conquer the land and subject Kabyles in a peaceful and negotiated way.<sup>76</sup> Although several Spanish politicians of the time, as Maura or Romanones, claimed the need for a decisive political action in the protectorate, the fact is that this never happened.<sup>77</sup> Spain did not either make a financial effort to invest in Morocco. The project of establishing a railroad to communicate the Rif and let to carry out the exploitation of the mineral resources in the area arrived only to Batel, about 45 kilometers from Melilla (See Appendix A, Map 2), without the mining exploitation service performed.

On the other hand the Rifians did not notice any improvement in their quality of life by the presence of the Spanish. The money that the Spanish authorities delivered to the leaders of the Kabyles did not reach the neediest.<sup>78</sup> It spread a flow of discontent among the population of the Kabyles; the Spanish offenses were magnified and not forgiven. In the Rif the population started to feel a need to expel the Spaniards, who only brought misery and oppression. With this anti Spanish feeling extended, it was easy for Abd-el-Krim to start a rebellion against the Spanish. The political action was limited to establish contact with the leaders of the Kabyles and provide money for these leaders in order to control and pacify the members of the Kabyles. There was not a political representative capable of coordinating policy measures in the Protectorate, leaving this function in the hands of the military.

For the foregoing reasons, the key element of the action of Spain in Morocco was the Army. But certainly the Spanish Army in the first quarter of the Twentieth Century was not able to be used in the national defense and much less in a situation as complex and challenging as the occupation and pacification of the Protectorate. The Army was in a

deplorable state.<sup>79</sup> The majority of officers just looking for a deployment in Africa to provide them with war merits. These officers spent as little time as possible with his troops deployed and returned to Melilla as soon as possible without the authorization of their commanders. Silvestre even ordered the Colonels to continue in Melilla, while their regiments were deployed in positions.<sup>80</sup>

But if the officers' situation was poor, the troops were even worse. The conscription law of 1912,<sup>81</sup> created the possibility of paying to choose the assignment and the service to carry out the military service. Those who had economic resources avoided going to Africa and only the disadvantaged were assigned to the dangerous zone of the protectorate. Morale was very low, there was no popular support to the Army, the equipment was old and in very bad maintenance conditions, the food was scarce and the preparation of the troops was even worse. Although the regulation marked that the period of instruction of recruits should be three months, very little time, General Silvestre ordered that the new soldiers should be ready to deploy to the forward positions in less than a month.<sup>82</sup>

From 1918, the government, seeking to reduce the casualties of Spanish soldiers forbade them to participate in combat operation, leaving this task to the indigenous troops, mostly Police and Regulars. This led to the Rifians, which appreciated the value in combat as a major virtue, to increase their neglected toward the Spanish soldiers. The consequence was that among the Rifians were widely believed that Spanish soldiers were not able to fight.<sup>83</sup> At the same time a great unrest started among indigenous troops that received smaller salaries than the Spanish soldiers and were subject to greater risk than them. Both elements favored a faster increase of supporters of Abd-el-Krim's uprising.

Finally it is remarkable the lack of military equipment. The economic crisis was reflected in the army, which was still using rifles from Cuba.<sup>84</sup> The Spanish's neutrality in World War I did not allow Spain to participate in the military innovations of the war. The



military material was not modernized with the surplus after the war in Europe. To cite an example, on the dates of the disaster, in the General Command of Melilla were available three ambulances and about twenty trucks, for a force of more than 20,000 men distributed in 140 advanced positions.<sup>85</sup> After the disaster, the government of Spain decided to conduct a real effort to finalize the Moroccan problem and acquired modern military material from countries as France and Great Britain.<sup>86</sup>

Undoubtedly, Spain was not ready to embark on an adventure as the colonization of northern Morocco. Neither politicians, nor society, nor the army, were capable for that challenge. All these strategic problems affected the operational and tactical levels, and led to disaster in the summer of 1921.

### **Operational Considerations**

The Spanish government, following to the disaster, ordered the execution of an investigation carried out extensively by General Picasso (see Appendix E). This investigation identified all failures at the operational and tactical levels, but for political reasons at the time, did not investigate the strategic mistakes, and the responsibilities of the government and the King. The document produced after the investigation<sup>87</sup> is a fundamental tool to conduct research at the operational and tactical levels.

The first thing that is obvious in the analysis of the General Silvestre's campaign was the lack of coordination of it with the effort that General Berenguer was conducted in the western front of the Protectorate. General Silvestre, since his designation as Commanding General of Melilla, began a rapid expansion and conquest of the territory in his area of operations.<sup>88</sup> His idea, as expressed in this paper, was to reach Alhucemas and try to link the two parts of the protectorate. The High Commissioner, the Minister of War and even the King were aware of his plans.<sup>89</sup> General Berenguer ordered Silvestre to stop before crossing

the Amekran River, so that it could consolidate the positions and make some policy actions in the conquered area. At the same time Berenguer authorized Silvestre to cross the River and to occupy any position that would allow providing a greater security to Annual.<sup>90</sup> With both Generals performing combat operations at the same time, it was impossible to have the possibility of support between the forces deployed in Africa. When the situation was critical, it was impossible to reinforce the besieged forces with troops from the General Command of Ceuta.<sup>91</sup>

Another important fact to remark is how General Silvestre, who was very used to making his decisions alone and without the advice of his staff, extended his lines. To establish the advanced positions, he did not consider that they were poorly defended, without supplies or ammunition, with few and bad prepared troops, and the majority without the vital element in North of Africa in summer, the water.<sup>92</sup> These positions could not support each other and also the lack of good roads worsened the situation. General Silvestre sought advice from Colonel Morales, chief of the Indigenous Police Force and one of the persons with more prestige among the Rifians.<sup>93</sup> On 16 February 1921, Colonel Morales sent him a complete report (See Appendix F), in which he clearly expressed the necessity to avoid continuing the progress, to make a political work, and he warned General Silvestre that despite the successes, a single reverse would complicate the situation in the whole area of the Rif.<sup>94</sup> But General Silvestre decided that his decision was right and he would be able to continue his progression.

This lack of a detailed campaign planning was motivated by the general belief of the Spanish military authorities of the lack of capacity of the Rifians. The Rifians were considered people incapable of organizing, without culture, and with no other interest than to have a gun, in a word the Spanish considered them "Moorish".<sup>95</sup> The Spanish troops never understood who their enemy was, what capabilities they had, and how they could defeat

them. The planning process, carried out by General Silvestre and his Staff, did not contain considerations over the enemy. They estimated that there would only be a small opposition approaching Alhucemas Bay. Intelligence activities in the area were null practically, and were limited to meetings between police officers and the Kabyle leaders,<sup>96</sup> who usually provided the information that favored their own interests. Without reliable and accurate information, the assumptions about the possibilities of the Rifians were made based on a false sense of superiority of the Spaniards. Spaniards assumed that all Kabyles had the same interests and that all of them were happy with the Spanish presence in their territories.

It is important to note that the events in the summer of 1921 were a surprise to General Silvestre, the High Commissioned, and the War Ministry. The development of the Silvestre's Campaign did not indicate that it was possible a general uprising in the Rif. The reports of the experts in the Rif, as Colonel Morales or Lieutenant Colonel Dávila Miranda,<sup>97</sup> Chief of Operations of the General Command of Melilla, were ignored. The activities of the Beni Urriagel Kabyle and his leader, Abd-el-Krim, were contrary to Spanish expansion into their territory, located in southern Alhucemas Bay, but neither Sylvester nor Berenguer felt that this opposition could become into a general uprising. The lack of foresight and understanding of the situation, reached their limit after Abarrán loss, Silvestre and Berenguer agreed that Abarrán events were the result of bad luck and not the result of an uprising.<sup>98</sup> This statement was clearly contrary to the indications they received in the military field and the information provided by the confidants.<sup>99</sup>

The lack of coordination between the High Commissioner and the General Commander of Melilla, the poor design and planning of General Silvestre's Campaign, and the lack of intelligence to analyze the information that warned about a higher hostility from the Kabyles in the western area of Rif, were determinant causes for the failure of Annual.

## **Tactical Considerations**

If the planning and execution of the campaign had been deficient, the tactical decisions were even worse. From a quick analysis based on the warfighting functions the following can be pointed out.

On Melilla's front, there was no an effective system of command, the orders did not reach all the positions, so when it was necessary to coordinate the actions of all positions, this was impossible. The control over the units was weak, there was no an organic deployment of the units, many of them were composed by pieces of others units without their organic commanders.<sup>100</sup>

Regarding with the maneuver, the decision to establish the positions without mutual support among them and without consolidating the ground, was a key element to explain how easily all the positions fell down across the front. The lack of logistical support was a key factor in the break down, the lack of ammunition, food and water was a key element in the decision to abandon them without opposition.<sup>101</sup> The majority of the positions were poorly defended, without firing ranges and without fortifications to provide them with protection.

The fire support was not decisive at any time and it was a problem during the withdrawal, most of the pieces were rendered useless or they finished in the Rifians' hand, which employed them in the sieges against the Spanish.

Finally, tactical intelligence was also very poor, although the troops were very close to the Rifians and there were a lot of concentrations of armed men, the units did not submit any reports about them.<sup>102</sup>

If from the quick analysis of the warfighting functions can be drawn serious tactical failures that facilitated the disaster, even more important, it was the lack of action of General Silvestre since 1 June, the date of the defeat of Abarrán. Once accomplished the loss of

Abarrán, the decisions he made were not correct. General Silvestre established a new position in Igueriben to support Annual, he chosen a terrain without possibilities for natural defense and surrounded by a greater height, the hill of trees. He was not clear when he reported to Berenguer about the situation, so the High Commissioned did not attend his demands for reinforcing.<sup>103</sup> He ordered the mobilization of the personnel who remained active in Melilla, forming a unit with the cooks, clerks, etc; these reinforcements were totally useless, because they had even less preparation than the deployed soldiers.<sup>104</sup> He did not prepared a contingency plan in anticipation of the attacks continued, so when Igueriben fell on 21 July , General Silvestre made the decision to leave Annual, choosing the long and difficult way to Melilla, instead of considering the option to reach the coast and be evacuated by the Spanish Navy.<sup>105</sup> General Navarro, who took command of the operation after the death of Sylvester, did not take the right decisions of defending in Dar Drius, which had natural conditions, ammunition and water. He continued toward Melilla, being forced to stop in Monte Arruit where he surrendered with General Berenguer's authorization.<sup>106</sup>

Without doubt the most striking issue was the ease of falling of all the positions, which a military withdrawal became into a rout without order. This image of flight and not of a military withdrawal, caused the whole Kabyles' uprising, even the faithful to Spain, which understood that the Spanish were been defeated by the supporter of Abd-el-Krim. Only the state of decay of the Spanish Army in Africa may explain this situation. The lack of moral and preparation of the troops, and the lack of leadership of his officers were the definitive elements. Although there were many cases of heroism and bravery,<sup>107</sup> the general behavior was terrible. In the flight of Annual, many officers were the first to leave in the available cars, removing their emblems and badges. The troops abandoned their weapons and the wounded were left without help to them.<sup>108</sup> The positions were abandoned without permission, as Izzumar which had to protect the retreat.<sup>109</sup> All these actions can only be understood in an

army without morale and leadership. The Spanish forces were numerous, and the Rifians, though fierce and combative, not outnumbered.<sup>110</sup> The lack of courage and fighting spirit were paramount in order to the Spanish defeat reached the disaster consideration.

## **Conclusions**

The conclusions of this study can be divided into two distinct parts, a part of current application or lessons learned and another that helps us to understand how the combination of factors caused the disaster. Although it may seem difficult to observe at first glance, there are similar circumstances nowadays in many countries with those situations that occurred in Spain in the first quarter of Twentieth Century.

The first conclusion, applies to nowadays, is the necessity that the foreign policy of a government are legitimated and supported by most of its citizens. This is especially important if these actions have included the participation of troops overseas. In these cases, the military operations must be legitimized by the legislative branch and have the support of the public opinion. This support must be maintained over time, because these operations will be in the most of the cases of long duration. With the legitimacy and support, the military effort in form of resources and human lives will be more readily accepted by all sectors of the society.

Another critical factor is to study and understand the environment, the terrain, the enemy, its culture, its objectives, and its possibilities. Spain failed at these points, perhaps she had sense of superiority very similar that many countries show today when they faced with enemies with smaller military capabilities and in asymmetric conflicts. To defeat an insurgency it is necessary to understand which are the reasons because they fight, who provides their support and what elements are paramount to them. All the Spanish campaign in Africa in 1921 lacked of an accurate design.

The armed forces must be adequate to address the country's needs. If the structure, personnel and resources are not designed for use in overseas operations in a high intensity environment, it cannot pretend to do it. In this case of study, the lack of investment in national defense reduced the capabilities of the Spanish Armed Forces, as it is happening today in many countries affected by a severe economic crisis. Although the lack of resources was not the only factor that caused the disaster, it certainly contributed to it.

Spain applied exclusively military measures to her counterinsurgency operations. Nowadays it is accepted that, in order to conduct a counterinsurgency operation, it is needed to conduct military operations, accompanied by public information campaigns, policy measures and economic investment. The exclusive military action favored the reject toward the Spanish presence, the creation of the insurgency, and increasing its support. In the recent past, the purely military interventions have favored the emergence of the insurgency in countries as Iraq.

The lack of military education was also an essential element. The majority of the senior Spanish officers in Morocco had spent most of his military career fighting in Cuba and the Philippines, example of this are generals Silvestre, Berenguer, and Navarro. After the loss of the colonies, many of them immediately went to Morocco, and they applied the same tactics to fight than they had done in Cuba, in a different environment, with another enemy and with other means. These commands had generally a lack of military education, which is understandable because they were promoted through the merits of war. In the years following the disaster, the military commanders were of an ulterior generation, much more cultivated.

The lack of moral was the decisive factor in the Spanish defeat, without this element we cannot understand the collapse of the entire front in less than two weeks. The morale is paramount, especially in conflicts, such as the current, the enemy often attacks undetected

and that the rules of engagement and the collateral damage limit the reactions to these attacks. Keeping morale is a key task for the commanders.

To understand a military defeat of this scale is necessary to conduct a study of the strategic, operational, and tactical considerations that led to it. Without the study of all the factors, it is impossible to understand the reasons that caused Spain's greatest military disaster in Africa in her military history.

The economic, political and social crisis of Spain in the early Twentieth Century, did not recommend taking an action as it was the occupation and colonization of the north of Morocco. Without political or economic objectives and without social support, neither the government nor the society showed interest in the Moroccan events, nor in the main actor that was developing them, the Army. This led that all the actions that took place in the area of the protectorate were no political but military, but these actions were carried on by a decaying Army, without material resources, but even more important without morals or leadership.

With this strategic background, it is understandable that the operational design of General Silvestre's 1920-1921 campaign was fully of errors and false assumptions. The absence of coordination with his superior the High Commissioner, General Berenguer, the lack of a detailed planning and the mistakes made understanding the environment and the indications of a revolt, were translated into a campaign that just looking for the advance into enemy territory, extending their lines at the same time that weakened them.

Without strategic objectives, with a deficient operational planning, and an army in a deplorable state, the tactical failures were inevitable. Each warfighting function that was analyzed revealed major flaws, which together caused the instant collapse of the entire front. The wrong choice of positions, the lack of contingency plans, the absence of an adequate system of command and control, and the lack of logistic support, were decisive tactical factors. But most of all, the lack of moral and leadership of many chiefs, officers and troops,



who did not oppose resistance to an enemy in theory minor, was a key factor to understand and comprehend the Annual disaster.

With a clear national policy on Africa and the social support to this policy, with the detailed design of the campaign and the coordination of the whole military effort in the protectorate, and with an army with moral and leadership, Annual, the biggest Spanish military disaster in Africa could be avoided or reduced.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Canovas was a Spanish politician who was born in 1828 and died in 1897. He designed the Constitution of 1876, which was the base of the Restoration. [www.biografiasyvidas.com/biografia/c/canovas](http://www.biografiasyvidas.com/biografia/c/canovas).
- <sup>2</sup> <http://hemeroteca.abc.es/nav/Navigate.exe/hemeroteca/madrid/blanco.y.negro/1898/07/09/013.html>
- <sup>3</sup> [www.historia siglo20.org/HE/12<sup>a</sup>-1.htm](http://www.historia siglo20.org/HE/12<sup>a</sup>-1.htm)
- <sup>4</sup> In fact, the economic balance was positive after a long time, as many capital returned to Spain from Cuba, it was not necessary spend Money in the colonies and the commercial relationships with the other independent states in South America were not affected. [www.historia siglo20.org/HE/12<sup>a</sup>-1.htm](http://www.historia siglo20.org/HE/12<sup>a</sup>-1.htm)
- <sup>5</sup> Joaquin Costa (1846-1911) was its highest representative, sought a reform of the Spanish society, better education and forgetting the historical past, and looking to Europe as a reference.
- <sup>6</sup> Some remarkable members of “98 Generation” were Azorín, Unamuno, Menendez Pidal y Pio Baroja.
- <sup>7</sup> He was born in 1886 and died in 1941, while he was exiled in Rome. <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/bib/historia/monarquia/alfonso13>.
- <sup>8</sup> On 7 August 7 1914, La Gaceta (Spanish Official Newspaper) published a Royal Order, on it the Government of Alfonso XIII stated that “the government should keep the strictest neutrality in all the Spanish people, in according with the national laws and the rules of the international law”.
- <sup>9</sup> “Las Juntas” were created in 1916 and 1917 by Officers of Infantry and Cavalry. They were directed by Colonel Marquez and in the beginning they tried to avoid the promotion by war merit. Woolman, David S., *Rebels in the Rif: Abd el Krim and the Rif Rebellion*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. 1968. 108.
- <sup>10</sup> Manuel García Prieto (1859.1938) was the leader of the Liberal Party. He was the Spanish President in 1912, 1917, 1918, and 1922. He was a key person in the political system of the Restoration.
- <sup>11</sup> Eduardo Dato (1856-1921). He was the leader of the Conservator Party. HE was the Spanish President in 1913-1915, 1917 and 1921. He was killed in a terrorist attack by three anarchists.
- <sup>12</sup> García Queipo de Llano, Genoveva, *El reinado de Alfonso XIII. La modernización fallida*. Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 1994. 56-58.
- <sup>13</sup> The Spanish Parliament in 1917 was constituted by 760 congressmen and to the meeting was attending by 71 congressmen.
- <sup>14</sup> The area of responsibility of Spain in Morocco was composed by two regions Yebala and the Rif. The Rif is located in the eastern part.
- <sup>15</sup> Woolman, 1968.
- <sup>16</sup> Different authors as Ponte or Pando state that all these events were the root of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939).
- <sup>17</sup> Porte, Pablo, “El desastre de Annual y la crisis de la Restauración en España, 1921-1923,” Tesis Doctoral, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Facultad de Geografía e Historia, 1997. 39.
- <sup>18</sup> Harris, Walter, *France, Spain and the Rif*. London: Edward Arnold & CO., 1927.1-20.
- <sup>19</sup> One candidate to the crown of Morocco was “El Roghi” who stated be the brother of Sultan Muley. He claimed his right to the crown and he created numerous uprising around all the empire. Porte, 71.
- <sup>20</sup> In 1902 Great Britain had finished the Second Boer war in South Africa and she was not interested in to start a new clash with France for the North Africa territories. King Edward VII wished to see an improvement in the relations between England and France. Harris, 2-3.
- <sup>21</sup> In the same Clause stipulated that the French Government would concert with Spanish Government, and would communicate to the British Government, the terms of the arrangement which may result between France and Spain. Anglo-French Agreement “Entente Cordiale”. London, 8 April 1904.
- <sup>22</sup> The meeting was held on 16 January to 7 April 1906, with the presence of 13 countries and its goal was to solve the crisis between Germany and France.
- <sup>23</sup> Harris, 6.
- <sup>24</sup> Lord Salisbury May 4th 1898 in the Albert Hall. *The Times*, 5 May 1898
- <sup>25</sup> Vallés, Alfonso. “Alhucemas una operación conjunto combinada.” *Escuela Superior de las Fuerzas Armadas*, 2001. 3.
- <sup>26</sup> An hour sailing from Algeciras to Ceuta or a night between Melilla and Malaga
- <sup>27</sup> Porte, 47
- <sup>28</sup> Harris, 49-55.
- <sup>29</sup> Alvarez, José E., *The betrothed of death: The Spanish Foreign Legion during the Rif Rebellion, 1920-1927*. Wetport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2001.2.
- <sup>30</sup> Ruiz Albeniz, Victor. *España en el Rif, Melilla: Ciudad Autonoma de Melilla*. p. 110
- <sup>31</sup> Porte, 79

32 The 1909 Campaign took four months and 40,000 troops took part on it. Porte, 84.  
33 Alvarez,3.  
34 Abd-del-Krim was from this Kabyle, who would be the leader of the uprising which caused the Annual  
Disaster.  
35 Woolman, 44.  
36 Victor Morales Lezcano, España y el Norte de Africa. Madrid, UNED,1968. 226-227.  
37 <http://www.vadehistoria.com/marruecos/war13.htm>.  
38 Porte, 104-105.  
39 Diario El Sol, 11 October 1920, p-5, col 1-2.  
40 Fernández de la Reguera, Ricardo and Marc, Susana: El desastre de Annual. Barcelona: Planeta, 1968.

13.  
41 This was the same tactics that the French troops were carried out in his part of the Protectorate. Pando,  
Juan, Historia secreta de Annual. Madrid: Ediciones Temas de Hoy, 1999. 64.  
42 Luis de Marichalar y Monrea(1853-1945) was War Ministry during the Annual Disaster.  
43 General Berenguer (1873-1953) was High Commissioned and Commander General in Ceuta. He was  
junior than Silvestre, but the Spanish government decided that he was more capable for the assignment,  
probably distrusting of Silvestre and his strong personality.  
44 Pando, 54.  
45 Fernández de la Reguera and Marc, 15.  
46 The final goal for Silvestre was Alhucemas Bay. This was the same plan than General Marina had in  
1912. Porte, 135.  
47 Ibid, 137.  
48 With this situation the possibility of mutual support between the two efforts were aborted. Alvarez,  
42.  
49 Pando, 66 and Porte, 148.  
50 The report of Colonel Morales was published by the Defense Ministry in the Spanish Congress on 29  
November 1922. Pando, 63.  
51 Harka was an indigenous armed group with a military structure.  
52 Morales Trueba, Adolfo, El Desastre de Anual. Escuela de Infantería de Marina “Albacete y Fuster”,  
2006.11.  
53 General Silvestre thought to cross the Amekran River on order to occupy a position in the head of the  
valley. I do not know if he continues with the same idea that I authorized.” Letter published by the Defense  
Ministry in the Spanish Congress on 29 November 1922. Spanish Congress Sesion Recorder. 4.402.  
54 40 artillery ammunition boxes, 2 rifle ammunition boxes, 4 cannons, light weapons, military  
equipment. Dávila Jalón, Valentín, “Una vida al servicio de España. General Fidel Dávila Arriondo (1878-  
1962). Madrid, 1978. 463.  
55 Statement of Colonel Riquelme to General Picasso, p. 1,780. Expediente Picasso, Final report  
dispatched to the Spanish Congress on 18<sup>th</sup> April 1922.23 and 27.  
56 Ruiz Albeniz, Victor, Las Responsabilidades del Desastre. Ecce Homo: prueba documental y aportes  
inéditos sobre las causas del derrumbamiento. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva. 1922. 294.  
57 Porte, 159.  
58 General Silvestre established a rotator turn of summer holidays in the Peninsula among their forces.  
Ibid, 162.  
59 Pando, 83.  
60 Ibid,107.  
61 Ortiz, Eduardo, De Annual a Monte Arruit y dieciocho meses de cautiverio. Crónica de un testigo.  
Melilla: Artes gráficas Postal-Express, 1923.17.  
62 Pando, 99.  
63 Even there are no an undoubted proof of the Silvestre´s suicide, the majority of the historians agree in  
this point. Porte, 210 and Pando, 106.  
64 Porte, 213.  
65 Captain Lobo, Ben Tieb FOB Commander, was not able to determine who ordered to leave the  
position and burned its magazines. Expediente Picasso, Final report dispatched to the Spanish Congress on 18<sup>th</sup>  
April 1922.432.  
66 General Navarro was in the Peninsula during Abarran battle, as soon as he had news of the events he  
came back to Melilla. On 22<sup>nd</sup> he left Melilla and reached Dar Drius that afternoon.  
67 In total to Dar Drius arrived 2,666 soldiers from Annual and others positions.

68 On 1 October 2012, Spanish King Juan Carlos I honored Cavalry Regiment Alcantara with the Cross of San Fernando, the highest reward in the Spanish Army, by the actions in the defense or the withdrawal of Mote Arruit. <http://www.abc.es/20120920/archivo/abci-regimiento-alcantara-heroes-201209201639.html>

69 National Statistic Institute.

70 Alvarez,,45.

71 Franco, Francisco, Marruecos. *Diario de una Bandera del Tercio de Legionarios*. Sevilla, 1939. 32.

72 Pando,166.

73 The numbers used in this study are based in the Picasso Files. Caballero, Fernando. "Marruecos. La Campaña del 21. Cifras reales" *Ejército, Revista ilustrada de la armas y los servicios*, Ministerio del Ejército, Spain. July-August 1983, n 522 and 523: 81-95 and 77-87.

74 The Tragic Week (July 26<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> August 1909) was a series of demonstration against the mobilization of troops for the Africa Campaign in 1909. Alvarez,,3.

75 Woolman,, 86.

76 Jiménez, Francisco José. El desembarco de Alhucemas, un hito en la historia militar. *Revista de historia militar*, n 101.2007. 171.

77 Fernández de la Reguera and Marc, 21-22.

78 General Silvestre repeatedly demanded to be provided with food aid for the people of the Rif, due to poor harvests. The government's response from Madrid was to authorize the free delivery of 450 kilos of barley, to be divided among the main towns of the Rif, in total about six grams of barley per person. Pando,,57-58.

79 Alvarez,,10.

80 Fernández de la Reguera and Marc, 26.

81 The law of 1912 established the length of the military service in three years, five active duty outside the Army, six years in the reserve and four territorial reserves on call. The surplus was renamed quota of instruction and, in theory, should receive an elementary education. Disappeared the replacement and the cash redemption but created the figure of the quota soldier, named for a service reduction in service of eight and five months, by paying a fee of 1,000 and 2,000 pesetas, respectively. He must also receive a pre-military training and resources to sustain and demonstrate stay outside the barracks, and the most important they avoided to go to the Africa Army. <http://www.tnsejerespa.galeon.com/aficiones934779.html>

82 Most of the soldiers, who were deployed in the Rif from May 1921, had made three or four firing exercises. Fernández de la Reguera and Marc, 29, and Alvarez,,6.

83 Statements of LtCol Fernandez Tamarit to General Picasso (Page 1,444). Expediente Picasso, Final report dispatched to the Spanish Congress on 18<sup>th</sup> April 1922.64.

84 Fernández de la Reguera and Marc, 28.

85 Porte,173.

86 During Alhucemas landing in September 1925, the Spanish forces used Tanks, mortars, machine guns and K-boats, bought to France and Great Britain.

87 This document is known as Picasso File (Expediente Picasso).

88 Several authors have remarked the personality of General Silvestre and his personal interest in to achieve fame and success.

89 Silvestre had been Aide ´camp of Alfonso XIII and had a close relationship with him. During a visit to the Cavalry Academy in Segovia in April 1921, Silvestre had a meeting with the King and with the War Ministry, where he reported about his intentions. Pando, 68.

90 Spanish Congress Session Diaries, 29 November 1922. 4,402.

91 General Franco related how his battalion had to move from the front walking to Larache to be embarked and transported to Melilla in order to secure the city against a possible Rifian invasion. Franco, 25-30.

92 Ruiz, José María, El "Desastre de Annual." Cambio de política en el norte de África. Grupo de Estudios Estratégicos, Análisis 8580, 5 April 2011.3.

93 Colonel Morales was killed in action during the withdrawal of Annual. He was commanding one of the columns. When Abd-del-Krim knew the events body he ordered to bring back his body, without requesting money for him as a signal of respect and in behalf of his old friendship. Woolman, 92.

94 Colonel Morales report, copy issued by his great-grandson, Major SPMC Adolfo Morales Trueba, from his familiar files and Expediente Picasso, Final report dispatched to the Spanish Congress on 18<sup>th</sup> April 1922.9.

95 Moorish is a world that has negative consideration in Spanish. Pando,15.

96 One of these meetings with the Rifian leaders is shown in Fernández de la Reguera and Marc, 41-45.

97 Expediente Picasso, Final report dispatched to the Spanish Congress on 18 April 1922.91.

98 Pando,79.

99 Expediente Picasso, Final report dispatched to the Spanish Congress on 18 April 1922.28-29.

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- <sup>100</sup> Morales Trueba, 17.
- <sup>101</sup> Ruiz, 6.
- <sup>102</sup> Morales Trueba, 17-20.
- <sup>103</sup> There are several letters that Silvestre sent to Berenguer after the loss of Abarran, on July 15<sup>th</sup> 1921, two days before that Igueriben was sieged, Silvestre wrote that he considered very easy to defeat the enemy with small successive operations. Pando, 89.
- <sup>104</sup> Pando, 90.
- <sup>105</sup> Several authors, as Colonel Spanish Marine Corps Ayuela, show the possibility that a withdrawal toward North, reaching the coast and supporting by the navy would be easier and with less casualties. Ayuela, Francisco Javier. "Una Historia Diferente" *Revista General de Marina*, Ministerio de Defensa, Spain. April 2012: 421-435
- <sup>106</sup> Pando, 165.
- <sup>107</sup> In total, twelve San Fernando Crosses (the highest Spanish medal) were awarded to Officers and troops during the events. Morales ,Appendix 7.
- <sup>108</sup> Ortiz, Eduardo, De Annual a Monte Arruit y dieciocho meses de cautiverio. *Crónica de un testigo*. Melilla: Artes gráficas Postal-Express, 1923. 25.
- <sup>109</sup> Pando, 103.
- <sup>110</sup> The numbers of the Riffian Troops were around 3,500, according to the most generous authors. Porte, 199.

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[www.historia siglo20.org/HE/12<sup>a</sup>-1.htm](http://www.historia siglo20.org/HE/12<sup>a</sup>-1.htm)

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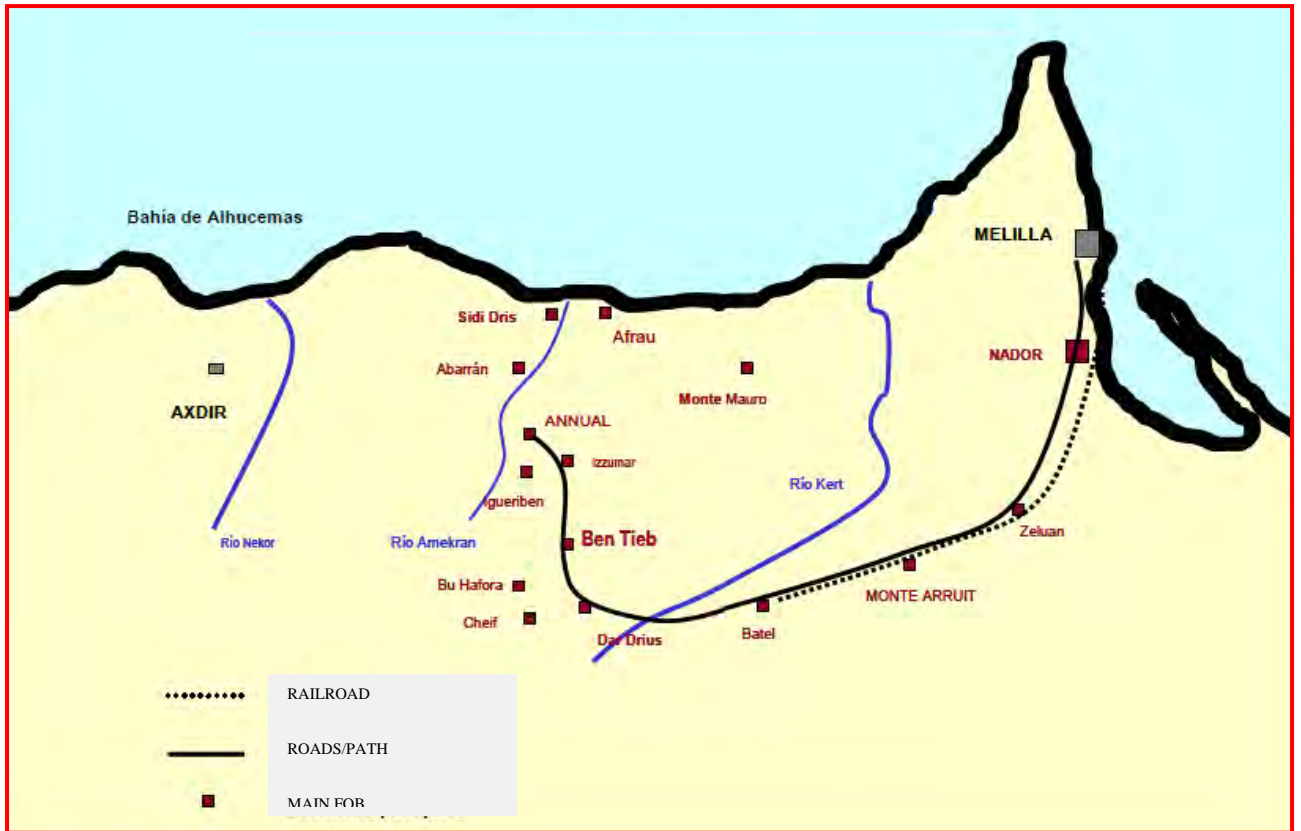
## APPENDIX A

### Maps



Map 1. Morocco in 1912

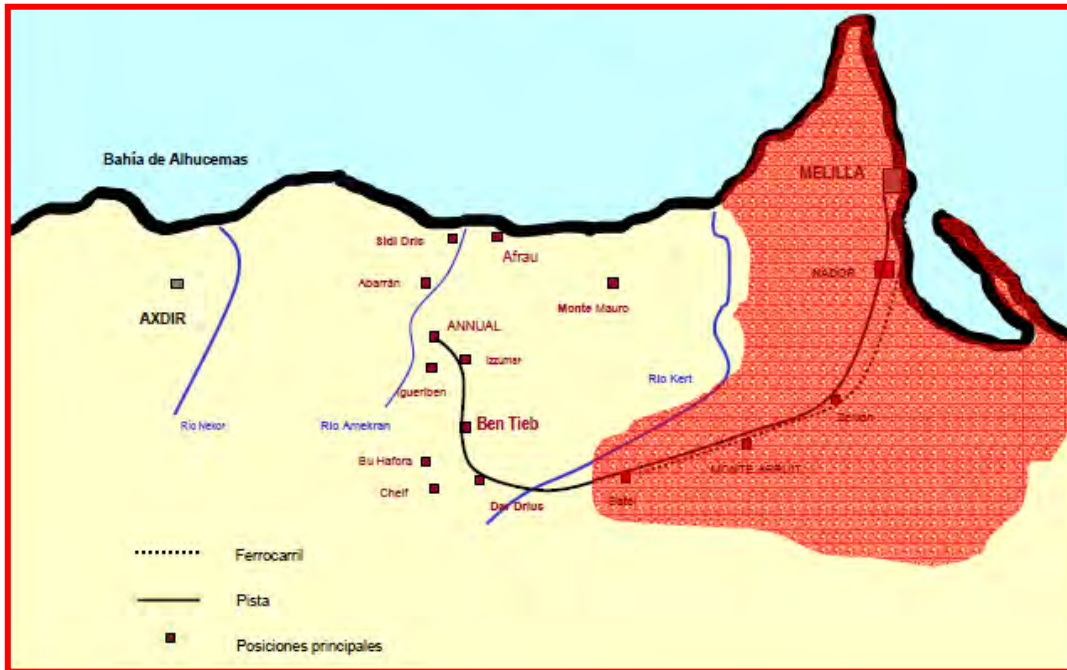




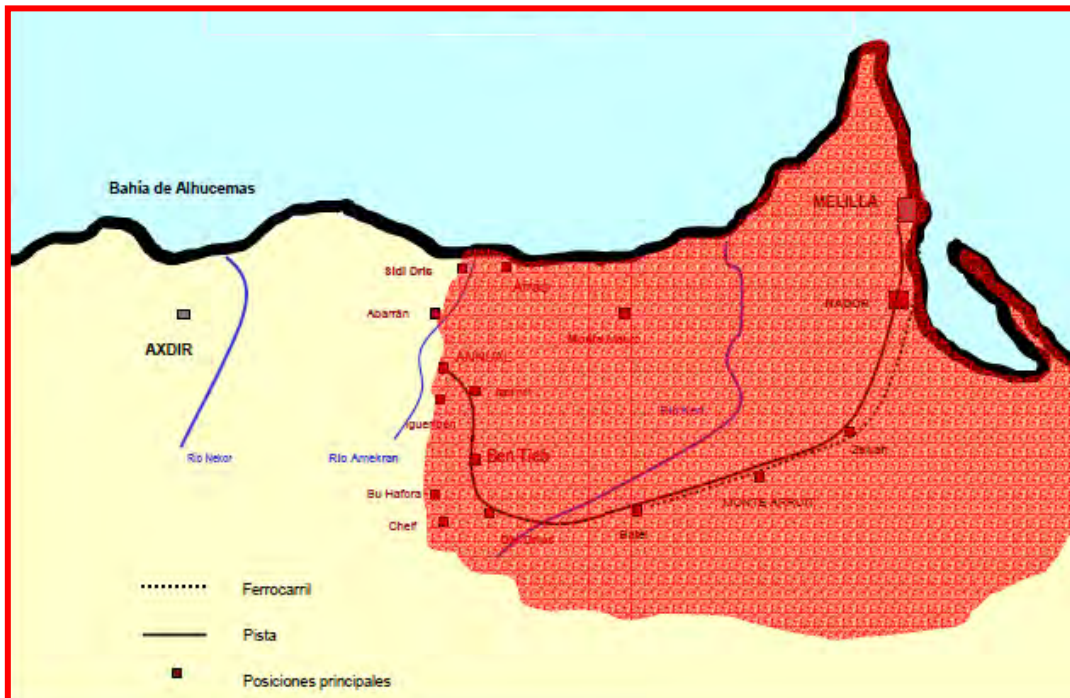
Map 2. Main lines of communication in the Rif Area.



Map 3. Kabiles' distribution in the Rif.



Map 4. Front line in 1920



Map 5. Front line in 1921

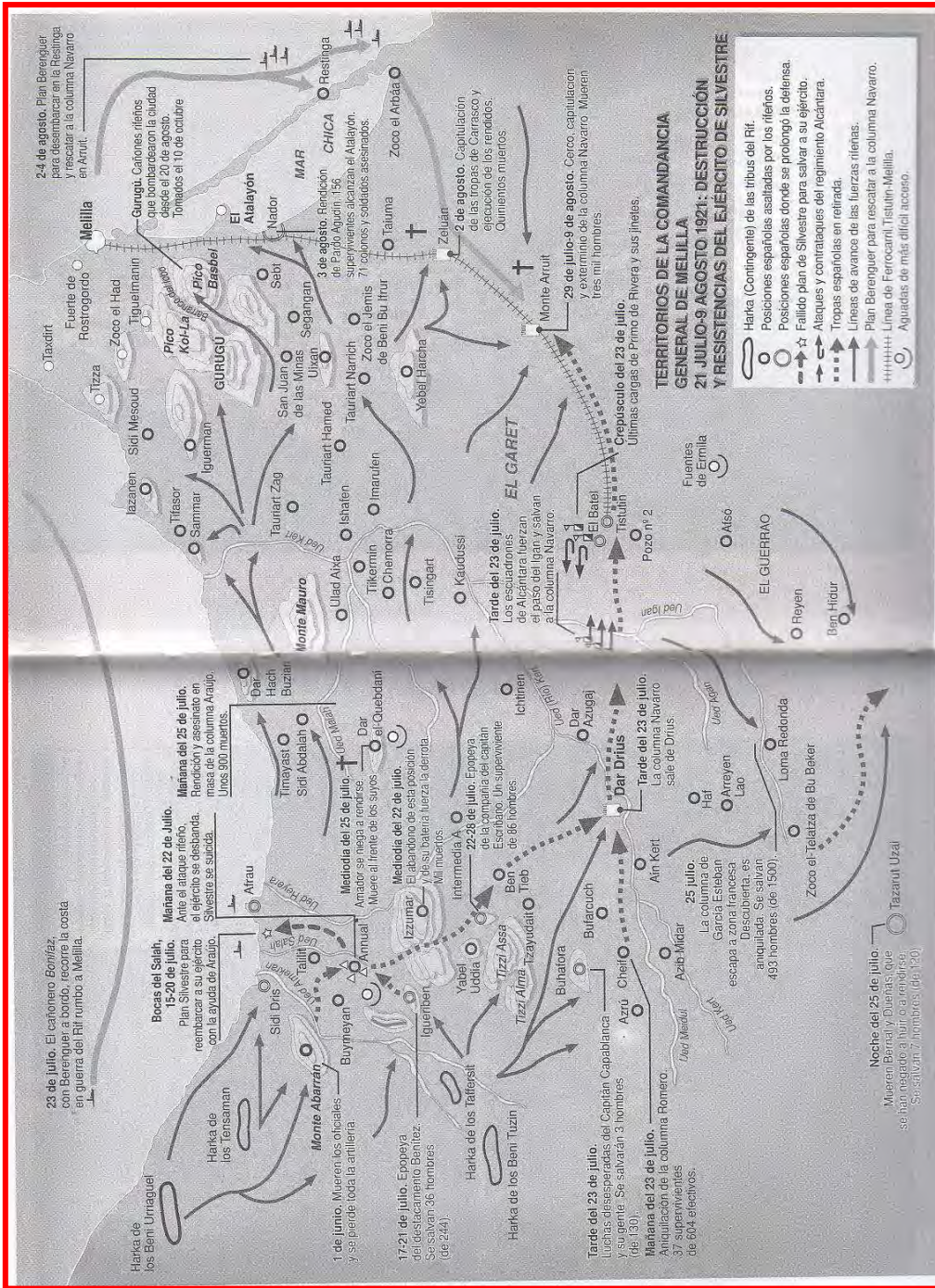


Map 6. Original draw of the Annual area

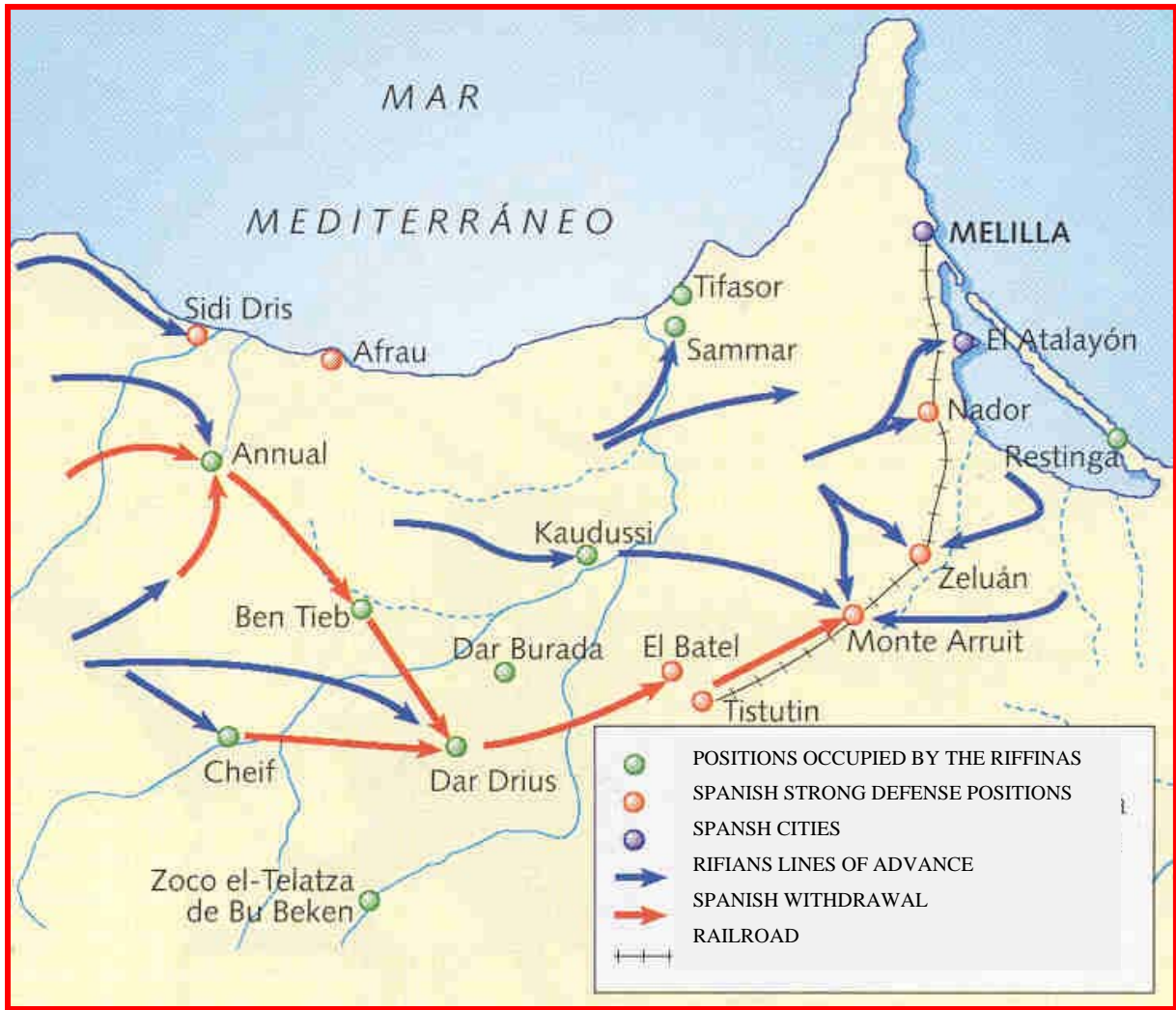


Map 7. Original map of Irigueriben position made by Lieutenant Casado, unique survivor officer in the position.





Map 8. July 21<sup>st</sup> to August 8<sup>th</sup> Operations.



Map 9. Rifians line of advance.

## APPENDIX B

### General Manuel Fernández Silvestre

General Manuel Fernandez Silvestre was born in Caney (Cuba) on 16 December 1871. His father was military, retired with the rank of Major. In 1889 he joined the Military Academy of Toledo. Sylvester was a model student with very high grades. In 1893 he graduated Second Lieutenant of Cavalry. In his time at the Military Academy, he clashed with Berenguer, who later became the High Commissioner in Morocco and chief of Silvestre in Africa. Unlike Silvestre, Berenguer got some low grades and was always a very mediocre student.

In 1895 he was assigned to Cuba, where he immediately went into combat against the Cuban insurgency, which looked for the Cuban independence. Silvestre was wounded several times in combat and stood out for his bravery, courage and good luck.<sup>111</sup> In 1898, after the consummation of the defeat against the United States, Silvestre returned to Spain with the rank of Major, awarded by merits of war. In 1899 he married and had two children.<sup>112</sup>

In 1904 he was assigned to Melilla, this was his first contact with Africa. He began studying Arabic, being the most outstanding student and earning his degree in Arabic interpreter.<sup>113</sup> In 1907, his wife died suddenly. In 1908, he was assigned to Casablanca, where he took command of an Indigenous Police Battalion. In 1911 he was assigned to Larache, where he began his confrontation with the Moroccan governor of the area, The Raisuni. In this confrontation, Silvestre was characterized by acting independently, without much regard to the instructions he received from his superiors, always with initiative and determination. In 1913 he was promoted to Colonel and delivered some brilliant combat actions, for which he was awarded with several decorations.



In 1915, he was promoted to general and appointed aide of King Alfonso XIII, where he remained for four years, where he was promoted to Major General. At this time, Silvestre established a great friendship with the King, both persons with an open and extrovert personality, and that would allow him to become the personal advisor of King in the affairs of Morocco.<sup>114</sup>

In August 1919, Silvestre was sworn in as Commanding General of Ceuta briefly. General Berenguer, who was in Ceuta as High Commissioner, did not want the presence in the town of another Major General, and less one with the personality and reputation of Silvestre. In January 1920, he was appointed as Commanding General of Melilla. General Silvestre was 48 years old when he assumed the command of the western part of the protectorate. He was a tall man, compared with the average of the period, strong, and with a piercing gaze. Silvestre was a military courageous, with a great love for his country and a great respect and friendship for the King. He was a very impulsive person, used to assume the risk of his decisions and not given to being advised by his staff. General Silvestre was convinced he was a lucky man and that luck had allowed him to emerge victorious in their battles and get rid of the death several times.<sup>115</sup>

Since his arrival at Melilla, General Silvestre personally supervised all the operations, using a fully centralized command. The chiefs of the military districts of the General Command of Melilla did not have any freedom of action, since all operations, including routine, were ordered and controlled from the General Command. Although Silvestre listened to his subordinates, he rarely paid attention of their opinions. The General did not usually seek advice from his staff, many of the operations undertaken without prior planning and without a detailed study. The chiefs of the columns of operations usually appointed the day before the operation, being weird that a chief command his troops in these operations.<sup>116</sup>



After a successful campaign, which looked like it would definitely solve the Moroccan problem, General Silvestre was surprised by the general uprising of the Rif. Given the gravity of the situation, he arrived to Annual on 21 July. Faithful to his impulsive style he tried to take command a column to relief Igueriben, where Major Benitez resisted heroically his last hours.<sup>117</sup> After the fall of Igueriben, Silvestre was shocked and after a meeting with the chiefs of the units present in Annual, on 22 July 1921, he ordered the abandonment of the position, assuming that there would not be a defense for the attack of the Rifian Kabyles. Once started the withdrawal of the position and the Rifian assault, Silvestre died, according witnesses committing suicide, but his body was never found.

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<sup>111</sup> Silvestre was shot in the head, which only grazed in the fighting of Sabana Corn in May 1896, and received over twenty-one wounded, including five bullet, in battle of Charity in December 1896. Fernández de la Reguera and Marc, 11.

<sup>112</sup> His son Manuel would be with his father in Annual as Lieutenant. General Silvestre sent him to Melilla with his car, saved his life, with instruction to General Navarro. He would die in the Spanish Civil War in 1937.

<sup>113</sup> One of his professors was a young Rifian Mohamed Abd-el-Krim, who graded him with an excellent. Pando, 29.

<sup>114</sup> Pando, 40.

<sup>115</sup> Fernández de la Reguera and Marc, 13.

<sup>116</sup> Fernández de la Reguera and Marc, 32-33.

<sup>117</sup> Pando, 92.

## APPENDIX C

### Mohamed Abd-El-Krim and the Rif Republic

Mohamed ben Abd el Krim el Khattabi was born at Ajdir in 1882 in the Beni Urriagel clan. His father was an influential man and became chief of the village. Abd-el-Krim's early education was that any Berber boy, simply studying the Koran.

In 1892 all the family moved to Tetuan. His father had great plans for his sons and he sent them to Melilla to attend the Spanish schools. The curriculum they studied there provided them with an education higher than any other Rifian boy. After his graduation Abd-el-Krim went Fez, to study at the Muslim University. His younger brother, Mhamed, was a brilliant scholar and, at expense of the Spanish Government, he was sent to Madrid in 1917 to prepare for a career as a mining engineer. Mhamed was studying in Madrid for three years, lived in a European environment, studying mineralogy and military engineering.

In 1906, Abd-el-Krim took his first job as editor of the Arabic supplement of "*El Telegrama del Rif*", the Spanish newspaper in Melilla. In the following years he became a secretary in the Bureau of Native Affairs, under Colonel Morales.<sup>118</sup> By 1915 Abd-el-Krim was an editor of "*El telegrama del Rif*" and he is an important young man, he taught Arabic at the Hispano-Arabic School in Melilla.<sup>119</sup>

Despite his having been born in a region very close to a Spanish Presidium, Alhucemas Island<sup>120</sup>, a place where outrages and punitive actions against the tribesmen were not uncommon and where hatred the Spanish was a natural inheritance, Abd-el-Krim did not appear hostile to the Spaniards.

In this point he started developing an increasingly unfavorable view of the Spanish, and he convinced himself that they tried to exploit the Rif and its mines. In this time the World War I was facing France and Germany. Abd-el-Krim started to publish articles

supporting the German position against France; he also said that Spain should not extend her sovereignty and find some sort of agreement with the New Rifian State. Due to the French pressure, the Spanish authorities tried Abd-el-Krim and imprisoned him in August 1917.

While he was imprisoned he tried to escape descending with a rope. He fell down and broke his left leg (we walked with a limp for the rest of his life). He was recaptured and was forced to serve eleven months before he was finally released at the end of the World War I. This caused him a deep resentment and hate.<sup>121</sup>

He was repositioned in his job, but he was convinced that due to his outspoken criticism of France during the War he might be extradited by the Spanish authorities to France. For this reason in January 1919 he applied for a twenty-day leave and never came back. At the same time we wrote to his brother, who continued studying in Madrid, reporting about the situation and asking him to come back to the Rif.

By the spring of 1919, the two brothers started recruiting tribal support for the rebellion. In September his father was poisoned during a banquet. The murderer confirmed that the Spanish had been bribed to assassinate him. This event increased hatred toward the Spanish in the Abd-el-Krim's brothers.

Although they held no official political power in Beni Urriagel Kabyle, their background, experience, intellectual preparation, and skill at organization gave them an effective superiority. Abd-el-Krim became a local leader who had the idea of a national state in the Rif. The Rifians listened to him because they considered he had three qualities necessary in the Rifian's idea of a leader, audacity, courage, and the ability to size matters quickly.

The plan was much more than a resistance against the Spanish forces, he had the vision of an aggressive war, with a coordinated effort to defeat the Spaniards. He observed the Silvestre's campaign and he realized that the General was spreading the same number of

troops over a larger area towards west. This situation could provide a good chance of success of a Rifian attack. The biggest problem that he faced in this point was to get a stable force, because the Rifians had never fought together as a unit, or submitted to central control. But to defeat Spain, centralized control would be needed.

Due to bad harvest of the last years and the shortage of food in the area, the Kabyles were particularly restless, especially the Beni Urriagel the most infertile area and the densest populated. By spring 1921 Abd-el-Krim had succeed in establishing a nucleolus of warriors, most of them from the Beni Urriagel Kabyle and the remainder from Bucoya, Temsaman, Beni Tuzin and Beni Amrt.

Abd-el-Krim opted by an overall strategy based on the guerrilla warfare. He stressed on the tactic of surprise, ambush, and mobility. He looked for arrive the objective faster and stronger than the enemy. He would allow the invaders to overextend themselves, as General Silvestre was doing in that point, so that not only their troops and outposts were vulnerable, but also their lines of supply. He decided to employ the same tactic that the Rifians always had fought.<sup>122</sup>

After his victory in Annual the Spaniards were expelled from the Rif. Abd El Krim consolidated his authority. He created the Rif Republic, tried to become member of the Nations Society, and created a Constitution. He carried out a reform in the way of life of the Rif and created a modern administration. He appointed in each Kabyle a Caid or Governor, commissioned to represent him to ensure the peace between the tribes and submission to their own authority. For the first time there was a government in the Rif. The Government supplied to the Kabyles councils in the administration of justice. The system worked, the social peace was achieved and he increased cohesion among the kabyles. He established a central government, with relatives and friends of his confidence, a police and an Army to fight against the Spaniards so to keep the peace among the kabyles.<sup>123</sup>

In 1923 his goal was Gomara, in the western Rif, where his power became absolute. Abd el Krim increased his power in Yebala, after rise to power of Primo de Rivera in Spain and the withdrawal of 29,000 soldiers of the protectorate. Abd-el-Krim attacked in June 1924 and in September most of the Spanish positions in the area were besieged. The withdrawal of Xauen, almost become in a new Annual.

In 1924 Abd El Krim reached its peak. Forced by their own lack of resources in the Rif after four years of war, he set his sights on the Werga River Valley, in the French zone. In April 1925, the Rifians attacked the French lines that could not contain them, in a few days they crossed the Werga River, and in early June, the Abd-el-Kim's forces were at 40 km from Fez, residence of the sultans of Morocco.

This was the starting point for a close cooperation between France and Spain. Abd-el-Krim never considered this option and he would not be able to face this Alliance.<sup>124</sup> In July took place a Spanish-French conference in Madrid where they reached an agreement of cooperation and coordinated actions against the Republic of the Rif. In September 1925, the Spanish counter offensive started; on 10 September the Alhucemas landing took place. The French forces, at the same time, attacked from the south in order to join with the Spanish troops. This link was achieved on 8 May 1926. On 26 May Abd-El-Krim surrendered to the French forces, fearful of falling into the Spanish's hands. The French authorities deported him to the Reunion Island (close to Madagascar Island), where he remained until 1947, where he was able to escape and go to Cairo where he died in 1963.

With his surrender the idea of an independent Rif Republic died and the area was under Spanish domination until 1956, when Morocco got her total independence.

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<sup>118</sup> Colonel Morales would be killed in the Annual disaster. They kept a friendship for a long time.

<sup>119</sup> One of his best students was General Silvestre, who got an excellent grade. Six years later the Rifian's uprising leading by Abd-del-Krim defeated General Silvestre. Pando,52.

<sup>120</sup> Alhucemas Island was occupied by the Spaniards in 1668.

<sup>121</sup> Fernández de la Reguera and Marc, 38.

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- <sup>122</sup> Woolman, 81.  
<sup>123</sup> Morales Trueba, Appendix 4.  
<sup>124</sup> Harris, 319.

## APPENDIX D

### The Rif Area

The Spanish Protectorate was a narrow strip of about 20,000 km<sup>2</sup>, extending from the Atlantic Ocean to the present border with Algeria, and from the Mediterranean to the Werga River (See Map 1). There were virtually no lines of communication, so the link between East and West was made by sea. In the year 1921 in the area between Melilla and Alhucemas, the only major lines of communication were the road and the railway line, that linking Tistutín Batel and Melilla, and from there a track that ran along Dar Drius to Izumar Pass till Annual. The rest of the tracks were just small paths that crossed multiple ravines. (See Map 2).<sup>125</sup>

Inside the protectorate, the region known as the Rif was an area between the Bay of Alhucemas and Melilla. This area was a barren mountain, steep and abrupt, with arid plains toward the east. They occurred in the same summer temperature changed between -1 ° and +50 ° Centigrade. Burning sun during the day and freezing cold at night. The land was barren and dry, basically consisting of a succession of hills and stony plains joined by hills. Between Alhucemas and Melilla there were no major rivers, except the Kert and the Amekran River. The rest was crossed by seasonal streams that made inaccessible ravines, which forced the troops to progress always across the heights.<sup>126</sup>

The protectorate had about 700,000 inhabitants most of which were clustered in Kabiles, which lived in small towns and settlements. They were four major Berber families: the Yebala, the Senhaja, the Gomara and finally the Rifian. They inhabited the eastern part, between the Bay of Alhucemas and the Algerian border (See Appendix A, Map 3). This was an area that had never recognized the authority of the Sultan and which wore a completely independent existence.<sup>127</sup>

The Rifians were less civilized than the others groups. They lived in a perpetual state of war against any common enemy, as the Sultan, but more often among themselves. The Rifians would abandon everything in pursuit of vengeance.<sup>128</sup> The ways of life the Rifians and their form of fighting were perfectly described by two contemporary authors. In 1921, Victor Ruiz Albéniz wrote, referred to the Rif and the Rifians, that the land was arid, rugged and barren. The dryness of the atmosphere burned the fields. But instead the race was prolific. The majority of the wars, which constantly reproduced in the Rif, were inspired rather than the fanaticism and xenophobia, in the hope of plunder, seizing guns, clothes, money.

He believed that nowhere in the world was easier to find so many people willing to betray as in the Rif. Only the force deserved respect at the time in which they warned that were not the weakest, and they try to impose and break their chains.<sup>129</sup>

In 1932, General Goded, Lieutenant General and Africa war veteran wrote that the Rifians were climber, strong, agile, and warrior by nature and tradition, accustomed to the use of the gun and the violence since their childhood. He stated that in the land of the Rif, which seems designed for the war, the Rifian applied wonderfully his native qualities: sight, strength, sobriety, aggressiveness, and mobility.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Morales Trueba, 3.

<sup>126</sup> Harris, 44-47.

<sup>127</sup> Porte, 50-51.

<sup>128</sup> Harris, 34.

<sup>129</sup> Ruiz Albeniz is considered the most important Africanist of the Spanish history. He was living in the Rif for more than ten years. Ruiz Albeniz, 171-176.

<sup>130</sup> Goded Llopis, Eduardo, Marruecos. Las etapas de la pacificación. Madrid: Compañía Iberoamericana de publicaciones, 1932. 45-47



## **APPENDIX E**

### **General Picasso's Files**

On 4 August 1921, the Minister of War ordered General Juan Picasso Gonzalez to investigate the events occurred in Annual. This research had to be limited by to the facts made by the chiefs, officers and troops in cases if they had not fulfilled their military obligations. In this way, the investigation left outside the military leadership and the High Commissioner, despite the protests of General Picasso.

After completing his investigations, General Picasso returned to Madrid on 23 January 1922 with the entire record of 2,433 pages. On 18 April 1922, General Picasso gave the record and a final summary written by him, including devastating conclusions, to the Congress. On 7 August, General Berenguer was called to testify before a commission, but his deputy condition prevented the process continue. On 11 August the government denied the Commission's view of the records of the National Defense Council, and it started rumors that the King Alfonso XIII was involved in the disaster.

Due to the situation and the lack of agreement among the members of the Commission, they agreed to convene the Congress for 1 October, and perform an overall vote on the matter. The session never happened, on 13 September, General Primo de Rivera, Captain General of Catalonia led a coup with the full consent of the King dissolved the Parliament and proclaimed the dictatorship, ending the responsibilities debugging process.

The same day, 13 September, the president of the Commission, Mateo Sagasta Echeverría, went to Congress to rescue Picasso's Files, convinced that General Primo de Rivera wanted to destroy them. He deposited the files in the Agricultural Engineers College, of which he was director and professor, trusting his custody to Enrique Jiménez Girón, one of the College professors. He remained there until the proclamation of the Second Republic in

April 1931, when Mateo Sagasta returned the files to the Congress. The Spanish Civil War allowed the files kept forgotten for a long time.

In September 1998, the files were discovered in the Spanish Congress Library.

Nowadays the Files are incomplete and these are the documents known:

- Final Report written by General Picasso, matching with pages 2171 to 2417, dated from 18 April 1922.

-Military Prosecutor Report, D. José García Moreno, dated from 26 June 1922.

-Prosecutor Report, D. Ángel Romanos, dated from 28 June 1922.

- Around fifty statements of Chief, Officers, Troops, and Civilians, witness of the events. This document was sent to the Congress on 3 June 1922.

## APPENDIX F

### Colonel Morales' Report

From the report submitted by Colonel Morales to General Silvestre on 16 February 1921, are taken the following paragraphs. In this report, Colonel Morales urged caution, and requested that progress should be consolidated, considering that it had reached its limit of elasticity. He recommended performing the operations on the coast and recalled the danger of a sudden change in the situation. General Silvestre chosen Annual path, and one month after receiving the report, he decided to continue the progress towards Nekor and occupied Abarrán, in the territory of Tensaman.<sup>131</sup>

“His Excellency:

Fulfilling his verbal order to inform you about the current political situation in relation to the planned advance on Alhucemas, I have the honor to do as follows:

...Once established at that point on the coast, we must believe that we have reached the limit of elasticity of the forces you have, in that position we should establish enough troops, both Indigenous and European, and the need to make rapid and significant work to establish in Sidi Driss the basis for our future advancement in Tensaman and reach the Nekor River, these considerations will necessarily oblige to suspend movements until, after the instruction of recruits will to the end of April, you count again with the necessary means to continue.

.... For the same reasons, discussing about Tensaman, we do not expect that there's nothing we can do really seriously, except small police operations, until May, and even if we have success in our political work and we do not have to overcome resistance from Tuzanis and Tensemanis, just in the mere peaceful occupation of the two Kabyles we will invest the whole summer...

... Assuming that these operations are conducted with the same tranquility that Beni Said and Beni Ulixek, which, as I stated above, it is unlikely; we do not end them up until July or August, at least, and in that time, by therefore, it is when we will be in full contact with Beni Urriaguel. Could we think, then, to continue until the Nekor River? The undersigned Chief sincerely believes that no...

The progress made in the cycle of operations, beginning on 7 March 1919, have been exceptionally rapid, and although all the submitted Kabyles are satisfied, as it is evidenced by the absolute tranquility of the area, this is not enough: we need some time to consolidate this position, without risk of facing with an unpleasant surprise, to leave unguarded throughout the occupied territory and bring the forces to undertake operations forefront, and that consideration should be imposed with greater force when dealing with Temsaman and Beni Tuzin...

Surely in these Kabyles nothing will happen if we send troops beyond the Nekor River, while things going well; but if there was any fighting, unfortunate, but hard, that compel us to take a break, things may vary...

It should also give it time. "It deals with making a political penetration aided by arms only where it is necessary", and this political action, real and intense, near the Beni Urriaguel Kabyle, should not to begin until we are on the shores of the Nekor River...

... It is the opinion of this Commander, who has the honor to inform you, that we should not pass, even in the best case, the Nekor River before the next fall, if we trust the success, more to the prudence than to the audacity.

Regarding with the course of action that we must follow to go to Alhucemas, there is only one: the coast .... But even if there was another practicable way inside, I think that our line of action should be always the invasion from the coast, for being the shortest path and the

one which required less effort, because we possess the secondary basis of Sidi Driss and Alhucemas and the resources to move...

Melilla, 16 February 1921  
Colonel, Gabriel Morales

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<sup>131</sup> Original in Spanish, Translation by the Author

## **APPENDIX G**

### **Spanish Forces**

Forces in Melilla's Circumscription in the summer 1921

In the General Inspection on 1 July 1921, there were 24.776 troops in the Circumscription of Melilla (18.011 deployed outside Melilla). From them, 19.756 were Spaniards and 5.020 were indigenous. This force was organized according to this way:

#### **HEAD QUARTERS**

General Commander: Major General (Cavalry), Manuel Fernández Silvestre.

Deputy General: Brigadier General (Cavalry) Felipe Navarro y Ceballos-Escalera, Barón de Casadevalillo.

Chief of Staff: Colonel (Infantry) Gerardo Sánchez-Monje y Llanos.

#### **INFANTRY UNITS**

*Regiment "San Fernando" 11:* It was composed by 3 battalions with 6 companies each; with 120 men for company, and a weapon company with 50 men each battalion. On 1 July, the Regiment had 3.071 men. Regiment Commander was Colonel Enrique Salcedo Molinero. Task: Protect Dar Drius circumscription.

*Regiment "Ceriñola" 42:* With the same organization. On 1 July, the Regiment had 3.024 men. Regiment Commander was José Riquelme y López-Bayo. Task: Protect Annual circumscription.

*Regiment "Melilla" 59:* With the same organization. On 1 July, the Regiment had 3.041. Regiment Commander was Colonel Silverio Araujo Torres. Task: Protect Kandusi circumscription.

*Regiment "África" 68:* With the same organization. On 1 July, the Regiment had 3.078. Regiment Commander was Colonel Francisco Giménez y Arroyo. Task: Protect Zoco el-Telatza circumscription.

*Disciplinary Brigade:* It was composed by a Battalion with 223 men. Battalion Commander was LtCol. Pardo Agudín. Task: Protect Nador circumscription.

*Regulares Group 2:* It was composed by 3 Infantry Battalions (3 Companies per Battalion with 110 men and a weapon Company with 50 men) and 1 Cavalry Battalion (3 Squadrons with 100 men every). On 1 July the Regulares Group had 1.841 men. (416 Spaniards and 1.425 rifians). Group Commander was LtCol. Miguel Núñez de Prado y Sasbielas.

*Indigenous Police:* It was composed by 15 Companies with 110 men each. On 1 July the Police had a force of 3.179 men (All of them were Rifians except the Officers). Indigenous Police Commander was Colonel Gabriel Morales Mendigutía.

*Sea Company:* On 1 July had 139 men.

## **CAVALRY UNITS**

*Regiment "Alcántara" 10:* It was composed by 6 Squadrons with 150 men every squadron. On 1 July it had a force of 1.078 men. Regiment Commander was Colonel Francisco Manella Corrales, his deputy Commander was LtCol. Primo de Rivera.

## **ARTILLERY UNITS**

*Artillery Command:* On 1 July, it had 1,384 men in the defensive position of Melilla and in the maintenance and ammunition group. The Commander was Colonel Masaller.

*Mix Artillery Regiment:* It was composed by 2 Artillery Mountain Groups (3 batteries with 4 70 mm canons) and one Light Group (3 batteries with 4 75mm canons). On 1 July, the Regiment had a force of 1.520 men. The Regiment Commander was Colonel Joaquín Argüelles y de los Ríos.

## **ENGINEER UNITS**

On 1 July the Engineer Command had 1,496 men distributed according to the next units:

*Engineer Command:* Colonel José López Pozas.

*Troops and Fortification Commander:* LtCol. Luis Ugarte Sáinz.

*Sappers:* 800 men distributed in 6 Companies.

*Communications:* 300 men distributed in 2 Companies and deployed around the whole area of operation.

*Vehicles Unit:* The Commander was Maj. Fernandez Mulero. There were around 100 men.

*Railroad Company:* 100 men.

## **QUARTERMASTER UNITS**

On 1 July, there were 1.076 men. The Commander was LtCol Fernando Fontán Santamaría.

The troops were organized in 7 Companies.

## **AIR FORCE**

The Air Squadron was composed by 6 airplanes.

### Forces in Annual Position on 17 July 1921

When the siege of Igueriben started, on Sunday 17 July 1921, there were around 3,100 troops in Annual. Two days later another 1,000 soldiers reinforced the position, and the next day 900 more. So, on Friday 22nd there were around 5,000 troops (3,000 Spaniards and 2,000 Indigenous). A combat force of three battalions (18 Infantry companies), three Cavalry squadrons, and five Artillery batteries, with this task organization:

*Regiment “Ceriñola” 42:* Five Infantry companies and one Machinegun company.

*Regiment “África” 68:* Five Infantry companies and two Machinegun companies.

*Regiment “San Fernando” 11:* Four Infantry companies and one Machinegun company.



*Regulares "Melilla" 2:* Three Infantry tabors and three Cavalry squadrons

*Artillery Regiment:* Four mountain batteries and one light battery.

*Engineer Command:* Two Engineer Companies.

*Supply:* Three Supply companies.

*Health Care:* Three mountain platoons and one ambulance platoon.

*Indigenous Police:* Four Companies.