

## **ANNEX 12**

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Fear and Domination: Pierre Riel, the Marquis de  
Beurnonville at the Spanish Court and Napoleon Bonaparte's  
Spanish Policy, 1802-05

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A Dissertation submitted to the  
Department of History  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Degree Awarded:  
Spring Semester 2005

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the present circumstances." Temporarily acquiescing on the subsidies issue, Hawkesbury did reiterate England's refusal to accept the transgression of French troops through Spain or Spanish complicity in arming of French warships. He also demanded to know the other articles of the Convention. However, he warned Frere, "I cannot too strongly recommend to you to avoid bringing these discussions to a sudden and unfavorable issue."<sup>335</sup>

While Hawkesbury sought détente, accumulating events dictated increasing hostility. At Ferrol, Admiral Pellew was furious Spanish officials had doubled duties on British goods while, he claimed, the French were exempt. He demanded Frere seek an explanation.<sup>336</sup> In late December the British frigate, *Aeolus* (40), cruising the Caribbean, opened fire with eighteen guns on the *Urquijo*, a Spanish corvette serving as a courier. When the Spanish captain was killed and his ship hauled into Jamaica, the best excuse England could muster was to blame the Spanish captain for his "rash and useless valor."<sup>337</sup>

These latest events undermined Hawkesbury's instructions and Frere entered discussions with Cevallos in a tone and language comparable to Beurnonville's techniques. He accused Spain of taking advantage of England's restraint "to carry on a two-fold war." The subsidy and sale of French prizes in Spanish ports was his evidence. Frere demanded a suspension of Spanish naval

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<sup>335</sup>Hawkesbury to Frere, 21 January 1804, *Papers Relative to the Discussion With Spain*.

<sup>336</sup>Admiral Pellew to Admiral Cornwallis, 7 January 1804, *Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates*.

<sup>337</sup>Fugier, *Napoleon et l'Espagne*, 292.

Regardless of Britain's perfidious attack on the treasure fleet and Frere's departure the two nations still tried to avoid war. Yellow fever gripped Spain with over 21,000 people dead from September to November in Malaga alone. Natural calamities and Napoleon's harsh demands were a difficult burden for Charles IV's inefficient government. Pitt was also reluctant to initiate a full-scale war. Fearing his domestic opposition, Pitt allowed all Spanish merchant vessels to sail from England and refrained from issuing letters of mark against Spanish ships.<sup>416</sup>

In Paris, Gravina, well apprised of his navy's deficiencies and Spain's general lack of preparedness, passionately urged Talleyrand not to violate Spain's neutrality. Talleyrand dismissed his misgivings with the reply that Spain had to avenge the loss of the treasure fleet. A few weeks later, 21 November, Gravina bore a letter to Napoleon from Charles IV outlining Spain's many tribulations. Napoleon was unsympathetic. Reasserting his Foreign Minister's comments, Napoleon called for Spain to be ready for war at a moment's notice and to continue the subsidies. Gravina left disappointed but resigned to carry forward his nation's policy.<sup>417</sup>

As Napoleon's grandiose naval plans for Channel operations solidified, he gradually realized the need for Spanish ships. Spain's fifteen ships-of-the-line and the potential to double that number in five months, would

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<sup>416</sup>Fugier, *Napoleon et l'Espagne*, 319.

<sup>417</sup>Gravina to Cevallos, 8 November 1804, Archivo Histórico Nacional, 5211, cited in Fugier, 324-25. There is no mention of this exchange in Napoleon's correspondence.