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Michael Guy Bishop
Utah State University

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SPANISH POLICY CONCERNING THE APACHES IN THE
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY WITH EMPHASIS ON THE
POLICY OF BERNARDO de GÁLVEZ

by

Michael Guy Bishop

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INTRODUCTION

In 1785, two men came into important government positions in New Spain who had considerable influence on the Indian policies of the Spanish frontier. These men were Bernardo de Gálvez and Jacobo Ugarte y Loyola. Both had proven their competence through earlier services to the crown. Gálvez had come to the new world while still a relatively young man in 1769. Due to his own accomplishments, and the watchful eye of his uncle, José de Gálvez, Bernardo advanced rapidly. He first served on the Louisiana frontier as a military officer, and in time rose to become governor of that province. In 1779, when Spain declared war on England, Gálvez directed the conquest of British posts on the lower Mississippi River and the capture of the Bahamas. On the death of his father, Viceroy Matías de Gálvez, in 1785, he was sent to Mexico to succeed him as viceroy of New Spain.¹

Jacobo Ugarte y Loyola had proven himself a capable soldier in wars with Portugal and Italy. In 1769, he had been dispatched to New Spain to serve as military governor of the frontier provinces.²

¹Donald E. Worcester, ed., Instructions for Governing the Internal Provinces of New Spain, 1786, by Bernardo de Gálvez, hereafter cited as Instructions (New York: Arno Press, 1967), p. 22. For further information on Gálvez while governor of Louisiana see also Herbert Eugene Bolton, Athanaze de Mézierès and the Louisiana-Texas Frontier (Cleveland, Ohio: Arthur Clark Co., 1914).

²Max L. Moorhead, The Apache Frontier (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), p. 19.

In 1776, when the Council of the Indies formed a new frontier policy which separated the regions of Sonora, Coahuila, New Mexico and Texas from the vice royalty of New Spain, Ugarte was appointed military governor of Sonora.

This reorganization of the frontier was due largely to the increased pressure of the Apache raids on the northern settlements. The new region, known as the *Provincias Internas*, was under the direct military rule of Teodoro de Croix.³ The increased Apache problems were the results of territorial expansion to the southwest by the Commanches. These two Indian groups were traditional enemies, and as the more powerful Commanches gained ground in the east, the Apaches moved farther into the Spanish domain. The minister of the Indies, José de Gálvez, was convinced that this threat could only be stopped by a coordinated effort of all the military forces on the frontier, which brought about the realignment of command in the area.⁴

In 1785, at approximately the same time as Bernardo de Gálvez became viceroy of New Spain, Jacobo Ugarte was appointed the commander general of the *Provincias Internas*. Ugarte, in his position as commander general, had full charge of all military activities on the northern frontier and was directly responsible only to Viceroy Gálvez. In the fall of 1786, Gálvez fell victim of a fever and died. Before his death,

³Worchester, Instructions, pp. 12-13. For further information on Teodoro de Croix see also Alfred Barnaby Thomas, Teodoro de Croix and the Northern Frontier of New Spain, 1776-1783 (Norman Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941).

⁴Ibid., p. 13.

however, he outlined a very promising plan to Ugarte for improving the situation on the frontier.

The Gálvez policy for dealing with all Indians on the frontier in general, and the Apaches in particular, was perhaps the most important plan ever adopted by the Spanish for control of the Indians of the northern provinces of New Spain. It worked for twenty-four years--from its inception in 1786 until the latter part of 1810, when it collapsed due to lack of use during the Mexican independence movement.

This paper will attempt to assess the reasons for the effectiveness of this policy, its impact upon the Indians--particularly the Apaches--and look at the Spanish military of the late 1700's in the southwest. To understand the need for formation of the Gálvez policy it will be necessary to review briefly the history of the Apaches to 1760, the situation of the Spanish on the frontier, initial Spanish Indian policies from 1766 to 1785 and to look in depth at the policy of Bernardo de Gálvez.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE APACHES TO 1760

The land of the Apaches by the eighteenth century was generally located north of the present boundary of the United States and Mexico, from the upper reaches of the Colorado River of Texas to the headwaters of the Santa Cruz River in Arizona. From the grassy plains of Texas it merged into the pine-clad mountains of New Mexico and then into the sterile desert region of Arizona. It was a harsh land that was only sparsely inhabited.⁵

The Spanish conception of Apache lands, which they called the *Gran Apachería*, was somewhat smaller than the true area over which the Apaches roamed. The Spaniards considered an area 750 miles in breadth--from the ninety-eighth to the one hundred eleventh meridian--and 550 miles in length--from the thirtieth to thirty-eighth parallels--to be the Apache region.⁶ The main area of habitation of the Apaches was the region now known as the American Southwest. However, when they were raiding they penetrated through the Texas frontier deep into Mexico.⁷

Linguistically, and to a lesser degree culturally, the Apaches were a united nation. The Apaches were of the Southern Athapaskan language group.⁸ Traditionally a nomadic and predatory people, they remained that

⁵ Moorhead, The Apache Frontier, p. 3.

⁶ Ibid., p. 3.

⁷ Robert G. Ferris, editor, Soldier and Brave (Washington, D. C.: National Park Service, 1971), p. 15.

⁸ Moorhead, The Apache Frontier, p. 4.

way until the last half of the nineteenth century when the United States Army forced them into a sedentary existence on reservations.

Politically, the Apaches were almost never unified. They were made up of various separate tribal groups, which were then divided into even smaller clans and family groups. By the early part of the eighteenth century, the Spanish had begun to realize these tribal distinctions and to locate the general geographic regions occupied by each group. Those on the upper reaches of the Río Gila and beyond the northeastern edge of Sonora were the Gileño. In southwestern New Mexico were found the Chirichahua; to the northeast the Jicarilla; down the Río Grande and extending into the valley of the Río Pecos were the other branches of the Apache family, notably the Natage, the Mescalero and the Lipan.⁹

The Apaches had become "horse Indians" by the 1690's, and this made them a most formidable opponent for the Spanish. Moreover, they had still not learned all the techniques of stock breeding and were dependent upon the Spanish for additional horses, which was one of the main reasons for continued raiding by the Apaches.¹⁰ Also, the Indians had become quite fond of the cattle and mules of the Spanish for food. These factors served to attract the Apaches into Spanish occupied regions. The Spanish inhabitants of the northern frontier were so terrified of the Apaches that they were prone to call any hostile Indian an "Apache." While the search for horses and food served to attract the Apaches into Spanish occupied regions, forces were at work to the east that would

⁹ John Francis Bannon, The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821, hereafter cited as Borderlands (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), p. 170.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 170.

drive the Indians into open conflict with the Spanish. By 1750 the Commanches were expanding their territory to the western reaches of Texas and eastern New Mexico, displacing the Apaches as they went.

The Commanches had obtained horses only shortly after the Apaches, and by the mid-1700's were the most accomplished horsemen of the plains. Their equestrian skills increased their power, and the Commanches were soon the most feared warriors in the entire west. As the more powerful Commanches pushed the Apaches westward, the Apaches vigorously attacked the Spanish as they sought to acquire new territory. By the 1760's then, the entire northern border of New Spain was in constant peril from the Apaches.

THE SPANISH SITUATION IN THE NORTHERN PROVINCES

The northern area of New Spain was of great importance to the Spanish from a strategic point of view. It served as a buffer zone between the riches of Mexico and the feared onslaught of the French, English and Russians from the north. The Spanish were inclined to be very fearful of intrusions into Mexico by their European rivals. They particularly were leery of the safety of their silver mines of northern Mexico. By the first half of the eighteenth century, the French had become very active in the Mississippi Valley, British fur trappers were ranging as far south as present-day Utah, and the Russian threat, real or imagined, along the Pacific coast also concerned the Spanish. It was fear of the Russians that motivated Spanish expansion to the northwest of New Spain into the area known as California. However, by the mid-1700's, the real threat in the Spanish Borderlands was not from Spain's European rivals, but from unfriendly Indians, especially the Apaches.

Spanish society on the frontier advanced in the form of three basic institutions--mission, presidio and civilian settlement.¹¹ Each of these institutions was closely linked to its counterparts. As the missionaries or civilian interests advanced the frontier northward, either for God or for earthly wealth, they were accompanied by the military for protection and as a safeguard to watch over the interests of the crown. Civilian interest in the northern frontier was aroused in 1736 when a Yaqui Indian reported to a Sonoran merchant that silver could be found to the

¹¹ Joseph A. Stout, Jr., and Odie B. Faulk, A Short History of the American West (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), p. 18.

north. The merchant repeated the story, and the result was a stampede of bonanza proportions. This *Real de Arizonac*, as it was called, proved to be incredibly rich. An estimated 5,000 to 10,000 miners and merchants rushed into the area.¹² While this strike lasted only a few months, there continued to be a sufficient amount to mining in the north to attract a substantial civilian population.

The Mission System

Perhaps the most remarkable institution to develop on the frontier was the Spanish mission. The mission was a tough pioneering agency that served as church, home, fortress, town, farm and imperial consulate. This corporate body made it possible for two missionaries with three or four soldiers to create an orderly settlement out of several thousand Indians.¹³

The primary purpose of the mission was to Christianize the Indians, and secondary to that goal was economic development and some degree of social discipline. The mission, as an arm of the state, also worked as a defensive fortress before the presidios were manned.¹⁴ The missionary work on the northern borders of New Spain was conducted largely by Jesuits, Franciscans and Dominicans. The work to the north and west of

¹²Ibid., p. 48.

¹³Robert V. Hine, The American West: An Interpretive History (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973), p. 10.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 10.

New Spain was done mainly by the Jesuits, who were especially active in Sonora, Chihuahua, lower California and Arizona.¹⁵

The Jesuits first came to New Spain in 1572, when a wealthy Spaniard named Don Alonso de Villaseca provided the funds for a missionary venture into the area. Twelve years after the first Jesuits arrived in Mexico, a group of twenty-three moved into the northern provinces. After a few decades, the number of missionaries had increased to twenty-seven fathers and several brothers.¹⁶

While the first Jesuit missions in the north were on the coast and in the province of Nueva Vizcaya, by the early eighteenth century they had expanded into Arizona with great fervor.¹⁷ The foremost pioneer in Arizona and lower California was a Jesuit priest named Eusebio Francisco Kino. By 1702, Kino had pushed northward from Baja California into Arizona. His was a unique ministry in that he taught more than Christianity; he showed the natives how to farm and ranch, how to plant and cultivate crops and how to prepare new foods. By the turn of the eighteenth century he had established three missions in present-day Arizona.¹⁸

¹⁵ Herbert Eugene Bolton and Thomas M. Marshall, The Colonization of North America 1492-1783 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922), p. 236.

¹⁶ Peter Master Dunne, Pioneer Jesuits in Northern Mexico (Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 1944) pp. 4-8. For further information on the Jesuits in New Spain see also by Dunne, Black Robes in Lower California (Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 1952); and Jacobs Sedelmayr: Missionary, Frontiersman, Explorer in Arizona and Sonora (Phoenix, Arizona: Arizona Pioneer, Historical Society, 1955).

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁸ Stout and Faulk, A Short History of the American West, pp. 46-47.

In the province of Sonora, where there was an abundance of silver, the missions were generally found near the mines. As one Jesuit father, Joseph Och, states in his journals: "Mines or pits are so plentiful that even if all the Spaniards busied themselves with mining they would not be equal to the task."¹⁹ This condition appears as a stark contrast to New Mexico, which Nicolas de LaFora described as an area where the "silver mines are of no great value."²⁰

The crown gave military support for mission activities with the eventual establishment of presidios. The mission-presidio complex was a viable frontier institution for the crown, particularly as it was the most economical means available to control the Indians.

Because of the close link of the mission and presidio system, the Jesuits exercised great power on the frontier. However, the power of the Jesuits soon was curtailed due to developments in Spain. King Charles III began a sweeping set of reforms to separate church and state, and the order came under fire. It began with a strict set of restrictions governing the church's legal and economic privileges. And then in the summer of 1767, the Society of Jesus was expelled from the New World.²¹

While the Jesuits had been relatively successful with most of the Indian groups of New Spain, they were never able to reap any measurable

¹⁹ Theodore E. Treutlein, Missionary in Sonora: The Travel Reports of Joseph Och, S. J., 1755-1767 (San Francisco: California Historical Society, 1965), p. 143.

²⁰ Lawrence Kinnard, ed., The Frontiers of New Spain: Nicolas de LaFora's Description, 1766-68 (Berkeley, Calif.: The Quivara Society, 1958), p. 95.

²¹ Lyle N. McAlister, The "Fuero Militar" in New Spain 1764-1800 hereafter cited as The "Fuero Militar" (Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida Press, 1957), p. 94.

amount of success among the Apaches. This failure was due largely to the nomadic nature of these Indians; the Apaches plainly refused to stay at permanent locations by a mission. For over a century they had been raiding deep into Mexico, and the raids had become a basic economic and social pursuit which was not easy to replace and not lightly surrendered.²²

With the expulsion of the Jesuits by Charles III, the Franciscans and Dominicans had full supervision of the Indians spiritual needs. However, the burden of controlling the hostile Apaches soon fell almost entirely upon the military and the frontier institution of the presidio.

The Presidio System

The presidio, as it developed on the frontier of New Spain, was neither novel in concept or in characteristics. The first Spanish presidios appeared around 1570 in Morocco. There it took on the added dimension of being an enclave of Christianity in a heathen land, a vestige which it retained in New Spain.²³

The first presidios were strategically situated along the principal roads to the silver mines of the north. The first garrisons were extremely small, but they doubled and re-doubled in size as the Indian wars intensified. In these isolated posts the troops were joined at

²²Ferris, Soldier and Brave, p. 15.

²³Max L. Moorhead, The Presidio: Bastion of the Spanish Borderlands hereafter cited as The Presidio (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1975), pp. 3-4.

first by their wives and children, and in time by civilians who gathered in the area for greater protection from hostile Indians. As the garrison was reinforced and its royal payroll increased, the presidio became especially attractive to merchants, stockmen and farmers. At first, a few friendly Indians added their presence to the fort to serve as military scouts and domestic servants, since missionized villages were almost always in the vicinity of a presidio. Eventually, the presidio was teeming with peaceful natives desirous of the work and protection that the fort provided. Thus, the presidio evolved from a simply garrisoned fort to the nucleus of a civilian town.²⁴

The number of troops stationed at the different presidios varied, but nearly all were undermanned. The frontier troops were usually militia units, although a few companies of regulars were in the area. To combat the Indian hostilities, and to protect against invasion by European rivals, the *fuero militar* was established in northern New Spain. This system granted Spanish military privileges in the New World and attracted half-breeds and Indians into the northern militias to alleviate the high costs of military defense. With the influx of enlistees seeking the new privileges, the provincial militias grew rapidly. By 1766, the number of Spanish regulars in all of New Spain totaled only 2,341, while the provincial militias exceeded 9,000 men. By 1784, as the Apache problems were increasing, the number of regulars had nearly doubled to 4,389 men and the militia had grown to over 15,000.²⁵ Indian auxiliaries were also used to bolster troop strength

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 4-5.

²⁵ McAlister, The "Fuero Militar," pp. 94-96.

in some areas. There were about 1,400 armed Indian militiamen on the frontier, located mostly in the province of Sonora.²⁶

The predominantly militia garrisons of frontier presidios suffered from a lack of well-trained officers and men, and from sub-standard equipment. The men were not drilled on a regular basis and marksmanship was poor due to a lack of practice. The enlisted men were required to purchase their own ammunition, hence they used very little of it on target practice.

A shortage of equipment was a chronic ill of the presidio soldier. For example, at the presidio of Tucson, a northern outpost on the Sonora frontier, each soldier was supposed to have been armed with a regular musket, a lance, a bull-hide shield and an arrow-proof jacket made out of heavy leather. However, many of the muskets were not serviceable and moreover, there were only sixty-four muskets for seventy-three men. There was also a shortage of lances and only twenty-one of the leather jackets were available. Even the presidio's horse herd, which was supposed to include six mounts per soldier, numbered only 356, which was eighty-two shy of the minimum requirement.²⁷

The horse herds were vital to a well-functioning garrison. They were necessary for patrol, pursuit and campaigns against the Apaches. Pastured near the presidios and difficult to guard, the horses were all too often run off by the hostiles. Since replacement costs were high, the herds were not brought back up to full strength very rapidly.

²⁶Christian I. Archer, "Pardos, Indians and the Army of New Spain: Inter-relationships and conflicts 1780-1810," Journal of Latin American Studies 6 (November, 1974) 240-45.

²⁷Moorhead, The Apache Frontier, pp. 90-91.

The problem was so serious that Viceroy Gálvez, in his Instructions of 1786, cautioned Ugarte to be especially attentive in guarding the horses. He directed Ugarte to hold company commanders personally responsible for all losses through theft.²⁸

Not only was equipment often substandard for the presidio soldier, but he suffered economic hardships as well. There were two reasons for these problems: first of all a very low pay scale existed for the frontier troops, and secondly there was wide-spread corruption among the officers who handled the payroll procedures. In 1729, the yearly salary of a presidio captain was 3,000 pesos a year, second only to the salary of a provincial governor. In comparison, the enlisted men received from 290 to 350 pesos a year depending upon rank. Prior to 1772, the enlisted men were required to purchase their own uniforms, equipment and maintain their horses in addition to providing for their families.²⁹

While monetary compensation for service was poor to begin with, the enlisted man suffered even further due to the common practice of the company captain acting as purchasing agent for the soldiers. Because of this arrangement, the captain would often purchase supplies at highly inflated prices and there was no recourse for the common soldier. For example, in Nueva Vizcaya, Sonora and New Mexico the soldiers were required to pay five pesos a bushel for wheat which had cost their officers only one and a half pesos at most; for beef, which the captains had bought at three or four pesos each, they were having to pay

²⁸Worcester, Instructions, Article 22, p. 35.

²⁹Moorhead, The Presidio, p. 67.

eight pesos. Horses, which initially cost from five to seven pesos were being sold to the soldier at from ten to eleven pesos each.³⁰

The troops that manned frontier presidios comprised a unique branch of the Spanish military system. While their deficiency in military instruction and disregard for discipline appalled regular army officers, their toughness and stamina was admired by their own officers. The presidial soldier served for a term of ten years at a time, the actual amount of duty he saw dependent upon Indian hostilities and needs of the province.³¹ As the Apache problem increased in the north, the presidio played an ever-growing role in those provinces. In order to improve its situation on the frontier, the crown instituted sweeping changes in its military and Indian policies in the last half of the eighteenth century in New Spain.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 57-58.

³¹Ibid., pp. 178-79.

INITIAL INDIAN POLICIES 1766-1785

In 1766, the Marqués de Rubí arrived in New Spain for an inspection tour of the military posts and conditions on the northern frontier. This expedition ushered in a period of intensified efforts to remedy the problem of defending the border against Indian attacks. Rubí's survey indicated that there were a number of regions where the Apaches gained entrance into the northern provinces. In order to secure the frontier from further hostilities these entrances must be closed off.³² The essential feature of Rubí's recommendations was the abandonment of the missions in eastern Texas and the withdrawal of the frontier line to the south. He insisted that Spain was trying to maintain too much of a northern boundary and had spread herself too thin.³³ Rubí proposed that a line of fifteen presidios be set up on this reduced frontier and that everything north of that line be returned to the Indians for the time being. He also recommended a war of extermination against the Apaches, judging that this was the only way to end the problem permanently.³⁴

Rubí suggested that each presidio be garrisoned by fifty well-trained and well-equipped men who could carry war to the Apaches. He felt that this line of presidios should extend at intervals from Sonora

³²Worcester, Instructions, p. 7.

³³Walter Prescott Webb, The Great Plains (New York: Grossett and Dunlop, 1931), p. 129.

³⁴Ibid., p. 130.

to Texas. These presidios would be approximately forty leagues apart along this new frontier line.³⁵

Back in Spain, Rubí's recommendations were given careful consideration. The new plan that evolved out of these recommendations, the so-called *Reglamento*, or New Regulations of Presidios, was not issued until 1772. The *Reglamento* was to prove the forerunner of a broader set of reforms that came four years later.

Under the direction of José de Gálvez, the northern provinces of New Spain were separated into a new governmental district in August, 1776. This new district, called the *Provincias Internas*, was formed to create a better system for governing and defending the frontier. Teodoro de Croix was given command over the new area and was delegated authority to make all decisions in the provinces. He was expected to devote his full attention to warfare and leave the civil matters to the local authorities.³⁶

The old system with the viceroy in charge had proven to be ill-suited for keeping abreast of the Indian problems of the north. These problems were very foreign to those the viceroy usually handled and he was generally not well enough informed to direct operations against the Apaches. Also, most of the problems on the frontier were over a thousand miles from the viceroy's headquarters in Mexico City, and so communications were time-consuming.

³⁵ Bannon, *Borderlands*, p. 180.

³⁶ Worcester, *Instructions*, p. 12.

Croix arrived in the *Provincias Internas* and assumed command in 1777. His administration lasted until 1783, during which time he enjoyed considerable success.³⁷ He held several councils of war with his subordinates which helped identify the true dimensions of the problems on the frontier. In December of 1777 eleven men met under Croix's direction at Monclova to discuss the problems of the *Provincias Internas*. The council discussed several questions, including the nature of the Apache hostilities and what progress, if any, was being made against them; how many warriors did the Apaches have, how well armed were they and of what value would peace pacts be with them. Also discussed was the type of military operations which might prove successful against the Apaches, how many men would be needed and should alliances be attempted with any other tribes against the Apaches.³⁸

While these questions showed how poorly informed the Spanish were concerning the Apaches, they did show a desire to become more knowledgeable about the situation. There was a unanimous agreement among all present at the council that while the Apaches were the Spanish's main foe on the frontier, little progress had been made to subdue them; that in fact conditions had steadily worsened, especially since the 1760's. Most of the military commanders also felt that the realignment of the presidios under Rubí's *Reglamento* had been a mistake because the frontier settlements appeared to be even more vulnerable than before.³⁹

³⁷ Ibid., p. 13.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 15-17.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 18.

The most striking decision of the council was that in the future the Spanish should try to form an alliance with the Commanches. This was a very ironic move, since it was the Commanches, in search of expanded territory, who had driven the Apaches into a position of hostility with the Spanish. However, since the two tribes were mortal enemies, the alliance appeared feasible to Croix.

The base for such an alliance had been laid by the governors of New Mexico as early as 1749. Governor Tomás Vélez Capuchín had maintained a casual peace with the marauding Commanches between 1749 and 1767. It was Governor Juan Bautista de Anza (1777-1781) however, who revived the old relationship and perfected it.⁴⁰ Under the direction of Felipe de Neve, who succeeded Croix in 1782, Anza formed the Commanche Alliance. The final peace was obtained by Domingo Cabello, the governor of Texas, in October of 1785. The terms were essentially the same as those which Anza had established a few years before, and included:

1. The cessation of all hostile activities between the Spanish and the Commanches.
2. The release of all Spaniards held captive by the Commanches, and their return to their own people.
3. The exclusion of all Europeans except Spaniards from the Commanche villages.

⁴⁰ Moorhead, The Apache Frontier, p. 143. For further information on Anza see also Alfred Barnaby Thomas, Forgotten Frontiers: A Study of the Spanish Indian Policy of Don Juan Bautista de Anza, Governor of New Mexico, 1777-1787 (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1932).

4. The recognition by the Comanches of all friends or enemies of the Spanish as their own.
5. The prosecution of war by the Comanches against the Lipan Apaches and the rendering of reports of all engagements to the Spanish.
6. The admission of Comanches into Coahuila for the purpose of attacking Apaches in that province.
7. The annual distribution of presents to the Comanche chiefs as a token of Spanish good will.⁴¹

The Spanish in the *Provincias Internas* were well pleased with the new alliance. This closely followed the Spanish strategy of previous decades, when they were masters of dividing and then conquering the Indians of Latin America. Not only did this new pact provide better defense against the Apaches, but opened the way for trade with the Comanches as well.

The Comanches began attacks on the Apaches as early as April of 1786. They were as fond of the alliance as the Spanish, for it allowed them unrestrained warfare against their old enemies the Apaches. Indeed, when the Lipan Apaches made overtures of peace to the governor of New Mexico the Comanches begged Anza not to make a treaty with them, arguing that if he did they would have no one to fight and consequently would become effeminate!⁴²

Spanish Indian policy in the *Provincias Internas* was soon to undergo more dramatic changes, for in 1785 Bernardo de Gálvez and Jacobo Ugarte y Loyola assumed their new positions in the area. Between them,

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 144-46.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 160-61.

these two men would shape the most effective Indian policy that was ever used in the northern provinces of New Spain.

THE GÁLVEZ POLICY

Bernardo de Gálvez seems to have understood the problems of the *Provincias Internas* as few of his predecessors had.⁴³ His instructions to Ugarte show him to be a master of frontier know-how and Indian relations. As a veteran of frontier wars in Sonora and a former governor of Louisiana, Gálvez knew the problems of the Interior Provinces and understood well Indian psychology.⁴⁴ The Gálvez Policy had some similarities to earlier policies, but it contributed far more to the pacification of the frontier tribes than did the realignment of the presidios or even the reinforcement of their garrisons. The policy was clearly laid down in the instructions to Ugarte, and involved swift and vigorous war against Indians who were hostile, peace among those who solicited it, and an attempt to win allies among the warlike nations by spreading the use of Spanish foods, drinks, weapons and customs among them.⁴⁵

In New Mexico particularly, great success was achieved by following the Gálvez Policy. The Comanches had previously been pacified and proved to be effective allies. Ugarte and Anza were able to sustain the peace for a full generation, and this in conjunction with their successful employment of the rest of the policy brought peace to New Mexico for the first time during the Spanish occupation.

⁴³ Bannon, Borderlands, p. 187.

⁴⁴ Stout and Faulk, A Short History of the America West, p. 65.

⁴⁵ Worchester, Instructions, p. 23.

The official title of the Gálvez Policy was Instructions for Governing the Interior Provinces of New Spain. Written in 1786, the instructions were to be strictly observed by the military commanders of the *Provincias Internas* in dealing with the Indians and other military matters. The set of instructions were divided in several categories. First, a section of general information specified ways to handle the overall Indian problems, and then shorter sections outlined detailed instructions for each province. The Instructions contained 216 articles in all, and were finalized in Mexico City on August 26, 1787.

In the beginning of his instructions Gálvez recognized that an unhappy state of affairs existed in the Interior Provinces due to the Indian problem. He stated that his purpose in drawing up this set of instructions was to form a clear and methodical plan for handling the situation.⁴⁶ It was essential that he established a clear plan, for this was one feature that past Spanish Indian policies had often lacked.

Gálvez first noted the problems involved in attempting to control such a vast area as the *Provincias Internas*. He pointed out that it was too large to be governed by one man and urged his senior officers to make full use of their powers. However, they were still required to make full reports of all activities to him on a regular basis.⁴⁷ This feature was essential, for without good communications from the frontier areas it would have been impossible for Gálvez to coordinate efficiently any programs. Articles nine through twenty divided up the provinces

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 27-28.

⁴⁷ Ibid., Articles 1-3, p. 30.

between Ugarte and the other senior officer, Juan de Ugalde.⁴⁸ For purposes of swift pursuit and punishment of raiders it was extremely important to Gálvez that his officers had a free hand in making decisions. The failure to act quickly could abort the possibilities of a successful campaign.

Viceroy Gálvez went on to urge all commanders to let the Indians destroy themselves if at all possible. As he recalled, no large European armies had taken part in the conquest of Mexico, but that the Indians were merely left to contribute to their own "happy ruin."⁴⁹ This policy was far more feasible economically for the crown, and also recognized the physical obstacles faced by trying to militarily control the Indians. Gálvez realized that some discord already existed among the tribes, and therefore urged Ugarte and Ugalde to exploit this as far as possible.⁵⁰

The commanders are instructed to secure peace with the Apaches if at all possible. Gálvez pointed out, however, that the Indians had been fickle and acted in bad faith in keeping past treaties. He also recognized that the Spanish had not always respected the peace pacts either. The Viceroy felt that peace was based on private interests and so the Spanish had to be able to offer the Apaches something in return for a cessation of hostilities. The goods to be offered were to include horses and mules, food and obsolete guns to hunt with.⁵¹ Gálvez believed

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 32-34.

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 37-38.

⁵⁰ Moorhead, The Presidio, p. 101.

⁵¹ Worcester, Instructions, Articles 36-40, pp. 39-40.

that if the Apaches desired these items then they would be peaceful with the Spanish. He deemed that it would be much cheaper for the king to satisfy these material needs than to fight the Indians.

In article forty-eight the frontier commanders were warned of the volatile character of the Apaches and to expect the peace to be broken numerous times. However, regardless of this they were ordered to make all necessary efforts to promote peace and when rebellious Indians again sought peace it was to be offered to them.⁵² Gálvez concluded this section of his instructions by stating that he did not personally feel the Apaches would submit voluntarily and that force would likely be required, however he recommended attempts at peaceful solutions be tried first.⁵³

In articles sixty-four through sixty-six Gálvez urged his officers to acquaint the Apaches with liquor. He pointed out that the northern tribes had already acquired a taste for alcoholic beverages and perhaps a similar fondness among the Apaches would serve Spain's best interests. It was felt that once the Apaches became accustomed to the use of liquor they would then be dependent upon the Spanish to furnish it. Perhaps if the alcohol served no other purpose, it was hoped it would loosen the Indians' tongues, for article sixty-seven implied that when the Indians were drunk they may confide their secrets to the Spanish.⁵⁴

In line with the plan to supply the Apaches with guns for hunting, Gálvez also felt this would be of benefit to the Spanish militarily. Prior to this the Spaniards had been at a disadvantage when engaged in

⁵² Ibid., pp. 42-43.

⁵³ Ibid., Article 52, p. 43.

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 46-47.

warfare with the Indians because their muskets were more difficult to reload than the warrior's bows. Therefore, it was felt that if the Apaches were provided with obsolete guns the Spanish soldiers would gain at least equal ground. Furthermore, when the guns needed to be repaired the Apaches would be dependent on the Spanish to fix them.⁵⁵

In his final enunciation of general Indian policy, Viceroy Gálvez encouraged his officers to continue the practice of presenting the Indians with gifts. He felt that this policy would promote good will and keep open any possible avenues for peace.⁵⁶ In essence, this new Indian policy recognized that in the past the hostiles made peace only to obtain gifts and then resumed warfare. It was now hoped that by creating a desire for many Spanish items the Indians would maintain the peace so they could obtain the food, horses and guns that they craved.

Following the untimely death of Gálvez late in 1786, the burden of applying the new policy fell on Ugarte. The new viceroy split the *Provincias Internas* in much the same way Gálvez had intended, and Ugarte was put in charge of the provinces of Sonora, Nueva Vizcaya and New Mexico. These western areas bore the brunt of the Apache threat and so were most applicable to the Gálvez plan.

During the next few years Ugarte proved to be a strong enforcer of the policy. He devoted his full attention to the Apache problem and by 1790, when he was replaced, he had had a good amount of success. Ugarte had the patience and wisdom necessary to pursue the policy although

⁵⁵ Ibid., Articles 68-70, p. 47.

⁵⁶ Ibid., Article 81, p. 50.

he was continually hampered by administrative reorganizations. In accordance with the directions of Gálvez, Ugarte actively sought peace whenever possible and resorted to military action only when there was no other alternative. By the spring of 1787 the Commanche, Ute and Navajo nations had not only made peace but now acted as allies of the Spanish against the Apaches. Within a few months, large groups of Apaches had sued for peace and settled in reservation-like encampments near the frontier presidios.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Moorhead, The Presidio, pp. 108-109.

SUMMARY

There were several reasons for the immediate success of the Gálvez Policy. First of all the chain of command had been restructured and the senior officers were given more power to control their districts. Because of this change the Spanish were able to facilitate immediate reprisals against marauding Apaches. The communications with the Viceroy had always been a problem and so this eliminated that weakness.

Also, while earlier policies had considered peace negotiations, they generally tended to act more in line with a plan of extermination. Gálvez personally felt that military action would be needed, but strongly advocated using peaceful means if at all possible. The program of orienting the Indians to the use of Spanish goods and an annual distribution of presents was very successful. The policy of buying peace proved to be much sounder than earlier attempts at military victory had been.

It took nearly ten years for the Gálvez Policy to be fully into effect, but there was a growing conviction among the Spaniards by 1796 that the long, cruel war with the Apaches was about to end. It was also recognized that the peace that existed was not brought about by the former policies of enslavement and annihilation but by the wise maxims of the *Instrucción of 1786* which had combined military pressure with economic enticements.⁵⁸ While the optimism for total peace in 1796 was short-lived, it's failure was brought on by external forces and not a short-coming with the Gálvez Policy.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 112.

In 1810, the insurrection broke out which was to become Mexico's war for independence. This diverted troops and funds to the centers of rebellion and forced the frontier areas to operate on a reduced budget. The distribution of gifts and supplies dropped off drastically and at several presidios the Indians fled and resumed raiding. The Apaches had always had a fundamental aversion to the sedentary life, and this coupled with their inability to comprehend the new inconsistencies in Spanish policy led to their disenchantment.⁵⁹ Furthermore, after independence had been achieved the new Mexican government did not have the money to restore the old system or to properly maintain the presidios.⁶⁰

The Gálvez plan had worked from its inception in 1786 to 1810. The overall goal of the plan had been to pacify the frontier of New Spain, and this was accomplished in large measure for duration of the effective use of the policy. It was during these years of purchased peace that most of the beautiful missions were constructed, that ranching in the area flourished and the northern provinces really grew.⁶¹ The policy which Gálvez designed and Ugarte helped institute brought more peace and stability to the Interior Provinces than had been previously experienced. The plan's success reflected its value to Spanish Indian policy on the frontier.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 113.

⁶⁰ Edward H. Spicer, Cycles of Conquest (Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1962), p. 240.

⁶¹ Stout and Faulk, A Short History of the American West, p. 66.

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APPENDIX

Expansion of the Presidio Garrisons--1700's

1723--19 Presidios manned by 1,006 officers and men

1787--23 Presidios manned by 3,087 officers and men⁶²

One of the most notable characteristics of the presidial company was its tendency toward rapid expansion. During the sixty-four years represented here the total force on the frontier had increased 206 percent. However, even with this rapid growth the *Provincias Internas* were still undermanned.

Racial Mix of the Presidio Garrisons 1773-1781

Caucasians (Europeans or Creoles)--50 percent

Mixed bloods--37 percent

Indian Auxiliaries--13 percent⁶³

While these percentages represent the average presidial company on the frontier, there were exceptions. For example in eastern Texas the garrisons were entirely caucasians, while at the same time in Sonora there was a larger percent of Indian auxiliaries. There was a marked tendency for the western and central garrisons to be less caucasian than those farther east.

⁶²Moorhead, The Presidio, pp. 181-82.

⁶³Ibid., pp. 182-83.

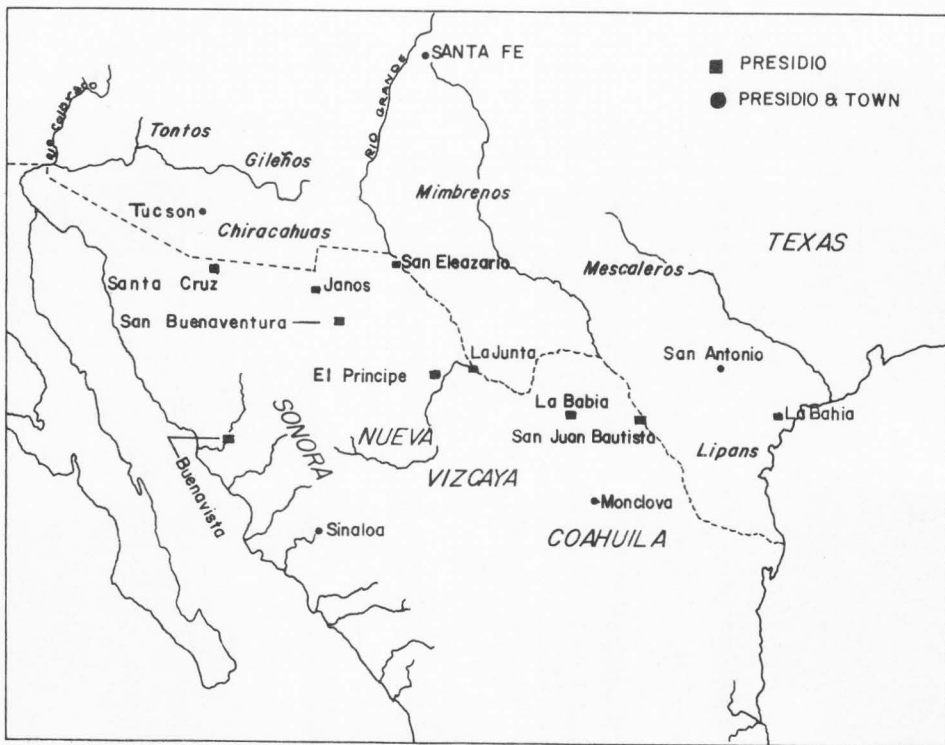


Figure 1. Location of major presidios and Apache groups of northern New Spain 1775