

A WAR OF PEN AND SWORD: THE ENGLISH INTELLIGENCE APPARATUS IN THE WAR OF  
THE SPANISH SUCCESSION

by

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(Under the Direction of Benjamin Ehlers)

ABSTRACT

During the War of the Spanish Succession, the English intelligence apparatus faced incredible challenges, including French intelligence operations, a constantly changing strategic landscape and the complexities of a trans-Atlantic war. As a result of these challenges, the English intelligence apparatus became increasingly professionalized and institutionalized, in a reflection of many of the general trends of state formation. At the same time, the trans-Atlantic nature of the War necessitated greater imperial consolidation and incorporation of overseas possessions into the intelligence apparatus, foreshadowing the rise of truly global empire. These developments were all a direct result of the challenges of the War of the Spanish Succession, and subsequently, arose from the direct actions of and competition between England and Bourbon Spain and France.

INDEX WORDS: Atlantic, Early Modern Europe, State Formation, Imperial Consolidation, Intelligence, Espionage, Privateer, War of the Spanish Succession, Queen Anne's War, England, Great Britain

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1708, James Montagu was appointed Solicitor General of Great Britain. The appointment likely came as a shock; the previous holder of the position, Simon Harcourt, had suddenly resigned in March, following the dramatic dismissal of his friend, Robert Harley, from the office of Secretary of State for the Northern Office. Montagu found himself in a challenging position. The Crown was at war with France over the disputed succession of the Spanish throne. An unlikely alliance of Portugal, England and Austria struggled to curtail Bourbon dominance on the Continent, and the conflict had spilled over into North America. Further complicating this situation, the Crowns of England and Scotland had been unified one year prior, and it was the Solicitor General's job to sort out the legal complexities of the new arrangement.

It was in this position that Montagu found himself in June of 1708. Only a few months into his new position, he received a letter from Charles Spencer, Queen Anne's principle Secretary of State. The letter itself could scarcely have been surprising; the two were in regular correspondence. That June however, on the first day of summer, the post delivered to Montagu not a letter, but an enormous packet of papers. The packet contained testimonies, examinations, affidavits, and intelligence reports – a whole host of prosecutorial evidence. That day of June 21, 1708, Charles Spencer revealed that he believed he had cracked open a French spy ring.

In the packet, Spencer gave Montagu a list of eight names and accompanying evidence, and requested Montagu's opinion as to whether those named should be tried with "high treason or [some] other offenses of which they may be convicted."<sup>1</sup> The evidence suggested that the individuals he named had been employed by a French minister as intelligence agents. It took Montagu more than two weeks to read through the evidence. When he did, he agreed with Sunderland's assessment – the French spies were subsequently charged with high treason and hanged. The British intelligence apparatus survived yet another threat, while James Montagu survived another day on the job.

Intelligence apparatuses offer an intriguing lens by which to examine institutionalization, state formation and imperial consolidation in this critical period. The War of the Spanish Succession marks a watershed moment in European development. The composite monarchies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries would soon give way to cohesive and increasingly centralized nation-states. Meanwhile, the eighteenth century witnessed the true advent of Europe's global empires, as increased institutional capacity resulted in a Europe better able to govern overseas holdings and incorporate far-flung colonies into a cohesive polity. Simultaneously, the period saw the emergence of Great Power conflicts oriented not around dynastic struggles, but imperial rivalry and the status quo, and the War of the Spanish Succession sits at the nexus of these critical transitions.

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<sup>1</sup> Spencer, Charles. "Whitehall, 21th June 1708." *Sunderland State Papers*.

The War of the Spanish Succession was, as the name suggests, a major dynastic struggle between the great monarchies of Western Europe. Ostensibly, the primary impetus for the conflict was the inheritance of the Habsburg's Spanish domains. Carlos II "el Hechizado" of Spain died childless in November 1700. The chief contenders for the succession were Archduke Charles Habsburg of Austria and Phillip Bourbon of France.<sup>2</sup> There were efforts to peacefully partition the Spanish lands in order to equitably settle the Succession without conflict, but these negotiations proved ultimately fruitless, and thus, the War of the Spanish Succession began. In a sense, however, the name historians have given to the conflict is somewhat misleading, as a primary motivator for England's entry into the conflict was the French plan to advance the claim of James the Pretender to the English throne. The War though was ultimately more than just a dynastic struggle. It was the first of the "major coalition wars" which characterized European Great Power struggles following the wars of religion in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries,<sup>3</sup> and set the stage for each of the War of the Austrian Succession, the Seven Years War and even the Coalition Wars of the Napoleonic Period. With memories of Habsburg dominance still fresh in the European consciousness, part of the motivation for the War was the desire to thwart the ambitions of Louis XIV and to circumvent Bourbon hegemony in Western Europe.

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<sup>2</sup> Both Charles and Phillip traced their claims to the Spanish throne back to sisters of Carlos II, Margaret and Maria, respectively. While Maria, and subsequently Phillip, had the stronger hereditary claim, she had renounced any claim she had on the Spanish Crown as one of the conditions for payment of her dowry upon her marriage to Louis XIV of France. The dowry in question was never paid however, which formed the basis for the Bourbon rejection of Maria's renunciation.

<sup>3</sup> Kennedy, Paul. *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*. Lexington Books: DC. 1987. P. xxiv.



The War's resolution is critical to understanding its significance as a modern conflict. After almost fifteen years of conflict, the War of the Spanish Succession ended with what has been considered by some to be a peace of exhaustion.<sup>4</sup> With the Treaty of Utrecht, the Bourbon Succession was affirmed, and Phillip became acknowledged across Europe as Felipe V of Spain. At the same time, the French agreed to cease backing Stuart Pretenders to the English throne, thereby guaranteeing English Protestantism and upholding the Glorious Revolution. Additionally, Spain's European holdings were divided between the Habsburgs and Bourbons, while Spain's New World Empire was granted in its entirety to Felipe V. In this sense, the War may be seen to have come to something of a draw, and indeed, even as a Bourbon victory. The dynastic conflicts were resolved in favor of the Bourbons on the grand Spanish stage, and the Habsburg lands were divided in ways acceptable to both coalitions. However, several smaller terms of the Treaty cast the peace in a different light. The British seizures of Gibraltar and Minorca were guaranteed, and British merchants received trading rights throughout the Spanish New World. The War's outcome then, while a dynastic victory for the Bourbons, was arguably a strategic victory for the British, and one that would be reflected in the trajectory of the coming century. Consequently, the War of the Spanish Succession was key in the transition from early modern to modern Great Power conflicts.

Additionally, the War of the Spanish Succession was the first major European conflict with an actual American theatre. While prior conflicts, such as those waged by

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<sup>4</sup> Albareda, Joaquim. *La Guerra de Sucesion en Espana*. p15.

the English Commonwealth under Cromwell, had American components, Queen Anne's War, the War of the Spanish Succession in the Americas, was a major component of the broader war, and fully incorporated into the grand strategies of the belligerents. As a result, the war posed unique challenges, and resulted in greater conceptualization and consolidation of overseas possessions as part of a centralized polity. Subsequently, the scope of the war, the challenges it posed and its many, varied motivations all render the War of the Spanish Succession a uniquely critical watershed in the process of state formation.

Particularly in the English language, the historiography of the War of the Spanish Succession is limited. Much of what exists, such as Francis Davis's *The First Peninsular War*, is traditional military history, with emphasis on details of specific campaigns, such as Marlborough's in 1704.<sup>5</sup> Henry Kamen's monograph on the War considers the military dimensions from a broader perspective, examining each belligerent's capacity to wage war on a national level, ultimately attributing Bourbon successes to Franco-Spanish ability to marshal the sum resources of each state, echoing the analysis of Kennedy.<sup>6</sup> Hattendorf's book on England during the conflict offers strong analysis of England's internal performance in the War, particularly on its effects upon politics and royal favoritism.<sup>7</sup> Ultimately though, the book fails to engage meaningfully with the question of state formation, instead focusing on the motivations for England's entering

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<sup>5</sup> Francis, Davis. *The First Peninsular War 1702-1713*. Ernest Benn: London. 1975.

<sup>6</sup> Kamen, Henry. *The War of the Spanish Succession in Spain 1700-1715*. Cox & Wyman: London. 1969.

<sup>7</sup> Hattendorf, John B. *England in the War of the Spanish Succession: A Study of the English View and Conduct of Grand Strategy, 1702-1712*. Garland Publishing: London. 1987.

the conflict, as well as its strategic aftermath. Spanish language descriptions of the War are, unsurprisingly, both more common and more detailed, particularly on the effectiveness of the so-called Bourbon Rejuvenation of Spain initiated by Felipe in order to execute the war effort.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, the scope of Spanish language secondary literature almost universally limited to Spain, with some texts on the French during the War.

Overall, published monographs on the War of the Spanish Succession have tended to emphasize strategic elements of the war, with an emphasis on military trajectory, along with internal economic considerations and economic comparisons between belligerents. While existing scholarship on the War does hold to the current perspective that the English benefited dramatically, indeed, perhaps disproportionately, from its settlement, it is simply not an often studied subject. As a result, the historiography of the War has not seen the same emphasis on state formation and the influence of international rivalries that have reinvigorated scholarship on the early modern period in recent years. Likewise, there is no major drive to consider the war trans-Atlantically, in the same way that recent scholarship has looked at the Seven Years/French and Indian War. Subsequently, English state formation and imperial consolidation and the War of the Spanish Succession are markedly under explored.

Intelligence apparatuses offer an excellent avenue by which to examine these processes of state formation and imperial consolidation. They, like any arm of the state, underwent dramatic institutionalization, professionalization and bureaucratization

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<sup>8</sup> See: Albareda, Joaquim. *La Guerra de Sucesión de España: (1700-1714)*. Editorial Crítica: Madrid. 2010.

during the period, developments which were accelerated by the War of the Spanish Succession. Likewise, intelligence is, at its core, driven by rivalry and competition. As a result it serves as a means to examine the ways in which rivalries influenced the institutional developments which took place during the War. Finally, given the trans-Atlantic dimensions of the conflict, intelligence apparatuses were forced to contend with the logistical challenges of maintaining effective intelligence gathering over distances far larger than those traditional apparatuses had contended with. Thus, intelligence apparatuses offer an excellent way to examine the means by which European powers sought to incorporate their trans-Atlantic empires.

Consequently, this study will endeavour to explore the development of the English intelligence apparatus over the course of the War of the Spanish Succession, as a means of considering these crucial questions of state formation and imperial consolidation at the turn of the eighteenth century and their relationships with Great Power conflict. Drawn primarily from preserved English State Papers, such as those of the Foreign and Domestic Office, as well as personal diaries and communications like the Journal of Sir George Rooke, this study will be comprised of three case studies of intelligence operations: those surrounding the Action of August 1702 and the Battle of Vigo Bay, those of English counter-intelligence at the critical midpoint of the War, and those of the failed English invasion of Quebec in 1710. Each of these intelligence initiatives involved complex, trans-Atlantic dimensions, and presented complicated questions for the English state. Likewise, taken together, these three events span most of the War, thereby offering a telling overview of the developments which came from it.

Overall, they present a story of an English apparatus which was increasingly able to respond to the challenges presented by the modern era through increasing professionalization and flexibility, particularly regarding the logistical challenges of trans-Atlantic empire. The English intelligence apparatus was not yet comprised of modernized intelligence agencies, but, over the course of the War of the Spanish Succession, it was becoming bureaucratized, institutionalized, and responsive to the pragmatic intelligence necessities of a growing world.

The sources which this study will use are standard for explorations of the early modern English state. The greatest volume of archival material comes from the collections of English state papers. Specifically, these sources are governmental papers produced by the Northern and Southern State Secretariats, the two departments most widely involved in intelligence matters throughout the early modern period. These papers include information received from informants and diplomats abroad, instructions sent to various agents, and transcriptions of official correspondences between officials working in the English government. Most often, these papers were written to or composed by the Secretary of State at the time. Consequently, they offer a top-down perspective on the administrative action of the English State Secretariats. Additionally, these collections contain compilations of the personal and professional correspondences of each of the English Secretaries of State throughout the War of the Spanish Succession, from each man's tenure in office, supplementing the more clinical bureaucratic documents from the State Papers.

In turn, the State Secretariat documents are supplemented by transcripts and minutes from the English Privy Council, Parliamentary Calendars, Admiralty documents and personal diaries. Privy Council documents and Parliamentary Calendars help place intelligence operations and their associated endeavours within the broader concerns of the English government. Meanwhile, given the naval nature of each of the cases at hand, Admiralty documents allow for consideration of naval intelligence. Likewise, personal diaries, such as that of Admiral Sir George Rooke, the highest ranking combat officer in the English Navy at the start of the war, function similarly to the personal and professional correspondences of the Secretaries of State, offering an opportunity for close examination of the proceedings of intelligence work at the top of the hierarchy, as well as opportunities to see individual reflections upon individual operations. Combined, these sources provide an excellent means by which to examine the actual motivation behind and orchestration of various English intelligence operations during the War of the Spanish Succession.

Shockingly, there is a dearth of dedicated studies on intelligence and espionage in the early modern world. While many books during period, particularly on the Atlantic World, contain brief, even throw away, references to spies, few scholars have tackled intelligence during the period. As would be expected from a topic of limited study, there is a decidedly limited depth of historiography concerning intelligence in early modern Europe and the Atlantic. There is one monograph, James Westfall Thompson's

*Secret Diplomacy: Espionage and Cryptography 1500-1815*<sup>9</sup>, which seeks to provide a comprehensive view of intelligence within the period. Unfortunately, with its first printing in 1937, the book is rather dated, with little to say on the question of state formation, let alone the Atlantic World and, by virtue of its scope, is more of a survey text, providing little in the way of applicable methodology.

More recently, Alan Marshall at Bath Spa University has made a career of exploring intelligence in an Early Modern European context in the Restoration Period. His book, *Intelligence and Espionage in the Reign of Charles II 1660-1685*<sup>10</sup>, provides the fullest model for a methodology of early modern intelligence that a modern scholar can find. Marshall's work however focuses primarily on the internal operation of intelligence apparatuses, as a result of the Restoration regime's persistent fear of Catholic plots. In turn, Marshall argues that the development of intelligence apparatus of the early modern English state was driven primarily by domestic concerns. Consequently, while *Intelligence and Espionage* engages with state formation from an internal perspective, does not consider the role of international rivalry in advancing governmental institutions and, like *Secret Diplomacy*, does not consider the Atlantic perspective and imperial consolidation whatsoever. Many works on the Atlantic World do contain oblique references to intelligence activities, but on the whole, these works lack any systematic treatment of inter-imperial espionage.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, aside from

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<sup>9</sup> Thompson, James Westfall., and Saul Kussiel Padover. *Secret Diplomacy: Espionage and Cryptography, 1500-1815*. New York: Frederick Ungar, 1963.

<sup>10</sup> Marshall, Alan. *Intelligence and Espionage in the Reign of Charles II: 1660-1685*. Cambridge U.a.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994.

<sup>11</sup> Examples of this phenomenon include: Grady, Timothy Paul. *Anglo-Spanish Rivalry in Colonial South-east America, 1650-1725*. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2010.; Parrish, Susan Scott. *American Curiosity:*

those studies whose contribution is merely to confirm that espionage was indeed happening, Westfall Thompson and Marshall are the two scholars with whom any intended plunge into early modern intelligence must contend.

Beyond a focus on the diplomatic though, the two books agree on an additional point – that early modern intelligence was driven by dynamic personalities within intelligence communities. Unfortunately, when these individuals either died or were dismissed from their posts, “lessons learned in one reign frequently had to be relearned at a later date.”<sup>12</sup> This issue of continuity is recurrent throughout any examination of early modern institutions, but is perhaps no longer the case by the beginning of the eighteenth century. Finally, as mentioned, neither text presents any major treatment to the question of intelligence within a broader Atlantic context, and how the logistical problems of conducting intelligence over such a large physical distance were solved. The question of Atlantic espionage certainly warrants study. While it is difficult to find primary sources from agents on the ground during the period, there is a wealth of official governmental material is more than enough to obtain a top-down picture of English intelligence activities. With all of these sources, it is possible to gain an understanding of the English intelligence apparatus as the war started, and to begin and better understand the evolution of government institutions at this critical time in state formation.

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*Cultures of Natural History in the Colonial British Atlantic World*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006. ; Wright, J. Leitch. *Anglo-Spanish Rivalry in North America*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1971.

<sup>12</sup> Marshall, 4.



The institutional question is an important one. As the process of state formation has become an increasingly popular object of study by historians of Early Modern Europe, what was once regarded as the administrative revolution has once again become in vogue. Scholars like Wayne te Brake have emphasized the development and evolution of state institutions in the light of public pressures, emphasizing the points of contact between the public and private spheres.<sup>13</sup> Beyond these encounters between the public and private, recent years have seen renewed scholarship on the development of economic institutions in the face of the expanding world. In his book *Pashas, Traders and Travellers in the Islamic World*, James Mather considers the expansion of English economic institutions, in the form of the Levant Company, to the Ottoman Empire. His subsequent analysis on the interplay between the two polities is an effective consideration of the ways in which early modern institutions might react to changing realities. Unfortunately, the Levant Company, while a fascinating subject, is not representative of standard governmental institutions.<sup>14</sup> Some recent scholars, such as Rachel Weil and Tim Harris, have published works on purely administrative

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<sup>13</sup> Te Brake Wayne. *Shaping History: Ordinary People in European Politics, 1500-1700*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998. Additionally, see:

Bellany, Alastair. "The Murder of John Lambe: Crowd Violence, Court Scandal and Popular Politics in Early Seventeenth-Century England" *Past & Present*. Aug2008, Vol. 200 Issue 1. . Corteguera, Luis R. "Popular politics in composite monarchies: Barcelona artisans and the campaign for a papal bull against hoarding (1580–5)." *Social History*. Jan2001, Vol. 26 Issue 1.

<sup>14</sup> Mather, James. *Pashas: Traders and Travellers in the Islamic World*. Yale UP, 2011.

Additionally, for a fascinating study on consumption and the Atlantic World that also directly discusses institutional development, see Marcy Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: A History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World*. Cornell UP, 2010.

Norton's work grapples with the question of how the governments of the European imperial powers attempted to reconcile their agendas with the increasing popularity of New World goods, ultimately charting the changes these institutions attempted to make in both popular perception, and themselves.

development during the period.<sup>15</sup> However, these sorts of studies, while well executed, do not fully consider the ways in which international rivalries and the pragmatic concerns of conflict between the great powers drove institutional development.

Intelligence apparatuses offer an excellent avenue by which to examine the shape and development of European governmental institutions and state formation during the transition from the early modern to the modern. Consequently, the findings of this study should not differ too dramatically from the general trajectory of research to this point. The common threads of state formation, imperial consolidation and Great Power conflict may be seen; however, intelligence apparatuses offer a unique opportunity to explore the ways in which each of these historical processes were interconnected with and influenced by one another. Over the course of the War of the Spanish Succession, the English intelligence apparatus evolved considerably. Initially decentralized as a means of combatting the communication delays which were an unfortunate reality of the time, it was nonetheless effectively coordinated. As the War developed though, centralization became ever more significant, particularly as the English intelligence strategy shifted to one which emphasized counter-intelligence at the midpoint of the War. By the War's conclusion, the English intelligence apparatus had become highly centralized with strong trans-Atlantic incorporation under the primacy of the Southern Secretariat. These developments, approximately in keeping with recent

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<sup>15</sup> Weil, Rachel Judith. *A Plague of Informers: Conspiracy and Political Trust in William III's England*. Yale University Press, 2013.

Harris, Tim. *Revolution: The Great Crisis of the British Monarchy, 1685-1720*. London: Allen Lane, 2006.

scholarship, were the direct result of the challenges and pressures of prosecuting a prolonged, trans-Atlantic War with France and Spain.

## CHAPTER 2

### WHISPERS IN AN AGE OF CHANGE

To a modern eye, the reason for Sunderland's involvement in the French spy ring is not immediately apparent. Intelligence has long had obvious connections with military establishments, and today is accorded its own bureaus, departments and agencies. For much of England's early modern history however, the State Secretariats had in fact doubled as intelligence agencies. Consequently, in examining the English intelligence apparatus in the lead up to the War of the Spanish Succession, it is important to examine the English diplomatic situation.

The prevailing theme in English foreign policy in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, was, much like in the first half, the ongoing commercial rivalry with the Dutch. This conflict, which resulted in open war three times during the century dominated England's diplomatic and political spheres. The rivalry would only resolve in part with the Glorious Revolution, which saw Dutch Stadtholder William III of Orange assume the English throne. At the same time, the English began to grapple with the concept of empire which accompanied an expanding global English strength (a strength which was itself actively augmented by the English government in an effort to curb Dutch dominance). Each of these themes, preoccupation with Dutch strength and the power growth which accompanies a rise to global power, are strongly reflected within the English intelligence apparatus during the period.

It is a matter of some curiosity that much of the surviving evidence about English intelligence in the early modern period comes from diplomatic sources, rather than military ones. Given the role of intelligence in military action throughout history, Europe's armies and navies at the time certainly employed spies and scouts in their service. Despite this curiosity though, it is a fact that it was not the admirals and generals, but rather the diplomats who established long-term, extensive intelligence networks and maintained comprehensive collections of what they had learned. That they were in the best position to do so is not entirely surprising. Diplomats, positioned as they were within the hearts of foreign courts, were in an excellent position to go snooping, acquire the latest gossip, as well as potentially win over members of the court by threats, bribes or other means. As diplomats typically<sup>16</sup> received their instructions from and relayed their findings to the Southern Secretary, the State Secretariat was rendered the natural depository of foreign intelligence. Let us then fully dive in to the goings-on of the Secretariat's intelligence apparatus.

As Arlington's State Papers are the most complete and readily available<sup>17</sup> of the Southern Secretary state papers, this consideration will be largely based upon his system, though incorporating details from other Secretariat's as well. As might be expected, Arlington corresponded with a vast number of diplomats, agents and informants. When delivering instructions, letters were addressed by name to the

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<sup>16</sup> As institutions were still rather fluid at this time, there were of course exceptions to this rule, a notable one of which will be discussed below.

<sup>17</sup> The state papers of other significant Southern Secretaries, such as Robert Spencer, are extant, but have not been published, and are instead solely available in the British National Archives. Suffice it to say however that, with supplementation, Arlington's career, which spanned the entirety of the reign of Charles II, is sufficient to gain at least a fair picture of England's pre-War intelligence activities.

intended recipient, rather than using aliases, though aliases were by no means uncommon during the period.<sup>18</sup> It seems incredibly unlikely that Arlington's underemployment of aliases was derived from any sort of lack of understanding of the practice. Instead, far more likely is that, as most of Arlington's contacts were known diplomats, he saw little reason to obfuscate his correspondents, whose connection to him would have been widely known anyway. Rather, it seems that Arlington was content to allow those with whom he had direct contact to act as middle-men or handlers for street-level informers, as indicated in this instruction to Sir William Temple.

By what we hear of Mr. Corney, he will not be a proper person to be trusted with [tin for sale]; however pray let him know, from me, that his Majesty is glad he is gotten out of Prison, and will upon occasion, gratifie[sic] him for his Suffering: and withal see what use you can make of him, in those parts, for drawing Intelligence out of Holland; and not giving him incouragement[sic] to come over yet to us.<sup>19</sup>

Thus it may be seen that, while Arlington certainly has instructions which he wishes to be carried out, he does not relay these instructions himself, instead directing them to Temple, one of his most frequent correspondents. This approach marks a dramatic departure from the style of John Thurloe, who personally advised even the lowest ranking of his agents and informants. While this change perhaps represents a lower

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<sup>18</sup> John Thurloe's state papers refer to numerous agents by aliases, as revealed through the extensive scholarship of Baker in "John Thurloe Secretary of State, 1652-1660," *History Today*, 8, 1958, p. 548-555. Additionally, the infamous Austrian Black Cabinet used aliases extensively. For a more detailed discussion of the Black Cabinet, see Thompson, esp. pgs. 116-119 and 188-201.

<sup>19</sup> Bennet, Henry, in Marshall. p. 66.

level of personal initiative on the part of Arlington than Thurloe (a charge which would certainly be difficult to verify by any historical method, particularly given the paucity of personal reflections by both men), its greatest significance is on an institutional level. While an effective and interested administrator is always beneficial, regardless of time period, the ability to delegate rather than rely upon micromanagement at every stage of the process indicates that the process of intelligence gathering was becoming streamlined and professionalized enough to enable the existence of handlers. Such a development flies in the face of descriptions of early modern intelligence networks which were organized on a personal basis from the top down and therefore were inclined to fall apart as soon upon the death or retirement of an officeholder. Instead, by effectively bureaucratizing the intelligence apparatus, it would be possible for former middlemen to reach out to successors in the Secretariat, or for street-level agents to contact replaced middlemen, when before the introduction of middling handlers they would have had a very difficult time contacting the State Department proper.<sup>20</sup>

This question of continuity of succession is a key one in the process of institutionalizing intelligence. Following the conclusion of the Third Anglo-Dutch War in early 1674, it appears that there was a general shakeup of the English government; it is possible that, in the aftermath of the defeat, there was a perceived need for change. The transference of contacts between administrations is understandably crucial toward the development of a cohesive, enduring intelligence apparatus. To that end, beginning

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<sup>20</sup> Marshall, on the issue of pay of former agents.

with Arlington (and arguably Thurloe)<sup>21</sup> there developed something of a process of partial succession. Thus, when Arlington retired as Southern Secretary in the fall of 1674 and the Secretariat was granted to Henry Coventry (who was himself formerly the Northern Secretary), Arlington was granted the post of Postmaster-General, a position with obvious connections to intelligence work. In this capacity, Arlington's continued presence ensured that the new administration would have some semblance of legitimacy and was able to continue to oversee some of his old contacts and was in a position to ensure that operations continued smoothly while still enabling a change of administration. All of these facts are directly reflected in various entries of the Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series.<sup>22</sup> Here, we find a number of instances which demonstrate that Arlington is still involved in the intelligence activities of the English state, though certainly not to the extent of his successor, Coventry, including one mention in which a former agent of Arlington "the ingenious gentleman, Mr. Ralph Montagu, so lucky in remote contrivances, having made a great acquaintance with this Duchess, when she resided at Chambery, has by concert with Arlington prevailed with her to come over [to England]."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> While most of Cromwell's high ranking officials were either banished or executed in the first years of the Restoration, Thurloe was not. Initially, he was arrested along with the other major figures, but he was released and subsequently served in something of an oversight or advisory role to the new government, a condition which was likely a major term of his release.

<sup>22</sup> Green, Everett and Francis Bickley. Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series. London, 1907. Collected by archive.org. <https://archive.org/details/calendarstatepa00levagoog>

<sup>23</sup> Calendar, Domestic Series.



Confirming to at least some degree the success of the administrative transition though, several of Arlington's contacts took up employment within the new administration. July of 1676 contains this entry:

John Boucket to the King. Petition for a reward for his services, having been employed by Lord Arlington ever since the beginning of the last two wars against the Dutch in Holland, to give constant weekly intelligence of their shipping, which he has done at great risk of his life. <sup>24</sup>

Boucket's request was subsequently accepted, and he was taken on in the Secretariat's payroll in his former position as an agent providing intelligence on the Dutch. This passage reveals another interesting point of the priorities and tactics of the English government at this time. While the Third Anglo-Dutch War had formally concluded in 1674, England was still technically a belligerent in the ongoing Franco-Dutch War. While England had ended its active engagement in the conflict with the peace in '74, English mercenaries continued to fight on the continent for more than another year until even the mercenaries were resolved. That Boucket was accepted in his post as an informant against the Dutch after England's near total withdrawal from the conflict is indicative of England's stance. Where defeat had deterred support for an active hand in the war, England was willing to continue some form of hostilities covertly, and, although there does not seem to be direct evidence of this information being relayed to France, such would not be entirely surprising given the English history of non-military support throughout European warfare.

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<sup>24</sup> Calendar, Domestic Series.

Far more common though than mentions of former agents being granted new positions with the Southern Secretariat though are those in which agents are instead granted positions by Coventry's replacement as Northern Secretary, Joseph Williamson, with one individual writing to Williamson personally to remind Williamson of a promise he had been given, guaranteeing a position by virtue of his "having been a true and faithful servant to Lord Arlington."<sup>25</sup> One needn't be surprised by the seeming favoring of Arlington's agents of Williamson over Coventry however; it is natural that the affairs of the Northern Secretariat, whose purview was more and more becoming domestic, in counterpoint to the Southern Department, should be the highlight of the Domestic Series. It is an unfortunate fact that the Foreign Series papers for the period after Elizabeth are scarce to nonexistent, thus necessitating the use of the Domestic Series (as well as the Colonial Series, where appropriate). While these employment transferences do indicate a successful transition, with preexisting networks remaining intact despite a change in leadership, the involvement of the Northern Department does present a problem. At the same time as this transfer reveals an increasing ability of networks to persist in spite of change, it indicates a lack of centralization within the English intelligence apparatus.

The Southern Secretariat's diplomatic corps enabled it to collect a vast amount of information even on enemy countries, as evidenced by Arlington's maintenance of assets such as Boucket in the Netherlands during the Second Anglo-Dutch War. Likewise, the tendency of the Southern Secretariat to collect and maintain the

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<sup>25</sup> Calendar, Domestic Series.

assembled state papers makes it an excellent starting point for examination of post-Cromwell English intelligence leading up to the War of the Spanish Succession. However, as the involvement of the Northern Department seen above indicates, intelligence was the realm of far more than just the Southern Secretary. In a direct indication that the roles of the two State Secretariats were not firmly established at this time, the Domestic Series contains a number of letters of intelligence on foreign matters addressed to Williamson from his various assets. While Marshall attempts to show the intelligence apparatus of the Northern Department as largely concerned with rooting out “popish plots”, the direct reporting of French fleets to Williamson by one Joseph Holden<sup>26</sup> clearly contradicts the notion that the Northern Department was exclusively concerned with domestic intelligence at this time. Likewise, there are surviving records which demonstrate the involvement of the military in intelligence activities – namely the Admiralty. While these documents are not official Admiralty documents, they do come from a name which should be familiar to both historical and literary scholars of 17<sup>th</sup> century England alike, Samuel Pepys.

Samuel Pepys, perhaps best known for the diary he kept before he ascended to the heights of his career in the Admiralty, also maintained an extensive collection of his correspondences throughout his professional life. In his letters as well as his diary, one may find a number of references to two individuals, Mr. Wade and Mr. Lee and

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<sup>26</sup> Calendar, Domestic Series. “Thomas Holden to Williamson. The 2nd came in here two small French men-of-war from Brest, and, as soon as they came in, the two captains took horse for Plymouth when they understood that part of the Dutch fleet lay there. They came back again the 4th and put to sea this morning with intelligence that the Dutch fleet...”

occasionally a Mr. Evett or Everett, who together appear to have functioned as handlers for several field-level assets. Pepys' relationship with these men is somewhat nebulous, as on one occasion, he appears to have been an authority figure, conveying to them orders on behalf of a mutual superior, as on November 19<sup>th</sup>, 1676, where Pepys records that upon meeting with the trio "with the Lieutenant's leave set them to work in the garden."<sup>27</sup> On other occasions, Pepys accompanied Wade and Lee to meetings with intelligence assets who rendered unto Pepys specifically briefings of a nonspecific nature, although Pepys does note that they seem to warrant further investigation.<sup>28</sup> On yet another occasion, Pepys, while still in his position with the Admiralty, received orders to meet with Mr. Lee from none other than "H. Bennet" – Arlington himself.<sup>29</sup> The actual information he received from these intelligence briefings is never directly addressed beyond oblique references to Dutch fleets, however the sheer volume of intelligence meetings undertaken by a mid-level member of the Admiralty serves as still further indication that the Southern Department was not the sole active intelligence bureau in England. More important than this confirmation though is Pepys' interaction with Arlington. While Pepys certainly acted within the context of the Admiralty, his connection with, and apparent deference to, Arlington<sup>30</sup> demonstrates the interconnectedness of the English intelligence apparatus. Arlington's awareness of and involvement in the activities of the intelligence wing of the Admiralty certainly go some

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<sup>27</sup> Pepys, Samuel and Mynors Bright. *Diary and Correspondence of Samuel Pepys*. New York. 1885.

<sup>28</sup> Pepys, 21.

<sup>29</sup> Pepys, 19.

<sup>30</sup> It is important to note that this event took place during Arlington's tenure as Southern Secretary, rather than while he was Postmaster-General.

ways toward evidencing the State Secretariat's central role in the English intelligence system as well as Arlington's personal investment in its activities as a whole. Most significantly though is the suggestion this incident presents as to the nature of the English intelligence apparatus. Much like modern intelligence apparatuses, which are formed of a convoluted network of agencies such as the CIA, DIA, NSA, and the NRO all working, theoretically, in tandem, so too did the English intelligence community at this time seem to operate, at least in theory.

The mechanism by which this complicated system functioned is in some ways simplified by the lack of overlapping 'mandates' which complicates modern apparatuses, but was simultaneously muddled by personal networks of patronage which characterized many early modern institutions. A prime example of this complex interaction of the personal and inter-departmental may be seen through the case of the Fanshawe family. The Fanshawes, whose royal service dates at least as far back as Elizabethan times, split in the generation before the period under discussion into two distinct branches, divided between the issue of Thomas Fanshawe by his first wife and those with his second wife.<sup>31</sup> The first branch produced in 1608 one Sir Richard Fanshawe, who was eventually awarded an Irish Baronetcy, while the second in 1596 produced the 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount Fanshawe, Thomas Fanshawe, whose viscounty was also in Ireland. While the titles of nobility bestowed upon the family seem to have been granted in reward for loyalty during the exile of Charles II, both branches of the family

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<sup>31</sup> Thomas Fanshawe's first wife was the daughter of one A. Bouchier, while his second wife was the daughter of a somewhat renowned, and possibly notorious in some circles, customs agent named Thomas "Customer" Smythe. *Miscellanea Genealogica Et Heraldica*. 314-318.

continued to work for the Stuart regime, fully within the realm of the English intelligence community.

The intelligence story of the Fanshawe family begins, for our purposes, with Sir Richard Fanshawe. While members of the family in prior generations had served as Remembrancer for the Exchequer, this post has no discernible, active links to English intelligence activity during this period. Fanshawe however served as English ambassador to the Iberian Peninsula during the first years of the Restoration, a post in which he naturally served under the Southern Secretary – the Earl of Arlington. It should be unsurprising at this point that anyone acting under Arlington's command was engaged in espionage of some sort, and Fanshawe was no exception. In this capacity, Fanshawe passed on a number of missives concerning the Spanish Court to Arlington, a Spanish intelligence cipher<sup>32</sup> and seems to have translated a large body of Spanish literary work into English. This vision of Fanshawe's intelligence career is gleaned solely from a collection of Fanshawe's personal correspondences while in Spain; Richard Fanshawe appears many more times in Arlington's state papers, particularly during correspondences with William Temple, in which Arlington and Temple discuss Fanshawe's intel.<sup>33</sup> At the same time as Fanshawe worked under Arlington's instruction, he appears to have had some interaction with Samuel Pepys, whose diary contains a handful of mentions of meetings with Fanshawe. While these meetings are referenced

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<sup>32</sup> Manuscripts of Heathcote, iii.

<sup>33</sup> Unfortunately for Fanshawe, much of this correspondence did not reflect too positively on his intelligence work. It would seem that, quite frequently, the intelligence which Fanshawe was able to deliver while apparently relevant on the surface proved ultimately unrelated to whatever needs Arlington and Temple had at the time. On occasion though, and far less frequently, Fanshawe's intelligence seemed to have been outright wrong, including, potentially, the Spanish cipher he delivered to Arlington.

more as friendly tavern chats,<sup>34</sup> it is unlikely that these individuals did not discuss their work to some extent. Fanshawe's diplomatic intelligence work continued throughout the rest of Fanshawe's life until his death in 1666. The Fanshawe intelligence story did not end with Richard Fanshawe however. Following the death of Sir Richard, references continue to be made to "Fanshawe" in Arlington's state papers, all of which lack the 'Sir Richard' which had preceded the Fanshawe family name in entries which took place before Sir Richard's death. At the same time, there begin to be references within the Domestic Calendar to Viscount Fanshawe in various correspondences with Henry Coventry.<sup>35</sup> This development is incredibly difficult to trace however, as the second branch (that which was awarded the viscounty) yielded several sons in this generation, and there is therefore no direct indication that the successor Fanshawe referred to by Arlington and Coventry are the same individuals. Clearly however, the Fanshawe family continued to interact with the intelligence apparatus in some capacity, and this activity occurred with both the Northern and Southern Secretariat at essentially the same time. Unfortunately, whichever Fanshawe (or Fanshawes) took up Sir Richard's role in the intelligence community does not seem to have been regarded as nearly as valuable as Sir Richard himself was, as these post-death references are far more fleeting and less substantive than those which related to Sir Richard's activities. Finally, some time later, in the late 1670's and early 1680's, one finds further discrete references to a William

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<sup>34</sup> Such as Pepys, April 1, 1662.

<sup>35</sup> Coventry was of course at this time still the Northern Secretary, Arlington not having yet moved to the office of Postmaster-General.

Fanshawe in a ledger of money paid in the name of the king's secret service.<sup>36</sup> It seems likely that this William Fanshawe would have been the first-cousin once removed of Sir Richard, and the nephew of the Fanshawe who was initially granted the Fanshawe Viscounty. These payments are awarded as both "gifts given freely" and "bounties," and though elaboration of the meaning of these classifications is not readily found within the text, it seems reasonable to believe that gifts are a result of personal favor, while bounties likely came from services rendered. Nonetheless, it is apparent that the Fanshawe family continued to be involved in the intelligence apparatus of the English state – and was rewarded for it. Beyond the titles of nobility and cash payment, William (who was of course a primary member of neither of the Fanshawe noble lines) was rewarded with a marriage to one of Charles II's illegitimate daughters.<sup>37</sup>

One final, brief point of consideration should be paid to the English intelligence community, namely its trans-Atlantic nature. While naturally, given the wars waged with the Dutch throughout the period, the Secretariat paid attention to Dutch military intelligence, and the examination thus far shows that the English were certainly involved in intelligence activities against the Spanish; the existing sources seem to display very little interest in England's overseas possessions from an intelligence perspective. Arlington certainly pays them little heed; Barbados and Antigua, usually among England's most heavily micromanaged possessions, are mentioned once, in what is little more than a side-briefing from Temple concerning Dutch shipping<sup>38</sup>, and none to speak

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<sup>36</sup> Moneys Paid. p 32.

<sup>37</sup> *Genealogica*. 313.

<sup>38</sup> Arlington, in, Marshall 89.



of concerning foreign colonial possessions.<sup>39</sup> The Domestic Series contains several mentions of the English colonies, but these are, quite naturally, domestic occurrences, explaining movements of trading vessels and wind conditions within the English Empire, rather than the letters of intelligence occasionally found throughout. Thus, while the governmental administration as a whole was certainly concerned with the well-being of its colonies, there does not seem to be any major effort to direct intelligence assets toward the Atlantic. It is entirely possible that the failure of the Western Design some decades before had sapped the initiative of the English to maneuver in the Western Hemisphere; it may certainly be wondered though whether this lethargy could possibly have persisted into the trans-continental conflict which was the War of the Spanish Succession.

At the same time, this trans-Atlantic lethargy was almost certainly not assisted by the confusing English diplomatic situation in the New World. Given the connection between the English diplomatic corps and the intelligence apparatus, it is not surprising that a jumbled diplomatic situation on the ground in the colonies would have complicated any concerted efforts to establish a durable, long-term intelligence apparatus across the Atlantic. Likewise, the often competing diplomatic aims of the colonial and home governments would have created difficult environment for any agent of the crown in which to operate. As a result of these complications, and with the

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<sup>39</sup> Although, given the length of the source and the lack of any true index, such searches require the use of a full-text search, a tool with which it is difficult to demonstrate negative proof as a result of the number of different spellings and potential references to colonial targets. Suffice to say however, the paucity of apparent intelligence in the papers when compared to the readiness of information available concerning actions in Spain, France and the Netherlands, renders apparent where the priorities of the Southern Department lay at this time.

concept of English Empire still in a nascent phase, it is understandable that there were no major efforts to establish an intelligence network in the New World akin to that of Europe. It is probable therefore that after the outbreak of the War of the Spanish Succession, a major redirection of English governmental attention to the New World may have provided the necessary impetus for the establishment of such a system. Nevertheless, the lack of any significant trans-Atlantic is certainly a shortfall of the English system during the period.

All of these developments generally reflect the circumstances of the English state during the period. Barring Sir Richard's posting in the Iberian Peninsula and similar co-diplomatic positions, the vast majority of English intelligence reports from the period focus upon the Dutch, during periods of peace and war. Likewise, the split emphasis between commercial and military data from intelligence sources emphasizes the Anglo-Dutch rivalry's nature as a commercial competition primarily, and a military competition only secondarily. Simultaneously, as the English state began to process ideas of empire and, particularly following the Glorious Revolution, awaken into its status as a modern state, one would reasonably expect an accompanying maturation of institutional ability, which is indeed what is seen.

Such then was the essential nature of the English intelligence apparatus in the years between the Protectorate and the immediate lead-up to the War of the Spanish Succession. While the Southern Secretariat had a leading role, the English intelligence community was still firmly decentralized. As bound by personal connections as it was by institutional integrity, the increasing ability of English intelligence networks during the

period nevertheless demonstrates an increasing professionalization and institutionalization of the English system by the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The English operated within a complex and shifting world of competing endeavours and personal. Likewise, while the English during the period were undergoing a period of modernization in institutionalization, with succession no longer being a death knell to pre-existing networks, they were still dominated by individual figures who managed and oversaw intelligence activities at many levels of operation.

Owing to its origins, the English intelligence apparatus still had a foot in the realm of diplomacy, and consequently sought to monitor and direct the actions of all, foe or friend. The English were competing with the Dutch for global dominance and forming concepts of empire, and, as these developments unfolded alongside the general process of state formation, one would expect the intelligence apparatus to mature simultaneously.

With the oncoming War of the Spanish Succession, the extent of this maturation would be sorely tested. The trans-Atlantic nature of the conflict would offer new, unprecedented challenges to the intelligence apparatuses of all of the European powers, and the conflict would dramatically shape the English government going in to the eighteenth century, including its intelligence system. As hostilities broke out, the English intelligence apparatus, comprised largely by the State Secretariats and the Admiralty, was immediately faced with a trans-Atlantic surveillance operation which culminated in a series of dramatic battles, all in the opening months of the War.

### CHAPTER 3

#### OF SAILS AND SPIES

At 6PM on April 16 1703, Richard Kirkby “lifted his hand as ‘a signal to be shot.’”<sup>40</sup> At that gesture, six royal marines aboard the HMS *Bristol* opened fire, executing Kirkby. Prior to his arrest and execution, Kirkby had been the captain of the HMS *Defiance* and second-in-command of the primary English naval force in the West Indies. He had protested his innocence to his commanding officer, the secretary of the Admiralty, and even Queen Anne herself, but to no avail. Indeed, the Admiralty fully supported his conviction, while Kirkby’s commanding officer, Vice-Admiral John Benbow, presented evidence against Kirkby at his trial. Benbow had every right to desire Kirkby’s execution, for at the time of Kirkby’s court-martial, Benbow was dying as a direct result of Kirkby’s actions. Less than a month after Kirkby’s court-martial, Benbow died of wounds he received in the naval battle known as the Action of August 1702.<sup>41</sup>

The Action of August 1702 began when Benbow’s squadron moved to intercept a flota under the command of the French admiral and buccaneer Jean-Baptiste du Casse. The ensuing battle was one of the very first engagements of the War of the Spanish

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<sup>40</sup> J. K. Laughton, ‘Kirkby, Richard (c.1658–1703)’, rev. Peter Le Fevre, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/15658>, accessed 2 Oct 2014]

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*; John B. Hattendorf, ‘Benbow, John (1653?–1702)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/2076>, accessed 2 Oct 2014]

Succession. Du Casse, also the governor of Saint-Domingue, had been deployed to the West Indies in a bid to secure French control over the Spanish Americas. Part of this task was the escorting of the Spanish treasure fleet safely home to Cadiz. For their part, the English had a vested military and economic interest in preventing the transportation of American silver to the Continent. To that end, Benbow had very clear orders: stop du Casse from leaving the Caribbean. On August 19, with information that du Casse's departure for Cadiz was imminent, Benbow signaled his squadron to close and engage with du Casse; however Benbow's signal was not heeded. Led by Kirkby, many of the officers under Benbow's command refused to engage du Casse, ultimately resulting in Benbow's defeat and death. For his central role in the inaction of the English fleet, Kirkby was court-martialed on charges of cowardice and disobedience, leading to his execution.

From the time of his conviction until his death, Kirkby insisted that his actions were justified. He attacked Benbow's decision to engage as "injudicious and ignorant" owing to a lack of proper intelligence of the ships in the Franco-Spanish fleet.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, Kirkby claimed that retreat was the appropriate measure any confrontation would lead to certain defeat, regardless of whether or not he and the other captains had engaged. While the claims of a man slated for execution are dubious at best, Kirkby's protestations are doubtful for another reason. The English intelligence apparatus had kept a close watch on du Casse ever since his departure from France. This surveillance, which involved virtually the entire English intelligence community, and successfully

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<sup>42</sup> Laughton, "Kirkby, Richard". *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

gathered information on the positions, numbers and even the names of du Casse's ships. Consequently, Kirkby's claims seem to have very little to support them.

The surveillance initiative, targeted at du Casse, was one of the first coordinated and extended English intelligence operations in the War of the Spanish Succession, but it was not the only tale in this saga. Shortly after Benbow engaged du Casse, the Allied forces attempted to seize the Spanish port of Cadiz. The assault was a colossal failure, and the fleet, under the leadership of Admiral Sir George Rooke, began sailing south to harbor the winter. Before he reached his destination however, Rooke immediately began sailing north, to Vigo. When he arrived, he found and engaged the French vice-admiral Francois Louis de Rousselet, the Marquis de Chateau-Renault. The ensuing battle, now known as the Battle of Vigo Bay, resulted in the total capture or destruction of the French fleet, and the seizure of some of the American treasure. These stories are related by more than chronology. Before du Casse sailed to the Caribbean, the French already had a naval presence in the sea, under Chateau-Renault. Additionally, both du Casse and Chateau-Renault were the subjects of detailed intelligence gathering operations. For that reason, this saga presents an opportunity to study and understand the nature and efficacy of the English intelligence apparatus at the beginning of the war. For months, the English government made du Casse and Chateau-Renault priorities, and Chateau-Renault continued to be a priority until the War's end in 1714. Both men presented challenging targets for the English intelligence network because of the logistical challenges of long-distance intelligence, and interesting subjects for the

historian. Both were French naval officers in charge of Spanish operations, and trans-Atlantic travelers.

To keep tabs on these men meant cooperation between the English admiralty and the traditional intelligence institutions – the state departments. Likewise, his many transnational and trans-Atlantic voyages necessitated gathering intelligence at many specific points, and the central coordination of this intelligence to respond appropriately to du Casse's activities. Consequently, the relationship between du Casse and the English intelligence apparatus is an excellent case study for the transformations in English Secret Service practices over the course of the War of the Spanish Succession. It all began though in the first year of the war, with the lead up to the Action of August 1702. The English surveillance operation on du Casse reveals an English intelligence apparatus on the cusp of becoming truly modern. In contrast to the patronage based systems of Walsingham and, to a lesser extent, Arlington, intelligence was becoming professionalized. Central authority, coordination and bureaucracy increased the capacities and efficacy of the English intelligence apparatus. Through coordination of interdepartmental intelligence activities, it successfully obtained useful information despite the ongoing struggle of professionalization, and the logistical challenges presented by a trans-Atlantic empire. Each of these aspects played a role in the events leading up to Kirkby's protestations, and his execution that spring morning aboard the *HMS Bristol*.

Intelligence gathering is a complicated business. One must first obtain a source of information, either by gaining (often buying) an informant or by placing an agent.

Next, one must maintain contact with the information source in order to receive any information that he or she gathers. Then that intelligence must be passed on to the necessary parties so that it may finally be acted upon. This process becomes further complicated by the time sensitive nature of intelligence, and still more complicated when intelligence must be shared and coordinated between several different agencies. These challenges are a considerable problem for the intelligence systems of even modern states, yet the English faced and overcame these issues in the lead up to the Action of August 1702 and the Battle of Vigo Bay.

The English intelligence apparatus in 1702 was both early modern and modern. The three agencies involved, the Domestic Office, the Foreign Office and the Admiralty each played a specialized, yet critical role. The Foreign Office was the one most responsible to the actual intelligence gathering, a task for which it was uniquely suited because of its diplomatic reach. The Admiralty was the acting branch; where the Domestic and Foreign Offices had diplomats and bureaucrats, the Admiralty had cannons and sails. During wartime, the Admiralty was naturally the branch most likely to utilize intelligence, yet it did collect intelligence of its own. Particularly while away from home waters, naval expeditions established and maintained short-term, ad hoc intelligence networks to compensate for their distance from the standard hubs of communication. Finally, the Northern Secretariat, which also collected intelligence, was also the agency largely responsible for coordinating intelligence and enabling communication between all three groups. All together, they formed an evolving, yet effective intelligence apparatus that heralded the changing shape of government and



empire in the coming century. Consequently, the English intelligence apparatus at the War's opening involved several different agencies. While the communication between these agencies was well coordinated, the apparatus itself was rather decentralized. This decentralization was a holdover from an earlier period, but decentralization did not necessarily mean inefficiency. Indeed, the decentralization of English intelligence at this point of the War was in many ways a boon, rather than a hindrance. As the English apparatus adjusted to the difficulties of waging an intelligence war across many theatres, even across the Atlantic, decentralization offered ways for the apparatus to function in spite of communication delays.

For the Northern Office, the story of the Action of August 1702 begins in February of 1702, three months before England's official entry into the war, and not with du Casse, but with Chateau-Renault. Tensions between France and England had been mounting for months, and several of the maritime and German states had already declared war on the French. Although public opinion was split on whether or not the government should declare, as a result of these tensions, there was a sense that war was inevitable.<sup>43</sup> Consequently, despite there being no official declaration of war, England's ministries were already vigorously prosecuting the war. Thus, on February 9, 1702, Josiah Burchett, secretary for the Admiralty, passed along several letters from Admiral Benbow to the Northern Office. Benbow had written to inform Burchett that he was aware of the intelligence that Chateau-Renault was due to arrive in the

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<sup>43</sup> Hattendorf, John Brewster. *England in the War of the Spanish Succession: A Study of the English View and Conduct of Grand Strategy, 1701-1712*. New York: Garland, 1987. P. 17

Caribbean with approximately 40 ships. Additionally, Benbow wrote that he had recently heard rumor of a French naval presence seen off Puerto Rico – numbering 40 sails.<sup>44</sup>

Benbow's letter confirmed a number of English suspicions about French priorities and strategies in the War. One of the primary motivations behind the war was the inability of European powers to compromise on the indivisibility of the Spanish Empire upon its inheritance. Both the English and the Austrians were initially willing to allow the French Prince Phillip to take the Spanish throne, provided that Spain's overseas possessions, including Naples, remain with the House of Habsburg. Even into 1702, the English hoped that they might convince the French to agree to this compromise solution, thereby averting war with France.<sup>45</sup> Chateau-Renault's presence in the Caribbean, along with so many ships, seemed to spell the end of this hope. The New World had traditionally been the site of only limited naval deployment; Benbow himself had fewer than ten ships of the line under his command. Consequently, the forty ships under Chateau-Renault's command signaled the French determination to secure Spain's New World Empire. Power projection was not the reason for the French show of force in the Caribbean though; the treasure fleet was due to come in.

It appeared that Chateau-Renault led a force too large for Benbow to contend with, and in April, the English began receiving intelligence that a second French squadron was due to sail for the Caribbean under the command of Jean-Baptiste du

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<sup>44</sup> Benbow, "9 Feb., 1702". *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series: Anne, 1702-1704*. London: Public Records Office. 2005.

<sup>45</sup> Hattendorf, 16.

Casse. As one might expect, initial reports were sketchy. One from April 12<sup>th</sup> claimed that du Casse was to “leave at once with a squadron for the coast of the Spanish Indies.” Another, more than a week later, asserted that du Casse was not going to leave for a few days.<sup>46</sup> Both reports were forwarded by Robert Yard, an undersecretary at the Northern Office, to Josiah Burchett. The seemingly minor difference between the two briefs betrays a lack of confidence in their intelligence. English intelligence briefs from the *Domestic Series* tended to relay information as a matter of fact, and never with overlapping claims. Thus, the relaying of disagreeing reports (indeed the second may even be seen as superseding the other) indicates the apparent importance placed on du Casse’s movements. Rather than risk providing incorrect intelligence, Yard simply chose to send all that he had to Burchett. Similarly, Yard’s choice of recipient is telling in and of itself. Typically, intelligence was relayed first to either Secretary Nottingham or Vernon, and then passed on to Burchett and the Admiralty if it was deemed appropriate. Yard however was sensitive to emergent circumstances, and chose to forward his intelligence directly to Burchett; the Northern Office was clearly aware of the attention the Admiralty was paying to any fleet movement from Europe to the Caribbean.

By the end of April, du Casse had indeed sailed for the Caribbean and appears to have arrived in the West Indies some time near the end of May.<sup>47</sup> At this point, the stories of du Casse and Chateau-Renault become closely entwined. On June 15, Prince-

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<sup>46</sup> Yard. “R. Yard to Josiah Burch”. *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*.

<sup>47</sup> Nottingham, “June 15”. *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*.

Consort George of Denmark instructed Admiral Sir Cloudsley Shovell to prevent French ships stationed at Brest, Rochfort and Saint Louis from joining with a larger fleet in Spain, in support of a planned Allied assault upon Cadiz. Simultaneously, Prince George informed Shovell of intelligence received from Benbow which “[made] it seem likely that M. Chateau Renault will return from the West Indies into these seas about August next,” along with the Spanish treasure fleet.<sup>48</sup>

It was not immediately clear what du Casse’s purpose in the Caribbean was, and what, if anything, his arrival had to do with Chateau-Renault’s departure. It appears that the Northern Department at least did not have intelligence on French naval strategy, but they excelled at gaining and coordinating information of French deployment numbers. The first parcel of information came on May 14 from Benbow who reported that seventeen “tall [French] ships” had sailed around the coast of Cuba. His suspicion was that these ships were a detachment from Chateau-Renault’s squadron, sent to convoy the treasure fleet. Little more than a week later, he gained further intelligence which corroborated his theory. While the seventeen ships sailed around Cuba, Chateau-Renault himself luxuriated at Havana with twenty-six French men-of-war.<sup>49</sup> Given the prior estimate of forty ships under Chateau-Renault, Benbow safely assumed that these two squadrons comprised the French admiral’s fleet.

At this point, detailed reports started pouring in. Secretary Hedges gave intelligence about the exact numbers and dispositions of Chateau-Renault’s and du

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<sup>48</sup> Nottingham, “June 15”. *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*.

<sup>49</sup> Benbow, “June 1”. *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*.

Casse's fleets to Admiral Sir George Rooke, the naval commander of the prospective assault on Cadiz. Du Casse was said to have eight ships with at least 30 guns. Chateau-Renault personally commanded eighteen ships "varying from 70 to 44 guns" along with eight smaller vessels, including flutes, fire-ships and corvettes. Finally, an officer serving under Chateau-Renault, the Comte de Toulouse, led a small detachment of six ships. A far cry from reports, the ship count only totaled 42, including those under Du Casse. A short follow up letter contained the answer: nine ships had left active squadrons, bound for either Mexico, Cadiz or Lisbon.<sup>50</sup> With du Casse's arrival with a number of ships roughly equal to those returning to port, it may have been reasonable to assume that du Casse was sent simply to replace ships under Chateau-Renault's command. Particularly on prolonged, American deployments, ships often needed to be exchanged, and with the treasure fleet due to return to Spain, the French would not have wanted any worn ships that could potentially compromise the convoy. It seems however that the English, or at least the Admiralty, did not view this as the case.

Not long after du Casse's arrival in the Caribbean, Secretary Nottingham commissioned from Burchett a report on Chateau-Renault's fleet. The report that Burchett returned was detailed and, if accurate, impressive. Burchett offers a breakdown of the number of ships at each gunnage, as well as the estimated number of men that would man each ship. Thus, there were "10 [ships] of 70 guns with 480 men each... 12 [ships] of 60 guns with 400 men each" and so on, all the way down to the

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<sup>50</sup> Hedges, "Hedges Instructions to Sir George Rooke". *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*.

smallest ships sailing with Chateau-Renault.<sup>51</sup> However, Burchett list contained only 34 ships, none of which were 30-gunners which comprised the smallest ships known to have sailed with du Casse. Furthermore, in a letter written three days later to Secretary Nottingham, Shovell wrote that “I hardly think Chateaurenaud[sic] can have thirty sail of the line.”<sup>52</sup> Shovell’s insistence against Burchett’s intelligence notwithstanding, the English clearly felt that du Casse and Chateau-Renault represented distinct commands. Even with the departures, had du Casse been deployed under Chateau-Renault, the French Admiral’s combined fleet would have measured closer to 40 men-of-war, and certainly above thirty.

Intelligence received sometime in the first half of August and reported by Shovell suggested “that Chateau-Renault[sic] would leave Havana at the beginning of August... with 22 ships of the line in the company of the flota.”<sup>53</sup> Adding the eight fire-ships, corvettes and flutes known to have sailed with Chateau-Renault to the estimate of 22 ships of the line, one once again arrives at the total of 30 ships in the squadron. If this report, that Chateau-Renault was soon to depart the Caribbean without the ships under du Casse, were correct, then it would obviously confirm the prior English briefs on the subject, and a few days later, Chateau-Renault did indeed sail for Spain and Cadiz with the treasure fleet in tow. Benbow’s squadron of seven ships of the line was unable to prevent his sailing, but he was left with one evenly matched foe – Jean-Baptiste du Casse. While the Northern Department says nothing on du Casse’s purpose in the

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<sup>51</sup> Nottingham, “15 July”. *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*.

<sup>52</sup> Shovell, “18 July”. *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*.

<sup>53</sup> Shovell, “20 August.” *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*.

Caribbean after intelligence priorities shifted to Chateau-Renault's imminent return to European waters, but it should be clear. Benbow had seven ships under his command, while du Casse had eight. Chateau-Renault's purpose was to present a French show of strength in the Caribbean at the outset of the war, and ensure the safe return of the treasure fleet. Chateau-Renault eventually gained information of the size (though perhaps not the composition) of Benbow's squadron, and deployed du Casse to the Caribbean to act as interference.<sup>54</sup> This plan came to fruition just a few days later, with the Action of August 1702.

As the battle in the Caribbean played out, the board was still taking shape in Europe. The Monarchy was heavily invested in the planned assault on Cadiz, and pieces were beginning to move into place. The Fleet was divided into two squadrons, one under the command of Captain Sir Cloudsley Shovell, and the other under Admiral Sir George Rooke, with the Duke of Ormonde leading the land forces. The Foreign Office was preoccupied with gathering intelligence in preparation of the landing, and the Admiralty scrambling to determine the best time for embarkation. With so many pieces in play, the coordination of the Domestic Office was crucial. The critical variable in the equation was Chateau-Renault. The French Admiral was expected to return to European waters soon, but his expected arrival date and port were still unknown. On

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<sup>54</sup> While du Casse did have one more ship under his command than did Benbow, his squadron was comprised of only four ships of the line, while the rest of his flag was smaller, support vessels. Benbow on the other hand had seven ships of the line, and so, according to naval reasoning at the time, should have had the advantage in any pitched battle, and was at the very least, evenly matched. Burchett, "Burchett to Nottingham," *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*.

July 15, the Southern Secretary Nottingham reached out to both Shovell and Rooke, doing so through the Northern Office.<sup>55</sup>

Correspondence through the Northern Office meant that, five days later, Northern Secretary Hedges was able to begin coordinating the assault. Shovell had been ordered to transfer some of the ships under his command to Rooke, and in turn, Hedges informed Rooke of these plans, so that Rooke was not caught off-guard. At the same time, Hedges instructed Rooke to continue gathering naval intelligence on Chateau-Renault.<sup>56</sup> In the following days, English networks across all theatres would begin receiving word of Chateau-Renault's return. Northern, Southern and Admiralty intelligence all learned that he was immediately returning to European waters – and with the Spanish treasure fleet.

The Queen and the Committee of Council quickly decided that Rooke “should... at once be informed that M. Chateau-Renault is returning home.”<sup>57</sup> It was the Northern Secretariat which passed along this information, along with the relevant intelligence advices, to Rooke.<sup>58</sup> From this point, with the assault on Cadiz proceeding forward, Chateau-Renault became even more of an intelligence priority. In the beginning of September, Chateau-Renault embarked from Brest, ostensibly for Cadiz to unload the Spanish *plata*. The Northern Office relayed this information, as well as intelligence it had acquired about the marine officers under Chateau-Renault for the use of the Duke

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<sup>55</sup> Shovell, “Shovell to Nottingham,” *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*.  
 Rooke, “Rooke to Nottingham,” *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*.

<sup>56</sup> Hedges, “20 July,” *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*.

<sup>57</sup> “To the Lords of the Committee of Council,” *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*.

<sup>58</sup> “To Sir George Rooke,” *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*.



of Ormonde.<sup>59</sup> At this point however, events began to unfold too quickly for the Northern Office. Once the actual operation began, these matters were best left to the Admiralty.

While the Domestic Office handled issues of trade and served as a sort of centralized hub for intelligence gathered across agencies, the Admiralty was, of course, the heart of all things naval. During wartime, the Admiralty naturally was more likely than either of the state departments to act upon any intelligence received. Consequently, the Admiralty was first and foremost an intelligence consumer. While the Admiralty carried out its own intelligence operations, and shared information with the other agencies, by virtue of being the department which acted on intelligence, it received and used more intelligence than it shared. This distinction, between intelligence consumer and provider, is key to understanding the Admiralty's relationship to the other two departments which comprised the English intelligence apparatus.

At the outbreak of hostilities, the Admiralty, like the rest of Queen Anne's government, was concerned with troop numbers, locations and likely deployments. To that end, each of the navy's critical players in the story, Josiah Burchett, Sir George Rooke and John Benbow, endeavoured to obtain intelligence to facilitate their own movements. All of this intelligence was shared, coordinated and acted upon, even if that action was itself deliberate inaction.

It is a significant distinction that all of this intelligence was acted upon. While the Foreign and Domestic Offices both reported and shared information, it was often

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<sup>59</sup> "To the Duke of Ormonde," *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*.

without suggestion or expectation of action. Conversely, all of the intelligence circulated within the Admiralty had either been directly requested or was otherwise intended as actionable, and indeed, was often accompanied by direct orders. Consequently, the Admiralty's intelligence apparatus was distinct from that of either of the State Secretariats in a way that reflected its military purpose. Each institution served a role in gathering intelligence, and they shared their intelligence when requested, or when they saw fit, but the Admiralty was unique in that it could act upon information at all.

When the War began, Admiral Rooke was no doubt restless. At the time, Rooke was deployed in the Gulf of Saint-Malo, with orders to prevent French naval incursion from Brest into the English Channel. The Admiralty, under the direct supervision of Queen Anne, was already planning the invasion of Cadiz.<sup>60</sup> This invasion was a key component of England's opening strategy in the conflict.<sup>61</sup> However, with the Mediterranean Fleet under Prince Eugene of Savoy unable to enter Atlantic waters because of Franco-Spanish control of the Straits of Gibraltar, command of the naval component of the operation would likely fall to Rooke, but military strategy is a complicated affair. Deploying Rooke's fleet risked "leaving our country at home naked, and open to the attempts of the French fleet from Brest."<sup>62</sup> Therefore, Rooke and the Admiralty watched for any opportunity to leave the Channel safely and enter Atlantic

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<sup>60</sup> Vernon, "To Sir George Rooke," *Domestic Series*.

<sup>61</sup> Hattendorf, *England in the War of the Spanish Succession*, p 4.

<sup>62</sup> Rooke, "Sunday, July 20," *Journal of Sir George Rooke*. Rooke, "Sunday, July 27," *Journal of Sir George Rooke*. Edited by Oscar Browning. London: Navy Records Society, 1897.

waters. Such an opportunity of course depended on the deployment of French ships from Brest, which in turn mandated careful intelligence. A potential opportunity finally arrived in April, when Burchett got word from Vernon that du Casse was departing Brest for the Caribbean.<sup>63</sup>

As soon as word arrived, Rooke wrote to Vernon, requesting information about the number of ships under du Casse's command. Rooke had two goals in doing so. He certainly wanted to ascertain whether or not the number of ships departing Brest would be sufficient for his leaving the Channel, but, as Admiral of the Fleet, Rooke also wanted to be able to pass the information along to Benbow, the highest ranking naval officer in the Caribbean. Consequently, the list Vernon sent to Rooke was labelled "for Benbow." Unfortunately for Rooke, Du Casse's squadron was too small for him to safely enter the Atlantic, and he was forced to continue his vigil, as per the orders of the Lord High Admiral.<sup>64</sup>

Although Du Casse's departure was insufficient for Rooke to set sail himself, it still meant fewer ships in Brest to endanger the English coastline, and therein lies the actionable component. Any French ships leaving the primary theatre in Europe was a benefit to the planned invasion of Cadiz. Consequently, Benbow was ordered to prevent the return of French ships from the Caribbean to European waters.<sup>65</sup> Benbow's task was complicated further when, shortly after Du Casse's arrival in the Americas, he gained intelligence that the fleet under Chateau-Renault was preparing to return to

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<sup>63</sup> "R. Yard to Josiah Burchett," *Domestic Series*.

<sup>64</sup> Vernon, "To Sir George Rooke," *Domestic Series*.

<sup>65</sup> Shovell, "18 July. Sir Cloudsley Shovell to Nottingham," *Domestic Series*.

Europe. Knowing that he would likely be unable to hinder the movement of a fleet the size of Chateau-Renault's, Benbow sent word to Burchett of Chateau-Renault's impending sail so that "such measures as are thought most proper may be timely taken."<sup>66</sup>

Owing to his physical distance from his points of contact in the Admiralty, Benbow's correspondence was naturally sent in packets, containing several letters at a time. It is revealing that intelligence about Chateau-Renault's departure was the final one in its bundle, and therefore the one which motivated the packet's sending. It was accompanied by information on the size and composition of both Chateau-Renault's and Du Casse's fleets, but critically, none of that information was actionable. Benbow was the highest ranking English naval officer in the Caribbean at the time, and was therefore the only individual capable of acting on specifically Caribbean intelligence. Consequently, while Benbow's information on Du Casse and Chateau-Renault may have been interesting to the Admiralty in confirming their intelligence, it was not inherently actionable for the Admiralty in Europe.

The news of Chateau-Renault's return was actionable, and act the Admiralty did. Benbow's intelligence motivated a flurry of deployments and repositioning by the English Navy. Rooke and Burchett quickly decided that it was unlikely that Chateau-Renault would make for Cadiz, leaving his most likely port of call as either Vigo or Brest.<sup>67</sup> Regardless, it was believed that the arrival of the treasure fleet would cause

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<sup>66</sup> Benbow, "15 June," *Domestic Series*.

<sup>67</sup> Rooke, "Sir George Rooke to Nottingham," *Domestic Series*.

some disruption, preventing the fleet at Brest from entering the Channel, and perhaps creating an opening for Queen Anne's much desired assault on Cadiz. To that end, Rooke was instantly ordered south to ascertain whether the assault might be wise, and command of the fleet in the Channel was given to Sir Cloudsley Shovell.<sup>68</sup> A month later, Rooke was recalled to the Channel to give his report. In his assessment, presented to (now Secretary of the Exchequer) Vernon, Rooke expressed grave misgivings about any assault on Cadiz. He questioned the timing of the assault, given the changing weather in both the Atlantic and the Channel due to change, and the weakness of coastal defenses in the absence of his fleet.<sup>69</sup>

Despite Rooke's trepidation though, wheels were in motion, and the Royal will in this matter was not to be denied. Hedges, now the Northern Secretary, passed orders from Prince George to both Rooke and Cloudsley to exchange some ships of the line in preparation of the assault.<sup>70</sup> Shovell also voiced concern about the assault on Cadiz, believing that the scale of the proposed operation was too small, which he attributed to "the misfortune and vice of our country [which is] is to believe ourselves better than other men."<sup>71</sup> Despite the expressed concern, the ship exchange moved ahead as ordered, and at the end of July, the fleet set sail for Cadiz.

The complicated process of the hasty preparations for the Cadiz assault reveals the Admiralty's role as a principal intelligence consumer. While the Admiralty of course

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<sup>68</sup> Burchett, "15 June, Josiah Burchett to Nottingham," *Domestic Series*.

<sup>69</sup> Rooke, "Sunday, July 27," *Journal of Sir George Rooke*.

<sup>70</sup> Hedges, "20 July. Hedges to Sir George Rooke," *Domestic Series*.

<sup>71</sup> Shovell, "18 July. Sir Cloudsley Shovell to Nottingham," *Domestic Series*.

collected and utilized its own intelligence, it was also the primary recipient of much of the intelligence collected by both the Domestic and Foreign Offices. This role was related to, but distinct from, its preference for actionable intelligence, which is an internal matter. The Admiralty's role as intelligence consumer is a defining feature of its position within the English intelligence apparatus as a whole. The other departments, the Domestic and Foreign Offices, volunteered such information to the Admiralty as they thought necessary, and answered requests for further information from its officials, such as Rooke's request to Vernon. The operational capacity then of each of the State Secretariats at the beginning of the War seems to have been largely limited to intelligence gathering, to the benefit of the military establishment.

The complex exchange between the Admiralty and other offices also demonstrates that the English had not yet escaped the quagmire of personal hierarchy which had generally defined English intelligence throughout the early modern period.<sup>72</sup> Shovell offered his thoughts to Nottingham in the Northern Department, and Rooke gave his to Vernon who, now Secretary of the Exchequer, was only connected to intelligence through his previous postings. Both men received their orders to exchange ships from Prince George, the Lord High Admiral, but these orders were relayed through Hedges, not Burchett. This example, though enlightening, should not be taken as the rule. Interagency communication was clearly the norm, but the trans-departmental communications and orders which characterized the immediate lead up to the assault on Cadiz should be treated as a special case. Time sensitivity doubtless necessitated

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<sup>72</sup> Marshall, *Intelligence and Espionage during the Reign of Charles II*, p 18.

quick action, but the bigger impact likely came from the royal influence. Anne and George had been directly involved in the Cadiz plans from the beginning. Therefore, when a potential opportunity for their pet strategy finally arrived, court relationships took precedent over institutional hierarchy and procedure.<sup>73</sup> Regardless of the reason though, by August, the ill-fated Cadiz expedition was in the Bay of Biscay, and would soon reach the coast of Portugal.

As Rooke sailed to Iberia, Benbow was not forgotten in the Caribbean. The Admiralty was of course aware that Chateau-Renault had left the Caribbean, but that still left du Casse to contend with. It had been since the letter packet of June 15 that the Admiralty had received word from Benbow. At the same time, an agent in Vernon's employ rendezvoused with Rooke, reporting that the bulk of the fleet at Brest was preparing to sail for Cadiz, under the command of Chateau-Renault.<sup>74</sup> Consequently, Rooke and Burchett made plans to send a detachment from Shovell's Channel Fleet to reinforce Benbow's squadron temporarily.<sup>75</sup> These reinforcements, of course, did not reach Benbow before the Action of August 1702, but they do illuminate the way in which the Admiralty acted in the absence of information. Knowing that Benbow's and Du Casse's fleets were of roughly equal strength, and that the Channel was unlikely to suffer incursion with Chateau-Renault sailing south, it was both safe and prudent to send reinforcements. It is simply unfortunate for Benbow that these reinforcements,

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<sup>73</sup> Hedges was a court favorite during the Tory period of Anne's reign, to the point that he even briefly served as sole Secretary, in charge of both the Northern and Southern Offices. Hattendorf, *England in the War of the Spanish Succession*, p 70-71.

<sup>74</sup> Rooke, "Monday, September 1," *Journal of Sir George Rooke*.

<sup>75</sup> Rooke, "Wednesday, September 3," *Journal of Sir George Rooke*.

while well-conceived, were dispatched days after the end of the battle which led to his death.

While the fleet sat off the coast of Portugal, Rooke endeavoured once more to abort the assault upon Cadiz. In two separate councils of war, he explained his position. The changing weather meant that it would be dangerous to remain out of port after September 10, and Chateau-Renault's impending arrival further jeopardized the fleet's safety at sea.<sup>76</sup> Even if conditions at sea were favorable though, Rooke pointed out at a council two weeks later that the Dutch troops could not be sufficiently provisioned, and that the army as a whole had been "wholly destitute of [intelligence] since their being ashore."<sup>77</sup> The Duke of Ormonde however, seeking royal favor, would hear no argument, and insisted that the assault go ahead as planned. The assault was a complete disaster. After several weeks of attempting to claim the city, the Allied invasion fleet was forced to withdraw the land forces and make for friendly ports until the autumnal gales subsided.

Initial plans were for the fleet to retreat south, away from the Chateau-Renault's incoming fleet, and await fairer weather at either Lagos or Tangiers.<sup>78</sup> As the fleet approached Lagos however, Captain Hardy, an officer under Rooke's command, came aboard and informed Rooke that an agent in Spain had reported intelligence that Chateau-Renault and the Spanish treasure fleet had not proceeded to Cadiz, being unsure of the fortunes of the assault, and had instead chosen to unload the *plata* at

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<sup>76</sup> Rooke, "Wednesday, September 3," *Journal of Sir George Rooke*.

<sup>77</sup> Rooke, "Thursday, September 17," *Journal of Sir George Rooke*.

<sup>78</sup> Rooke, "Retreat, 1702," *Journal of Sir George Rooke*.



Vigo. With this information, Rooke ordered two ships “immediately away to Vigo... to bring him intelligence” and readied the rest of the fleet to prepare to sail north.<sup>79</sup> Having been painfully vindicated in his insistence on proper intelligence at Cadiz, Rooke had no plans on attempting Vigo without information.

Four days later, the two reconnaissance ships returned from Vigo with a captured friar. This friar informed Rooke that virtually all of the silver had already been unloaded, but that the fleet itself was left in a precarious position. Rooke immediately sent word to Shovell, requesting that he join the fleet at Vigo, but it was an unnecessary measure.<sup>80</sup> Between his and Burchett’s intelligence, Rooke knew precisely the makeup and even the position of the fleet at Vigo.<sup>81</sup> The French fleet, waiting at anchor in the harbor, presented an easy target for the English fleet under Rooke. Consequently, the Battle at Vigo Bay was as great a success for the Allied forces as Cadiz had been a failure. The entirety of the Franco-Spanish fleet was either captured or destroyed, and along with it a small portion of the remaining *plata*. Hailed by the Tories as a hero, Rooke returned to England, at the same time that Kirkby’s court-martial was beginning.

This final portion of the saga illustrates the importance of intelligence to successful military endeavours, but it also demonstrates much about the conduct of the Admiralty’s intelligence. Coordination within the Admiralty and across departments was clearly important, but intriguingly, the Admiralty maneuvered on several operational

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<sup>79</sup> Rooke, “Tuesday, October 6,” *Journal of Sir George Rooke*.

<sup>80</sup> Rooke, “Saturday, October 10,” *Journal of Sir George Rooke*.

<sup>81</sup> Burchett, “Burchett to Nottingham,” *Domestic Series*. Rooke, “Retreat, 1702,” *Journal of Sir George Rooke*. Rooke, “Saturday, October 10,” *Journal of Sir George Rooke*.

levels. Burchett (and through Burchett, the Secretariat and Admiralty proper) had his own network of informants, all working to provide intelligence to the officers at sea. Simultaneously, individual admirals, and even captains had their own personal, local agents and intelligence practices. Given the communication distances between London and distant European waters, let alone the Caribbean, it is hardly a surprise that officers acted with a certain independence from the heart of the Admiralty. This independence more than just a necessity, but also was a critical component of the Admiralty's intelligence apparatus, allowing flexibility and corroboration of information from several sources all ideally working toward victories such as Vigo Bay.

The final portion of the English intelligence apparatus was the Foreign or Southern Office. In contrast to the Domestic Office, which coordinated intelligence, and the Admiralty, which acted upon the intelligence, the Foreign Office was the branch most principally engaged in gathering intelligence at all. The diplomatic nature of the Foreign Office made it ideally suited to the purpose of gathering intelligence. Ambassadors and dignitaries were uniquely positioned to have access to foreign courts, and the freedom of movement granted to diplomatic agents enabled them to establish local intelligence networks. The diplomatic mission of the Foreign Office heavily influenced its nature as an intelligence agency. Foreign policy and relations were naturally among the most important activities of government, which meant direct royal management. Likewise, diplomatic positions were often high-profile and desirable appointments. As a result, individuals appointed to the Foreign Office, like Vernon, often had close ties to the royal court. Indeed, Vernon's removal to the Northern Office,

and his subsequent complete dismissal from government within the first months of Anne's reign, resulted from his fall from royal grace at the succession.<sup>82</sup> These two factors meant that the Foreign Office was the intelligence agency which was most closely associated with the Crown proper. This Crown connection is apparent both in the actions of the Foreign Office and in its relations with the Domestic Office and the Admiralty.

The relationship between the Crown and the Foreign Office is apparent at the very beginning of the War. While the War proper began shortly following the death of William and Anne's accession to the throne, preparations for War had begun far prior with the explicit intent of "abating the exorbitant power of France."<sup>83</sup> While a succession may have interfered with these plans, then Southern Secretary the Earl of Nottingham made clear that "his [William's] Death, unfortunate as it is, will make no alteration in that matter [of war]."<sup>84</sup> In this correspondence, Nottingham spoke with royal authority. Nottingham was not the only Foreign Office official to express such sentiments. James Vernon also made clear that, although William's death might provide

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<sup>82</sup> Vernon had, like many Whigs, supported a complete Hanoverian succession, bypassing Anne entirely, in the name of a stable line of succession, as Anne had by this time failed for years to produce a male heir. Consequently, he was replaced by Montagu and moved to the Northern Office as punishment. Montagu's appointment and Vernon's reappointment though were solely temporary, arranged so that a man deemed politically appropriate for the Southern Secretariat held the post, yet allowing the bureaucratically competent Vernon to keep the government running until suitable replacements could be found for both posts. In the interim, Vernon was once again, for all intents and purposes, the sole secretary.

<sup>83</sup> *State Papers Online*, Gale, Cengage Learning, 2014. Reproduced by kind permission of The National Archives. Document Ref.: SP 104/199.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

a short-term hindrance, the royal will was still firmly in favor of war, and as such, preparations would continue.<sup>85</sup>

These correspondences also make clear that, just like the Admiralty and Domestic Office, the Southern Secretariat was by this time capable of moving forward with plans in the face of a royal succession. In spite of not only a change of monarch, but also of not one but two Secretaries, but the Foreign Office proceeded with plans to secure a guarantee of neutrality from Portugal, with the potential invasion of Cadiz specifically in mind.<sup>86</sup> Likewise, it is clear that the Foreign Secretary was able to continue intelligence operations throughout the numerous administrative changes of the beginning of the war, conducting operations throughout France and Spain.<sup>87</sup> When the War of the Spanish Succession was just beginning, the Southern Secretariat had already evolved beyond the Foreign Office of the Restoration period whose abilities were so dictated by individual secretaries.<sup>88</sup> Instead, the Southern Secretariat was becoming a bureaucratized arm of foreign policy, central to both diplomacy and intelligence, serving at the pleasure of the monarch.

Indeed, it is clearer that the Foreign Office directly served the monarch than it is for any other branch of the intelligence apparatus. Vernon, Manchester and Nottingham were all in regular correspondence with Queen Anne about policy and

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<sup>85</sup> *State Papers Online*, Gale, Cengage Learning, 2014. Reproduced by kind permission of The National Archives. Document Ref.: SP 104/196, Sequence Number: 0124, 0125, 0126, 0127, 0128, 0129, 0130.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *State Papers Online*, Gale, Cengage Learning, 2014. Reproduced by kind permission of The National Archives. Document Ref.: SP 94/75.

<sup>88</sup> Marshall, *Intelligence and Espionage in the Reign of Charles II*. 18.

strategy from the earliest moments of her reign.<sup>89</sup> State Papers from the Foreign Office contain several instances of Latin transcriptions of Anne's direct diplomatic missives to foreign powers, given to the Southern Secretary, with instructions to be passed on to the relevant parties.<sup>90</sup> Likewise, interactions with the other agencies make the connection between the Foreign Office and the Monarchy explicitly clear. In dealings with the other departments, the Foreign Office took the upper hand, particularly with the Admiralty. In his diary, Rooke noted instances in which he questioned the viability of an assault Cadiz, but was forced to bow to the directives of the Southern Secretariat, because its instructions came directly from the throne.<sup>91</sup> Similarly, when Nottingham wrote to Shovell, apparently requesting that that Shovell seek to engage Chateau-Renault on his return, Shovell expressed his own misgivings, replying that "equal numbers seldom make great victories at sea." The will of the Foreign Office though, and through it the royal will, would not be denied, and Shovell also wrote that "I shall, however, hope to give a good account of him."<sup>92</sup> Particularly in light of Prince George's position as Lord High Admiral, the Southern Secretariat's ability to issue instructions to the Admiralty is revealing. The royal favor gave the Foreign Office primacy.

Fortunately for the English, the Southern Department did more with its power than pass down instructions. Indeed, in his response to Nottingham, Shovell acknowledged as much, saying that "I think... the information as to Chateau-Renault's

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<sup>89</sup> Hattendorf, *England in the War of the Spanish Succession*. pp 1-17, 47-48.

<sup>90</sup> *State Papers Online*, Gale, Cengage Learning, 2014. Ref.: SP 104/199.

<sup>91</sup> Rooke, "Sunday, July 27," *Journal of Sir George Rooke*.

<sup>92</sup> Shovell, "Sir Cloudsley Shovell to Nottingham." *Domestic Papers*.

strength very exact.” Furthermore, he went on to request an exact list of Chateau-Renault’s ships, which he would receive a few days later.<sup>93</sup> The Foreign Office may have given occasionally questionable orders on the Monarchy’s behalf, but its intelligence was precise, and Shovell knew that he could rely on Nottingham for the rest of the information he needed, and he was not wrong. Agents from the Foreign Office were active from the outset of the war. While their efforts seem to have focused on the royally backed invasion of Cadiz, their intelligence naturally factored into both the Action of August 1702 and the Battle of Vigo Bay.

Three separate pieces of intelligence obtained by the Foreign Office factor into the story at a very early juncture. At the very beginning, the information that du Casse was preparing to depart for the Caribbean was passed on to Burchett from Vernon, during his tenure as *de facto* sole secretary.<sup>94</sup> This information told the Admiralty that it needed to be on guard, and Benbow was placed on the alert. The purpose of du Casse’s voyage though remained unclear. That is until, shortly after learning of du Casse’s impending departure, agents from the Foreign Office intercepted, translated and transmitted, orders from the Philip’s government in Spain to the Spanish governors of the New World. The orders confirmed what the English had feared, that a critical part of du Casse’s mission to the Americas was to ensure that the Spanish Empire acquiesced to authority of the Bourbon dynasty.<sup>95</sup> This confirmation heightened the English

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<sup>93</sup> Shovell, “Sir Cloudsley Shovell to Nottingham.” *Domestic Papers*.

<sup>94</sup> Yard, “R. Yard to Josiah Burchett.” *Calendar of State Paper, Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*.

<sup>95</sup> *State Papers Online*, Gale, Cengage Learning, 2014. Ref.: SP 94/75.

intelligence apparatus's efforts to monitor first du Casse and then Chateau-Renault, and set the initial stage for the English response.

The third piece of intelligence, unsurprisingly, relates to Cadiz. On June 12<sup>th</sup>, Nottingham received word from an agent who had been dispatched to Languedoc and the Iberian Peninsula. The agent, who is not named in the correspondence, sent intelligence on the size of France's Mediterranean Fleet at Marseilles, along with his or her personal assessment that Prince Eugene of Savoy was "advantageously positioned" to contain the fleet.<sup>96</sup> With Eugene hemming them in, the French Mediterranean Fleet would hopefully be a nonfactor, in both combat and transport, during these initial stages. The anonymous agent also passed along information concerning the size of the garrison at Cadiz, as well as noting the distance between Cadiz and potential reinforcing garrisons of Marseilles and Toulon. While it seems unlikely that either Marseilles or Toulon would be the first locations from which Louis and Philip would send reinforcements, the English priority is apparent. The invasion of Cadiz, which we have already seen was at the forefront of English royal planning, was even more centrally placed in the Foreign Series papers. Indeed, Chateau-Renault and du Casse barely feature in the Foreign Papers from the first year of the war. That is not to say however that the Southern Secretariat was not heavily invested in these events.

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<sup>96</sup> "Narrative of journey to Marseilles and Toulon. Entry into Marseilles; its fortifications; details of ships; contents of the Arsenal; other stores; French manpower; entry into Toulon; its ships and magazines; soldiers in Cadiz and Marseilles." Document Ref.: SP 78/153 f.77 Folio Numbers: ff. 77 *State Papers Online*, Gale, Cengage Learning, 2014.

The saga opened with intelligence from and continued with the aid of the Foreign Office. As recorded in the Domestic Papers, on July 15 intelligence about Chateau-Renault's return to Europe was given to the Admiralty by the Foreign Office. Information from the briefing, which was delivered to both Rooke and Shovell, came from two sources. One of these was a Mr. Roope, an agent of the Southern Secretariat stationed at Tenerife, while remarkably, the other was none other than Admiral Benbow himself.<sup>97</sup> As Rooke's diary reveals, Benbow was in some correspondence with his fellow officers at the Admiralty, yet he chose to send information as important as Chateau-Renault's return not to the Admiralty, but to the Foreign Office. Whether this choice was made due to established protocol, tradition, or Benbow's own personal preferences, it is apparent that there was some sense of the Foreign Office's primacy in matters of intelligence, even within the Admiralty.

It is perhaps Mr. Roope, rather than Admiral Benbow though, who is key to understanding this primacy. Tenerife, off the coast of Spain, was a strategically important island. While it was no Menorca or Gibraltar, it was nonetheless significant because of its location in the Atlantic trade current. During wartime, it would be difficult to maintain an intelligence agent in such a location without diplomatic connections. Likewise, it would have been virtually impossible for the Admiralty to maintain regular contact with agents stationed in Brest, the home of the French Atlantic

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<sup>97</sup> Shovell, "18 July." *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*.

The invested reader may care to know that Mr. Roope's career as an intelligence asset for the Southern Department continued throughout the War, primarily around Dunkirk where he worked to supplement intelligence reports on Northern France which came from the Admiralty.



fleet, during wartime, yet Vernon was clearly able to send instructions to and receive information from, Brest, throughout the period.<sup>98</sup>

It was precisely the diplomatic nature of the Foreign Office which enabled the Southern Secretariat to establish and maintain intelligence networks in critical locations like Brest, Teneriffe, Cadiz, Madrid and Marseilles. In turn, it was this ability which gave the Foreign Office its primacy. Naval officers such as Benbow naturally shared their intelligence and information with one another, but they also passed it on to the Foreign Office because it was the central consolidator of intelligence. The Domestic Office coordinated, and the Admiralty acted, but it was the Southern Secretariat which received the most raw information of any of the English departments. In turn, the Foreign Office was the agency best suited to consolidate information. Thus, even though Benbow probably knew that his intelligence would likely be passed on to his fellow officers, it made sense to send it on first to the Foreign Office, which might have supplementary intelligence, which was indeed the case.

As these exchanges with Rooke and Shovell make clear though, the Foreign Office did not believe that it had all the answers. In both of their responses, Rooke and Shovell answer an unrecorded query about Chateau-Renault's return to Europe. Shovell says that he "hardly [thinks] Chateaurenaud can have thirty sail of the line" while Rooke responds that "it is very unlikely that the fleets [Chateau-Renault's and the merchant fleet from the West Indies] will meet in mid ocean."<sup>99</sup> Both letters are written in

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<sup>98</sup> Yard. "R. Yard to Josiah Burchett," *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*.

<sup>99</sup> Rooke, "Sir George Rooke to Nottingham," *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*.

response to “yours of the 15th,” seemingly to a question about the potential threat Chateau-Renault might have posed to an English trade convoy. The Foreign Office may have held primacy, but seemed to know when to reach out for information and clarification. They were diplomats and spies, not sea captains, and, at least in this stage of the war, they knew it, even if royalty at times compelled the Secretariat to issue instructions contrary to the inclination of these same officers.

The apparatus of the Foreign Office did not function solely as a top-down, centralized analyzer and distributor of intelligence though. When its intelligence assets knew that there was no time to operate through the standard channels, they gave their intelligence both to their superiors, and to those who needed it most. The agent who gave Rooke the intelligence which led to his final misgivings about the invasion of Cadiz was one Mr. Slade, who “had been employed by Mr. Secretary Vernon to gain intelligence.”<sup>100</sup> The intelligence that Slade brought to Rooke was simple, yet crucial; Chateau-Renault had left Brest, intending to sail to Cadiz. In response, Rooke immediately called a council of war, and advised that the invasion ought not to proceed.<sup>101</sup> His warnings of course, were not heeded, but one should not view this incident solely as a failure of the English establishment to act on intelligence; the royal will and the English military apparatus were already too heavily invested in the assault for Rooke and Ormonde to be reasonably able to withdraw at the eleventh hour. Instead, one may view it as an example of the flexibility of the English intelligence

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<sup>100</sup> Rooke, “September 1,” *Journal of Sir George Rooke*.

<sup>101</sup> Rooke, “September 3,” *Journal of Sir George Rooke*.

apparatus. With the battle plans already drawn, it would have been too late to send to London, and hope that renewed instructions be sent back to Rooke and Ormonde at Cadiz. With time sensitive information, Mr. Slade did the only logical thing he could; he sent word back both to London and made contact with Rooke, in hopes that the operational branch might still be able to act upon the intelligence while it was still actionable at all.

Mr. Slade's contact with Rooke also illuminates that these agencies were not coordinating solely at the top. While perhaps something of a special case, it is significant that communication did not simply exist on a personal level, between men in charge of their departments, who likely knew one another. Slade, an agent from another department, was able to reach across departmental lines and share information with the Admiralty when it was needed. At the start of the War, English intelligence was becoming depersonalized, and in turn, bureaucratized and institutionalized. These would not be the only developments however. As the War progressed, strategic changes necessitated a shift in English intelligence strategy, resulting in a growing emphasis on counter-intelligence, which, in turn, led to an increasing centralization alongside this institutionalization.

## CHAPTER 4

### WITH CARE AND ZEAL

In the middle of night on the eighth of January, 1708, Charles Spencer, Earl of Sunderland and Her Majesty Queen Anne's Southern Secretary of State, ordered a letter sent to both Postmasters General. He commanded both the Whig and Tory Postmasters General to send notice to "all the Ports," forbidding passage to anyone without the Queen's express permission. Passage through the ports had been kept under close watch since the War had begun, but the night of January 8 was an extraordinary occasion – a prisoner had escaped.<sup>102</sup>

Initially, Sunderland, "having never seen him" was unable to provide a description of the escaped prisoner. After some enquiry however Sunderland forwarded further information to the Postmasters General, describing the prisoner as "a middle sized man, lean and pale face, wears a dark brown wig, a dark colored suit of clothes, waistcoat and breeches the same... his name is Baud."<sup>103</sup> Two days later, Baud had been captured, and was on his way to Newgate Prison; the closure of the ports had worked. It was no small matter to close "all the Ports" in Great Britain, particularly given the administration's insistence on maintaining full-scale maritime commerce throughout the War. He was of course no regular prisoner; Baud was a French spy.

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<sup>102</sup> Sunderland, "Whitehall, Jan. 8 1708." *Sunderland State Papers*.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid*.

For an unspecified time prior to his initial arrest, Baud had been engaged in a simple yet significant intelligence operation. He had approached various English intelligence handlers and, claiming to be on personal mission from Queen Anne, requested their intelligence. While it is unclear just how much information Baud was able to acquire by this method, the gravity with which the British government viewed the threat is significant. At the very least, one may understand British alarm in that the French seemed to know the identities of any of their handlers at all. The intensity and efficiency of the British response reflects the increasing importance of counter-intelligence by the middle of the War, as well as the augmented centrality of the Southern Secretariat in the intelligence activities of the now British State.

In 1705, the War was entering its second phase. With the coalition victory at the Battle of Blenheim, hopes for a quick war on both sides were dashed. Louis was unable to force Austria's exit, guaranteeing a difficult, multi-front war. Meanwhile, France's military resilience in the face of the defeat showed the Allies that Louis and the French state would be capable of prosecuting the War for years to come. The next several years of the conflict would effectively determine the final outcome and the Treaty of Utrecht. Between 1705 and 1708, the Bourbons solidified their hold on the Spanish throne, while suffering setbacks in Savoy and Italy. The English on the other hand seized Gibraltar and the Balears, began trading in the Spanish New World while passing the Act of Union and thereby becoming Great Britain in the process. While both sides continued to actively prosecute the War for years after 1708, the developments of the central period of the conflict render its study as important as any other period. Indeed,

by the middle of 1708, the British possessed most of the gains, territorial and otherwise, that they would be formally ceded in the Treaty of Utrecht five years later.

The case of Baud and the accompanying rise of counter-intelligence in the English apparatus represent an important shift in the government's approach to the War. After the Battle of Blenheim, the War ground to a halt in both the Empire and in Iberia. Nonetheless, the English were able to make small yet strategic gains, such as Gibraltar and Menorca, on the back of their naval superiority, and as the War slowed, they were eager to consolidate these gains.<sup>104</sup> At the same time, the English government was undergoing political upheaval. From the midpoint of the War, the Whigs, with the cooperation of the Tory Lord Treasurer Sidney Godolphin, began their rise to an extended period of dominance. The Whigs on the whole were heavily invested in the War, and secured its funding as best they could.<sup>105</sup> In spite of this investment though, the scope of English grand strategy actually contracted following Blenheim. To that end, the English adopted a more defensive and supportive approach, preferring to lend financial and material aid as well as naval support to Allied initiatives, a strategy which defined British coalition involvement for more than a century after. Unlike naval supremacy and fiscal support however, intelligence proved more, rather than less, complicated to maintain while on the defensive.

Counter-intelligence is, by definition, a complex business. The core tenet of counter-intelligence is simple enough – to deter the covert activities of foreign actors,

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<sup>104</sup> *England in the War of the Spanish Succession*.

<sup>105</sup> Bucholz and Key, 342-344.

and to prevent their gaining effective intelligence. To that end, effective counter-intelligence necessitates both the detection and thwarting of enemy agents, such as Baud, as well as attempts by domestic malcontents to offer their services to hostile powers. It is of course infeasible, particularly for a power heavily invested in foreign trade, to close off all access to the outside world for any substantial length of time. Consequently, the principal work of counter-intelligence is detection and coordination.<sup>106</sup>

The result of this growing focus on counter-intelligence was centralization. The task of controlling information flow into and out of the British Isles was crucial to this mission, and was a difficult one – particularly in the wake of the Whig’s insistence on maintaining maritime commerce at pre-War levels. Likewise, the English intelligence apparatus had the Crown’s overseas possessions to think of as well. Organizing counter-intelligence across the Atlantic presented an additional challenge. The English intelligence apparatus responded with centralization as a means of controlling information and intelligence.

Throughout the middle period of the War, the Southern Secretariat achieved intelligence primacy, owing in large part to the rise of counter-intelligence. Owing to its predominantly domestic nature, the military establishment was largely absent from matters of counter-intelligence. Instead, matters of military intelligence, such as those which led to the Battle of Vigo Bay, became the explicit purview of the military establishment. Unfortunately, as a result, documentation for these sorts of endeavours

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<sup>106</sup> *The Intelligence Revolution.*

is few and far between. Thankfully, the actions and correspondences of the State Departments are well documented, and provide a telling look at the advent of English counter-intelligence during the War of the Spanish Succession.

Counter-intelligence, both early-modern and contemporary, can be roughly broken down into two categories – deterrent and detective, or, broadly speaking, proactive and reactive.<sup>107</sup> Deterrent counter-intelligence involves such measures as passport restrictions that are designed to hinder the actions of hostile agents. Detective measures on the other hand are those intended to identify and neutralize foreign intelligence assets who have penetrated deterrent techniques. While both methods were utilized throughout the English intelligence apparatus, each was specifically adapted for different needs. Generally speaking, English counter-intelligence in the New World was reliant upon deterrent techniques in order to compensate for delays in communication. Conversely, in the British Isles, the English intelligence apparatus, while certainly employing deterrent techniques, was incredibly reliant upon a complex system of detective methods. The story of English counter-intelligence during the middle period of the War then is an entwined story of shifting strategic initiatives and heightened paranoia, all leading up to the night of January 8.

Beginning in 1706, the English were highly alert to the possibility of a Bourbon attack somewhere in the New World. In the closing weeks of 1705, the French had launched an assault on English holdings in Newfoundland.<sup>108</sup> The French forces

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<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> Newfoundland, with its abundant fish population and ample timber for naval supplies was one of the earliest settled areas of North America, with both English and French communities established along its



ultimately failed to capture the principal English city of St. Johns, but did destroy a number of outlying settlements, and prompted English fears of further attacks throughout the New World. In response, Charles Hedges, Earl of Chester and Southern Secretary approved a request to “examine the soldiers now there, which lately returned from Newfoundland.”<sup>109</sup> This initial debriefing proved successful, as four days later, Hedges sent instructions to the recently knighted Lieutenant Sir John Gibson to conduct a further inquiry, including what the soldiers may have known of French preparations for further attacks, and the “present state and condition” of fortifications throughout Newfoundland.<sup>110</sup> The results of Gibson’s questioning were forwarded to the Council of Trade on February 4, and they must have been troubling. One month and several correspondences later, Hedges had granted permission to the Council of Trade to prepare a declaration effectively granting the Commodore of Newfoundland military rule over the colony. With this declaration, the Commodore gained the authority to conscript militiamen and militia officers, designate Royal Naval use harbors as well as granting blanket powers “you shall think proper in this.”<sup>111</sup> English concerns in the New World did not end with the flashpoint region of Newfoundland however.

The Caribbean had been a hotbed of conflict since the War’s opening stages, and by 1706 was now entering a new phase of hostilities. Following the establishment of

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shores. As time went on, Newfoundland’s strategic position on the approach to the Gulf of St. Lawrence guaranteed its strategic significance. As both powers internalized its strategic importance, the small fishing communities were expanded and fortified. The presence of these fortifications led to Newfoundland being a flashpoint of hostilities, even during periods of peace.

<sup>109</sup> Hedges, Charles. “Cockpit 24 January 1705/6.” *Hedges State Papers*.

<sup>110</sup> Hedges, Charles. “Cockpitt[sic] 28 January 1705/6.” *Hedges State Papers*.

<sup>111</sup> Hedges, Charles. “Cockpitt[sic] 5 March 1705/6.” *Hedges State Papers*.

English naval superiority in the first years of the War, the French Navy had turned largely to small-scale attacks on English shipping and privateering, and this was particularly true in the Caribbean. A memorial received by Hedges in early February 1706 attests to the extent of the threat posed by French privateering in the Caribbean. The Governor of the Leeward Isles wrote to the Southern Secretary “that for a want of guns sufficient to protect the harbors, the merchant ships have been insulted by French ships of war.”<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, the governor informed Secretary Hedges that the Council of Trade fully backed the plan to provide extra cannons for the defense of the islands. Hedges, seemingly unimpressed with the Governor’s plea, casually forwarded the Governor’s memorial to the Lord High Treasurer, to seek his opinion on whether or not such an investment was warranted.<sup>113</sup> It seems likely that the Lord High Treasurer agreed with Hedges’ assessment that the danger to shipping around the Leeward Islands from French privateering was insufficient to justify the cost extra fortifications. Several months later, the Council of Trade was petitioning for the same cannons to defend the Caribbean islands.

By the end of the 1706 however, Hedges was changing his position. Where before he had dismissed direct pleas from the colonial Governor almost out of hand, by November, Hedges was writing directly to the Board of Ordinance with instructions to prepare to send armaments to the Leeward Islands, particularly Antigua and Nevis, as

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<sup>112</sup> Hedges, Charles. “Whitehall, 11 February 1705/6.” *Hedges State Papers*.

At this time, the English colony of the Leeward Islands included such valuable possessions as Antigua and Nevis, as well as St. Kitts, which was populated by competing French and English colonists.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

well as to Barbados.<sup>114</sup> This change in position is remarkable, because in the preceding months, the Council of Trade had actually ceased its requests for increased manpower and fortification in the Caribbean. Likewise, the government in London received no further memorials from the Leeward Islands. Consequently, the change in policy may not be attributed to the personal dynamics of monarchical rule – no impassioned pleas had swayed Queen Anne into forcing her advisors' hands. Instead, the change may be attributed to new intelligence.

Deterrent counter-intelligence had been practiced on a local level by colonial government since the early stages of the War. Such measures often focused on hindering the intelligence activities of Franco-Spanish privateers who sought to obtain information on the state of English fortifications and garrisons, along with the traditional prizes of piracy.<sup>115</sup> Aware of the threat posed by enemy knowledge of fortifications, some English colonial leaders passed such measures as the "Act for the Security of the Bays Townes[sic] and Sea Coasts of this Island from the Insults of Her Majesty's Enemys[sic] and to prevent the Enemys gaining Intelligence by the Running away of Boates." Much to the consternation of local merchants, the Act did far more than arrange naval patrols; it also imposed commercial restrictions that, according to their petition, amounted to an embargo on foreign shipping.<sup>116</sup> The petitioners claimed that the Act, designed to prevent Bourbon privateers from sailing close to the harbors

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<sup>114</sup> Hedges, Charles. "Whitehall, 11 November, 1706." *Hedges State Papers*.

<sup>115</sup> It should be noted that English privateers also engaged in such activities, much to the chagrin of Spanish colonial governors. For more on this, see "Pirateria y Strategia Defensiva en Yucatan durante el Siglo XVIII."

<sup>116</sup> Lesley, John, et al. "Representation of the Council, 28 June 1705." *Colonial State Papers*.

under the guise of commercial vessels, did more harm than good. Her Majesty's Privy Council however saw the merits to the Governor's Act, and over the next year proceeding to incorporate elements of embargo throughout the Caribbean, designed in large part to protect intelligence on the status of fortifications and garrisons.

These endeavours to impose an information wall around Caribbean possessions occurred simultaneous to the debriefing of the soldiers returning from the Newfoundland garrison. While the information these returning soldiers offered is not recorded, several facts are clear. In the opening months of 1706, the English aimed to boost deterrent counter-intelligence throughout the Caribbean, imposing both commercial and migratory restrictions through embargo and passport control. Throughout 1706, following their campaign in Newfoundland, several French vessels were deployed to the Caribbean where, in the closing months of the year, the English came to suspect they would launch an assault. Finally, in the intervening months, Hedges and the English intelligence apparatus dispatched a number of counter-intelligence operatives to Caribbean possessions.

At this point, the complex web of English counter-intelligence in the Caribbean in 1706 starts to become clear. English naval patrols and commercial embargos functioned much as communication surveillance does today. While acting to deter intelligence activities in general, the uptake in privateering, and subsequent pleas for assistance from individuals such as the Governor of the Leeward Islands was received much in the way that uptake in "chatter" is cause for alert by modern intelligence agencies. Simultaneously, it seems likely that the soldiers returning from Newfoundland offered

some intelligence on the French fleet's preparation to sail, if not to the Caribbean specifically, than to somewhere other than France, as indicated by the repeated examination the soldiers faced. In turn, the combination of these intelligence factors led to the urgent deployment of agents to the Caribbean sometime in the first half of 1706.

Reports from these agents began reaching Hedges in September of 1706, which were then immediately passed on to then Secretary of War, Henry St. John.<sup>117</sup> While the actual reports are not recorded, the information they contained was sufficient for Hedges to broach the subject of sending regiments to the Caribbean. Further reports in October correspond with Hedges' shift in policy in favor of augmenting the fortifications at the Leeward Islands. The relationship between the intelligence supplied by these agents and Hedges' reversal in position is made explicit by a letter sent by Hedges to the Board of Ordnance on 29 October, 1706. Hedges had received a memorial from an agent stationed in Antigua who suggested that the Ordnance agent stationed at Barbados "may be ordered to go to Antegoa to view your fortifications of that island and report what ordnance stores he finds needful to be supplied for your defense thereof, and in particular for the fortification lately built there."<sup>118</sup> The intelligence Hedges received was pressing enough that he recommended to Queen Anne that the Board of Ordnance be given whatever supplies they requested as a result of their inspection.

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<sup>117</sup> Hedges, Charles. "Whitehall, 27 September 1706." *Hedges State Papers*.

<sup>118</sup> Hedges, Charles. "Whitehall, 29 October, 1706." *Hedges State Papers*.

Even before the inspection could be completed though, the security of Barbados and the Leeward Islands was made of critical importance. A week later, the Council of Trade and the Board of Ordnance were requested to appear before the Privy Council to discuss the preparedness of the various Caribbean islands for assault.<sup>119</sup> The Privy Council must have been concerned by the picture presented, because the Board of Ordnance was ordered to supply not just cannon and material for fortification, but also swords, muskets and bayonets. Indeed, the matter was pressing enough that Hedges ultimately found himself micromanaging both the Board of Ordnance and the Council of Trade. Shortly after the meeting of the Privy Council, Hedges chastised the Board of Ordnance for only sending muskets to the Caribbean, and not swords or bayonets.<sup>120</sup> The same day, the Secretary wrote to the Council of Trade, demanding that they send him the orders they had prepared for the Governor of Barbados such that they could be examined by Queen Anne and the Privy Council.<sup>121</sup> The intelligence received was clearly no small matter; meetings of the Privy Council were held on rarely, the government's preferred system being compartmentalization. In the wake of the intelligence provided though, the perceived threat to the Caribbean became critically important to Queen Anne's government, and her ministers responded in kind. The Leeward Islands and Barbados were fortified.

On the day prior to Hedges' receiving his agent's report suggesting the refortification of Barbados, he received another parcel of information. Another agent

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<sup>119</sup> Hedges, Charles. "Whitehall, 6 November 1706." *Hedges State Papers*.

<sup>120</sup> Hedges, Charles. "Whitehall, 18<sup>th</sup> November 1706." *Hedges State Papers*.

<sup>121</sup> Hedges, Charles. "Whitehall, 18<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1706." *Hedges State Papers*.

named Thomas Tudor, “employed in [Her Majesty’s] publick service at Barbadoes” had been captured by the French.<sup>122</sup> Hedges’ immediate order to the Postmasters General was that arrangements be made for Tudor to receive the necessary money required for Tudor to pay his way out of jail, as well as for his transportation back to Barbados. It is unclear how much information, if any, the French received from Tudor, or indeed, if they were aware of his employment with Hedges. His imprisonment by the French was, ostensibly, on the basis of debt, rather than espionage, however, arrest on smaller crimes in order to get around tricky diplomatic or political issues is hardly a novel concept in any time period. Furthermore, Tudor’s being released and returned to Barbados is no reason to believe that the French were unaware of his true employment. Deportation of foreign agents was common practice within the English intelligence apparatus as well. In spite of these complications though, the inescapable fact is that Thomas Tudor, one of Hedges’ agents dispatched to the Caribbean was captured by the French, and the Secretary Hedges took personal note. Whether or not the French were able to extract any information from Tudor about English preparations for a potential attack on an English Caribbean possession, one thing is apparent – the predicted attack never came.

The lack of a French attack makes it difficult to say whether or not the episode may be termed an English intelligence success. It is entirely possible that the French were deterred from potential attack by the English preparations, and awareness. Likewise, it is possible that the French had no plans on attacking English Caribbean

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<sup>122</sup> Hedges, Charles. “Whitehall, 28 October, 1706.” *Hedges State Papers*.

possessions during the close of 1706, and that the English response was overblown and fueled by rumor and paranoia. Regardless, the episode is illuminating about English intelligence at the midpoint of the War. Resources were, understandably, wearing thin by this point. Subsequently, not every request for materials, such as that from the Governor of the Leeward Islands at the start of 1706, could be granted. In a war with so many fronts, the English were naturally unable to provide resources to every quarter. This dearth of resources led to the English strategy of devolving authority to regions under threat. In under-fortified areas where the government was either unable or unwilling to provide sufficient resources, devolving authority to these areas, like the Leeward Isles, worked well in concert with a strategy of deterrent counter-intelligence. If the enemy is unaware of a strategic weakness, it is easier to get away with not rectifying that weakness. However, when the situation demanded, the English establishment was of course willing to direct resources to necessary quarters, as they did in the case of the Leeward Islands and Barbados.

Given the importance of defensive fortifications during the period, along with the lag in communications, it was difficult to determine ahead of time when such measures would be justified.<sup>123</sup> Thus, the adoption of deterrent counter-intelligence techniques (even if they were not conceptualized as such at the time) seems to have been a sound tactic. By hindering the activities of foreign agents through such techniques as the Act for... Preventing the Enemy's Gaining Intelligence by the Running of Boats, the English intelligence apparatus in turn would have slowed down the

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<sup>123</sup> McNeill, p 58-59.



decision making process by hostile forces, as well as providing a means by which to determine when and where more active intelligence methods should be employed. The accompanying devolution of political authority to local officials was not matched by a reduction of the authority of the State Secretariat in intelligence. Indeed, if anything, the saga illustrates the opposite point. The sheer volume of correspondence between England's American holdings and the State Secretariat points to the extent of centralization. While Hedges and the Secretariat employed fewer direct agents to the New World, the trans-Atlantic possessions were, nonetheless, an increasingly incorporated part of the Secretariat's intelligence sphere.

English counter-intelligence in the British Isles at the midpoint of the War was, functionally, rather similar to that in the Caribbean, but with more emphasis and employment of detective methods. These methods bore remarkable resemblance to the anti-Popish techniques of both the Elizabethan intelligence apparatus under Walsingham and the Restoration apparatuses under the Earl of Clarendon. It is perhaps owing to this evolutionary continuity that the counter-intelligence in the British Isles has more of a systematic feel to it than does the apparatus for the Caribbean. However, aside from the targets pursued and the ease with which the system was orchestrated, the English apparatus had far more in common with the modernized intelligence networks which were to emerge from the War of the Spanish Succession than it did with the patronage oriented networks of the past.

Just as colonial acts and embargos formed the basis for deterrent counter-intelligence in the Caribbean, customs and immigration control were the first line of

intelligence defense in the British Isles. By the middle of the War, exchanges between the Southern Secretary and either the Postmasters General or the Council for transports about the movement of individuals had become fairly common. On August 16, 1706, Secretary Hedges wrote to the Postmasters General concerning two Neapolitan Lieutenants, named Gastano Mungo and Jacobla Nolla, who wished to travel to Lisbon. Hedges instructed the Postmasters General not only to allow their passage on the Packet Boats, but also to have the fee for their passage waived. The two lieutenants seem to have sought a sort of political asylum, having been “banisht from their Native Country for their Loyalty to their king.”<sup>124</sup> The implications of Hedges’ statement is clear in context. As a Spanish possession, the Neapolitan Crown was under contest during the War. Thus, the king to whom Mungo and Nolla had been loyal was the Habsburg claimant Charles of Austria. Their stated reason for travel was to “attend his Catholick Majesty [of Portugal],” with whom England was allied in the War. Mungo and Nolla’s allegiance to Charles of Austria, along with their goal of serving an ally is a perfectly reasonable explanation for permitting their travel. Instead, it is the correspondence between Hedges and the Postmasters General itself that is noteworthy.

Travel between England and Portugal was a source of particular concern for the intelligence apparatus of the State Secretariat. In many cases, the individuals were permitted to travel, just as Mungo and Nolla were, but just as often, travel was restricted. Given Portugal’s proximity to Spain, English concerns about travel there is understandable. Any individual travelling to the Iberian Peninsula could potentially

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<sup>124</sup> Hedges, Charles. “Whitehall 16 Aug 1706.” *Hedges State Papers*.

work against state interests, particularly if they were Catholic. Considering the continuing religious overtones of conflict throughout the period, religion was still a major factor in whether an individual was deemed suspect when it came to travel. Indeed, when one looks at the sheer number of Catholics who had to be granted special permission to travel on the packet-boats, it seems entirely likely that religious confession could have provided the sole basis on which an individual could be viewed with suspicion and made subject to investigation.

Conversely, with Catholic allies, neither religion nor destination could not be the sole justification for the actual denial of passage. With so many factors to consider, Elizabethan and Restoration methods of screening were insufficient.<sup>125</sup> Subsequently, a high degree of administrative centralization and bureaucratization was required to manage travel. On October 19, 1706, Hedges wrote to a Captain Swanton.

Sir,

I received yours of the 16<sup>th</sup> Inst: also a former letter from you relating to a passenger you brought from Tunis: But his relations, nor anybody else appearing here on his behalf, and the Archbishop of Canterbury knowing nothing [of] him.

The Archbishop having his papers under consideration, I hope in a few days to let you hear further.<sup>126</sup>

That Swanton, employed in the English Royal Navy, reported to Secretary Hedges concerning his Tunisian passenger is evidence of this increasing centralization. At the

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<sup>125</sup> Discussion of these techniques, in the vein of Marshall.

<sup>126</sup> Hedges, Charles. "Whitehall, 19 October, 1706." *Hedges State Papers*.

start of the War, such correspondences involved many parties, from the Northern to the Southern Secretariat, with involvement in the Admiralty at many levels. By this time however, with the Southern Secretariat becoming ascendant in intelligence matters, Captain Swanton wrote directly to Secretary Hedges. Unfortunately, the results of the Archbishop's inquiry are not recorded, nor are any further exchanges with Captain Swanton. Still, the direct interaction between Hedges and Swanton is significant. The Admiralty had ceded control over entry into the country to the Southern Secretariat.

The Admiralty was not the only agency which began to report to the Southern Secretariat for counter-intelligence at this time. The Commission for Customs also began holding and reporting suspicious individuals to the Southern Secretariat. On October 31, 1706, Hedges sent a letter to the Commissioners regarding a customs agent at Dover who "seized four French Seamen and a boat which brought over the Count de Sonianski from Calais."<sup>127</sup> The Count in question apparently had Queen Anne's personal "Pass for his coming over," and therefore was ordered to be released, along with the French sailors who brought him from Calais. The conditions for each party's release differed significantly however. The Count was to be given transport "on board some English ship." The French seamen on the other hand were made to immediately leave English shores with "care taken... they... do not carry off any person whatsoever." The implications are clear. While Queen Anne had the royal prerogative to allow the passage of the Count into England, those instructions did not inherently extend to the sailors who brought him there. For English counter-intelligence, this was just as well, as

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<sup>127</sup> Hedges, Charles. "Whitehall 31<sup>st</sup> October 1706." *Hedges State Papers*.

those French sailors could easily be enemy agents seeking to orchestrate mischief, and moreover, the Commission for Customs knew it.

It is worth noting that this control was not limited solely to individuals seeking entry to Britain. At the end of September, 1707, Southern Secretary Charles Spencer, Earl of Sunderland, expressed misgivings about the expatriation of “a Roman-Catholick Priest and severall young women... to Ostende without passes... to enter themselves in convents.”<sup>128</sup> Sunderland, who had come into office only a few months prior, requested advice from the Attorney and Solicitor Generals on handling the situation. The group had been apprehended by a Lieutenant Colonel Douglas who in turn informed Secretary Sunderland of their apprehension.

The group’s passage was ultimately denied at the suggestion of the Solicitor General, but the result of the incident is not as important as what it suggests. Firstly, just as the Southern Secretariat was responsible for immigration to the British Isles, so too was it the leader in emigration, which, for counter-intelligence, is arguably as important as immigration. Retrieving intelligence naturally requires being able to leave to report in one way or another, which in turn makes emigration control an important element to control. Additionally, Sunderland’s requesting advice from the Attorney and Solicitor General speaks to the process of administrative succession at this point. Continuing the trend of modernization, these intelligence duties remained under the purview of the position of Southern Secretary, rather than migrating with Hedges. Similarly, Sunderland’s ability to seek advice from others who had served concurrent

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<sup>128</sup> Spencer, Charles. “Whitehall, 30 Sept. 1707.” *Sunderland Papers*.

with Hedges is indicative of the depersonalization of the post. Bureaucratization and interconnectivity reduced the impact of the skills of any one minister, the source of the “dynamic individual” oriented intelligence apparatuses which Marshall criticized.

The utilization of mayors and other local officials seems to have been a new development. Mayors feature only once in Marshall’s depiction of England’s Restoration intelligence apparatus, in an episode in which the Earl of Arlington coordinates with the Lord Mayor of London. It seems then to have been an innovation born of the necessities of the war. It cannot, however, be attributed to the rise of the Whigs. Hedges, a Tory, made as much use of mayors as did Sunderland. The rise in the use of mayors instead may have been connected to England’s intelligence practices in the New World. As the State Secretariat adapted to the use of local officials operating in tandem with strategically deployed agents across the Atlantic, they began employing the same practices at home. In this sense, state formation and imperial consolidation were intertwined by the War itself. The slowing of the War’s pace from 1705 to 1708 presented the opportunity for the State Secretariat to replace the ad hoc methods of the War’s beginning with a more standardized apparatus.

Four French sailors and a Count, claiming to have his travel guaranteed by Queen Anne, arriving from Calais would have justifiably raised both eyebrows and red flags, as would a group of English women following a Catholic priest to France. The Southern Secretariat then was the appropriate agency to contact both because Hedges would be in the best position to refute or corroborate the Count’s claims, and because of the Secretariat’s leading role in immigration. Proper control of transport to and from the

British Isles was an incredibly simple, and seemingly effective form of deterrent counter-intelligence, yet it was one which took centralization and awareness of protocol at both the top and the bottom. For the system to work, individuals like Captain Swanton needed to understand the importance of regulating who entered the country. Of course, that understanding would have meant nothing had these individuals not known to whom they should send their queries. Likewise, the system required sufficient regular flow of information upwards so that those in charge, such as Hedges, could address incidents with the context required to actually provide instructions.

This centralization and systematization were not limited solely to deterrent counter-intelligence. Indeed, they were perhaps even more characteristic of the detective apparatus employed by the English at the midpoint of the War. In the middle of October, Hedges sent an apparently long due response to a letter from the Mayor of Southampton. Hedges had, in August, received a letter in which the Mayor informed him of the arrest of thirteen Irishmen. Upon their arrest, the Mayor of Southampton sent word, along with evidence and records of testimony, where they were eventually read in council before the Queen. The eventual decision of the Queen and Privy Council was that “there was no evidence before you, or confession sufficient immediately to commit them to the county gaol.”<sup>129</sup> Hedges’ rather scolding letter points to one of the most important institutions in English counter-intelligence in the British Isles – mayorships.

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<sup>129</sup> Hedges, Charles. “Whitehall, 19 Oct. 1706.” *Hedges State Papers*.

To an ever increasing degree, throughout the midpoint of the War, mayors formed the backbone of English detective counter-intelligence away from the Capitol. In this regard, the system bore strong similarities to those of Walsingham and Clarendon. Just as they strove to root out internal, Catholic plots, domestic intelligence during the War of the Spanish Succession was concerned with the threat posed by internal dissidents. It was in this capacity that mayors were most heavily involved. Individuals deemed suspicious for whatever reason, be it religious confession, nationality, or even drunken tavern talk, individuals could be held by mayors with reports sent to the Southern Secretariat.

On March 23, 1708, Sunderland dispatched a very brief message to the Mayor of Hull, in which he upheld the Mayor's arrest of an unknown number of "suspected persons" and recommended the the Mayor proceed with prosecuting the arrested individuals "according to the statutes provided."<sup>130</sup> Such exchanges were commonplace for both men, and became only more regular as the War progressed. On April 5 of 1708, Sunderland answered a letter from the Mayor of Dover who had carried out an arrest and sent the accompanying affidavit to the Secretary, conveying his appreciation and thanks.<sup>131</sup> Likewise, in September, Sunderland wrote the Mayor of Deale "concerning the Person who takes upon him the name of William Smith."<sup>132</sup> Sunderland determined that Smith was not a threat and that he should be released on the condition that "as soon as he arrives in town he... attend one of Her Majesty's Secretaries of

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<sup>130</sup> Spencer, Charles. "Whitehall, 23 March, 1707/8." *Sunderland State Papers*.

<sup>131</sup> Spencer, Charles. "Whitehall 5<sup>th</sup> April, 1708." *Sunderland State Papers*.

<sup>132</sup> Spencer, Charles. "Whitehall, 9<sup>th</sup> Sept 1708." *Sunderland State Papers*.



State.”<sup>133</sup> At the end of the letter, Sunderland praised the Mayor’s care and zeal, in what became tantamount to a signature to mayors involved in counter-intelligence work. Reports from mayors about the detainment of suspicious individuals became a staple of the counter-intelligence apparatus, one upon which the State Secretaries could rely to bring forward suspicious activity, whether it was ultimately deemed dangerous or not.

Information between mayors and the State Secretariat was not one-directional though; the Secretary often gave orders to mayors either to hold individuals until agents could arrive to carry out arrests, or to interrogate potential informants. Sunderland was in frequent correspondence with the Lord Mayor of London, even to the point of sharing intelligence with him. In October of 1708, he kept the Lord Mayor abreast of the various intelligences and advices on an ongoing naval campaign.<sup>134</sup> Later that month, Sunderland dispatched two agents to Worcester, whose mayor had recently arrested Thomas Fitzgerald and John Gordon on his instructions.<sup>135</sup> Mayors were the cornerstone of counter-intelligence coordination between the center of government and the local. Mayors were not the only point of contact though. In some, often dramatic instances, local figures could be contacted to perform their civic duty.

On April 7, 1708, Sunderland contacted the Treasurer of the famed Gray’s Inn. The letter he sent was cryptic.

Sir,

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<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> Spencer, Charles. “Whitehall, 18 October, 1708.” *Sunderland State Papers*.

<sup>135</sup> Spencer, Charles. “Whitehall, 25<sup>th</sup> October 1708.” *Sunderland State Papers*.

The Bearer of this is one who belongs to my office. I desire you will admit him into Mr. Texton's Chamber and Study, that he may look over his papers and give me an account what they are, there being great reason to believe there are amongst 'em several of a very dangerous consequence to Her Majesty's Government.<sup>136</sup>

The papers that Sunderland's agent found must have been compromising, because not long afterward, Sunderland had the Treasurer bar Texton's room at the Inn to keep him there while a more thorough investigation could be carried out. Two and a half weeks later, Sunderland sent word that the Treasurer may "take off the Seale of Mr. Texton's Chambers."<sup>137</sup> The reasons for his release are unclear however as, a few months later, Texton was arrested on Sunderland's orders. It is possible that he was released to enable agents to follow his movements for a time, or new evidence came to light. Regardless, the Treasurer of Gray's Inn complied with the Secretary's request, and the entire incident is simply further evidence of both the centralization and extension of the English counter-intelligence apparatus, centered on the Southern Secretariat.

All of these elements factor in to that night of January 8. Sunderland sent out his initial call to arms to the Postmasters General, who executed his orders to "close all the ports." When deterrent measures failed, reactive measures were necessary, and the Southern Secretariat's control over emigration with regards to counter-intelligence fit the bill. Two days later, Baud was captured by a man working for the Mayor of

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<sup>136</sup> Spencer, Charles. "Whitehall 7<sup>th</sup> April 1708." *Sunderland State Papers*.

<sup>137</sup> Spencer, Charles. "Whitehall, 24<sup>th</sup> Aril 1708." *Sunderland State Papers*.

Gravesend. According to the letter, he was apprehended by a Mr. Thomas, who was given a two hundred pound reward for his services.<sup>138</sup> The subsequent investigation revealed that Baud was, in some capacity, in the service of the Duke of Savoy, but seems to have been working for court factions which conspired to bring Savoy to the French side in the War.<sup>139</sup> The inquiry may have ceased there had it not been for the involvement of one John Read. Read, a dissident and sometime informant for the State Secretariat, was convicted of horse theft in the fall of 1707, and sentenced to hang. Read was apparently a regular contact of Baud's.<sup>140</sup> Read was also the target of the plot of Billert, who endeavoured to have Read freed by fabricating a pardon, first in the name of the Lord Mayor of London, and subsequently in the name of Queen Anne herself. The plot was uncovered by the agents whom Billert attempted to swindle, Thomas Harrison and Gilbert Abrahall.

Each agent testified before council on January 19, 1708. Harrison, an agent of the Sheriff of Middlesex, described being approached by Billert, who claimed the Lord Mayor's authority in requesting a respite for Read's execution.<sup>141</sup> In the proud tradition of bureaucracy, Harrison, uncertain, took Billert's request up the chain, and travelled with Billert to Tyburne. Abrahall, who in some capacity worked under Sunderland and

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<sup>138</sup> Spencer, Charles. "Whitehall, 10<sup>th</sup> Jan, 1707/8." *Sunderland State Papers*.

<sup>139</sup> Smollent, Tobias. *The History of England*. Gutenberg.

For the court intrigue at Savoy, see: Kamen. In essence, the Savoyard government was divided between a dominant faction which wished to stay loyal to the Anglo-Austrian coalition in order to curtail Bourbon power, and a second, smaller faction which aimed to enter into France's good graces as a means of maintaining long-term Savoyard independence. Baud was in the employ of a minister who was in the latter faction.

<sup>140</sup> Spencer, Charles. "Whitehall, 12<sup>th</sup> January. 1707/8." *Sunderland State Papers*.

<sup>141</sup> Spencer, Charles. "The Information of Thomas Harrison." *Sunderland State Papers*.

was stationed at Tyburne. Upon encountering Billert, he reported the incident, which led to Billert's arrest and the inquiry before the Council, demonstrating the system at work.<sup>142</sup> Billert's plan though helped to confirm what would be known today as a leak. The same route which Billert had planned to use to extract Read was being used to transmit state papers to the French. The leak was eventually traced to a clerk in the Northern Office who was smuggling papers in exchange for payment. This revelation led to a full investigation by the Privy Council, and the ultimate dismissal of Robert Harley from the post of Northern Secretary. The rise of the Southern Secretariat to ascendancy in intelligence matters was complete.

As a final note, throughout the midpoint of the War, intelligence activities increasingly consumed the affairs of the Southern Secretariat. At the start of the War, the majority of the Secretariat's correspondences were diplomatic in nature. In 1705, diplomatic exchanges, particularly with Portugal and Venice, were still prevalent in the State Papers. By 1709 however, such correspondences had virtually disappeared, replaced almost entirely with intelligence interactions. The Southern Secretariat was becoming an intelligence focused department, and the dominant one at that.

The rise to ascendancy of the Southern Secretariat, and its ever-growing role as an intelligence agency reflect many of the developments throughout this period. The War was slowing, but England's intelligence apparatus was not. The shift towards a focus on counter-intelligence matched the shift in English posture towards the War. England's involvement in the War continued unabated, and even increased under the

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<sup>142</sup>Spencer, Charles. 'The Information of Gilbert Abrahall.' *Sunderland State Papers*.

Whigs, but offensive land campaigns fell out of the strategic picture. Simultaneously, the Americas became an increasingly important theatre as hostilities spread fully across the Atlantic. As a result of these developments, the English intelligence apparatus went on the defensive, and focused increasingly on counter-intelligence. To that end, the initiatives launched by the Southern Secretariat, under both Hedges and Sunderland, led to increased centralization of intelligence capacities under the Secretariat. This centralization came with a companionate increase in understanding and efficacy of intelligence practices, which would only become more apparent at the War's end. By the final years of the War, the British intelligence displayed incredible control of information. The Quebec Expedition which launched in 1711 necessitated not only control and centralization, but also an understanding of intelligence practices on a professional and institutional level.

## CHAPTER 5

### DEFEAT

“Many projects of this kind have been thought of, and many propositions made, but no one seems at the same time so feasible, and so truly advantageous to Britain, as that contained in these Instructions now sent to you, and for the execution of which we are preparing with the utmost diligence and secrecy.”<sup>143</sup>

These words were sent by Henry St. John, Secretary for the Northern Department a Mr. Hunter on February 6, 1711. The intended “project,” coming at the end of the War of the Spanish Succession, was the invasion of Quebec. The endeavour had been considered in various forms since 1708, under the Secretariat of the infamous Robert Harley. Only now though, three years later, was the British administration prepared to get the operation underway. For her part, Queen Anne called the mission a “glorious Work, which tends so much to the honour of God, and of our Crown and Dignity.”<sup>144</sup> Roughly two months later, the invasion fleet sailed and detachments sent orders to New York and New England to send militia north, to create a two-prong attack. In June, the militia marched, and the fleet arrived in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and promptly foundered on the rocks, leaving the entire fleet crippled, 600 dead and more than 1000 injured. The fleet turned around, stopping first in Newfoundland before returning all

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<sup>143</sup> St. John, Henry. “Whitehall, 6<sup>th</sup> Feb 1710/11.” *St. John Naval Papers*.

<sup>144</sup> Stuart, Anne I. “Instructions, 17 January 1710/11.” *St. John Naval Papers*.

the way to England. Upon receiving the news, the militia led by the Governor of New York abandoned his portion of the invasion as well. The campaign was a disaster.

The expedition had its origins as early as 1708. Proposals to take French Canada were not uncommon, but were always dismissed as unfeasible. In 1708, Samuel Vetch, Governor of Nova Scotia had proposed a venture that moved beyond initial planning, spearheaded by the Northern Secretariat. Preparations foundered though in the wake of Harley's removal from office, and it was not until the end of 1710 that the plans were revived under the instigation of Hovenden Walker. Walker, a naval officer who served under Rooke at the Battle of Vigo Bay, was promoted to Admiral in advance of his leadership role in the Quebec Expedition. As the Expedition took shape, it became clear that it would be a massive undertaking. More than 6000 soldiers were to be deployed across a number of ships, with the squadron led by the ships Saphire[sic] and Leopard, commanded by Captains Cockburn and Cook, respectively. After a number of delays owing to the weather and the movement of French ships in Dunkirk and Brest, the fleet sailed for New York at the beginning of June, 1711. Once in New York, the expedition rendezvoused with colonial Governor Hunter, and coordinated a joint amphibious assault and overland invasion. Then, on August 5, the invasion fleet foundered, and Admiral Walker's dreams of glory were dashed.

The invasion of Quebec was the last major offensive action taken by the British in the War. Shortly after its failure, the British began dispatching envoys to obtain peace terms.<sup>145</sup> Within a year, hostilities had virtually ceased, and the Treaty of Utrecht

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<sup>145</sup> Hattendorf, *England in the War of the Spanish Succession*, p 225-227.

was signed in 1713. In spite of its failures though, the Quebec Expedition can be looked at as the culmination of the developments of the British intelligence apparatus throughout the War of the Spanish Succession. As St. John's letter suggests, the preparations involved "utmost... secrecy" – the domain of the intelligence apparatus. The invasion required the cooperation and utilization of both intelligence and counter-intelligence techniques, as well as the incorporation of trans-Atlantic assets. Indeed, as the plan developed, aspects of trans-Atlantic coordination which were at the start of the War considered to be obstacles, were instead incorporated as assets.

Critically, the covert nature of the Quebec Expedition required centralization above and beyond any displayed in the English intelligence apparatus to that point. Information about the invasion was tightly controlled by those who orchestrated it. Consequently, most of the intelligence assets involved in its planning were unaware of the mission, mandating a streamlined and centralized apparatus. Similarly, the secrecy surrounding the expedition required even greater understanding and employment of counter-intelligence techniques than was seen earlier. The end result is that the Quebec Expedition demonstrates that the English intelligence apparatus had learned the lessons of the War, both centralizing and bureaucratizing while utilizing a number of sophisticated techniques, such as misdirection and misinformation.

The exact origins of the Quebec Expedition are difficult to trace, but the true planning of the 1711 mission began no later than October of 1710. It is clear that Queen Anne had long desired an offensive action against the French in North America, but her



council had advised against such an endeavour.<sup>146</sup> In October though, the Earl of Dartmouth, Sunderland's successor to the Southern Secretariat, was in correspondence with the Board of Ordnance regarding tents intended for a regiment at the Isle of Wight.<sup>147</sup> The Board of Ordnance responded in the negative, questioning the purpose of the tents. Dartmouth responded that "the tents which you were ordered to send to the five regiments... are intended for their use."<sup>148</sup> The supply of the tents in question would continue to be a logistical issue for the Quebec expedition until March of 1711. In every exchange, whether with the Northern or Southern Office however, the Board of Ordnance seems to have discounted the requests, in one case simply saying "we have no sent the requested tents."<sup>149</sup> It is probable that the Board of Ordnance failed to acquiesce to the State Secretariats' requests because the Secretaries were consistently vague in their correspondences about the reasons for the requisition. This was not a case of administrative breakdown or politics though; the Quebec Expedition was, for all intents and purposes, a black op.

Instructions written on behalf of Queen Anne by St John make this aspect of the venture explicit. The packet, addressed to Robert Hunter, Governor of New York states that to ensure "that these Our good intentions may not in any wise be Divulged, but

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<sup>146</sup> As the War on the Continent had ground down, and the Allied forces encountered setbacks, particularly in Catalonia, the British government began to pay more attention to those areas in which they presumed would be post-War gains, for instance, Gibraltar, which already began receiving significant attention in terms of future development by 1710. The New World, where Britain had encountered some success, had caught the attention of adventurer-investors (individuals who advocated and offered to partially finance endeavours like the Quebec Expedition) throughout the War. Unfortunately, the available Privy Council documents do not record Anne's motivation for backing the Expedition; all that is clear is that she did so, and very strongly.

<sup>147</sup> Legge, William. "Whitehall 16 October 1710." *Dartmouth State Papers*.

<sup>148</sup> Legge, William. "Whitehall, November 3 1710." *Dartmouth Naval Papers*.

<sup>149</sup> St. John, Henry. "February 23, 1710/11." *St. John Naval Papers*.

effectually be put in Execution, we have communicated the same [plan] only to...

William Lord Dartmouth and Henry St John.”<sup>150</sup> This measure highlights a number of revealing aspects of the expedition. To be able to plan a large military expedition, such as a trans-Atlantic invasion, with only two individuals knowing the purpose of the preparations, would necessitate a high degree of administrative efficiency and centralization. Beyond that however, keeping such an expedition secret would require even greater centralization. Dartmouth and St John were clearly concerned about the likelihood of the French discovering the design before it could begin. For the expedition to have any real chance of success without taking up tremendous resources, it would have to remain a secret.<sup>151</sup> This was an administrative challenge that was, at its heart, an intelligence problem. The British intelligence apparatus was required to function both in intelligence gathering, to discern what the French may or may not know, and in counter-intelligence, keeping the matter under wraps as best they could – all without the intelligence apparatus at large knowing what was taking place.

To that end, the instructions to Governor Hunter were to be carried to him by Captain Cockburn, Commander of the *Sapphire*, the lead ship in the convoy. While Governor Hunter’s instructions were explicit on the purpose of the venture, he naturally would not receive them until the squadron reached North America. Captain Cockburn’s instructions, by contrast, contained no definite information. Instead, they informed him

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<sup>150</sup> Stuart, Anne I. “Instructions for our Trusty and Well-Beloved Robert Hunter.” *St. John Naval Papers*.

<sup>151</sup> Dartmouth and St John were particularly preoccupied by the French fleet at Brest, which, with proper warning, could readily intercept the small squadron which would depart for Quebec. Conversely, to send any more than the minimum of ships would cause the French to move to intercept the squadron anyway, even without knowledge of the expedition’s purpose. This conundrum was at the heart of the Secretariats’ dealings with the Admiralty in the lead up to the Quebec Expedition.

that, upon landing in North America, he was to immediately defer to the command of Governor Hunter.<sup>152</sup> Additionally, the instructions commanded him to keep the packet intended for Governor Hunter on his person at all times, and to

Take care to have a weight constantly fastened to the said Packet, and that in case you are in the utmost hazard of being taken by the Enemy, you do immediately throw the said Packet over board in such a manner as that it may sink and that there be no possibility of its falling into the Enemy's hands.<sup>153</sup>

Should Cockburn or the Saphire be taken and Cockburn's instructions lost, Isaac Cook, Captain of the Leopard, the second ship of the squadron, had received a copy of the instructions intended for Governor Hunter. Cook was bound by his initial instructions solely to follow the orders of Cockburn, Cook was bound by the same instructions, and was then to deliver the plans to Governor Hunter in Cockburn's stead. In the convoluted fashion typical of intelligence however, were Cockburn simply to die, with the instructions still intact, his first officer was to take charge instead, with Cook remaining in the subordinate role. These instructions, while palpably cloak and dagger, demonstrate the gravity with which those in the know viewed the secrecy of the mission. It also illustrates the complex chain of command that went into planning the Quebec Expedition. Governor Hunter would know the exact details of the expedition as soon as the commander of the Saphire presented them to him. In the meantime, Cockburn knew nothing of the details of their expedition, while Cook knew even less.

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<sup>152</sup> Stuart, Anne I. "Instructions for our Trust and Well-Beloved Captain John Cockburn." *St John Naval Papers*.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

The system was designed to ensure that as few individuals as possible knew the details of the expedition. When the squadron arrived in New York, all would be made clear.

Given the lag time in communication though, the Expedition faced the challenge of preserving secrecy while getting the colonial militias into a state of combat readiness. Informing the Governor of New York of the purpose of the endeavour ahead of time would have certainly risked the French discerning the objective and both fortifying Quebec and attempting to intercept the squadron. However, landing in an unprepared Hudson Bay would have resulted in long-term logistical delays which would likewise have allowed the French time to invoke countermeasures. The solution of the State Secretaries was misdirection. On February 3, Dartmouth wrote to Governor Hunter addressing concerns that the French might “make some attempt on that place [of New York].”<sup>154</sup> Dartmouth’s recommendation was that Governor Hunter call together and begin drilling the militia, to be ready to repel a French attack.<sup>155</sup>

These instructions had manifold effects. Firstly, they ensured that, when the Quebec Expedition reached New York, they would, in theory, find a militia fully prepared for combat, thereby solving the initial problem. This solution had the added benefit of potentially misdirecting the French about the preparations in the New World. Should the French succeed in intercepting documents, they would, in theory, misunderstand

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<sup>154</sup> Legge, William. “February 3 1710/11.” *Dartmouth Naval Papers*.

<sup>155</sup> The possibility of a French attack in Continental North America was not entirely outlandish. By this time, the Carolina-Florida frontier had witnessed several attacks back and forth, while New England and New York both had suffered from attacks by Amerindians with backing from the French. However, there is a complete absence of any actual recorded intelligence concerning the possibility of a French attack from Quebec, only instructions referencing the possibility. Consequently, one may reasonably assume that those in the know in the British government did not actually believe that any sort of French invasionary action was imminent.

the intentions, just as Governor Hunter would. In this way, this sort of misdirection turned the trans-Atlantic communication delay from a hindrance into a boon. Such instructions accomplished the aim of the British in preparing the colonial militia for action, while at the same time delaying the French response to the colonial build-up – so long as the invasion fleet could sail before the Quebecois government could inform Paris of British activities.

Misdirection was the rule in preparations for the Quebec Expedition, and Governor Hunter was not its only target. The Board of Ordnance, the Council for Transports and even the Admiralty itself were all misled by communications for the State Secretariats. That same February 3, Dartmouth asked the Lords of the Admiralty if they could “spare some men of Warr for convoying Two Thousand Men from Ireland to Lisbon.”<sup>156</sup> Dartmouth had no plans on sending troops from Ireland to Lisbon; the troops bound for Lisbon already had their convoy taken care of, and were due to depart not from Ireland, but from Plymouth. Instead, these Men of War were intended to convoy the Expeditionary squadron into Atlantic waters before rejoining the Mediterranean fleet, once the Leopard and Sapphire were safely out of the reach of the French fleet at Brest. The Admiralty first raised objections, but Dartmouth eventually leveled “Her Majesty’s will,” and the Admiralty relented.<sup>157</sup> The invocation of Queen Anne was a powerful tool, but one which Dartmouth and St John seemed reluctant to

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<sup>156</sup> Legge, William. “Whitehall Feb. 3 1710/11.” *Dartmouth Naval Papers*.

<sup>157</sup> Legge, William. “Whitehall, February 14 170/11.” *Dartmouth State Papers*.

use; it is possible they feared that, should the French learn of Queen Anne's personal interest in seemingly standard matters, they could grow suspicious.

In instances where specific misdirection were not called for though, oblique language was the order of the day. There were two general instances in which vague references to the Quebec Expedition were used, rather than any real sort of misdirection. The first were small, or regular requests, which ultimately required no real justification, such as dispatches for intelligence reports, or requisitions for small quantities of arms.<sup>158</sup> In such cases, requests were made without further detail and were, in virtually every case, carried out without further questioning. In the second case were those requests or requisitions which were somewhat outlandish, that some explanation was required. In these instances however, the requests could not be handled by misdirection. A Colonel Dudley with the Board of Ordnance received from St John one such request on February 10. In the dispatch, St John requested, among other things, 5000 spades, 6000 shovels, 3000 "pick axes of all kinds" and 300 wheelbarrows.<sup>159</sup> A request of this magnitude would have necessitated some sort of explanation. However, for regular movements of troops, such as those to Lisbon or Barcelona, such requisitions were not handled by the Secretaries of State. Consequently, the request could not be masked as for another purpose; St John was forced to refer simply to an "expedition," while hiding behind Queen Anne's

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<sup>158</sup> Such as that which took place in February, when Dartmouth wrote to the Board of Ordnance requisitioning 400 pistols, where he offered no explanation, only sending the requisition. A few days later however, when requesting muskets and broadswords, he stated that they were required for an "endeavour which has... Her Majesty's blessing."

<sup>159</sup> St John, Henry. "Whitehall 10<sup>th</sup> Febry, 1710/11." *St John Naval Papers*.

instructions.<sup>160</sup> Meanwhile, in a request to the Secretary at War, Dartmouth offered up only “foreign service” as his explanation for ordering eight regiments be dispatched “immediately for Spithead.”<sup>161</sup> Given the primacy of the Southern Secretariat, Dartmouth, in effect, pulled rank.

This sort of internal secrecy was not without its drawbacks. Having to repeat orders, following up with the Queen’s authority, was already a waste of logistical time and diplomatic resources, but in some cases, without full details of the purpose of the mission, individuals did not comply with requests, even with the Queen’s anomalous support. Most notable was the case of a military engineer named De Bauss. In February, St John wrote to the Earl of Orrery, commander of the forces deployed to the Netherlands. In characteristic vague fashion, he informed Orrery that “the Queen has a service extreamly at heart which will from the Nature of it require a very good Ingenier.”<sup>162</sup> He proceeded to request that Orrery attempt to prevail upon an officer “in Harton’s Walloon regiment... called de Bauss.” Unfortunately for St John, one month later, de Bauss declined the offer, because he did not wish volunteer to embark upon a mysterious mission. St John was shocked. “I can hardly believe his circumstances to be so good as to incline him to refuse going... upon a service, where the Queen will employ him.”<sup>163</sup> He implored Orrery to offer any deal within reason to de Bauss to convince him to come along on the expedition. On March 27 though, St John was forced to

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<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>161</sup> Legge, William. “Whitehall, 13<sup>th</sup> March 1710/11.” *Dartmouth Naval Papers*.

<sup>162</sup> St John, Henry. “Whitehall, 20<sup>th</sup> Febry 1710.[11]” *St John Naval Papers*.

<sup>163</sup> St John, Henry. “Whitehall, 13<sup>th</sup> March 1710[11].” *St John Naval Papers*.

begrudgingly accept that de Bauss would not join the expedition. He chastised Orrery “naming the West Indies to him,” in spite of the fact that “the troops now embarking should not be designed for that part of the World.”<sup>164</sup> St John blamed the fear that he felt de Bauss must have held for travelling to the West Indies for his refusal to join the venture, but, ultimately, the Duke of Orrery was giving de Bauss the best information he felt he had. The ability of subordinates to act independently in a meaningful fashion was limited in the face of such secrecy and misdirection.

Misdirection continued even to the eve of the expedition itself. As the fleet prepared to sail, St John addressed the Lords of Admiralty to answer questions about the purpose of the venture. In his message, St John claimed that “Her Majesty, having some months since received advice that the French intended an expedition to North America... Her Majesty has pleased to direct what assistance and support could be afforded.”<sup>165</sup> The story offered was in line with the letter sent to Governor Hunter in February. The cover story had to be maintained. Indeed, with the expedition due to depart, preserving secrecy was even more important, for it was too late to learn in time if the French suddenly discovered the expedition’s purpose. In fact, given the attention that the preparations would have inevitably roused from the French by this time, it is likely that Dartmouth and St John anticipated that the French establishment would in some way learn what the document contained. Were that the case, they would have transitioned from misdirection to misinformation.

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<sup>164</sup> St John, Henry. “Whitehall, March 27<sup>th</sup> 1711.” *St John Naval Papers*.

<sup>165</sup> St John, Henry. “Whitehall 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 1711.” *St John Naval Papers*.



Misdirection is the process of attempting to divert attention from one point to another, such as the Dartmouth's insistence that the men of war he requisitioned were destined to convoy ships from Ireland to Portugal. Misinformation on the other hand is the deliberate communication of faulty information with the intention that it be learned and acted upon by the enemy. The difference is critical. The vagueries and lies told by Dartmouth and St John to the rest of the administration were intended to cover their tracks should the French manage to obtain intelligence. Misinformation implies an expectation that the information will reach an enemy, and on January 29, St John and Dartmouth acted with just that. Instructions to Admiral Walker, written once again by St John on behalf of Queen Anne, stated:

For the better concealing these our intentions of sending Land Forces to North America, We have directed only three months provisions to be shipped for our said Land Forces, being the usual quantity allowed for shipping Land Forces into the Mediterranean. We therefore hereby direct you to contract for three months provisions for 5000 men... and that the same be sent to [elsewhere.]”<sup>166</sup>

The intended plan then was to requisition the standard quantity of supplies at several stations, each of which would be picked up along the journey, to ensure that the Expedition would be adequately supplied. The choice not to simply obscure the number of supplies ordered is enlightening. Other requisitions for supplies elsewhere, and at other points in time were not obfuscated in quite this manner. The implication is that the Dartmouth and St John expected the French to get word of such a large supply

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<sup>166</sup> Stuart, Anne I. “Instructions January 29 1711.” *St John Naval Papers*.

request, and opted to mask the request as intended for a deployment of troops to the Mediterranean. Given ongoing conflict between the Emperor and France in Italy and in Catalonia, the ploy was a reasonable one.

The utilization of intentional misinformation is significant for the development of an intelligence apparatus. On a basic level, it requires a high level of centralization to choose a story and subsequently disseminate it. This process was of course easier when as few as four people knew that the story being disseminated was misinformation. More importantly though, misinformation necessitates an understanding of intelligence practices. One must understand that the enemy is engaging in intelligence practices as well for the idea of misinformation to even make sense. Beyond that, one must have an idea of what sorts of information the enemy is able to discern, and therefore what their understanding of one's operations are. In practice, this required the British to know firstly that the French had an operating intelligence apparatus, and that that apparatus was successful enough to penetrate British counter-intelligence. Dartmouth and St John needed to understand that the French almost certainly knew the size of routine supply shipments, and that they could use the French knowledge to their own advantage. Misinformation then necessitated an understanding of the capabilities of intelligence apparatuses, both their own and their opponents'.

Queen Anne's orders for supplies were not the only instance of deliberate misinformation. The Admiralty was once again the unwitting pawn in misdirection and misinformation on January 30. Dartmouth informed the Lords of the Admiralty of intelligence received which indicated that the French planned an assault on Gibraltar.

Therefore, he ordered the Admiralty to instruct Sir John Jennings, Commander of the Mediterranean Fleet, to prepare for a possible preemptive fleet action with reinforcements from a few ships stationed in the Channel. The instructions were to be sent along a number of channels.<sup>167</sup> The attack the intelligence warned of never materialized, but the preemptive preparations gave Dartmouth and St John yet another excuse for sailing unexpected ships out of the Channel. At the same time, sending the instructions along many lines of communication likely all but ensured that some would be intercepted by the French. The misinformation continued.

Misinformation did not mean however that the British had given up on the counter-intelligence apparatus they had begun cultivating at the midpoint of the War. Instead, it appears they that they came to terms with the limitations of their apparatus while fully continuing their counter-intelligence activities. That the counter-intelligence apparatus continued to function is evidenced by a report copied to Robert Harley, the disgraced Northern Secretary whose disorganized ministry led to a long-term leak of secret documents to the French. Harley, after spending two years on the outside of Queen Anne's Government had, by 1710, finally regained her good graces, and was appointed as Lord Chancellor of the Exchequer. At the start of 1711, Dartmouth received a letter from an agent whose handwriting he did not recognize. Dartmouth forwarded the letter to Harley in speculation that the agent in question may have been one of Harley's. The agent told of what was, to him or her, a very peculiar incident.

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<sup>167</sup> Legge, William. "Cockpitt, January 30<sup>th</sup> 1711." *Dartmouth State Papers*.

When the *Leopard* and *Saphire* were sailing from Plymouth to Spithead, they encountered the French squadron from Dunkirk. The agent wrote that in the encounter, the commander of the British ships, likely Captain Cockburn, cried out in dismay “We are betrayed!” but managed to disengage the French squadron and return to port. It was the commander’s outburst which caught the agent’s attention, suggesting to St John that “perhaps you may learn what reasons the Commandare had to think he was betrayed.”<sup>168</sup> In the context of the Quebec Expedition, the Commander’s belief that he had been betrayed is fully justified. Even without knowing the specifics of the mission, Cockburn or Cook were fully aware of their operation’s covert nature. It is entirely possible that the unknown agent suspected however that Cockburn’s squadron was pursuing some nefarious purpose, and that he believed himself beset by British forces when he had, in fact, encountered the French. Whatever his or her reasons for informing Dartmouth however, the Earl kept to form and forwarded the message to the Admiralty board and made arrangements to have the agent paid standard dues. The counter-intelligence apparatus was continuing to work, even when the target was itself a British operation. In fact, the evolution of the British intelligence apparatus beyond the personal patronage based systems of years past is even more apparent in this episode. The chain of command was bureaucratized enough for an agent whom Dartmouth did not even know to be able to relay timely and effective intelligence.

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<sup>168</sup> Legge, William. “Whitehall, January 16<sup>th</sup> 1710/11.” *Dartmouth Naval Papers*.

Fortunately for Dartmouth and St John, not all of the intelligence procured by their counter-intelligence network was about the operation they were attempting to keep hidden. In March, when one of the Lieutenants attached to the Quebec Expedition “left his ship, and design[ed] not to return,” the State Secretariats initiated a manhunt on a scale similar to that in the hunt for Baud three years prior.<sup>169</sup> The Lieutenant was eventually captured and court-martialed for desertion. Whether the Lieutenant had intended to escape to France and betray what he knew about the Expedition, or if he merely took an unauthorized shore leave, the British intelligence apparatus were unwilling to take chances. The same philosophy inspired a rather extreme measure that April which amounted to a gag order. As the invasion fleet completed its final arrangements to sail for New York, St John readied one last set of instructions in the name of Queen Anne, including an order that “for one whole month from the arrivall of Our Shipps, the Leopard and the Saphire, There be an Embargo on all... vessels whatsoever, bound from any part of the Continent of North America to Europe.”<sup>170</sup> The stated intention of this embargo was to ensure that no information about the preparations for the invasion could reach the French back in Europe in time for the Bourbon authorities to respond to the threat. The authority of the State Secretariats to control comings and goings from the British Empire had been officially extended to the Crown’s North American possessions. Unlike before, when embargo measures were imposed initially by colonial government for the sake of deterring intelligence-seeking

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<sup>169</sup> St John, Henry. “Whitehall 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1710/11.” *St John Naval Papers*.

<sup>170</sup> Stuart, Anne I. “Whitehall, 4<sup>th</sup> April 1711.” *St John Naval Papers*.

privateers, now the embargo was imposed top-down, to preemptively prevent incidental information from reaching Paris. The Americas were now directly, if by no means fully, incorporated into the British intelligence apparatus.

The final piece of the story of the intelligence behind the Quebec expedition is the intelligence gathering itself. In an apparent failure of the British intelligence apparatus, there seem to have been no attempts to gain intelligence on the state of Quebec itself in at least the three years leading up to the Expedition. There were however several naval intelligence missions geared toward discerning the status of the French fleet at Brest as early as December of 1710. These operations had two apparent goals in mind. The first was to discover windows of opportunity for the safe departure of the (by European naval warfare standards) miniscule invasion fleet. The second function was to attempt to ascertain whether or not the French had learned the true purpose of Cockburn's fleet. To further that end, many smaller intelligence gathering expeditions were ordered dispatched by Dartmouth. The Earl ordered the first of these on December 30.<sup>171</sup> The Admiralty reacted promptly, sending only three days later a list of the ships in Brest that were prepared to "put to sea in 8 days time."<sup>172</sup> These requests for intelligence continued through the next several months, with Dunkirk also being a target for surveillance. Dartmouth sent his last direct request for an intelligence expedition to the Admiralty on February 19.<sup>173</sup> Naval intelligence on the state of the French fleets at Brest at Dunkirk continued to come in from the Admiralty, but

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<sup>171</sup> Legge, William. "Whitehall 30 Dec 1710." *Dartmouth Naval Papers*.

<sup>172</sup> Burchett, Josiah. "Whitehall Jan 2<sup>nd</sup> 1711." *Naval Advices*.

<sup>173</sup> Legge, William. "Whitehall, Feb. 19<sup>th</sup> 1710/11." *Dartmouth Naval Papers*.

Dartmouth and St John were by March already endeavouring to get the fleet out to sea. Still, one should not ignore the means by which this intelligence was obtained and reported.

Regular frigate expeditions to Brest and Dunkirk seem to have been a fixture of the naval intelligence apparatus by this point in the war, but the Admiralty's apparatus was clearly subordinate to that of the Southern Secretariat. Every piece of intelligence obtained was forwarded by Burchett to Dartmouth and, when the Southern Secretariat required more intelligence, the Admiralty was ready to comply. Additionally, the intelligence provided by the Admiralty was, of course, military intelligence. At the beginning of the War, such matters had been left solely under the purview of the Admiralty. By the end of the War though, naval intelligence had become fully incorporated into the British intelligence apparatus, headed by the Southern Department. Simply because the Admiralty was in charge of the Navy no longer guaranteed independence on naval intelligence. Just as the Southern Office had become ascendant over the Northern Office in the wake of Harley's fall from grace, so too had the Southern Secretariat come to dominate the intelligence apparatus of the Admiralty. Unlike the Northern Office though, there was no one specific event which may be seen as a watershed in this development; it was a slow, steady process throughout the War. Indeed, the State Secretariats dominated the Admiralty's intelligence apparatus to such a degree that they were able to plan and orchestrate a trans-Atlantic invasion all the while working around, and even through, the Admiralty,

all without the Admiralty's knowledge. The State Secretariats, and particularly the Southern Secretariat, had achieved paramountcy in intelligence.

Of course, all the intelligence in the world could not save the Quebec Expedition from the tragedy which awaited it. On August 18, the fleet's enemy was not the French, or internal betrayal, or even poor coordination; it was the bed of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and against such a foe, the British intelligence apparatus had no remedy. The expedition failed, and British offensive operations in the War of the Spanish Succession virtually ceased. When the Treaty of Utrecht was signed, the British lost the War, and the Phillip Bourbon became King of Spain. However, in many ways, the British came out ahead in the Treaty. They gained Gibraltar and Menorca as well as Nova Scotia, and with the *asiento*, their trading rights in the Spanish New World were secured. The British emerged from the War in a powerful strategic position, poised to dominate the rest of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

A similar claim may be made for British performance in the Quebec Expedition. While the venture itself failed, it demonstrated a number of successes on behalf of the British intelligence apparatus. Even proposing to keep such a large scale endeavour quiet suggests considerable confidence in the intelligence apparatus from the outset, and it appears that much of this confidence was born out. The Admiralty was wholly unaware of the purpose of the Quebec Expedition, while agents in the service of the Secretariats seemed oblivious of Dartmouth's and St John's designs as well. The invasion fleet reached North America without interference from the French squadrons



at Brest and Dunkirk, which suggests that Louis' government was also in the dark, or at least insufficiently confident to act.

Additionally, keeping such an operation secret while still being able to proceed according to plan was no minor administrative hurdle. Dartmouth and St John were required to balance the need to maintain effective intelligence and counter-intelligence while simultaneously keeping their designs hidden. That they were able to do so reflects the centralization of the British intelligence apparatus by the end of the War. Information flowed along proper channels where it was needed, and owing to the primacy of the State Secretariats, Dartmouth and St John were able to practice misdirection and misinformation. The British intelligence apparatus had advanced dramatically from the decentralized system at the beginning of the War. Misdirection could not function in an environment where three departments operated independently of one another, only sharing information through private channels. The demands of the War and the efficacy of centralization had led to a point where covertly organizing a black op like the Quebec Expedition had become possible.

Likewise, while the endeavour failed to acquire French Canada for the British Crown, it had demonstrated the degree to which Britain's New World possessions were incorporated, at least into the intelligence apparatus. At the War's inception, trans-Atlantic intelligence was based almost entirely upon rumors and reports from naval officers. As the War progressed and local officials were increasingly incorporated as intelligence assets, the New World was rendered less of an intelligence backwater until, by 1711, the Southern Secretariat undertook intelligence operations in America as in

Europe. Throughout the preparations for the Quebec Expedition, the Americas were, understandably, vital to planning. By this time though, the lag time in trans-Atlantic communication was not only accounted for, but even utilized to benefit intelligence operations. In sum, while the Quebec Expedition failed, its planning and orchestration demonstrated the British intelligence apparatus's development into a modernized intelligence service, ready, at least in theory, to meet the demands of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The British may have nominally lost the War, and the Quebec Expedition was an indisputable failure. Nevertheless, it amply illustrates the lessons learned by the British intelligence apparatus throughout the War of the Spanish Succession. Without centralized authority, the secrecy necessary for the Expedition to be organized would certainly not have been attainable. Likewise, the English intelligence apparatus at the beginning or even the middle of the War would not have been capable of working around the lag-time in trans-Atlantic communication to this degree, much less use it to their advantage. Perhaps most importantly though, the Quebec Expedition clearly shows the role of direct competition between the belligerents in these institutional developments. Misinformation and misdirection are immediate indicators of the professional awareness the British intelligence apparatus had attained by the end of the War. The developments of the War were not simple administrative transformations, but the product of institutional competitive coevolution.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

The British intelligence apparatus developed considerably from the beginning of the War of the Spanish Succession, and even further from its post-Restoration position. Before the War, the English intelligence apparatus still functioned largely as a glorified arm of the diplomatic corps. Intelligence assets were recruited locally by diplomats in posts throughout Europe, who in turn operated essentially autonomous intelligence networks while sending reports back to the State Secretariats in London. This system, in many ways, mirrored the patronage-based systems of years past, particularly when compared with what was to come. Likewise, in spite of England's growing trans-Atlantic empire, the New World was wholly ignored in this intelligence apparatus, in an omission that was symptomatic of its diplomatic origins.

The outbreak of the War of the Succession ushered in rapid and dramatic change from this centuries-long status quo. The first major development was coordination. As the War commenced, the manifold departments of the English government were forced to cooperate. The Admiralty, the Northern and the Southern State Secretariats all began sharing information with one another to facilitate Queen Anne's war goals. This communication quickly fell into a coherent system of intelligence collection and consolidation. The Admiralty, as the department most directly involved in combat, was the primary consumer of intelligence. In turn, the Northern and Southern Secretariats

both provided intelligence that was obtained from their independent networks to the Admiralty. The Northern Secretariat was the primary conduit of information between the two departments, while the Southern Secretariat, by virtue of its diplomatic connections, was able to obtain intelligence that neither of the other departments could easily access.

At the same time, the English intelligence apparatus was also forced to reconcile with the logistical challenges of fighting a trans-Atlantic War. While active fronts had not yet opened in North America during the War's early stages, the Caribbean was a hotbed of raiding, naval combat and privateering. In response, the Admiralty quickly fell into a pattern of ad hoc, decentralized intelligence gathering, with individual captains and admirals maintaining intelligence networks of their own. This system, which was a reasonable development from traditional practices of military intelligence and scouting, helped to alleviate the communication delay not just from London to Portugal or the Mediterranean, but across the Atlantic as well.

As the War continued however, the English intelligence apparatus became increasingly centralized. Counter-intelligence became a critical component of the English system, particularly as they began to adopt a more defensive, supportive role in the struggle, following successes like the seizure of Gibraltar and Menorca. In turn, counter-intelligence mandated a degree of centralization and consolidation that had not existed at the beginning of the War. The key instruments of counter-intelligence were local officials who implemented measures and reported suspicious activity up the

ladder. In turn, those in charge of the English intelligence apparatus could issue instructions to local officials in order to aid counter-intelligence activities.

In these affairs, the Southern Secretariat exercised great authority, most notably in restrictions on who could enter or leave the country. These powers were crucial to inhibiting potential intelligence activities of the Bourbons as well as occasionally uncovering dissenters who were sometimes, though by no means always, considered to be dangerous to the state. Such considerations extended across the Atlantic, particularly to Newfoundland and Caribbean holdings, each of which faced substantial French threats. The growing authority of the Southern Secretariat in intelligence matters made this consolidation possible, as local officials knew, with increasing awareness, to whom they reported in such matters. By 1708, the English, now British, intelligence apparatus had become highly centralized, with the Southern Secretariat working directly over the Northern Office. Owing to the incorporation of various local officials, both in Britain and abroad, under the State Secretariats, the intelligence apparatus also served as a consolidation mechanism, bringing the periphery more closely under the purview of the metropole.

Finally, by the end of the War, these changes reached their apex. The State Secretariats had become fully accustomed to the business of intelligence work, as evidenced by the Quebec Expedition. The Admiralty, formerly one of a triumvirate of effectively coequal intelligence bodies, had become subservient to the Southern Secretariat in intelligence matters. The Admiralty regularly sent intelligence briefs to the Southern Secretary, and was beholden to requests from Dartmouth for intelligence.

The full extent of the Admiralty's removal from the upper echelons of intelligence work though is the Quebec Expedition itself. Because it was a covert operation, the invasion was planned entirely without the knowledge of the Admiralty.

The Expedition itself involved countless intelligence and counter-intelligence operations, as well as the direct incorporation of trans-Atlantic intelligence considerations. It is perhaps most significant though for the degree to which it required the State Secretariats consider intelligence gathering on its own terms. The utilization of misdirection and misinformation illustrate just how sophisticated the British intelligence apparatus had become, and are representative of the degree of centralization which allowed it to function.

All of these changes were a direct product of the pressures of the War of the Spanish Succession. The War had involved many, shifting fronts, including several in the New World. At the same time, internal political shifts resulted in a tumultuous administrative environment. Josiah Burchett was the only individual to be employed in the same, intelligence related position for the duration of the War. Internal pressures were nothing compared to the challenges of the war itself though. The governments of Louis and Felipe were no slouches when it came to intelligence, staging operations in both the New World and the British Isles themselves. Confronted with the necessities of war, coupled with daunting internal administrative challenges, the British intelligence apparatus had no choice but to centralize or devolve into disorder. The developments which took place within the British intelligence apparatus are in keeping with what is now orthodox thinking on the processes of state formation. From the end of the

seventeenth, and going into the eighteenth centuries, European governments increasingly centralized and bureaucratized, with patronage giving way to professionalization. This evolution is even more significant when viewed by comparison to the intelligence apparatuses of earlier periods. Intelligence had long been executed by Marshall's dynamic individuals, and, in the British case, were a tool of the diplomatic corps. By the time the Treaty of Utrecht was signed, the situation had changed dramatically. Intelligence was a bureaucratized tool of the state, and intelligence activities had taken over the diplomatic mission of the State Secretariats.

The British intelligence apparatus exists at something of a counterpoint to standard narratives of British political history which argues that the War of the Spanish Succession witnessed the rise of the Whigs and presaged the advent of the post of Prime Minister under Walpole little more than a decade later. By contrast, Whig triumphalism is largely absent in this narrative of intelligence, and for good reason. While Hedges was replaced by the Whig Earl of Sunderland, the apparatus of the Southern Secretariat continued largely uninterrupted, in spite of the transition. There do not appear to have been any major shifts in intelligence practices when the Whigs took control of the Southern Secretariat. By contrast, the rise of the Southern Office over the Northern Office was brought about in large part thanks to the dismissal of Robert Harley from the position of Northern Secretary. Harley, who was a politically active favorite of the Whigs, could not escape the fallout. It almost appears as though intelligence was considered too important to be dictated solely by politics.

Intelligence apparatuses offer a window to the role that competition between the great imperial powers played in this process. This role is no mere abstraction. Kennedy presents competition as the key factor in the rise of the West, while scholars of state formation have viewed competition as the driving force behind such administrative developments as tax reforms. In matters of espionage and intelligence however, the competition was direct, and often urgent. In turn, the developments which took place in intelligence apparatuses were direct and calculated administrative responses to external pressures, in a way that other sorts of administrative evolutions were not. The result is that intelligence apparatuses provide a lens to examine not only these changes themselves, but what directly motivated them, and how those responsible for the changes viewed the systems themselves.

The directly competitive nature of intelligence opens the door for innovative comparative studies of state formation and imperial consolidation. While this study focused solely on the English intelligence apparatus, each of the various players in the War were, of course, conducting their own intelligence operations as well. These various operations occurred parallel to, in concert with, and in opposition to one another. Thus, future studies on intelligence apparatuses may seek to explore these overlaps as a means of comparing and dissecting these processes, while, hopefully, uncovering intriguing and exciting tales along the way.



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