

GENERAL INFORMATION - War Termination Codebook

War Name(s): Battle of Tampico

Participants: Spain, Mexico

Dates/Duration Of War: April 7th, 1829 - September 11th, 1829

Sources:

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Escribano Roca, Rodrigo, and Rebeca Viñuela Pérez. "Mexico's Independence and Republican Construction in Spanish Political Thought (1821-1848)." *Global Intellectual History* (Abingdon, England), ahead-of-print, no. ahead-of-print, 2024, pp. 1–23, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23801883.2022.2159851>.

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Sarkees, Meredith Reid, and Frank Wayman. *Resort to War, 1816 - 2007: 1816 - 2007*. 1st ed., Washington: CQ Press, a Division of SAGE, 2010, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781608718276>.

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Captured Territory & Imposed Occupation:

The Spaniards landed at Tampico and

WAR TERMINATION (CODED PER PARTICIPANT IN A WAR)

Participant: Spain

War Aims:

Territorial Gain: N/A

Unification: N/A

State Creation: Spanish politician Eugenio Aviraneta proposed that the invasion place a Spanish prince on the Mexican throne and create an independent kingdom with close ties to Spain. (Arboleyda et al. 475)

Regime Change: N/A

Treaty Enforcement: N/A

Reparation: N/A

Policy Change: N/A

Empire: “Pero la justificación la encontramos en la resolución de finales de octubre: para conservar “siempre unidas con la Metrópoli las posesiones de América que no se han separado enteramente de ella en estos tres últimos años”. (Rodríguez, 50)

English: Spanish justification for the war was “To unite the Metropol with the American provinces that have not been entirely separated.”

Trade/Resource Access:

Ethnic Concerns: The Spaniards were confident that the invasion would be “broadly welcomed” by the Mexican public, and specifically, the Spanish and indigenous inhabitants of the country. (Arboleyda et al. 475)

Primary Goal: Empire

Other goals:

Strategy: A state may adopt one of the following three types of strategies when fighting an interstate war:¹

Maneuver: Maneuver strategies are those whereby states focus on the use of speed and mobility to disarm the opponent through disrupting the opponent's ability to organize forces effectively. (Bennett & Stam 1996) Topete's strategy demonstrates mobility through the use of staging grounds in the North, South and Central regions; ideally, allowing troops to march inward into the center of the country. (Arboleyda et al. 473) In actuality, Baradas used a single staging ground in Tampico with the strategy of quickly moving into the interior of Veracruz. (Arboleyda et al. 473)

Attrition: No

Punishment: No

Total Size of Fighting Military Force:

Mexico

- Santa Anna: 4,000 men (Sims, 146)
- Valdivieso: 4,000 men (Sims, 146)
- Velazquez: 2,000 men (Sims, 146)
- Total: 10,000 poorly trained, irregular unpaid soldiers (Sims, 146)

Spain

- 1828 Spanish Council of State projections: 15,000 men + 6,000 reserve (Sims, 141)
- Actual: 3,000 veteran soldiers (Sims, 146)
 - 3500 men (Arboleyda et al. 478)
 - One flagship (Arboleyda et al. 478)
 - Two frigates (Arboleyda et al. 478)
 - Two cannonships (Arboleyda et al. 478)
 - 15 supply ships (Arboleyda et al. 478)

Battle of Tampio: 8,000 Mexican soldiers v.s. 3,500 Royalist soldiers (Schenoni, 226)

Threat of Third Party Intervention:

Notes:

Mexico in the years after the revolution was extremely decentralized, with factionalism rampant among both conservative and liberal sides. (Schenoni, 225) Power was held by local caudillo warlords. (Schenoni, 225) Due to this, the Spanish government believed its "reconquest" would

¹ Bennett & Stam 1996; and Stam 1996.

be achieved fairly easily because the Mexican government realistically was too divided and weak to put up resistance. (Arboleyda et al. 477)

Caudillos were populist figures with great political and social influence. (Fariás & Miklian, 573) They emerge when democratic institutions are weak or non-existent, which in the Latin American context, were dominated by the military and landed aristocracy. (Fariás & Miklian, 572) Santa Anna was the most famous and powerful of these Caudillos, and through his rule, we gain a window into Mexican-Spanish relations. Criollos, like Santa Anna, had a “paradoxical and paradigmatic hostile affection towards Spain.” (Fariás & Miklian, 575) in that high social class and power came from being a Spanish “white”, but conflicted with, “...the ceiling that Spain imposed to prevent his social ascent, as only soldiers born in Spain could ascend to the army’s upper echelons”. (Fariás & Miklian, 575) Santa Anna thus worked with the Spanish when beneficial, but also used them to negotiate more power for himself. (Fariás & Miklian, 576) In this way, Spain wasn’t an “enemy” as much as an obstacle in the way of the true war, which was the pursuit of regional power. For example, his 1822 revolt against Mexican-Spanish emperor Iturbid was not because of “Hispanophobia”, but rather the emperor’s “...tyranny and to re-establish the Mexican Congress.” even going so far as to offer an alliance with Spain and protection for their property. (Fariás & Miklian, 575) The expulsion of Spaniards was, rather, a populist movement that caudillos again used to gain power. “Although Santa Anna’s Perote pronouncement contained a clause requesting Congress to expel Spaniards from the country as the source of Mexican evils, Santa Anna applied this clause judiciously to gain greater support.” (Fariás & Miklian, 576)

Indeed, victory at Tampico boosted the legitimacy of Santa Anna as the head warlord of Mexico. (Schenoni, 226)

War also causes the expulsion of *peninsulares* and the reformation of the tax system to burden “medium and large businesses, foreigners, and the wealthy”. (Schenoni, 226)

Juan Bautista Topete, a Spanish naval captain, drew out the most detailed plan for invasion. (Arboleyda et al. 473) He recommends the Spanish split their landing force into five infantry battalions, six cavalry squads, and an artillery division that would land in Tampico. (Arboleyda et al. 473) Ideally, they would quickly head to higher ground in San Luis Potosi and Queretaro as they were rich in resources and had populations loyal to the crown. (Arboleyda et al. 473) Tampico ideally was an easy staging ground to escape the hostile Mexican coastal climate, whose intense heat and yellow fever outbreaks Topete worried would prevent the march into Mexico. (Arboleyda et al. 473) According to the plan, two other divisions would disembark: One in Santocomapa in the north and Coatzacoalcos in the south, with both halves of the division heading toward provinces with many European residents who would support the invasion.

(Arboleyda et al. 473) The other would standby with backup expeditionary troops on coastal forts. (Arboleyda et al. 474)

Interestingly, Barradas, the chosen leader of the excursion, ignored all of the prior advice. His landing in Tampico during the summer caused yellow fever to decimate his forces. (EP, 478) Additionally, he landed the entire force in Tampico allowing the Mexican army to concentrate its entire defense in one place, and with Admiral Laborde returning to Cuba, Barradas was marooned with no escape or support. (Arboleyda et al. 478) Mexican citizens did not enlist in the Spanish army to the surprise of the Spanish, and instead deserted Tampico and Altamira to ensure the Spaniards could not utilize local support. (Arboleyda et al. 479) Additionally, the instability in the state did not hinder Mexican resistance, but rather, the Spanish invasion “served to cause a temporary lull in the factional political conflict as the nation rallied to the call for unity”. (Schenoni, 226)

Barradas surrendered and was allowed to return to Cuba on the condition they would not “take up arms against the Mexican Republic” again. (Arboleyda et al. 480) While this effectively ended the physical threat Spain posed to Mexico, Colonel Jose Antonio Mejia, a Cuban Creole who served with Santa Anna in the battle of Tampico, betrayed Mexico and met with the Spanish minister Francisco Tacon to plot for another reconquest. (Arboleyda et al. 481) Mejia drew up a plan similar to Topete’s, but Spanish officials were wary it was a trap concocted by the Mexican government. (Arboleyda et al. 481) Instead, the Spanish government resorted to diplomacy, recognizing Mexico’s independence if it put the Bourbon monarch Ferdinand VII’s brother on the throne. (Arboleyda et al. 481) The negotiations failed after Ferdinand’s death and in 1836, the two nations signed a treaty of “Peace and Friendship” in which Spain promised to respect Mexico’s independence so long as Mexico did not support Cuba or Puerto Rico in independence attempts. (Arboleyda et al. 482)

ROUGH NOTES

Spaniards: “They believed that imperial recovery depended on persuading the Spanish-American revolutionary leaders through the resurrection of the constitutional regime and the summoning of overseas deputies to the Cortes” (Escribano Roca & Perez, 3)

“The collapse of the Crown’s legitimacy with the captivity of Ferdinand VII by Napoleonic France and the outbreak of the juntero movement in the viceregal dominions had unearthed the fragility of the imperial system.” (Escribano Roca & Perez, 4)

Between 1823 and 1827, the Secretaries of State knew that, given the military and financial weakness of the Monarchy, reconquest was only possible through the support of the Holy Alliance (Escribano Roca & Perez, 8) 47

However, their perceptions changed after the rapid establishment of formal relations between the Spanish American republics and the European monarchies. From 1828 onwards, the Crown began to listen to the plans of various officials, adventurers and disgruntled inhabitants of the republics (Escribano Roca & Perez, 8)

Resort to War

- Ferdinand VII wants to regain Mexico.
- Disenfranchised Spaniards who flee to Cuba want to return and persuade the Spanish that remaining Spaniards in Mexico would support a reconquest.
- July 16th 3500 Spanish troops land in Tampico
- August 21st Santa Anna attacks the Spanish in Tampico.
- Yellow fever breaks out in the Spanish lines
- September 10th the Mexican army attacks again.
- September 11th, the Spanish surrender and are forced to return to their staging ground in Cuba.

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