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GRADUATE COLLEGE

FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY, 1763-1778, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE CARIBBEAN

A DISSERTATION

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ROOPNARINE JOHN SINGH

Kearney, Nebraska

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FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY, 1763-1778, WITH

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FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY, 1763-1778, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE CARIBBEAN

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Soon after the end of the Seven Years' War in 1763, the French began to revise their colonial policy and, in so doing, initiated a new mode of diplomacy. As a defeated nation, they made new plans for the recovery of lost territories and prestige, and they embarked on a general reform program in order to rebuild the army and the navy. Clearly, the French had not accepted their humiliation by the English as final. French officials began at once to prepare a retaliatory scheme which would press into service all French forces, whether on the continent or in the colonies. The purpose was clear. France intended to ready herself for a war of revenge. Historians of French diplomacy in the post-1763 period have agreed that she marshaled her resources for such a war of revenge against England and that, to this end, French foreign ministers sought to strengthen their country's relationships with allied powers, Spain in particular. But many historians, particularly in the

eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, have given little attention to the vital role which French colonies played in implementing the policy of preparing for a war of revenge. Caught in the interest of European expansion into the new world and the competition for colonies in the age of imperialism, they assumed that colonies existed to serve the exclusive interest of metropolitan countries and as centers of trade and commerce.

Eighteenth century historians were also influenced by the philosophy of colonization and mercantilism which had dominated political practice and economic thought. Therefore historical literature justified the planting of colonies from a utilitarian position. Examples are given in the following chapter which describes the writing of travellers, navigators, and explorers who encouraged the use of colonies in the prosecution of metropolitan expansion and economic interest. The works of Edward Long, History of Jamaica (1774) and Bryan Edwards, History civil and commercial of the British colonies in the West Indies (1793) also reflected the vested interest of European nations in the colonies. Such emphasis was similarly felt in Abbé Raynal's Histoire philosophique et politique des établissement et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes (1780).

In general, eighteenth century historians recognized that the purpose of French colonies was to serve the economic interest of the Métropole. This interpretation

underplayed the military or diplomatic value of the colonies. But there were exceptions to the interpretation of Long and Edwards. When Adam Smith published his Wealth of Nations (1776) he attempted to remove European monopoly in the colonies by waging war on mercantilism. Smith's work raised crucial issues pertaining to the colonies, for example slavery, and served as the foundation for later economists in the nineteenth century like David Ricardo and Karl Marx who stood against economic exploitation and for natural liberty, justice, and the rights of mankind. The same intellectual atmosphere also influenced Thomas Clarkson who wrote Abolition of the African slave trade (1830). Like Smith, Clarkson discussed many issues affecting the colonies, such as the need to abolish the slave trade, and urged a humanitarian position in dealing with the colonies. In contrast to Long and Edwards, Clarkson's work foreshadowed a different attitude among later historians, particularly in the twentieth century, an attitude which recognized the role played by the colonies in European diplomacy. An example is Eric Williams' Negro in the Caribbean (1942), Capitalism and Slavery (1961), and British Historians in the West Indies (1966), which discuss the problems and role of the colonies in the age of imperialism and their role in the making of the European past. Williams' works have generated considerable interest in Caribbean studies and in the importance of the colonies.

Contemporary historians, especially since World War II, have devoted more time to colonial studies and to the use of colonial archives. They are increasingly aware, additionally, of the participation of the colonies in the past in developing the nations of Europe. For example, Gouverneur Général Olivier wrote that colonization established between the colonizing country and the colonized peoples a relationship which can only be compared to that of mutual obligation and reciprocal services we find in a family between parent and children. Seen in this way, one cannot ignore the importance of that relationship. The colonial situation is bilateral. Olivier stated: "The interests of those colonized ought to be given at least as much consideration as those of the colonizers. And these interests must not be solely material ones. The share of the spirit ought to be at least as important as that of the body."[1]

It is in the interest of those colonized--the French Caribbean colonies--that consideration is given in the present research. This is supported by evidence that Etienne François de Choiseul, minister of foreign affairs, of war, and of the marine, saw in his plan for a war of revenge an important role to be played by the colonies. The findings indicate that Saint Domingue, Martinique, French Guyane, and Guadeloupe and its dependences were

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[1]Gouverneur Général Olivier, France and the Colonial Problem (Paris: Centre d'Information Documentaires, 1938), p. 36.

a primary factor in influencing the formation of a foreign policy designed to war with England. This study further reveals that, according to the plan, the colonies were to contribute significantly by supplying forces for that forthcoming war whether such troops fought independently or supported French battalions of regular soldiers to be sent from the Métropole. The thesis is supported largely by reference to a Mémoire which Choiseul wrote to Louis XV in 1765. Choiseul anticipated that the struggle with England would be fought on the seas and in the colonies. Consequently, French colonial forces must be adequately prepared to attack English colonies both in the Caribbean and North American areas. He knew that the English colonies in America were dissatisfied with the mother country, and he predicted in his memoir that they would certainly revolt against England. If France had not declared war against England before the time of this expected American revolution, then French forces, including those in the Caribbean, would be summoned to aid England's rebellious colonies.

The thesis finds additional support from an examination of Choiseul's strategy for war. The French minister recognized the possibility that the outbreak of war with England could take place on the continent instead of in the colonies. He expected that William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, and English foreign minister who had resigned in 1761, might return to office and that if he did,

Anglo-French hostilities might erupt again into a continental war. In such circumstances, France could counter with a war of diversion against England. Spain, allied to France by the Pacte de Famille, would attack Portugal in an attempt to divert English forces from concentrating in the north of France. Hopefully, the Spanish attack would force England to come to the aid of Portugal, as in 1762, a course of action which would divide English forces in Europe. England would then be unable to send further divisions to protect her colonies in North America and in the Caribbean. The way, therefore, would be opened for an assault of English colonies by combined Franco-Spanish colonial regiments.

This study focuses on the role of French Guyane (Guyane) in order to exemplify in one instance Choiseul's scheme for war and to show that the colony was an important influence in his formation of foreign policy. Guyane was strategically located, in the direction of the wind, to lend support to French forces in the Caribbean in times of war. Choiseul was convinced of this advantage as early as 1762, but he did not utilize the colony's valuable position since overtures for the peace of 1763 had been made. In the changed circumstances of 1763, he reexamined the military usefulness of the colony and then issued orders for immediate colonization and establishment of bases.

Guyane was important in still another way. Choiseul

expected that in a war of diversion whereby Spain attacked Portugal, the Spanish Monarch, Joseph I, would escape to Brazil and establish his empire. This course of action, affecting both French and Spanish interests, possibly could be averted by an invasion of Brazil by Guyanese regiments supported by French battalions stationed in the Caribbean.

Choiseul's plan for war, however, was not realized during his administration, which ended in 1770, and the peace of Europe was maintained. The only major disturbance of the peace was the "war scare" of 1768-1770. It was during the ministry of his successor, the Comte de Vergennes in 1774, however, that Choiseul's plan was finally implemented. The new minister, following the policy laid down in the previous administration, successfully inaugurated it in 1778 when France, and in 1779, Spain, joined the American revolution against England in a war of revenge.

CHAPTER II

FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY AFTER 1763

"I command my cousin the Duc de Choiseul," wrote Louis XV in 1770, "to place his resignation as secretary of state and superintendent of posts in the hands of the Duc de la Vrillière and to retire to Chanteloup until further orders from me."[1] Thus ended the political career of a man who had directed the domestic and foreign policies of France from 1759 to the time of his fall from office in 1770. The Duc de Choiseul began his service at the time when France was making little progress in the Seven Years' War, and during his term of office, he attempted to defend France's vast and scattered colonial empire against Britain, the greatest naval power in the world. He allied France with Spain, Sicilly, and the House of Hapsburg but to no avail. Choiseul's ultimate failure to save the French empire in North America and India led, after 1763, to a revision of French foreign policy and, consequently, to the opening of

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[1]As quoted in John F. Ramsey, Anglo-French Relations, 1763-1770: A Study of Choiseul's Foreign Policy (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1939), p. 143.

a new era in diplomatic and colonial affairs. The revised policy, aimed at a war of revenge against England, provided for major reforms of French army, navy, and artillery, closer cooperation in foreign affairs with Spain based on the Pacte de Famille, and reform of the administration and defense of the French colonies.

A look at the foreign policy of France beginning with the establishment of peace in 1763 indicates that it was Choiseul's plan to restore the French empire and position. French prestige was badly damaged by the Seven Years' War, in addition to the loss of numerous colonies, and Choiseul was determined to restore both. He wanted to reconstruct the empire and restore France's position as a colonial power. In his Mémoire to Louis XV in 1765 he outlined the reforms he had started in 1763, part of which included reforms in the colonies. England, wrote Choiseul, was the "declared enemy" of the Bourbon crowns and wanted to govern the entire world. It was imperative that France make every effort to guard herself against England's "dangerous designs." War with England was imminent, he said, but peace should be maintained for a few years to give France time for preparation. In the event that England initiated a continental war, Choiseul planned to use Spain as a means of diverting the English on the Continent while France attacked the English colonies in the Caribbean. The islands of the French Antilles, Martinique, Saint Domingue, and Guadeloupe for

example, and the colony of French Guyane, would also play a significant role by augmenting the French forces and providing strategic military bases. In the East Indies preparation would be made on the Îles de France and de Bourbon to strengthen the forces at Pondicherry. France's energies must be concentrated on seizing British colonies, on helping the British colonies in North America if they should rebel against England, and above all on carrying out a successful invasion of Britain herself.[2]

Choiseul attempted systematically and successfully to consolidate and strengthen France's wartime alliance with Spain, an alliance embodied in the Pacte de Famille of August 15, 1761. Throughout the period between the Peace of Paris and the French Revolution, it was her Spanish alliance, far more than that of 1756 with Austria, which was the basis of French foreign policy. In his Mémoire of 1765 Choiseul himself referred to the Austrian alliance as "precarious," very different from the fundamental alliance with Spain. He suggested to Louis XV that if Charles III became involved in a war with England he must be supported by France. The maintenance of the alliance between Charles III and Louis XV was vital to Choiseul's foreign policy. During the last phase of the Seven Years' War the Franco-Spanish alliance remained unshaken in spite of the

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[2]Etienne François de Choiseul, Mémoire de Monsieur de Choiseul Remis au Roi en 1765 (Paris: Charles Giraud, 1881), pp. 8-9. (Hereinafter cited as Choiseul, Mémoire.)

total lack of military or naval success, contrast to the de facto Anglo-Prussian alliance which emerged in 1756 and was broken up in 1762. Both Spain and France were angered by Britain's maritime and colonial victories. Britain's possession of Gibraltar and her recovery of Minorca aggravated Anglo-Spanish disputes. It is beyond question that both Spain and France suffered from the success of England and, while the ambitions of Charles III and Louis XV were by no means identical, the Bourbon princes had a certain fundamental unity in their mutual hostility to England. The period between 1763 and 1770 saw the alliance between them consolidated, most noticeably by the commercial treaty of 1768.

At the same time that France attempted to strengthen the alliance with Spain, Choiseul informed Louis XV that the peace of 1763 was a mere truce and that he expected a resumption of hostilities anytime. He justified his argument on the assumption that William Pitt, former secretary of state in England, was planning to resume his ministry and that if he did, war with England could be expected. His warning expressed some urgency as seen in his writing. "...I will say in a word to Your Majesty that, if Your Majesty had war against England, it would be immediate, just as we envisaged it..."[3] Choiseul was sanguine about the outcome

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[3]Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., p. 20. "Si Elle avait la guerre contre les Anglais, il serait instant, au moment qu'on l'envisagerait..."

of a war with England and believed that it could be subsidized by the colonies at no great expense to the Métropole. Continuing, he assured Louis XV of the success of his plan:

> By following this plan we will make ready your Majesty's possessions in this part of the world, and I believe that this plan, which ought to succeed...is the only one which can assure your Majesty of his possessions, and to put them in a position to threaten those of the enemies and even to have success in America.[4]

Choiseul was convinced that his plan, discussed fully in the next chapter, was sound and that it offered the only possible means to recover the lost possessions and power. But, as mentioned above, such a recovery depended upon war. This meant adequate preparation and a mutual relation with Spain. It was the implementation of these objectives which paved the way for a new course in foreign policy that led France to recover her prestige and self-confidence. And it was the realization of these objectives which eventually led Choiseul to inaugurate a general reorganization of the army, a reconstruction of the navy, and innovation in artillery.

Re-colonization

An essential part of Choiseul's program of reform

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[4]Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., p. 20. "C'est d'après ce plan que nous préparons les possessions de Votre Majesté dans cette partie du monde, et je crois que ce plan, qui doit réussir...est le seul qui puisse assurer à Votre Majesté ses possessions et les mettre en état de menacer celles de ses ennemis et même d'avoir succèss en Amérique."

constituted attempt to find new French settlements and to populate and reorganize the French colonies which survived the Seven Years' War. He searched for strategic areas in the East and West Indies. In the east, as in the west, France had been defeated by the English. To preserve any influence in India the French forces at Pondicherry had to be reinforced. The colonizing expedition of 1767 to the Îles de France and de Bourbon was predicated on the assumption that these islands could augment French defenses in India and serve as strategic bases from which to launch an attack against English commerce.[5] In the west, Martinique and Guadeloupe remained French strongholds. Although weakened by the disastrous defeat of the Seven Years' War and susceptible to invasion, Choiseul strengthened these island bases by inaugurating a series of military and administrative reforms. He suppressed the milices which were for the most part inadequately trained. In the English islands it was on the poorer whites that militia duty fell as a heavy burden. The French planters, however, had ceased altogether to do guard duty, for which they hired mercenaries. They never received any military exercise except in the event of an impending invasion for which they always turned out unprepared. Consequently, military defense of the French

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[5]The Îles de France and de Bourbon are the islands in the Indian Ocean about 240 miles off the southeast coast of Africa. This expedition is discussed below.

islands was inadequate. But the inability of the milices to guard the coasts presented no serious problem after the termination of the Seven Years' War. On the other hand, the burden of maintaining some kind of defense was a principal reason for the planters to support suppression of the milices and to have in its place regular troops from the Métropole. Thus between 1763 and 1766, two battalions were sent to Saint-Domingue, one to Martinique, and three to Guadeloupe.[6] They were supplemented from 1765-1768 by the reestablishment of the milices which were reorganized and placed under the direction of the military. The strength of the French forces was further increased by companies of free slaves organized by parish administrators, and the entire defense force was placed under the unified command of Martinique and Guadeloupe. In addition, Choiseul's plan intended to gain support of French Guyane which, as discussed above, he recolonized in 1763. The colony was strategically located sous le vent, that is, in the direction toward which the wind blew. This meant that French ships, aided by the wind, could easily give needed help to other French forces in the Caribbean in the event of war.

The administration of the colonies underwent certain changes in the new era of French colonialism. In 1763, for example, Choiseul gave to the comptoirs of the Compagnie Gorée

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[6]Edmund Préclin, La France et le Monde de 1715 à 1789 (Paris: P. Renouvin, 1952), p. 492.

the responsibility to administer French territories of Gambia and Ouidah on the Gulf of Guinea. At Pondicherry he placed administrative posts under the control of the crown and created a bureau of the Indies within the ministry of the marine. In the French Antilles the dominance of Martinique over the neighboring French islands was removed and each island was granted administrative autonomy.[7]

Privileged commercial companies which previously had enjoyed a monopoly over colonial trade suffered under Choiseul's colonial reforms. Some critics held that these companies had contributed to the loss of the old empire by monopolizing trade solely for vested interests rather than for the interests of the state. Montesquieu, for example, criticized private companies by asserting that they abused their rights and exploited only for profit. He advocated that all companies should be controlled by the state.[8] Two contemporary economists, Jean Gournay and l'abbé Morellet, demanded that the company system, if allowed to operate, be opened to every one. Agreeing with Montesquieu, Gournay stood for state control that hopefully would lead to increased navigation, manufactures,

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[7]Albert Duchêne, La Politique coloniale de la France (Paris: Marchal et Godde, 1929), pp. 101-102.

[8]Baron de Montesquieu, The Spirit of Laws, revised ed. (New York: The Colonial Press, 1899), I, 371-372.

and prosperity for both the colonies and the Métropole.[9] The reforms which Choiseul initiated led to the liquidation of all private companies except the Company of the Indies, which was finally suppressed on August 13, 1769. In taking over the role of the companies, the state regulated commerce with the colonies, provided slaves, recruited colonists, controlled their administration, and improved ports and fortifications.[10]

Commercial interest in the colonies was, however, secondary to the program of colonization. In securing new lands Choiseul hoped to expand and rebuild the weak empire, to establish a white French population, to augment the defenses of existing colonies, and to build additional fortifications and bases for the purpose of reinforcing French military and naval strength. These aims were part of Choiseul's plan for a war of revanche against England. In one Mémoire he wrote, "it appears absolutely necessary, during peace, to populate the colonies and to send inhabitants there at the same time to improve the cultivated lands and to put them [the colonies] in a state of resistance against the

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[9]Christian Schefer, La France Moderne et le problème colonial 1815-1830 (Paris: F. Alcan, 1907), p. 21. Jean-Claude-Marie Gournay, 1712-1759, was a physiocrat, a member of the Grand Council and an associate of Quesnay and Turgot. L'abbé Morellet, 1727-1819, was a well known author.

[10]Préclin, La France et le Monde de 1715 à 1789, op. cit., p. 489.

enemies in time of war."[11] In another Mémoire emphasizing the importance of the colonies in his plan he wrote, "if we can get, as we hope, a population, precious by the presence of Europeans, its capacity will be specially used to provide the Îles du Vent assistance which was no longer received since the loss of the northern colonies..."[12] According to one historian, H. Ternaux-Compans, Choiseul was firm in his decisions to use the colonies as a military base. Ternaux-Compans cited the Kourou expedition of 1763 as a prime example of Choiseul's plan.[13]

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[11]Conseil, Mémoires 1765-1790, Archives Nationales; Series F^2C., Vol. VII, fol. 17., (Hereinafter cited as A.N.), "Il paroit d'une nécessité absolue de penser pendant la paix à peupler les colonies et à y faire passer des habitants tant pour y augmenter les cultures que pour les mettre en état de résister aux efforts des ennemis en temps de guerre."

[12]Mémoires sur la Guyane 1763-64, Documents divers sur la marine et les colonies, Archives Nationales, Series M. 1024 (3) dossier V. "Si l'on se procure, comme on l'espère, une population précieuse en Européens, leur industrie sera spécialement employée à fournir aux Îles du Vent tous les secours qu'elles ne tiraient plus depuis la perte des colonies septentrionales..."

[13]H. Ternaux-Compans, Notice Historique sur la Guyane Française (Paris: F. Didot Frères, 1843) pp.89-90. Kourou, the new settlement established in 1763, was named after the Kourou river. It was about eighteen miles north of Cayenne, the capital of French Guyane, which is located on the north-eastern corner of South America. There is no agreement on the date of discovery by the French of Guyane, also called Cayenne. The Ambassade de France, French Guiana, land of the rain forest (New York: Service de Presse et d'information, 1961) p. 7, stated that Cayenne was founded in 1604, and that in 1633 the Norman Companies obtained trading rights between the Orinoco and Amazon Rivers. E. Daubigny, Choiseul et la France d'outre mer après le traité de Paris (Paris: Hachette, 1892), p. 33, used 1626 as the date. There is agreement however that the colony was placed under the crown under Louis XIV in 1674. Before this, it was taken by the Dutch many times. In 1946 the colony became a French overseas department.

Discussing the motives of the Kourou expedition, he wrote:

> The desire to replace Canada which was ceded to England and to establish on the continent of America a white population strong enough to come to aid of those in the Antilles in the event that they would be attacked, were the true motives which compelled the French government in 1763 to colonize Guyane on a large scale.[14]

The Kourou expedition was the first of three attempts to expedite Choiseul's plan and to prepare the colonies in the event of war. As will be seen later, the expedition had been proposed as early as 1762, before the termination of the Seven Years' War. At that time the foreign ministry saw Guyane's position as strategic for supporting French forces in the Caribbean. In 1763 Choiseul carried out the earlier proposal and reestablished a new settlement at Kourou as part of his plan.

In 1764 Choiseul sent Louis Antoine de Bougainville, a private French navigator and explorer, to lead an expedition to the Falkland Islands (Malouines). Bougainville founded a French settlement, Port Louis, at East Falkland at the head of Berkeley Sound to serve as a base for French ships en route to the Pacific. But two years later France transferred to Spain the proposed base which was named

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[14]Ternaux-Compans, Notice Historique sur la Guyane Française, op. cit., pp. 89-90. "Le désir de remplacer le Canada qui venait d'être cédé à l'Angleterre, et d'établir sur le continent de l'Amérique une population blanche assez nombreuse pour venir en aide à celle des Antilles, dans le cas où elle serait attaquée, furent les véritables motifs qui engagèrent, en 1763, le gouvernement français à entreprendre de coloniser la Guyane sur une grande échelle."

Puerto de la Soledad. Meanwhile another port had been established by Britain in 1765 at Port Egmont on Saunders Island in the northwest of the group of islands. Britain formally claimed the fort. Spain negotiated for a British withdrawal but failed, and in 1770, a large Spanish force tried to expel the British from Port Egmont. War between Britain and Spain was narrowly averted and Britain returned to Port Egmont the following year. The Falkland crisis strained diplomatic relations between England and Spain. As will be seen in chapter eight, this crisis also involved France and led to increased Anglo-French tension.

Choiseul ordered a third expedition in 1764, this time to the East Indies, to colonize the Îles de France and de Bourbon. But the expedition was delayed, and in 1766 two ordinances were passed urging its departure and stipulating conditions under which the islands were to be administered. Choiseul's military objectives in the colonization were demonstrated when, in his letter to the Duc d'Aiguillon, former governor at Rennes and minister of foreign affairs in 1770, he wrote that the expedition to the east would begin with 600 men, to be followed by an additional 600.[15] The command of the expedition, which was finally underway in 1767, was given to Daniel Dumas, major-general and

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[15]Choiseul (Versailles) to Duc d'Aiguillon (Paris), July 5, 1776, A.N., Correspondance envoyée et Ordres du Roi, Colonie B., Vol. 125. (Hereinafter cited as Col. B., 125.)

inspector of troops during the Seven Years' War in Canada. Additionally, he was appointed governor of the new colony, assisted by an intendant, Pierre Poivre. The officials received full command of the French forces in the East Indies. The Île de France, the more important of the two islands, was given the seat of government. Besides its production of valuable commodities which the French had been shipping to France, the island had a suitable position from which the French could assault the English. For this reason the initial stage of colonization was largely military, followed by adequate supplies of ammunition and additional soldiers. From Port Louis, France, an order was requested for the shipment of fifty thousand pounds of gunpowder for service of the legion of the Île de France.[16] Later in the same year another ordinance created a company of canonnière-bombardiers for the Île de France.[17] In a Mémoire, Choiseul wrote that he "...would hold on to the Îles de France and de Bourbon and...would make an establishment at Madagascar."[18]

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[16]Choiseul (Versailles) to Choquet (Paris), October 14, 1776, Archives Nationales, Col. B., Vol. 125, fol. 403. "M. le Duc de Choiseul a donné des ordres au Port Louis pour qu'il soit fourni au magazin de l'artillerie de ce port cinquante milliers de poudre de guerre pour le service de la Légion de l'Île de France."

[17]Ordonnance du 1er décembre, 1776, Archives Nationales, Col. A., Actes et Pouvoirs souverains et Edits, Vol. 10, fol. 173. (Hereinafter cited as Col. A., 10.)

[18]Etienne François de Choiseul, Mémoires du duc Choiseul 1719-1785 (Calmettes ed., Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1904), pp. 393-394. "Je garderais les Îles de France et de Bourbon, et je ferais un établissement à Madagascar."

The record of the Ministère de l'Instruction Publique stated that Dumas "...was actively occupied with the preparation of an English war, according to the instruction which had been delivered to him before his departure..." from France.[19] Since the role of Dumas was important in carrying out Choiseul's plan in the east, a brief discussion of his work on the island is necessary. In a dispatch to de Castries of the French foreign ministry, Dumas wrote: "The broad line of governmental policy entrusted to my care was not limited to the administration of two small islands, to a local defense. It encompassed a great offense to be executed at the first rupture."[20] The location of the isles en route to the east offered a strategic position for an offensive attack against the British. Assisted by Dubreuil, chief engineer of the isles, Dumas organized a regiment of 3,000 men and recruited a militia of 800 whites and free Negroes. He also employed those Negroes still in slavery to reinforce defense. The total French force was estimated by Dumas to exceed 8,000 men. In another dispatch to

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[19]Ministère de l'Instruction Publique et des Beaux-Arts, Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques, Bulletin de la section de Géographie, Vol. XL (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1925), p. 46. (Hereinafter referred to as Ministère de l'Instruction.) "...il s'occupa fort activement de la préparation d'une guerre anglaise, conformément aux instructions qui lui avaient été remises avant son départ."

[20]Ibid., p. 46. "Les grandes vues du gouvernement confiés à mes souins ne se bornaient pas à l'administration de deux petites îles, à une défense locale. Elles embrassaient une vaste offensive à exécuter à la première rupture."

Versailles Dumas stated that if the French forces were adequately increased, "...well planned, directed and conducted, it would make the superiority of the enemy forces vain and useless; and if this plan is not judged sound, I do not know another plan by which we can establish the defense of this colony and put it in a state of safety."[21] Choiseul recognized that the Îles de France and de Bourbon were vital to the maintenance of French possession in the east, that they were conveniently situated in the main stream of English traffic, and that they were essential military and naval bases in case of war. In addition they could easily give some support to the French forces at Pondicherry.[22] Conversely, the French at Pondicherry would be able to render necessary help to the force on the isles. In his analysis of the complementary position between the isles and the colony at Pondicherry, Dumas said that "...some troops on the Îles de France, some fortifications at Pondicherry, these are the principles of all defense

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[21] Ministère de l'Instruction, op. cit., p. 47. "...bien conçu, bien dirigé, bien exécuté, doit rendre inutile et vain la supériorité des forces de l'ennemi; et si ce projet n'était pas jugé bon, je n'en connais pas sur lequel on pût établir la défense de cette colonie et par lequel on pût se flatter de la mettre dans un état de sûreté."

[22] L'abbé G. T. Raynal, Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes, 10 Vols. (Amsterdan: J. L. Pellet, 1780) II, 546. See also Henri Prentout, L'Île de France sous Decaen, 1803-1810. Essai sur la Politique coloniale du premier empire (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1901), p. ix.

and all offense in this area of the world."[23] In another letter to the Duc de Choiseul-Praslin, called Praslin, successor to Choiseul as minister of the marine from 1766-1770, Dumas reflected on the strength of his military preparation:

> In the present state of affairs, we can be sure that (always supposing Pondicherry is fortified and has within its walls a garrison of at least 1200 men), if war is declared, there will be a revolution in our favor on the day when we appear at the coast with a squadron of 3,000 men. Then the uniting of our forces and the necessary dividing of those of the English, due to the extent of their possessions, will give us complete advantage of the points of attack....If the operations of war are well conducted and are directed by sound and continually active policy, they can lead us in this area to great successes.[24]

Choiseul's plan and preparation for war with England were exemplified in the administration of Dumas in the east. When Praslin came to the ministry of the marine he supported the work of Dumas and under his administration several ordinances were passed confirming the plan of defense in

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[23] Ministère de l'Instruction, op. cit., p. 54. "Des troupes à l'île de France, des fortifications à Pondicherry, voilà les principes de toute défensive et de toute offensive dans cette partie du monde."

[24] Ibid., p. 58. "Dans l'état actual des choses, on peut regarder comme certain (toujours en supposant Pondichéry fortifié et ayant dans ses murs une garnison au moins de 1,200 hommes) que, si la guerre se déclare, il se fera une révolution en notre faveur le jour où nous paraîtrons à la côte avec une escadre de 3,000 hommes de débarquement. Alors la réunion de nos forces et la division nécessaire de celles des Anglais par l'étendue de leurs possessions nous donnera tout avantage sur les points d'attaque....Des opérations de guerre bien conduites et dirigées par une politique bien entendue et toujours active peuvent nous conduire dans cette partie à de grands succés."

in the east and increasing the French forces. For example, an ordinance in 1768 created a second company of canonnière-bombardiers; in 1770 another increased the canonnière-bombardiers to one hundred men on both islands and established two companies d'ouvrier; finally, another measure provided a company of one hundred men with fusiliers.[25] These royal acts maintained Choiseul's plan in the east but after his fall from office in 1770, and with agitation in North America for a revolution, the military preparation in the east witnessed a gradual decline. Preparation thereafter, was concentrated in the west, mainly in the French Antilles where French military and naval forces finally carried out, by their support to the American colonists, the war of revanche.

Alliance with Spain

The Pacte de Famille between France and Spain was a major influence in eighteenth century French diplomacy. It was signed in 1761, during the last phase of the Seven Years' War, when Pitt insisted on continuing the war with France until the latter agreed to the terms which ensured England's supremacy in the colonial world. Choiseul countered by a threat to draw Spain into the war unless Pitt agreed to moderate terms. When Pitt refused, Choiseul prepared to

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[25]See Ordonnances du 1er Août, 1768; 1er et 10 décembre, 1770, Archives Nationales, Col. A., Vol. 12, fols. 28 and 32. Three chapters are devoted below to discuss French military activities in the Caribbean.

continue the war with the aid of Spain. The aims of Choiseul were explained in the 1765 Mémoire.

> I then proposed to Your Majesty to play two games at the same time: first to maintain negotiation with England in such a manner that if it did not succeed this time, it would serve from its simplicity as a base for general negotiation which should take place if Pitt fell before the influence of Bute. At the same time, and this was the second game which I thought necessary, I entered into an exchange of views with Spain, in such a manner that, if we were to make peace, that crown would find it necessary to support us in the negotiation, and guaranty the stability of the treaty. On the other hand, if we failed in this, my plan was that Spain should be drawn into the war, and that France would be able to gain by the events which this new development might produce, and repair her losses. Finally, if the event proved unfortunate, I had in mind that the losses of Spain would be lighten those which France might suffer.[26]

Choiseul's negotiation with Spain led to the Pacte de Famille, a compact which united the Bourbon powers in a mutual defensive and offensive alliance. The agreement stated that France was not to make peace until Spanish grievances against England were remedied, and that Spain

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[26]Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., p. 5. "Alors je proposai à Votre Majesté deux partis à suivre ensemble: l'un de soutenir la négociation de la paix avec l'Angleterre, de manière que, ne réussissant pas pour cette fois, elle servît, par sa simplicité, de base à la négociation véritable qui devait avoir lieu si M. Pitt succombait sous le crédit de my lord Bute. En même temps, et c'est l'autre parti que je jugeai nécessaire, je liaí la négociation avec l'Espagne, de façon que cette couronne, si nous faisions la paix, se trouvait intéressée à nous seconder dans la négociation et à assurer la solidité du traité. Si, au contraire, nous la manquions mon projet était que l'Espagne fût entrainée dans la guerre, et que la France pût profiter des événements que ce nouvel embrasement pourrait produire, pour réparer ses pertes. Enfin, si les événements étaient malheureux, j'avais en vue que les pertes de l'Espagne allégeassent celles que la France pouvait faire."

was to declare war on England if peace was not made. Additional provisions stipulated that France ceded to Spain, Minorca which was taken from England in May 1756. Minorca was to be garrisoned until the end of war. Other continental powers were invited to join the Family Compact. Portugal, for example, was invited to become a party to it, in order to close her ports to England. But if Portugal refused, she was to be treated as a common enemy and an ally of England. Choiseul was to secure the admission of Russia into the scheme. All military plans were to be concerted. The plan provided for an attack on Gibralter, Jamaica, Ireland, and even the Austrian Netherlands.[27]

Since the Pacte was the basis in negotiating for a Franco-Spanish relation and mutual defense after 1763, it is necessary to examine the reasons for which Spain entered into the Pacte, in the first place, in 1761.

Spain concluded the Pacte mainly because the Seven Years' War between England and France had increased Spanish causes for complaint against England. For example, in the period before the war, England had done very little to restrain English smugglers from menacing Spanish and

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[27]Archive d'Affaires Etrangères, Correspondance Politique, Espagne, Vol. 533, fols. 290-294. (Hereinafter cited as A.E.C.P.) For the text of the Pacte de Famille, see fols. 270-285. As it turned out Portugal refused to join in the compact and was invaded in 1762. Assisted by the English, she offered a successful resistance. Similarly, Choiseul expected England to aid Portugal in the war of diversion planned for after 1763.

French commerce. After the war began the English likewise showed complete disregard for the rights of shipping among the neutral islands of St. Vincent, Tobago, Dominica, and St. Lucia. The violation of the rights of neutral islands increased during the war. To aid the islands, France permitted them to trade with the French Antilles. England saw this as an open-trade policy and encouraged English merchants to manipulate trade with the neutral islands. This course of action reached such proportions that English merchants began to seize goods from their rivals, a situation that only deteriorated diplomatic relations among the colonial powers in the Caribbean. When it became clear that the tide of war was turning in favor of England and against France, and that William Pitt intended to seize the entire French possessions in North America and the Caribbean, Spain feared that part of the seizure might include the neutral islands which she had claimed. To prevent this and the possibility of an English descent on the neutral islands, and consequently the worsening of the French position, France and England, according to Spanish thinking, might end the Seven Years' War and make peace. But the making of peace by the two powers would still leave Spain to negotiate separately with England, and the Spanish government feared that a just settlement without the aid of France was not possible. Therefore, it was advantageous for Spain to strengthen her alliance with France.

Choiseul was aware of the Spanish dilemma. At the same time he needed Spanish support. As the Seven Years' War turned against France, Choiseul promised to make Spain's demands, that is, protection of the neutral islands, a condition of peace with England. This the English failed to accept. From the English view the entrance of Spain in the negotiations for peace made a peaceful settlement with France impossible and war with Spain inevitable. This is clearly seen in Article One of the Pacte made in the secret convention of August, 1761. The article declared that if England refused the conditions of peace offered by France, and if peace was not made before May 1, 1762, Spain would declare war on England. The secret convention did not remain a secret to the English and peace was not made. Meanwhile, negotiations continued between Choiseul and Pitt, but England, anticipating events, declared war on Spain in January, 1762.[28]

The territory of Louisiana was an additional factor affecting the Spanish decision to join the Pacte de Famille. Spain saw the extensive territory as a menace to the safety of Mexico if the English captured it from the French. Confronted with the possibility that Canada might also be lost to the English, and knowing that the French position

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[28]A. S. Aiton, "The Diplomacy of the Louisiana Cession" American Historical Review, XXXVI (July, 1931), 701-720. Also W. R. Shepherd, "The Cession of Louisiana to Spain." Political Science Quarterly, XLX (September, 1904), 439-458.

could be strengthened if Spanish support was secured, Choiseul ceded Louisiana to Spain. Although the transfer was not official until the conclusion of the secret treaty of November 3, 1762, the arrangement for the cession was a factor in the creation of the Pacte of 1761.[29]

As indicated earlier, failure to negotiate a satisfactory peace settlement between Pitt and Choiseul in the preliminary discussions in early 1761 contributed significantly to Spain's decision to conclude the Pacte with France. When Choiseul sent ambassador De Bussy to London in 1761 to begin overtures for a peace settlement, he instructed him to negotiate for a "reasonable peace"; that is, a peace which would maintain basically the colonial possession of both powers as in 1756.[30] France also hoped to guarantee the safety of Spanish possessions in America, including her claims to the neutral islands. But the correspondence between Spain and France for a Pacte not only made peace talks with England impossible but led Pitt to declare "...that England and France were two champions who fought each other; both were wounded, but if the first was less

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[29]Aiton, "The Diplomacy of the Louisiana Cession" American Historical Review, op. cit., 701-720.

[30]Choiseul (Versailles) to Bussy (London), May 23, 1761, A.E.C.P., Angleterre, Vol. 443, fols. 118-119.

she must continue to fight to assure victory."[31]

Charles III, who succeeded Philip V to the Spanish throne in 1759, wanted reforms and favored a change of course in Spanish foreign policy. Hence he agreed to the signing of the Franco-Spanish Pacte. Already, before his accession to the throne, he had displayed his reforming ideas as duke of Parma and king of Naples and had declared his intention of leading Spain once more to greatness. Charles III was qualified for the task and impressed foreign observers and his own subjects with his seriousness and application to state affairs. In foreign affairs he felt that commercial objectives were closely related with imperial defense. He was anxious to defend Spanish possessions from the attacks of rivals as well as to protect her trade from foreign interference. His most powerful rival was Britain, and he was anxious to maintain a colonial balance of power. This balance was one of the main features of his foreign policy, and it was the reason for entering the Pacte de Famille which offered an offensive and defensive alliance between the two Bourbon powers and which took Spain into the colonial war that France was waging with Britain. But Charles III miscalculated and

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[31]As quoted in Alfred Bourguet, "Le Duc de Choiseul et l'Angleterre: La Mission de M. de Bussy à Londres," Revue Historique LXXI-LXXII (September-December, 1899), 31. "L'Angleterre et la France étaient comme deux champions qui se battaient; tous deux étaient blessés, mais, si le premier l'était moins, il devait continuer le combat pour s'assurer de victoire."

underrated Britain's war potential and he entered a colonial conflict with inadequate naval resources. Britain was equal to the united forces of the Bourbon powers, and the Seven Years' War was a disaster for Spain as well as for her ally.

In negotiating for an alliance with Spain Choiseul endeavored to include two important treaties which he had outlined in a letter of May 12, 1761, to his ambassador to Madrid, the Marquis d'Ossun. The first treaty stated that the alliance

> ...will be a family compact to be drawn up and made binding in perpetuity on all future sovereigns of the house of France and which, being only of interest to the branches which compose it, will exclude any other power. The second treaty to which other powers may be admitted, will concern objectives regarding principally the king [of France] and the king of Spain, which are related more or less directly with other kings or republics.[32]

As discussed below, the treaties, incorporated in the Pacte of 1761, were the subject of considerable discussions after 1763. The fundamental principle, however, which governed the compact was "...qui attaque une couronne

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[32]Choiseul (Versailles) to Ossun (Madrid), May 12, 1761, A.E.C.P., Espagne, Vol. 532, fol. 235. "...l'un sera un pacte de famille à stipuler et à constituer à perpétuité entre tous les souverains de la maison de France et qui, n'étant relatif qu'aux intérêts des branches qui la composent, sera exclusif pour toute autre puissance; le second traité, auquel d'autres puissance pourront être admises à accéder, roulera sur les objets qui, regardant principalement le roi et le roi d'Espagne, ont aussi des rapports plus ou moins directs avec d'autres rois ou républiques."

attaque l'autre..."[33] The principle was stipulated in Article Four. The other twenty-eight articles dealt with military and naval matters and committed both powers to a mutual defense and offense against England. Essentially, the compact limited the union to the two Bourbon princes; it obliged one member to supply aid to the other upon request, and gave the one who provided aid the right to claim compensation in the event of loss of territory due to the assistance rendered. Accordingly, both crowns strove to maintain a common understanding in foreign policy and a united stand in facing the enemy.

The application of the defensive and offensive provisions of the Pacte of 1761 during the last phase of the Seven Years' War did not lead the Bourbon powers to victory. On the other hand, its failure to ameliorate the French position in the war in no way affected the relationship of the two crowns. Ironically, when the Peace of Paris confirmed the defeat of the Bourbon powers, the Pacte was the instrument used to strengthen the relationship between the two crowns. Since the Bourbons did not regard the Peace of Paris as final, they resumed negotiations shortly thereafter. France, in particular, reinterpreted the Pacte with a view to improve the diplomatic

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[33]See A.E.C.P., op. cit., Vol. 533, fols. 270-285, Article Four. Note that an alliance with Spain originated as early as 1733. It was reviewed in 1743, and greatly expanded in 1761.

relation between both countries.[34]

Following 1763, Franco-Spanish exchanges centered on the interpretation of the commercial provision as stated in Article Twenty-Four of the Pacte. The disputed article provided the Bourbon princes with equal commercial privileges with Spanish and French colonies and stipulated that "...in France the Spanish flag will have the same rights and prerogatives as the French flag, and at the same time, in Spain, the French flag. The subjects of the two monarchies in declaring their merchandises, shall pay the same duties that the nationals of the other country pay."[35]

The French interpretation of the article implied that all trade restrictions were removed between the two countries. Spain, however, feared the loss of much of her commerce to France and protested the French interpretation. Since the trade concession which Spain made to France was not very specific, the French ambassador in Madrid urged Choiseul to negotiate for a treaty clarifying and supplementing the much disputed article: "I have to speak to you, Sir, about the need to make a commercial treaty with Spain;

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[34]A.E.C.P., Espagne, Vol. 533, fols. 270-285. The commercial aspect of the alliance is continued later in the chapter.

[35]Ibid., Art. 24. "... de sorte que le pavillon espagnol jouira en France des mêmes droits et prérogatives que le pavillon français et pareillement que le pavillon français sera traité en Espagne avec la même faveur que le pavillon espagnol. Les sujets des deux monarchies, en déclarant leurs marchandises, payeront les mêmes droits qui seront payé par les nationaux..."

since the Family Compact has made our privileges unsteady ...it is necessary for us, Sir, to have a firm and permanent title which must be respectively obligatory."[36] Ossun's request for a permanent treaty found support in the French ministry as indicated in Choiseul's reply:

> M. l'abbé Beliardi will deliver, Sir, to you the various mémoires which the king has approved relative to our commerce and to the explanation of the Family Compact.... I have no need to describe to you the magnitude of this negotiation and the secret that it requires in order that it is not disturbed by the intrigue of our enemies, especially the English and Foreigners.[37]

In another document, Réflexions sur l'état du commerce Anglais et Français par rapport à l'Espagne, Choiseul stated that the main object of both Spain and France was the protection of commerce in the colonies. "They can adopt," thought Choiseul, "means of which the English will not be able to complain reasonably. It is necessary to undermine our enemies by the same peaceful war which they use against us."[38] Consequently,

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[36] Ossun (San Ildefonso) to Choiseul (Versailles), August 14, 1763, A.E.C.P., Espagne, Vol. 539, fols. 121-124. "Il me reste Monsieur, à vous parler sur la nécessité de faire un traitté (sic) de commerce avec l'Espagne vous voyez que le Pacte de Famille de rendu nos privilèges chancelants....Il nous faut, Monsieur, un titre solide, permanent et qui soit respectivement obligatoire."

[37] Choiseul (Versailles) to Ossun (San Ildefonso), May 10, 1765, Bibliothèque Nationale, Papers of l'abbé Béliardi, F. Fr. 10766, fol. 3. (Hereinafter cited as B.N., P.B.) "M. l'abbé Beliardi vous remettra, Monsieur, les différents mémoires que le roy a approuvés relativement à notre commerce et à l'explication du pacte de famille....Je n'ai pas besoin de vous représenter la grandeur de cette négociation et le secret qu'elle demande pour ne pas être troublée par les intrigues de nos ennemis et principalement des Anglais et des Etrangers."

[38] Ibid., fol. 49. "Elles peuvent adopter des moyens dont les Anglais ne pourront pas raisonnablement se plaindre. Il faut miner nos ennemis par la même guerre de paix dont ils font usage contre nous."

he asked Spain to provide a good market in the colonies for French commerce and at the same time pressed for a treaty preparatory for war. He argued that if war began and went against France, Spain and her flourishing empire would be an attractive target of English invasion, while France, with a small colonial empire, would suffer little from the fury of the enemy; that is, in the event of war France might be able to hold on to her meager overseas possessions, whereas Spain would not be able to do so since her colonies were very extensive. With this rationale Choiseul argued that it was more beneficial for Spain to obligate herself to France than France to Spain.

The correspondence between France and Spain after 1763 suggested the holding of a convention to clarify the Pacte and the meaning of the disputed article. The convention, which finally met on January 2, 1768, drafted a treaty consisting of a preamble and twenty-one articles. In clarifying and elucidating the Pacte, the new treaty accorded more extensive commercial provisions to the French with a reciprocal provision for the Spaniards in France. The last article made the convention a part of the Pacte of 1761. On March 13, 1769, another convention was called to work out some of the details of the earlier convention.[39]

The commercial treaty benefited France more than Spain.

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[39]For the convention of 1768 see B.N., P.B., op. cit., fols. 473-501; and that of 1769, fols. 545-555.

It also contributed toward the realization of Choiseul's design for closer relations with Spain in colonial and foreign affairs, for obtaining increased commercial privileges from Spanish colonies in order to aid in the reconstruction of the French economy, and for preparation of an eventual attack against Britain. The treaty likewise attempted to reduce the English trade concession which had been obtained by the Assiento at the Treaty of Utrecht. France requested her ally to keep a continual watch on England and to reduce her commerce; she encouraged Spain to use every possible means to reduce English prosperity in North America and to prevent her from any conceivable attempt to take Latin America. The urge to repress English commerce and influence and ultimately her forces was also expressed in a letter from Ossun to Choiseul asking that France unite with Spain in augmenting their forces against England.[40]

The commercial treaty strengthened ties between the Bourbon governments not only in economic matters but also in military affairs. This is seen in the following anonymous document entitled Projets d'accords commerciaux sur différents produits coloniaux.

> She [Spain] must invite France to have a dockyard and a strong squadron Windward to the coast of America. The position of the islands of St. Domingue and Puerto Rico

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[40]Ossun (San Ildefonso) to Choiseul (Versailles), June 20, 1765, A.E.C.P., Espagne, Vol. 543, fol. 125.

> is so good that it could be able to form the bulwark of the whole of America if these islands were ceded to France. By this means we will be able to prevent activities from Jamaica and all the establishments that the English can carry on the coast of Campêche.[41]

The attempt of France to obtain military commitments from the Spanish colonies and from Spain was more successful after the resignation of General Richard Wall, Spanish minister of foreign affairs, on August 21, 1763. His administration had been an impediment to Franco-Spanish relations, for he was generally in opposition to bringing Spanish policies into coordination with the French. Wall was succeeded by the Marquis de Grimaldi, former Spanish ambassador at the court of Louis XV, whose appointment was applauded by the French. Grimaldi's successor at Versailles, the Comte de Fuentês, further aided France in improving her diplomatic ties with Spain. Fuentês was one of the few Spanish diplomats to defend the idea of a Franco-Spanish alliance.[42]

The choice of Grimaldi renewed the French hope of

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[41]B.N., P. B., op. cit., fol. 68. "Elle devrait engager la France d'avoir un chantier et une forte escadre au Vent des côtes de l'Amérique. La position de l'Île de St. Domingue et de Porto-Rico est si belle qu'elle pourrait former le boulevard de toute l'Amérique si ces 2 iles étaient cêdées à la France. On briderait par ce moyen la Jamaique et tous les établissements que les Anglais sont àdportée de faire sur la côte de Campêche."

[42]General Richard Wall, former Spanish ambassador to London, became minister of foreign affairs in 1754. He also headed an anti-French party. Under Wall the Spanish cabinet was against any alliance with France, but, as seen below, this position was changed.

consolidating the alliance of 1761. In the voluminous correspondence which both courts exchanged, Choiseul's influence over Grimaldi was apparent. As Louis Blart stated, in "...this period one can truly say, to some degree, that the Duc de Choiseul governed the foreign affairs of Spain..." and that Spain sought frequently advice from the French minister. This was done in order to avoid conflict and reduce difficulties that seemed inevitable. Blart stated further that Grimaldi exercised a preponderant influence on Charles III in spite of opposition from the Spanish council which was unfavorable to French war design.[43]

Choiseul also corresponded directly with Grimaldi, sometimes without the knowledge of Ossun. He adopted this method to test his ideas and plans for war before presenting them to the French government. It was, in his opinion, a safe way to keep top level diplomacy secret. Blart's study of Choiseul's correspondence reveals that some of his letters to Grimaldi were even unknown to Louis XV, that the French minister felt more comfortable discussing Franco-Spanish affairs with the Spanish minister than with his colleagues at Versailles, and that his plan for a projected war with England had to be in the strictest confidence since he "...thought already to take his revenge,

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[43]Louis Blart, Les Rapports de la France et de l'Espagne après le Pacte de Famille (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1915), p. 77.

and his entire care led toward this goal."[44]

At the same time that Choiseul negotiated for an alliance with Spain, he encouraged Louis XV to correspond with his Bourbon ally, Charles III, for the purpose of improving diplomatic relations between the two countries. Franco-Austrian relations, thought Choiseul, were précaire, and in order to carry out his plan against England it was essential to have a balance of power on the continent. He informed Louis XV that just as Spanish trade was necessary to recover French trade in order to revive the economy, Spanish foreign policy should be guided by French foreign policy in order to secure a formidable defense. In a letter to Ossun, Choiseul expressed the hope that Louis XV and Charles III would strengthen the union contracted in 1761, under the Pacte, so that "...the two nations whose common glory and reciprocal advantages must from now always unite."[45] There were occasions when Choiseul's letters to Ossun reflected his impatience with the Spanish government. A typical example of this was contained in a letter to Ossun in June, 1764. He wrote: "I will be forced,

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[44]Blart, op. cit., p. 78. The correspondence between the two Ministers are conserved at the Archives Nationales, Series K 144. No. 181. "Pensait déja à prendre sa revanche, et tous ses soins tendaient à ce but."

[45]Choiseul (Versailles) to Ossun (San Ildefonso), May 31, 1763. A.E.C.P., Espagne, Vol. 538, fol. 198. "...deux nations que leur gloire commune et leur avantages réciproques doivent aujourd'hui unir pour toujours..."

sooner or later if the Family Compact is not consolidated by the Bourbon House, to give again Spanish affairs to the [French ministry] of foreign affairs..."[46] It is difficult to ascertain what Choiseul meant in this letter. It is likely that he had the notion of "war" by his use of "affaires étrangères." But this cannot be assumed. Certainly he sought for more than just an entente cordiale. He wanted a treaty that would definitely commit Spain to France, for he was convinced that Spanish alliance was necessary to French interest. To this end he wrote to Louis XV in his Mémoire of 1765:

> [The king must]...treat with the most scrupulous care his system of alliance with Spain as a necessary power to France....If you should lose this ally you would have no other in Europe....It is necessary therefore, Sir, that you engage more and more with Spain, your natural ally...[47]

Choiseul assured Louis XV that Charles III also needed France and that in the event of a colonial conflict Spain would be drawn into it eventually. For this reason France should maintain good relations with Spain and give her direction

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[46]Choiseul (Versailles) to Ossun (San Ildefonso), June 25, 1764, A.E.C.P., France, Vol. 574, fol. 148. "Je serai forcé tôt ou tard, si le Pacte de Famille n'est pas consolidé par toute la Maison, de remettre l'Espagne aux affaires étrangères..."

[47]Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., p. 6. "De ménager, avec la plus scrupuleuse attention, son système d'alliance avec l'Espagne de regarder la puissance espagnole comme une puissance nécessaire à la France....si vous perdiez cet allié, vous n'en auriez plus dans l'Europe....Il faut donc, Sire, vous attacher de plus en plus à l'Espagne, votre alliée naturelle..."

in order to insure a firm and indissoluble bond. Choiseul wrote: "...the Spanish king was obliged or determined by his haughty character to war against the English; I sustain, even until this misfortune, my ideas of necessary direction in order to maintain the indissolubility of union between the two crowns."[48]

The question which must be raised is to what extent did Choiseul expect Spanish involvement in a French plan for war? Did Choiseul anticipate complete participation as under Article Four of the 1761 Pacte, "...qui attaque une couronne attaque l'autre"? Did he want limited Spanish involvement and if so, how limited? Two things are clear: (1) Choiseul believed he needed Spain in the event of war, but (2) the extent and effectiveness of that support was in doubt. Choiseul wrote to Ossun in December, 1764, that

> There are two points of view to consider in a political system: in time of peace and that of war. The latter is prepared during peace when there is hope that during war the ally that you treat with care will furnish you with the help and money or men which you will employ to fight your enemies with advantage. This case is not true of Spain nor of Naples because this power will be only a dead body; in time of war it would be absurd to count on its force....Although Spain has been useful to us to make the last peace, this same usefulness has revealed so clearly her weakness that it is necessary for us to watch ourselves a second time; and the first consideration that will be for France, if war came between her and England, will be that Spain, despite the

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[48]Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., p. 6. "Le Roi Catholique était obligé ou déterminé par son tempérament un peu altier, à la guerre contre les Anglais; Je porte jusqu'à ce malheur, mes idées de ménagement nécessaire pour le maintien de l'indissolubilité de l'union entre les deux couronnes."

> stipulations of the Pacte de Famille, will evade from engagement in this war. Whereas if Spain had war first, we would be obligated by sentiment and politics to enter into it, without which I think that she would lose America in two years.[49]

In substance, the letter stated that if war came it was unlikely that Spain would agree to commit herself, but Choiseul did not rule out the possibility that Spain might, nevertheless, be useful to France. Choiseul emphasized, in another letter two years later, the need to be cautious with Spain.

> It appears to me that in this situation [war] we should be reserved in our relations and interest with Spain. It is necessary to consider our own interest and not to count on Spain if we have war... We must regard Spain useful to our commerce and for this reason to sacrifice in other aspects what is possible....We would make war alone at the beginning, and perhaps to the end if we are successful. If we are beaten we will try to engage Spain in it, as

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[49]Choiseul (Versailles) to Ossun (San Ildefonso), December 16, 1764, A.E.C.P., France, Vol. 541, fols. 275-276. "Il y a 2 points de vue à considérer dans un système politique, le tems (sic) de paix et celuy de guerre; ce dernier se ménage pendant la paix, quand on a l'espérance qu'à la guerre, l'allié que vous ménagez vous fournira des secours ou pécuniaires ou de forces qui vous mettront en état de combattre vos ennemis avec avantage; ce cas ne peut s'imaginer de l'Espagne ni du royaume de Naples, car cette puissance ne sera long tems (sic) qu'un corps mort en tems (sic) de guerre sur la force duquel il serait absurde de compter...quoyque l'Espagne nous ait été utile pour faire la paix dernière, cette même utilité nous a devoilé si clairement sa foiblesse qu'il faudrait bien se garder de nous la procurer une second fois; et la première attention qu'aura la France si la guerre survenait entre elle et l'Angleterre serait que l'Espagne, malgré les stipulations du Pacte de Famille, évitât de se mêler dans cette guerre, au lieu que si l'Espagne avait la guerre la première, nous serions par sentiment et politiquement obligés d'y entrer, sans quoy je pense qu'elle perdrait l'Amérique en deux ans."

in the last one, to help us get peace; such is my system...[50]

Obviously, Choiseul felt that Spain was more useful in time of peace than in time of war, that in time of war France would not be aided by Spain because the latter was weak, but that in time of peace Spanish colonies would be useful to France by giving commercial privileges and concessions. Choiseul held, in effect, that during peace time Spain would be most useful to France since her commerce would aid France to prepare for war. On the other hand he did not dismiss the possibility that Spanish military aid could be of some help to France in war if the latter were in a very difficult situation. Choiseul held, however, a second position in regard to Spanish aid. He wanted to use Spain in a war of diversion against England.[51]

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[50]Choiseul (Versailles) to Ossun (San Ildefonso), June 9, 1766, A.E.C.P., Mémoires et Documents, France et Divers Etats, Vol. 574, fols. 193-194. (Hereinafter cited as M. et D.) "Quoiqu'il en soit, il me semble que dans la situation actuelle, nous devons mettre beaucoup de réserve dans le feu de nos démarches et de notre intérêt pour l'Espagne; il faut songer à la notre avant tout, ne pas compter sur l'Espagne si nous avons la guerre...il faut regarder l'Espagne comme utile à notre commerce et pour cette partie sacrifier dans les autres genres tout ce qui sera possible...et quant à la guerre nous la ferons tout seuls dans les commencements, et peut-être jusques à la fin si nous avons du succès. Si nous sommes battus, nous tâcherons d'engager l'Espagne comme à l'autre guerre pour nous procurer la paix. Tel est mon système..."

[51]A full discussion of a war of diversion is given in the following chapter in connection with Choiseul's plan for a war of revanche.

How did Spain react to Choiseul's position? It was indicated earlier that Grimaldi was well disposed toward the thinking of Choiseul and, in general, cooperated, and that he tried to influence Charles III to have a foreign policy similar to that of Louis XV. Historians disagree, however, on the extent of Choiseul's influence in Spain. F. P. Renault, for example, held that French influence was decisive and that Spanish ministers supported the idea of a war.[52] Louis Blart, on the other hand, stated that the Spanish ministers did not support the war aims. He wrote that "...the ministers in Madrid showed themselves clearly hostile, the nation, unfavorable...", that it was an alliance brought about by a few statesmen, the Duke of Choiseul and Grimaldi, that the agreement had both strengths and weaknesses, and that its success or failure was at the mercy of events.[53] Blart recognized that the alliance was indispensable to France in a maritime war. At the same time, France could be of service to Spain in Italy, by means of her Austrian alliance, and particularly in America where she could aid her against the English. Hence Spanish help to France against the English constituted a definite part of Choiseul's plan, a plan for war.

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[52]F. P. Renault, "Etudes sur le Pacte de Famille et la politique coloniale Française, 1760-1790," Revue de l'histoire des colonies des Français, Dixième Année (Premier semestre, 1922), 47-48.

[53]Blart, op. cit., p. 78.

CHAPTER III

CHOISEUL'S PLAN FOR WAR

Based on the willingness of Spain to join France through the Pacte de Famille in a war against England, Choiseul began to lay the foundation for a plan. The plan was presented to Louis XV in a Mémoire written in 1765. In the document Choiseul stated candidly that England was France's enemy and that she was a threat to France.

> England is the declared enemy of your power and of your state, she will always be. Her avidity in commerce, the haughty tone she takes in the world's affairs, her jealousy of your power, the intrigues which she has made against you, make us foresee that centuries will pass before you can make a durable peace with that country which aims at supremacy in the four quarters of the globe.[1]

Choiseul predicted, however, that England's quest for world supremacy soon would founder on the shoals of an

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[1]Etienne François de Choiseul, Mémoire de Monsieur de Choiseul Remis au Roi en 1765 (Paris: Charles Giraud, 1881), p. 8. (Hereinafter cited as Choiseul, Mémoire). "L'Angleterre est toujours l'ennemie déclarée de votre puissance et de votre Etat; elle le sera toujours. Son avidité dans le commerce, le ton de hauteur qu'elle prend dans les affaires, sa jalousie de votre puissance et plus que cela les particuliers des différentes cabals qui tour a tour la gouvernement, doivent vous faire presager qu'il se passera, qu'il encore des siècles avant que de pouvoir établir, une paix durable avec cet Etat, qui vise à la suprêmatie dans les quatre parties du monde."

American Revolution, that the colonies would lead England to disaster and to defeat, that England would cease to be a threat to Europe.[2]

Consequently, France would be wise to pursue a course that would create increasing financial burdens for England without stimulating undue alarm. As he put it:

> Meanwhile we must, in politics, take precaution against her dangerous designs, and by defending ourselves against her [England] according to the means that I will indicate to Your Majesty, such as I conceived them in the article of the Marine, endeavoring to provoke not so much enemies against her as occasions for expenses. That is why the war against Portugal will always be, in every case, a useful war to Your Majesty, no matter what events result.[3]

Choiseul knew that England was in great financial difficulty as a result of the Seven Years' War and that she could not afford another war. He was certain that another war would not only increase England's national debt but would ultimately destroy her as the maritime power. Consequently, he advised that France devise means by which England would be forced to expend huge sums of money to support her army and to finance an expensive war. His plan

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[2]Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., pp. 8-9. An analysis of Choiseul's views on the American revolution is given in chapter nine.

[3]Ibid., pp. 8-9. "En attendant, il faut, en politique, se précautionner contre ses desseins dangereux, et en se defendant contre elle, selon les moyens que j'indiquerai à Votre Majesté, tels que je les ai imaginés, à l'article de la marine, chercher à lui susciter moins des enemis que des occasions de dépenses. C'est pourquoi la guerre contre le Portugal sera toujours, dans tous les cas, une guerre utile à Votre Majesté quelque événement qui en résulte."

called for a war which the English would be forced to defend whether it is fought "...on the continent, in Germany or in Flanders..." and naturally at great cost.[4] The forthcoming American revolution, thought Choiseul, would have similar results, but that event was remote. He added, however:

> That which is more immediate and which will cause a necessary fall is the immensity of English debts. When this power returns to war with Your Majesty, no matter what the events, the main task that Your Majesty must impose on its ministers is to spare France expense, in as much as it will be possible, while giving occasion to the English for the greatest possible expense. I realize the difficulty of this system, but I believe in knowing the possibility, and if Your Majesty, without letting yourself be carried away by excessive expenses in the first years of the war, like it has nearly always happened, will take care in such a way as to be able to afford to prolong this war a year more than the English will be able to afford, then it will no longer be the successes that will determine the peace, it will be the financial state of each kingdom, and Your Majesty will be the master of conditions.[5]

It is evident that Choiseul's basic strategy included

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[4]Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., pp.8-9. "Il en sera de même d'une armée anglaise sur le continent, soit en Allemagne, soit en Flandre."

[5]Ibid., p. 9. "Celui qui est plus prochain et qui procurera une chute nécessaire, est l'immensité des dettes de l'Angleterre. Quand cette puissance rentrera en guerre avec Votre Majesté, quels que soient les événements, l'attention principale qu'elle doit ordonner à ses ministres est d'épargner à la France la dépense, autant au'il sera possible, en occasionnant aux Anglais la plus forte dépense au'il se pourra. Je sens la difficulté de ce système; mais je crois en connaître la possibilité, et, si Votre Majesté, sans se laisser entraîner à des dépenses excessives dans les premières années de la guerre, comme il est arrivé presque toujours, se ménage de manière à pouvoir fournir à cette guerre une année de plus que les Anglais ne peuvent y fournir, alors ce ne seront plus les succès qui détermineront la paix, ce sera l'état des finances de chaque royaume, et Votre Majesté sera le maître des conditions."

the creation of a war of diversion, either in the colonies or on the continent or both, that would cause England huge expenditures. As will be seen in chapter seven, the plan called for French forces in Guyane to attack Brazil in order to prevent the Portuguese monarch, Joseph, from escaping there to establish an empire since a Portuguese empire in South America would threaten Spanish and French interests.

To fight a new war with England also meant that French forces on the continent and in the colonies needed to be reformed and augmented. Time was essential to that task and Choiseul understood that France must prevent a crisis until fully prepared. He wrote in the Mémoire:

> Moreover, to attain this basic goal [of revenging herself against England] it is mandatory, by every possible means, that your political affairs, Sir, be managed in such a way that the war does not take place sooner than in 1769. I do not know if we will be able to forestall until this time the misfortune of war, especially if Mr. Pitt returns to office, but I believe that we must employ all our talents to attain this goal.[6]

Choiseul's 1765 war plan was similar to an earlier one conceived in 1763.[7] The latter, entitled Réflexions

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[6]Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., p. 9. "Au surplus, pour parvenir à cet objet essentiel, il est indispensable, par toutes sortes de moyens, que vos affaires politiques, Sire, soient ménagées de manière que la guerre n'ait lieu tout au plus tôt qu'en 1769. Je ne sais si l'on pourra parvenir à reculer jusqu'a celle époque le malheur de la guerre, surtout si M. Pitt rentre en place, mais je crois qu'il faut employer tous ses talents pour y parvenir."

[7]Réflexions sur une guerre particulière entre la France et la Grande-Bretagne, Archive d'Affaires Etrangères, Correspondance Politique, France, M. et D., Vol. 574, fol. 143. (Hereinafter cited as A.E.C.P.)

sur une guerre particulière, stated that "...England had contemplated for some time to prevent France from having a powerful Marine and to make her fight on land in Europe.... But France will fight henceforth a war on sea."[8] Anticipating an English attack of France on the continent, Choiseul planned to counter by sea with forty ships of the line docked at Brest and Rochfort plus twenty ships of the line at Toulon. French defense would be further augmented by three companies of regular troops on each ship of the line. It was hoped that the French counter attack would be so formidable that the British forces would be forced to concentrate on the coast of Britanny in order to patrol the channel, in the Gulf of Gascony, and in the Mediterranean. Such a concentration of English ships in European waters would deprive the English colonies of adequate defenses and would allow the French Caribbean forces freedom to strike at will. The French squadron possessed a natural base at Môle Saint-Nicolas (Haiti) or at Cap Tiburon (Saint Domingue). In addition, the French flotte at Brest would prevent the English forces in Europe from coming to the aid of their colonies in the Caribbean. The plan anticipated that the French flotte would be aided by French

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[8]Bibliothèque Nationale, Papers of l'abbé Béliardi, Mss Fr. 10770, fol. 63. (Hereinafter cited as B.N., P.B.) "L'Angleterre s'est arangée auparavant pour empêcher la France d'avoir une Marine puissante et la faire combattre sur terre en Europe....Mais la France fera désormais une guerre de mer."

troops gathered in Flanders and Brittany and at Ferrol in Spain, and that if the English attempted to shift their forces from Europe to the colonies, two additional squadrons of fifteen ships of the line along with one hundred and twenty companies of troops could be sent to Saint Domingue. However, Choiseul was convinced that once the war began on the continent the English would be trapped in Europe, thereby allowing the French Caribbean forces to strike at the English in Jamaica and possible in America.[9]

According to the Réflexions, the French goal in the colonies would be to destroy English war supplies in America at Providence, St. Augustine, and the Bahama, and to destroy English commerce in Newfoundland, Quebec, Florida, and Jamaica. A successful campaign against England at these strategic places was predicted on the assumption that the French colonies could prepare all of their forces and be ready to strike before the English declared war.[10]

Both the Réflexions and the Mémoire postulated the beginning of a continental war which would be expanded into a colonial and maritime war. Hence Choiseul's basic plan of 1763 was maintained, although the 1765 Mémoire contained a more elaborate plan based specifically on a war of diversion.

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[9]B.N., P.B., Mss Fr. 10770, fols. 66-73.

[10]Ibid., fol. 82.

War of Diversion

In planning for a war of diversion Choiseul carefully examined the diplomatic position of the various European powers in order to assess those positions vis-à-vis France and England. Hoping to gain Louis XV's support for his strategy, Choiseul submitted his findings to Louis XV in the Mémoire of 1765. He informed Louis XV that Austria's interest in Italy, to cite one example, could lead to a disturbance of the Peace of Paris, a course which France should prevent in order to maintain the peace for at least a few more years thereby giving France time to prepare for war. Choiseul wrote:

> In Italy peace can be disturbed only by the House of Austria, either she will aim her ambition in the conquest of the Kingdom of Naples or in war against France. Your Majesty will plan to make a diversion against her in her Italian states. In either case, the king of Sardina is necessary, and I think that we must, for these goals, spare with care the court of Turin. As long as Your Majesty will be united with the court of Vienna, Italy will be peaceful, but this union, as I have explained above, may cease; we must therefore, in order to support it expect, each day, its end and war.[11]

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[11]Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., p. 8. "En Italie, la tranquilité ne peut être troublée que par la Maison d'Autriche, soit qu'elle porte son ambition à la conquête du royaume de Naples, soit qu'étant en guerre contre la France, Votre Majesté songeat à faire une diversion contre elle dans ses Etats d'Italie. Dans les deux cas, le Roi de Sardaigne est nécessaire, et je suis d'avis qu'il faut, pour ces objets, ménager soigneusement la cour de Turin. Tant que Votre Majesté sera unie à la cour de Vienne, l'Italie sera tranquille, mais cette union, comme je l'ai expliqué plus haut, peut cesser; il faut même, pour la soutenir, envisager chaque jour sa fin et la guerre."

Choiseul's concern about the position of Italy in European affairs also stemmed from attempts made at the court of Turin to establish diplomatic relations with the court of London. He wrote:

> One can only foresee for success the attachment stemming from the court of Turin for the court of London, attachment known to me, which has engaged me during the last war, to advise your Majesty about the arrangement of Plaisantin, without which the court of Turin, without any doubt, would have tightened its bonds with London; instead, the confidence in Your Majesty, which was firmly obtained by clarity and good faith from this arrangement, stopped the intrigues of England at Turin and put us in a position to put forth strongly the interest of the Kingdom of Sardina in favor of France, if circumstances take war to Italy.[12]

Choiseul sought to improve relations with Turin and with Sardina in an effort to offset any potential English influence in Italy and in order to maintain friendly relations between France and Austria.

Elsewhere in Europe, Holland presented some problems for France. According to Choiseul, Holland was "...inwardly as much an enemy to France as England, and is checked in its animosity by the greediness of profit that this state

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[12]Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., p. 8. "Il n'y a à prévoir pour le succès que l'attachement enraciné de la cour de Turin pour celle de Londres, attachement connu, qui m'a engagé, pendant la dernière guerre, à conseiller à Votre Majesté l'arrangement du Plaisantin, sans lequel la cour de Turin, il n'en faut pas douter, aurait reserré ses liens avec Londres; au lieu que la confiance dans Votre Majesté, qui a été solidement acquise par la netteté et la bonne foi de cet arrangement, a arrêté les menées de l'Angleterre à Turin et nous a mis en mesure de faire valoir puissamment l'intérêt du Roi Sardaigne en faveur de la France, si les circonstances portent la guerre en Italie."

makes by neutrality."[13] In his plan for a continental war of diversion, Choiseul envisaged attacking Holland just as Spain would attack Portugal. He wrote in his Mémoire that:

> I dare suggest to Your Majesty that if England wages war with France at the time when you will be obligated with Austria, Sir, that will leave us no other theatre of war on the continent than to go to Hanover, a ruinous and profitless war; as I say, I dare advocate to Your Majesty that in this case, I would advise to act towards Holland as Spain should act toward Portugal. In my judgment I would carry the war to the Seven-Provinces that would serve me in case of success, as guarantee against losses that Your Majesty could have in America.[14]

Choiseul assured Louis XV that once the continental war began, and given reasonable military reforms and preparations, France could keep the English occupied in Europe while the French colonial army and navy invaded the English colonies in the Americas. French military forces from Martinique, Guadeloupe,and Sainte-Lucie were large enough to undertake an invasion of English colonies in the Caribbean. The strength of the French approximated

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[13]Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., p. 9. "Quant à la Hollande, elle est intérieurement aussi ennemie de la France que l'Angleterre, et n'est retenue dans son animosité que par l'avidité des gains que cet Etat fait par la neutralité."

[14]Ibid. "J'ose avancer à Votre Majesté que, si l'Angleterre fait la guerre à la France dans le temps où vous serez lié, Sire, avec la Maison d'Autriche, ce qui ne vous laisse aucun theâtre de guerre sur le continent que d'aller à Hanover, guerre ruineuse et peu profitable, j'ose, dis-je, avancer à Votre Majesté que, dans ce cas, je lui conseillerais d'agir vis-à-vis de la Holland comme l'Espagne devrait agir vis-à-vis du Portugal. A mon avis, je porterais la guerre dans les Sept-Provinces, qui me serviraient, en cas de succès, de nantissement aux pertes que Votre Majesté pourrait faire en Amérique."

twenty battalions, excluding an army of 4,000 from Saint Domingue and a smaller army from Guyane. In addition, Spain was expected to assume an important role in the proposed war of diversion and to strengthen French forces both in Europe and in the Caribbean.

In another document Choiseul mentioned the role to be played by Spain:

> If England attacks France alone....Spain must then attack Portugal by diversion, and perhaps Ireland next....Spain must not annex Portugal because the king would leave for Brazil and ruin the Spanish possessions in America. The war of diversion must last four or five years.[15]

The proposed attack on Portugal would be pronged; one on Portugal, the other on Brazil by the combined Spanish-French colonial forces.[16] The attack on Brazil would avoid the establishing of a Portuguese empire in South America which might threaten the Spanish empire and the French colonies in the Caribbean.

At the same time that Choiseul invited Spain to join France in a war of diversion, he was cognizant of the weakness inherent in the Spanish army and navy.[17] Consequently,

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[15]Mémoire des questions préalables à résoudre entre les 2 cours avant d'arrester definitivement un projet sur la guerre de Portugal. B.N., P.B., Mss Fr. 10770, fols. 43-44. "Si l'Angleterre attaque la France seule....l'Espagne ferait ensuite une attaque de diversion contre le Portugal et peut-être ensuite l'Irlande....L'Espagne ne doit pas annexa le Portugal car le Roi partirait pour le Brésil et ruinerait les possessions espagnoles en Amérique. La guerre de diversion doit durer 4 ou 5 ans."

[16]Further treatment of the proposed plan of attack on Brazil is given in chapter seven.

[17]Spanish reforms are discussed in the following chapter.

he proposed major reforms for the Spanish military similar to those to be undertaken in France and emphasized on the importance of a strong united defense in the Caribbean. He wrote that:

> Their defense [Spanish and French] depend entirely on the squadrons which must be stationed always at Puerto Rico, Saint Domingue, or St. Yago in Cuba. These three positions are so strategic that in addition to the defense of the coasts sous le Vent they can restrain and threaten Jamaica at the same time; but it would be necessary that the courts of France and Spain work together in order to establish a plan of naval defense proportionate to that used by the enemy. The same positions are equally useful to aid Havana and Vera Cruz by sea or land...[18]

Choiseul's purpose in enlisting the Spanish in an attack on Portugal was to force the English to concentrate their naval forces in Europe. He opposed both the idea of a permanent occupation of Portugal or its division, as advocated by l'abbé Beliardi, the French Consul General in Spain.[19]

Choiseul assured Louis XV that financially the war

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[18]B.N., P.B., Mss Fr. 10766, fols. 148-149. "Leur défense dépend entièrement des escadres qui doivent être constamment à Porto-Rico, St. Domingue ou St. Yago de Cuba. Ces trois positions sont si belles qu'outre la défense des côtes sous le Vent, elles bridents en même temps et menacent la Jamaique; mais il faudrait à cet effet que les cours de France et d'Espagne se consertassent ensemble pour établir un plan de forces maritime proportionnées à celles que l'ennemi pourrait employer. Ces mêmes positions sont également bonnes pour porter du decours de mer et de terre à le Havane et à Vera-Cruz..."

[19]A.E.C.P., Espagne, Vol. 540, fol. 126. L'abbé Béliardi, French Consul General in Spain, 1758-1772. From 1757-1771 he was general agent of French commerce in Spain. He was also special representative of Choiseul at the Spanish court in Madrid.

would not affect France as much as England.[20] He added that the colonies themselves would underwrite part of the cost of war by assuming responsibility to finance reforms as stipulated in the general Ordinance of March 24, 1763.[21] In addition, Choiseul expected to win the proposed war with England, permitting France to restore her lost empire and to obtain compensation for the cost of the new war.

Reference of Choiseul's plan to finance the war is found in his Mémoire of 1765 and a letter to Ossun in 1766.[22] In the same letter he urged Ossun to persuade Spain to accept his plan for a war of diversion, adding that when a country (referring to Spain) was unable to strike against the enemy at designated places of combat, a war of diversion was the best means of attack.

Choiseul's plan for war of diversion was not received favorably in Spain. As mentioned earlier, Spanish ministers objected and supported their objections by referring to the inadequacy of the Spanish army and the expenditure that would be involved. Choiseul assured them, Grimaldi in particular that "...defense by sea, offense by land with our troops is the only sensible part..." which the

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[20]The cost of war has been discussed earlier.

[21]The Ordinance of March 24, 1763 is discussed later.

[22]Choiseul (Versailles) to Ossun (San Ildefonso), August 11, 1766, A.E.C.P., Espagne, Vol. 546, fols. 310-312. See also Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

Bourbon powers can play in another war.[23] He assured Grimaldi that the Portuguese army was in no better condition than the Spanish army and that just as England would render aid to Portugal in a war so would France to Spain. Choiseul further stated that the war would not be as expensive as Grimaldi envisaged and that since Pitt would not be expected to return to office "before one year," meaning before August, 1767, Spain would have sufficient time to prepare her military and naval forces. "Moreover," wrote Choiseul, "in spite of the return of Mr. Pitt and his very peculiar character to renew the war, I doubt that this event (war) would occur in a year."[24]

Revenge was the essence of French foreign policy after 1763. Historians are in general agreement with this. In his History of Spain, Charles Chapman maintained that "...France wished revenge and the restoration of her overseas domains while Spain's principal motive was a desire to save her colonies from conquest by England. Both countries therefore bent their energies to preparation for war."[25]

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[23]A.E.C.P., op. cit., Espagne, Vol. 546, fols. 310-312. "La défensive par mer, l'offensive avec nos troupes de terre, voilà le seul parti raisonnable."

[24]Choiseul (Versailles) to Ossun (San Ildefonso), August 11, 1766, A.E.C.P., Espagne, Vol. 546, fol. 212. "Au surplus malgré la rentrée de M. Pitt on son caractère très propre à renouveller la guerre, je doute que cet événement arrive d'ici un an."

[25]Charles E. Chapman, A History of Spain (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948), p. 387.

In the view of Louis Blart, "...the Duc de Choiseul passionately wished revenge against England, by patriotic sentiment and also from the position of personal honor."[26] A synthesis of both views comes from Henri Blet in his assertion that "...the peace signed, he [Choiseul] exerted himself to prepare a war of revenge against England, motivated less by colonial sentiment than by patriotism."[27] C. A. Julien wrote that Choiseul regarded the peace as a mere "truce" and therefore he prepared for a new conflict which would be "maritime and colonial." It is clear that the single objective was revanche but this "...was to be essentially maritime and colonial."[28] Unless Pitt took the initiative, Choiseul was determined not to be drawn into an expensive and distracting military commitment in Europe and the war was not to become a European one. France must concentrate on seizing British colonies in the Caribbean and in aiding the American colonies in revolting against the mother-country. An actual invasion of Britain might

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[26]Louis Blart, Les Rapports de la France et de l'Espagne après le Pacte de Famille (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1915), p. 93. "La revanche contre l'Angleterre le duc de Choiseul la voulait, passionnément, par sentiment patriotique et aussi par point d'honneur personnel."

[27]Henri Blet, Histoire de la Colonisation française (Paris: B. Arthaud, 1946), p. 278. "La paix signée, il s'efforça de préparer une guerre de revanche contre l'Angleterre, moins par sentiment colonial que par patriotism."

[28]C. A. Julien, Les Français en Amérique 1713-1784 (Paris: Centre de documentation universitaire, n.d.), p. 85.

even be necessary. But the fulfillment of these goals depended on a general overhaul of the forces of the Bourbon crowns, not only on the continent but in the colonies.[29] If revenge was the essence of French foreign policy after 1763, diversion was the means. This plan was well calculated. To this end Choiseul addressed Louis XV:

> This plan is great, I believe it useful; it needs to be explained and, if I am not dead when this happens, and Your Majesty remembers that no matter where I am, I will give to Your Majesty the explanations if Your Majesty desires them. It was the project that I meant to propose to Your Majesty for 1763 if peace had not come.[30]

However, well calculated, the plan of Choiseul depended on adequate preparation for war. He urged Spain to follow France in initiating needed reforms in the army and in the navy. Simultaneously, he passed the necessary legislation for similar reforms in the French colonies.

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[29]A. Goodwin, ed., The New Cambridge Modern History (Cambridge: The University Press, 1965) VIII, 254-255.

[30]Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., p. 9. "Ce plan est grand, je le crois utile; il demande à être expliqué, et, si je ne suis pas mort quand le cas arrivera, et que Votre Majesté s'en souvienne, dans quelque lieu que je ne trouve, j'en donnerai à Votre Majesté les explications si Elle les désire. C'était le projet que je comptais lui proposer pour 1763, si la paix ne s'était pas faite."

CHAPTER IV

PREPARATION FOR A WAR OF REVENGE

The plan which Choiseul conceived for war, soon after the signing of the Peace of Paris in 1763, was based on instituting a number of reforms among the Bourbon powers in Europe and in their colonies. The reforms were made in the military, navy, and artillery. They were also administrative and they called for increasing the strength of forces, on the continent and in the colonies, in preparation for a war of revanche against England.

Since time was needed to prepare adequately for war, Choiseul was careful to avoid any conflict with England that would affect his preparation. As will be seen in chapter eight, there were occasions which could have erupted into a major conflict, the Malouines episode, for example. But Choiseul acted as a negotiator between the contestants--Spain and England--to avoid war. As indicated earlier he did not want war sooner than 1769, and even in 1770, he felt that France was not ready. Peace had to be preserved not only to afford sufficient time for France to prepare, but also to give Spain needed time to overhaul her forces. He wrote that it was during peace that one

should consolidate, anticipate, and acquire a firm political system in Europe.[1] But the creation of such a system presupposed completion of reforms by the Bourbon powers. Spanish reforms were important in helping to carry out French plans. Only then would France be in a position to implement her foreign policy of revenge.

Reforms Under Charles III

At the same time that Choiseul introduced measures to reform French forces in France and in the French colonies, Charles III, in support of the foreign policy of Choiseul, similarly initiated measures for administrative, economic, and military reforms in Spain and in the Spanish colonies. Anticipating some repair to damages incurred to Spain in the Seven Years' War and hoping to strengthen colonial defenses against another English invasion, Charles III brought his foreign policy in harmony with that of Louis XV and implemented a number of French reforms in the Spanish colonies. But the intent of these measures, unlike those of the French, was purely defensive rather than offensive. The Spanish monarch, at least until the late 1760s, was unwilling to risk a war and consequently further losses in the colonies. And in his support of Choiseul no confrontation with England was in sight. However, the historian F. P. Renault wrote

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[1]Etienne François de Choiseul, Mémoire du Duc de Choiseul 1719-1785 (Calmettes Ed., Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1904), pp. 246-247.

that Charles III "...wished no more a revenge but his revenge. [Italics mine] His ministers...were ready to collaborate actively with the work of revenge....The Pacte de Famille was admitted as the base of Franco-Spanish relationship."[2] Perhaps it is misleading to emphasize the idea that Spain, like France, pursued a policy of revenge.

That was not the case, and Renault's position of a revenge might be misleading. Charles III and his ministers emerged from the Seven Years' War as a defeated power and Spain's military strength in 1763 was weaker than it had been in 1761 at the time she entered the war. In such a state Charles III envisaged that reforms were the only means to recovery and to strengthening of Spanish defenses. Any recourse to war would be costly and damaging. He was equally convinced that the survival of Spain as a colonial power and her maintenance of status as a European power depended on her own political and economic resources, the decline of which the earlier Bourbons had done something to arrest but little to reverse. At the same time he was cognizant of his wartime alliance with Louis XV. This

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[2]F. P. Renault, "Etudes sur le Pacte de Famille et la politique coloniale française, 1760-1790," Revue de L'histoire des Colonies françaises, Dixième Année, (Premier Semestre, 1922), 47-48. Charles III "voulait non plus une revanche mais sa [Italics mine] revanche. Ses ministres... étaient prêt à collaborer activement à l'oeuvre de revanche ...Le Pacte de Famille était admis comme base de rapports franco-espagnole."

alliance, he conceived, would aid Spanish reforms and contribute to security in the Spanish colonies. On the other hand he was equally cognizant that the alliance could draw Spain into war in the event of an Anglo-French conflict. Spain was also vulnerable to an English assault. It was difficult, however, for Charles III and his ministers in 1763 to decide on the future course of Franco-Spanish diplomacy and the degree with which an alliance should be contracted. This explains why five years of correspondence followed in 1763 and why a convention was eventually called in 1768 to resolve the nature and extent of renewal of the Pacte of 1761. And when Charles III finally agreed to renew the alliance with France it was with the intention that both countries would benefit mutually. The Pacte therefore exerted a great influence in shaping Spanish policies and reformed programs in the period between 1763 and the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789. It influenced Charles III to carry out an efficient colonial government aimed at rehabilitating trade with the colonies, improving colonial defense, and protecting the empire against invasion; in general, to restore Spanish maritime and military power in Europe and in the colonial world.[3]

The colonial activity of Spain was in some respect parallel to the French activity. Defense was the motive

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[3]A. Goodwin, ed., The New Cambridge Modern History (Cambridge: The University Press, 1965), VIII, 402-403.

which guided the expansion of the empire's frontiers. Fear of England led, for example, to an expedition to the Falkland Islands in 1764. In cooperation with the French, who also made a colonizing expedition to the Falkland Islands during the same year, Spain tried to expel the English from their settlement of the islands, particularly, at Port Louis and Port Egmont.[4] On the northern frontiers of New Spain similar motives operated. It was hoped that Louisiana would serve as a barrier against Anglo-American penetration into the trans-Mississippi west. She also tried to counter Russian advances in the Pacific where, in 1769, Spain began the colonization of California. Even during the American revolution the defensive expansion of Charles III was continuing.

Under the influence of France, Spain introduced administrative reforms in the colonies. The French system of intendances, for example, was used in the Spanish world. It was first tried in Cuba in 1764, in New Spain in 1768, and gradually throughout the empire. The new officials, with accompanying subdelegados and other assistants, took their place in the colonial hierarchy and were charged with the four departments of justice, general administration, finance, and war. In addition Charles III revived the visita,

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[4]Edmond Préclin, La France et le monde de 1715 à 1789, 7 vols. (Paris: P. Renouvin, 1952), VII, 484-485. An extensive discussion of the Falkland dispute is given in chapter eight.

a general inspection of the colonies by a royal commissioner. In effect the Bourbon administrative reforms attempted to systematize and centralize colonial government and to control it at all levels.[5]

Additionally, Spain strengthened her overseas military establishment by the formation of a colonial militia which supplemented the regular troops sent from the Métropole. The institution of the militia, designed after the French military reforms, was a part of imperial defense that resulted in the general overhaul of the old colonial system. In consequence, Mexico City had as many as fourteen companies of militia. Fortifications were also built on the Spanish islands in the Caribbean, mainly in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and along main ports of the mainland of South America.[6] The military reforms greatly strengthened Spanish forces. A letter to this effect from Ossun to Choiseul indicated that Spain had built two ships of eighty guns, launched one of seventy and started to build four more. He also said that at San Anders plans were underway to build four additional ships of the line.[7] This volume of naval, military,

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[5]A. Goodwin, ed., The New Cambridge Modern History, op. cit., VIII, 397-404.

[6]H. H. Bancroft, History of Mexico, 6 vols. (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1883-1888), III, 401-402.

[7]Ossun (San Ildefonso) to Choiseul (Versailles), September 3, 1764. Archive d'Affaires Etrangères, Correspondance Politique, Espagne, Vol. 541, fol. 67. (Hereinafter cited as A.E.C.P.) See also Vol. 540, fol. 64. San Anders is located in the Caribbean, east from the coast of Nicaragua.

and administrative reforms signified a basic change in colonial policy and was characterized by an imperial defense for the protection of the Spanish empire against aggression, for the restoration of Spanish maritime and military power in Europe, and for the strengthening of the Bourbon powers against England.

A letter dated August 1, 1765, from Ossun to Choiseul, reported on the progress and acceleration of Spanish reforms. It assessed, at the same time, the position of England for war and urged the Bourbon powers to increasingly augment their forces to meet a possible threat arising from the English. The letter indicated the apprehension of the English concerning Spanish military reforms. It implied that England might attempt to intimidate Spain, an intimidation expressed by the English ambassador at Madrid, the Count of Rochfort, in a conversation and a correspondence with Grimaldi.

> If the intention of the London court was in dictating the haughty sentences to Mr. Rochfort, to intimidate the king of Spain and his ministers, it did not succeed. We see with the greatest satisfaction that his Catholic Majesty was even more determined to accelerate, either in Europe or in the new world, his preparations of defense. It would be, of course, to put ourself in the case of being unprovided if we let them stay longer in the illusive hope that our natural enemies will negotiate faithfully in order to maintain the peace.[8]

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[8]Ossun (Madrid) to Choiseul (Versailles), August 1, 1765. A.E.C.P., Vol. 544, fols. 135-136. "Si l'intention de la cour de Londre en dictant à M. de Rochfort les propos de hauteur qu'il a tenus, était d'intimider le Roi d'Espagne et les ministres, elle n'y a pas réussit, et nous voyons avec la plus grande satisfaction que Sa Majesté Catholique n'en est que plus fermement determinée à presser soit en Europe soit dans le nouveau monde les préparatifs de défense. Ce serait évidemment s'exposer à être pris au dépourvu que de les ralentir dans l'espérance illusoire que notre ennemi naturel négocia de bonne foi dans la vue de maintenir la paix."

The letter added that England needed a long period of peace because of her weariness and expenditure in fighting the last war and for the purpose of consolidating her empire. Yet if her empire were threatened she would be willing to resume the fight.

> Therefore we must count only on our forces. If the English see that we are not capable to act, they will use this occasion in order to make greater conquest at our expense. We will be obliged to buy the peace by concession of humiliation, but it will not last long. They will still rape it in order to sell it again, and at the end we will lose all our possessions in America and the respect of the entire world....[9]

Reform of the French Army

At the same time that Choiseul tried to influence the direction of Spanish diplomacy after 1763 and to draw Spain into a war of diversion against England, he consumed much of his energies to reform the army, navy, and artillery, and in general, to improve the defenses in the French colonies. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the French army had been the most efficient military instrument in Europe. But at the end of the Seven Years' War it was never able to gain a decisive victory over the troops of Hanover, Hesse, and Brunswick. The decline of the army was caused not only

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[9]Ossun (Madrid) to Choiseul (Versailles), August 1, 1765. A.E.C.P., Vol. 544, fols. 135-136. "Ne comptons donc que sur nos forces; si les anglois nous voyent dans l'impuissance de faire, ils en profiteront pour se grandir encore à nos dépens. Nous serons obligés d'acheter la paix par des cessions humiliantes, mais elle ne durera pas long temps. Ils la violeront encore pour nous la vendre de nouveau, et nous finirons par pendre nos possessions en Amérique et notre considération dans l'universe entier...."

by inadequate financial resources allotted to it but also by weaknesses in its social composition. For example, the army consisted of a number of incompetent generals bound to the court. It also witnessed frequent bitter struggles between aristocratic and bourgeois officers. In 1750 one-third of the infantry officers were men of middle-class origin, who had acquired their commissions by purchase or had risen from the ranks. It was by birth and money, not merit which determined the appointments to senior military positions. As late as 1781, a royal decree provided that every candidate for a commission had to satisfy the court that he had possessed sixteen quarters of nobility. The nobility had dominated the officer rank, but their number was steadily reduced since the reforms of Choiseul and his successors, the Comte de Vergennes, for example. In 1775, the French army numbered 170,000 men. Of this 60,000 were officers whose pay and pensions absorbed more than half the army budget even though only one-sixth were on duty with their regiments. Out of an army of 200 regiments, there were, for example, 1100 colonels and 12,000 generals. But in 1789, when the army was nearly double that of 1775, there were only 9,578 officers.[10]

The reduction of officers was due mainly to the reforms introduced since 1763. During the administration of Choiseul the army was cut down by nearly one-half the number

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[10]J. O. Lindsay, ed., The New Cambridge Modern History, (Cambridge: The University Press, 1957), VII, 181-182.

of officers; but they continued to enjoy their pay and pensions. Choiseul compelled colonels in actual command of regiments to spend a part of a year with the soldiers, and instituted periodical maneuvers for the training of young officers. Recruiting, instead of being left to the captains of companies, was brought under the Minister of War; and in place of the "farming" of regiments and companies, a regular system of accounting and administration was begun. In his 1765 Mémoire, Choiseul wrote that commencing with the negotiation for peace "...I occupied myself with the reform. I felt that the greatest advantage of Your Majesty was that this reform be made promptly. I studied all the various reforms that had been made since Henry II...."[11] Choiseul added that his introduction of changes in the army, had two basic objectives. The first was military. It involved the division of troops on the basis of a certain number of officers to ensure efficiency and reduction of costs. The second was political. It dealt with correcting abuses in the army and with increasing it especially in times of war.[12]

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[11]Etienne François de Choiseul, Mémoire de Monsieur de Choiseul Remis au Roi en 1765, (Paris: Charles Giraud, 1881), p. 11. (Hereinafter cited as Choiseul, Mémoire.) "Je me suis occupé de la réforme. J'ai senti que le plus grand avantage pour Votre Majesté était que cette réforme fût faite promptement. Je m'instruisis de toutes les différentes réformes qui avaient été faites depuis Henri II."

[12]Ibid.

The reforms which Choiseul had introduced in the army after 1763 were largely the work of the Comte de Gribeauval. After distinguishing himself in the Austrian service during the Seven Years' War, Gribeauval was placed in charge of the French Artillery Corps. He was a specialist in developing the mechanical aspects of gunnery and artillery. He standardized the caliber of his cannon and eliminated the huge siege guns that had overencumbered older armies. In their place, guns and bayonets were made much lighter by shortening the barrels. This facilitated an easier and more accurate aim. As a result of the innovation, lighter pieces of weapon could be moved about the battlefield by men, and the artillery could keep pace with the infantry.[13]

Jacques Guibert, another able reformer, invented a means of combining mobility with close formation in the army. In his Essai Général de Tactique he attempted to synthesize various types of new military thought, thereby producing a formula for winning decisive battles. His system enabled troops to maneuver freely in the presence of the enemy instead of being tied to a prepared position. His methods attempted to make changes natural, simple, and easy. For example, he introduced irregular formation. Lines no longer had to be more than roughly straight and the units of which they consisted might be deployed in the reverse of the usual

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[13]Emile G. Léonard, L'Armée et ses Problems au XVIII Siècle (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1958), pp. 257-258.

order when this was quicker. One result was that an army marching in parallel columns could form at the double a line parallel to or at any angle with the line of march. In addition, troops posted at, or on their way to, one part of the line could be rapidly moved to another part. By reinforcing certain sections of his line at the last minute and by varying the formations of the different columns, so as to make them appear stronger or weaker than they actually were, the general could intensify the effect of surprise. Guibert's system envisaged the decisive attack as an overwhelming concentration of fire on a part of the enemy's line, followed by a charge merely to administer the coup de grâce. Concentration of force was the key to success and he therefore wanted less division of an army not more. The command of an army scattered in detachment involved a great multiplication of written orders and reports. The movements of the detachments had to be planned in some detail, to ensure that they all moved quickly in the right direction and were always so placed that they could be rapidly concentrated. In general, the new methods of warfare introduced by Gribeauval and Guibert called for intelligence and initiative in all ranks. A strong devotion to duty was also required.[14]

The military reforms under Choiseul eliminated many abuses, enforced discipline, and improved training and

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[14]Lindsay, ed., The New Cambridge History, op. cit., VII, 196-198.

instruction. The *écoles d'équitation* and the *école des dragons* trained soldiers in the art of maneuvering of cavalry. Some of Guibert's reforms were incorporated in 1791 in a drillbook which became the basis of French tactics and training up to 1830. A basic principle in the new system of warfare was uniformity. "If Your Majesty is forced to have augmentations, they will be only in soldiers and in uniform proportions."[15] Also the new formation in the army was supervised by about eighty high ranking officers (*officiers généraux*) in order to maintain a high level of efficiency. The modern General Staff saw its beginning after 1763. It was the French who advanced furthest in the direction of staff planning. This was a direct result of the lessons learned during the Seven Years' War and the genius of Lieutenant-General Pierre Bourcet. In 1766 Bourcet introduced a body of *officiers employé à la reconnaissance du pays* which became a special quartermaster staff (*service d'état-major des loges des armées*) in 1770.[16] But the latter was suppressed in 1771, one year after the fall of Choiseul from office, on the grounds that it was too expensive. However, during the administration of Choiseul an important function of the quartermaster staff was

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[15]Choiseul, *Mémoires du duc de Choiseul 1719-1785*, *op. cit.*, p. 255. "Si Votre Majesté est forcée à faire des augmentations, elles ne seront que de soldats et par proportions uniformes."

[16]D. D. Irvine, "The Origin of Capital Staffs," *Journal of Modern History*, X (June, 1938), 161-179.

concerned with geographical factors. It secured adequate geographical information before an invasion took place and prepared topographical sketches and expository reports. Individual members were also employed to investigate the provinces or coasts to be invaded or to conduct missions in foreign territories similar to the mission of De Kalb to America in 1768. This type of activity continued after 1771, hence the quartermaster staff was not entirely disbanded.

Choiseul's army reforms were inspired to some degree by the reforms of foreign armies, notably the army of Frederick the Great. In writing about the Prussian army Choiseul stated: "If we do not imitate them for administration of troops as well as for artillery, their greatness will cause the ruin of the French nation."[17] Choiseul recruited, in addition, Swiss regiments and employed them in the service of the French army. He wrote in his Mémoire:

> From the year 1763, the first year of peace, I was seriously occupied with a reform of the abuses prevalent in the Swiss regiment. According to ordinances and by treaty with the cantons, I was able to form a solid body of the Swiss regiment... The formation was the first political object: discipline and training of maneuvering were the second military object. I put the Swiss regiment...

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[17]Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., p. 13. "Si nous ne les imitons pas tant pour l'administration des troupes que pour l'artillerie leur perfection entraînerait la ruine de la nation française..."

in the service of the King.[18]

Altogether there were twenty-six foreign battalions in the French army comprising Germans, Italians, Swiss, Corsicans, and Irish French.[19] In 1770 the total number of foreign recruits was 152,758.[20] These came under the same regimentation as the French battalions. Uniformity, a basic principle of the military reforms of Choiseul, was maintained. When Choiseul reported in 1765 to Louis XV about his military reforms, he set the date of 1768 for its completion. He was confident that by that time France would emerge with a strong army that would "...reap the fruits at the next war."[21]

The effect of military changes which Choiseul introduced led the French army to recover rapidly from its weakness and partial destruction during the Seven Years' War.

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[18]Choiseul, Mémoires de Duc de Choiseul, 1719-1785, op. cit., p. 279. See also Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., p. 14. "Mais, dès l'année 1763, la première de la paix, je m'occupai sérieusement et avec activité à réformer les abus sans nombre qui préjudiciaient au service du Roi dans le corps des Suisses. Je parvins par des ordonnances par des traités avec les cantons à former un corps solide de la nation suisse...La formation était le premier objet politique; la discipline et la connaissance des manoeuvres étaient le second objet militaire et utile que j'avais en vue. Je parvins à mettre les régiments suisses...pour le service du Roi."

[19]Ibid., p. 14.

[20]Ibid., p. 258.

[21]Ibid., p. 15. "Je l'ai proposée à Votre Majesté qui l'a adoptée et qui en retirera les fruits à la guerre prochaine."

The impact of defeat and the success of military and naval preparation under Choiseul's administration inspired the army to emerge, even after 1770, as one of the more modern and advanced armies in Europe. For some time France had lagged behind the Prussian army in which technicians were drawn largely from the Junker class rather than from the middle class. In France the nobles were unable to provide such technical innovations. Choiseul's reforms attracted the bourgeois class which gave the necessary technical leadership lacking earlier.

The reforms led to a new composition in the army that had been monopolized by nobles. Whereas in Prussia the middle class technicians had been less respected and even despised by the Junkers, in France their counterpart were given an important place in the military. That is Gribeauval's artillery schools failed to make engineers out of the French nobles, a class which compared with the Junkers in Prussia. In addition French engineers were very able in the work of fortification. This was also the case in the French colonies where similar military change took place. Consequently, the French national and colonial armies witnessed a complete overhauling and prepared the military for a new era of warfare.

Restoration of the Marine

The reform of the French navy was the most successful part of Choiseul's preparation for war. Convinced that

it was a powerful navy which had led to England's success in the Seven Years' War, he initiated a complete reform of the navy similar to the reform of the army. Choiseul restored the marine as a most formidable weapon to protect French commerce and French possessions. In a Mémoire he wrote that "...the marine must be the principal defense of the colony...."[22] He believed that it was also essential if a renewal of the struggle against England was to have any chance of success. He held that before France could implement her policy of revenge, a naval reform was imperative.

The best documentary evidence of Choiseul's reform of the marine comes from his Mémoire of 1765. Choiseul wrote in a separate section of the Mémoire about the destruction of the navy in 1761 at the time he was given the additional portfolio as Minister of the Marine. He talked about the construction of ships, ports, and magazines which he had ordered to increase the efficiency of the marine in the war. He said, for example, that in 1762 he had spent fourteen million livres in order to send an expedition against the British in Newfoundland, to arm a French squadron at Rochefort for keeping watch over an English

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[22]Mémoire Concernant la déffense des colonies françaises de l'Amérique et le moien de tenir la marine militaire en activité en temp de pais, Amérique du Nôrd 1714-1777, A.N., Col. F^{2}C, Vol. 8, Carton No. 8. "...la Marine doit être la principale déffense des colonies...."

squadron at the Île d'Aix, to send another squadron to Saint Domingue for augmentation of the French forces, to arm a third for protection of French commerce in the Mediterranean, and finally, to prepare a fourth squadron for the attack of Rio de Janeiro. He reported that when the war ended in 1763 France had forty-four ships of the line and ten frigates. These were not in good condition and demanded immediate repairs if France were to wage a war of revenge.[23]

But the rebuilding of France's naval forces for war required, in addition, more ships, bigger and deeper ports, adequate supplies and more sailors. To assess these needs, "...I learnt the most minute details..." Choiseul wrote.

> Every day I spent some time in this study, and as sailors are the foundation of naval forces as subjects are the pecuniary force of a State, I counted, according to classes (which is not an easy task) the number of sailors in the realm whom we could rely upon, to estimate the quantity of ships which France could provide.[24]

The forty-four ships of the line and ten frigates which France possessed in 1763 were not only in bad state but were also insufficient to fight another war. Therefore,

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[23]Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., p. 17.

[24]Ibid., "J'appris les plus petits details. Je donnais tous les jours du temps à cette étude, et comme les matelots sont la base des forces navales, comme les sujets la force pécuniaire d'un Etat, je me mis au fait, par les classes (ce qui n'est pas une instruction aisée) du nombre des matelots sur lesquels on pouvait compter dans le royaume, pour apprécier le nombre des vaisseaux que la France pouvait entretenir."

Choiseul studied the naval problems of France and came up with an estimation which showed that France needed more than eighty ships of the line and forty frigates, plus boats for transporting supplies.[25] Based on this calculation he ordered a replacement of the ships destroyed during the Seven Years' War and that new ships be built, furnished, and armed. A year later Choiseul evaluated the progress of his naval program and reported, according to his Mémoire of 1765, that within the next four years France would have a fleet of sixty ships of the line and be ready for war. "It is from this information that I proposed in 1764 to Your Majesty to have in four years sixty ships of the line in the event that war is declared."[26] When in 1765 he reported to Louis XV on the military progress, Choiseul stated that France had built the estimated sixty ships of the line in one year rather than four, and further, that France had exceeded the number of ships that had been planned. Consequently, the naval forces were almost doubled that of 1763.

> You have at present sixty-three ships of the line and thirty-one frigates. I have almost doubled the forces of Your Majesty, with the difference that next summer these sixty-three ships will be completely ready to go to the sea, and in a proper

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[25]Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., p. 17.

[26]Ibid., "C'est d'après ces connaissances que je proposai, en 1764, à Votre Majesté d'avoir en quatre ans 60 Vaisseaux de ligne, en cas que la guerre se déclarat."

> condition in every respect, instead of which, when I took them over for care, they were in a horrible disorder.[27]

In another document Choiseul wrote that by 1768 France would have sixty-six ships of the line and forty frigates. This is six ships of the line more than he had predicted in his Mémoire of 1765. He also wrote that in 1770 France would secure a total of eighty ships of the line, one hundred and eighteen battalions and fifty-six squadrons.[28]

The building of the navy within such a span of time is a reflection of the implementation of Choiseul's plan and preparation for war. The time element also reflected some measure of immediacy. He expected war to be initiated by Pitt as soon as the latter returned to office. This explains in part the reason for the urgency of his preparation. But his naval program was not to be ended. By 1769 Choiseul planned to build an additional sixteen ships of the line.[29]

The French naval program included the rebuilding of

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[27]Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., p. 17. "Vous avez à présent 63 Vaisseaux de ligne et 31 frégates. J'ai presque doublé les forces de Votre Majesté, à la différence que, l'été prochain, ces 63 Vaisseaux seront tous en état d'aller à la mer, et en état de tous points, au lieu que, quand j'en ai pris le soin, ils étaient dans un désordre affreux."

[28]Mémoire sur les forces de mer et de terre de la France et l'usage qu'on pourrait en faire en cas d'une guerre avec l'Angleterre, A.E.C.P., Espagne, Vol. 550, fols. 495-497.

[29]Ibid.

magazines and fortifications and the strengthening of ports, particularly at Brest, Rochefort, and Toulon where most of the ships of the line would be docked. Such repairs were extensive; at Brest it took eighteen months and cost nine million livres. But the port offered increased docking facilities and provided a favorable strategic defense. At Lorient, Marseille, Bordeaux, and Bayonne additional magazines were constructed. In the East and West Indies French naval bases were repaired and new ones built at Îles de Bourbon and de France, Port Royal (Martinique), Cherbourg, and Dunkerque. The introduction of such an extensive naval reform was the result of support stemming not only from government funds but also from the French public, particularly the merchant classes of the south and west of France. No less than fifteen ships of the line armed with 1000 cannons, for example, were contributed by the merchants in the period from 1763-1765.[30]

Purging and restaffing of the marine and bringing the administration under stricter control of the ministry of the marine accounted for another phase of naval reforms. The powers of the intendants, laid down by Colbert in the ordinance of 1689, and the administrative hierarchy known as la plume, had been greater than those of the executive,

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[30]C. A. Julien, Les Français en Amérique 1713-1784, Le Canada, La Louisiane, la Guyane. La Politique Américaine de Choiseul (Paris: Centre de Documentation Universitaire, n.d.), p. 85.

l'épée. "The corps of la plume was the object of animosity from l'épée," wrote Choiseul.[31] He reported to Louis XV that la plume enjoyed great privileges by the ordinance, neglected the interest of the government, misrepresented and ill-treated the officers, and sought only self-interest. The entire administration was corrupted; hence Choiseul introduced the ordinance of 1765 in an attempt to redress the balance of power in favor of l'épée. However, his successor, De Boynes, minister of the marine (1771-1774), attempted to reverse this by bringing officers of the marine in line with those of the army. The attempt was so unpopular that the next successor, De Sartines (1774-1780), dismissed nearly half of the administrative branch in order to create posts for executive officers in peace time. Such reshuffling of officers contributed, in part, to the chaos of the French government when France became involved in the American revolution. With the succession of Castries (1780-1787) to the ministry of the marine, another change followed. Wider powers were restored to the commissary branches of the service by the ordinance of 1786.

Even more serious than the rivalry between la plume and l'épée were the jealousies within the ranks of the executive offices. The regular officers comprising the Grand Corps (called rouges) had been drawn from a cadet

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[31]Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., p. 18. "Le corps de la plume était l'objet de l'animosité de l'épée."

entry originally known as gardes-de-pavillon, who were sons of the Breton and Provençal nobility. In an effort to widen this entry Choiseul permitted officers of the petite marine (called blues) to serve in either the merchant or royal navies, in which, however, they could never rise higher than the rank of sub-lieutenant. The Castries administration replaced the old system of entry with cadets known as élèves. These reforms were unpopular among the aristocracy, many of whom continued to regard naval service as inferior to that of the army. Yet when the ranks of the rouges had been depleted by the French Revolution, it was to the élèves that the government turned for its officers.[32]

Another naval reform dealt with the manning of the French fleet. The earlier system of calling up classes of the seafaring population proved a hardship to the inhabitants of the marine provinces. Choiseul equalized the system under which some 90,000 men were liable for service. The system, however, was inadequate to serve in wartime. Hence in 1769 Choiseul created the Corps Royal d'Infanterie et d'Artillerie, which in 1786, Castries reorganized as a force of 6,000 seamen-gunners. The men only served on board in time of war, but the force was never popular with naval commanders. Finally, Choiseul inaugurated a school

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[32]A. Goodwin, ed., The New Cambridge Modern History, op. cit., VIII, 183-184. See also Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

of naval medicine and a corps of naval constructors (marine engineers). These institutions proved successful and represented some of the lasting achievements of Choiseul's naval reforms.[33]

The prestige of the navy was greatly enhanced by the accession of Louis XVI who took a personal interest in maritime affairs. Naval building programs continued regardless of cost and were encouraged by royal visits to the dockyards. The cost soared during the American Revolution, for the French navy expended 160 million livres annually. Such expenditure continued to rise and was a principal cause of national bankruptcy in 1789.[34]

A revolution in artillery constituted an essential ingredient of the naval reforms of Choiseul. In battles, the use of artillery had been restricted by the weight and slowness of the guns. Choiseul wrote in 1765: "Artillery was an important part which was neglected....Since Louis XIV, we have neglected artillery which was entrusted to entrepreneurs. I coordinated sea and land artillery. I formed brigades..."[35] He assigned the department of artillery to

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[33]A. Goodwin, ed., The New Cambridge Modern History, op. cit., VIII, 183-184.

[34]Ibid.

[35]Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., p. 18. "L'artillerie était une partie essentielle qui était fort négligée.... Depuis Louis XIV on avait négligé l'artillerie qui était livrée à des entrepreneurs. J'ai réuni l'artillerie de mer à celle de terre. J'ai forme des brigades..."

Gribeauval who made changes and introduced new principles, the most notable of which was to make guns lighter by shortening their barrels. The innovation facilitated an easier and more accurate aim. Cannons and other types of ammunitions were also improved and standardized in all ports under the guidance of Moroguer and Martil, military experts.[36] With such reforms, Choiseul was well underway in preparing the navy, as well as the army, for war. In his Mémoire of 1765, he assured Louis XV that satisfactory progress had been made.

> I believe, Sir, that the officers of the marine that I propose to Your Majesty are immensely more knowledgeable than the officers who were in the marine of Louis XIV... I dare to assure you, Sir, that in 1769 your marine will be sufficient for the defense of your possessions, and will be stronger than it had been during the brilliant times of Louis XIV.[37]

The military and naval reforms of Choiseul, including a "reform of morale" of the officer corps and crew men, meant that a substantial effort had been made after 1763 in carrying out the needed preparation for a war of revenge. Simultaneously, military and naval reforms had been implemented in the Franch Caribbean stretching from the

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[36]Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., p. 18.

[37]Ibid., p. 19. "Je crois, Sire, que les officiers de la marine que j'ai proposés à Votre Majesté ont infiniment plus de connaissances que ceux de la marine de Louis XIV n'en avaient...J'ose vous assurer, Sire, qu'en 1769 votre marine sera suffisante à la défense de vos possessions, et sera plus forte qu'elle n'a éte dans les temps les plus brillants de Louis XIV."

Gulf of Mexico to Guyane. As seen in the next chapter, Choiseul assured Louis XV that the preparation of French forces in both France and the colonies would not only defeat England but re-establish French superiority in the colonial world.

CHAPTER V

MILITARY PREPARATION IN THE CARIBBEAN

When Choiseul instituted a corps of engineers in the marine and added in 1769 a corps of royal infantry and artillery, he attempted to strengthen the naval force as well as to guarantee that "...la défense des colonies devait être assurée."[1] His reform program, aimed at preparing French forces for a war of revenge, was not limited to France. Choiseul envisaged that the French colonies constituted an important part in the preparation. Hence, he initiated in 1763 a number of ordinances for the expressed purpose of carrying out reforms similar to those taking place in France. Choiseul's plan for the colonies, particularly those in the French Antilles, constituted a complete overhaul of colonial and military administration. He placed the burden of defense in the hands of regular French troops sent from the Métropole instead of the ancient milices instituted in the colonies.

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[1]Henri Blet, Histoire de la colonisation française (Paris: B. Arthaud, 1946), p. 280. See also Etienne François de Choiseul, Mémoire de Monsieur de Choiseul Remis aü Roi en 1765 (Paris: Charles Giraud, 1881), pp. 17-19. (Hereinafter cited as Choiseul, Mémoire.)

The colonies which contributed significantly in realizing the plan and program of Choiseul were Saint Domingue, discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1492, and a group of islands called Îles du Vent.[2] The latter comprises Martinique, Guadeloupe and its dependancies whichkinclude the islands of Marie-Galante, La Désirade, the Îles des Saintes, and the Île de la Petite Terre. These are located east and south of Guadeloupe. Two other small islands also came under the jurisdiction of Guadeloupe: Saint Barthélemy and Saint Martin, situated approximately 140 miles northwest of Guadeloupe.[3]

These islands and French Guyane constituted the French Antilles after 1763. They formed a connecting link of forces which Choiseul attempted to strengthen and which

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[2]Saint Domingue was the western third of the island of Santo Domingo (Hispaniola). It was formally ceded by Spain to France in the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697. Saint Domingue survived the Seven Years' War and in 1795, by the treaty of Basel, Spain ceded the rest of Santo Domingo to France. In 1808-09 it was restored to Spain and subsequently ruled by Haiti for 22 years before gaining independence in 1844.

[3]Guadeloupe, the largest territory of the French Antilles, was discovered by Columbus in 1493. In 1674 it came under French jurisdiction and became a dependency of Martinique until 1775. The British ruled in Guadeloupe between 1759 to 1763 and again briefly in 1794. In 1810 they took it again and retained it until 1816 when it was returned to the French Government. In 1635 Martinique was colonized by the Compagnie des Îles d'Amérique. It came under the French crown in 1674. In the latter half of the seventeenth century Martinique was repeatedly attacked by the English and the Dutch but it was not captured until 1762 when the English held it for one year. It remained in French hands except for the years 1794 to 1892 and 1809 to 1814 when it was again in English hands. After 1814 it was restored permanently to France.

he referred to as France's "colonial domain." It was this chain of colonies which he hoped to use in order to establish "...a European system in America..." But to accomplish this France would have

> ...to transmit to America [French Antilles] twenty-four battalions which, the islands would discover that would be necessary to them, [and which] would be maintained in supplies as in ammunition by the squadrons of Your Majesty in this part of the world.[4]

This was basically the plan which Choiseul sought to implement in Saint Domingue, Martinique, Guadeloupe, the Îles du Vent, and in Guyane. The plan was expected to be strengthened by Spanish aid arising out of the Pacte de Famille. The main concern of France, therefore, would be to prepare French colonial forces in readiness for a war which Choiseul expected as soon as Pitt returned to office.

In order to implement Choiseul's plan in the Caribbean, three types of action were undertaken: re-colonization, administrative changes, and military reforms. In his re-colonization scheme Choiseul attempted to populate the French sugar colonies with white settlers and to establish large centers of white population. He believed that a sufficiently strong white settlement would not only stimulate

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[4]Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., pp. 19-20. "(J'ai voulu etablir) en Amérique un système d'Europe...faire passer en Amérique vingt-quatre bataillons qui trouveraient dans les îles ce qui leur serait nécessaire, resteraient pendant toute la guerre en Amérique, et seraient alimentés tant en vivres qu'en munitions, par les escadres de Votre Majesté dans cette partie du monde." The plan has been discussed in chapter three.

the colonies economically but would avert uprising among the natives, and more important, would help to defend the colonies in times of war. He realized that during the Seven Years' War, England had drawn substantial support from her white settlers who fought very ably for the mother country. This support was lacking in the French islands where a native population had always outnumbered the colonists. In 1753, for example, Saint Domingue had 18,041 whites compared with 154,859 natives. Guadeloupe, for the same year, reported 10,538 whites and 46,653 natives in comparison with Martinique's 12,068 whites and 65,905 natives.[5] In each island the native population--slaves and free Negroes--predominantly exceeded the colonists and consequently posed some threat to the stability of the colonies. During the war both white and native populations were reduced sharply. Thus in 1763, to cite one case, Saint Domingue had 1,600 whites to 6,000 natives; however, the white population was of a higher percentage than in the past.[6]

With the conclusion of the Peace of Paris in 1763

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[5]Ch. André Julien, Les Français en Amérique 1713-1784 (Paris: Centre de Documentation Universitaire, n.d.), pp.39-41. No figure is available for Guyane in 1753; but in 1749 there were 456 whites to 5,471 slaves.

[6]Gabriel Hanotaux et Alfred Martineau, Histoire des colonies françaises et de l'expansion de la France dans le monde (Paris: L'Histoire Nationale, 1929), I, 478-479. (Hereinafter cited as Histoire des colonies françaises.)

Choiseul opened a new era of colonial activities. He sent French settlers to the East Indies to colonize the Îles de France and de Bourbon. In the West Indies he focused attention on three potential areas.[7] The first was at Sainte-Lucie where Choiseul despatched 800 planters in 1763. The venture failed because of the severity of the tropical climate and the survivors returned to France within a year.[8] A second expedition in the same year was sent to La Désirade, but it too suffered the same fate.[9]

The failure to create new colonies in the two small islands did not affect the colonizing program of Choiseul, for he had ordered a third expedition in 1763. This was sent to Kourou in Guyane where he expended considerable funds and despatched a large number of planters to create a new colony with military bases to support his war plans in the Caribbean.[10]

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[7]For a brief discussion of the colonization in the East Indies see chapter two.

[8]Julien, Les Français en Amérique 1713-1784, op. cit., p. 40. Sainte-Lucie was first colonized by the British in 1605. The French re-colonized it in 1660. Britain took it back in 1722. Again France took possession in 1743 and held it to 1748 when it was declared a neutral island. Captured by the English in 1762, it was returned to France the following year. After it was captured again by England in 1778, the island passed several times between English and French rule until 1814 when it was finally declared a crown colony under Britain.

[9]Ibid. La Désirade, a dependant colony of Guadeloupe, is situated a few miles east and south of the island.

[10]The Kourou expedition is treated in a separate chapter below.

The military objectives which motivated France's colonial ventures in the Caribbean after 1763 were not entirely separated from economic concerns. Growth in trade and industry enabled the colony to maintain the local militia and to help support the regular troops from the Métropole. For this reason, during the Seven Years' War attempts were made to foster colonial trade with other Caribbean islands. After the war, economic reforms were precipitated by colonists who urged that commercial activities should not be restricted by the local governor and that they should be given a free hand in their use of slave labor. Pressed by the need to initiate changes Choiseul appointed on October 1, 1764, a deputy from Martinique, Jean Dubac, as Premier Commis, to represent the colonies in France and to carry out economic measures in the French Caribbean that would increase the prosperity of the colonies. But the work of Dubac in curtailing the tyrannical power of the local governors in order to give greater control to the planters led to a new situation in which the colonies began to serve the exclusive interest of the Métropole. In effect, Dubac introduced the system of the Exclusif which made the colonies provinces of the mother country and centers of French commerce. This system gave greater commercial advantages to the Métropole than to the local planters, and it assured Choiseul that the colonies were able to help support his reformed measures.

Apart from economic reforms Choiseul passed a number of ordinances to improve the administration in the French colonies. He initiated on March 24, 1763, an order suppressing some of the privileges of the governors and establishing four governor-generals at Saint Domingue, Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Cayenne.[11] The ordinance delegated areas of responsibility to the governors and intendants, a course of action necessitated by the continued abuse of powers by colonial officials. The measure sought to curb the governor's use of the milices in dictating and enhancing his powers. In addition, Choiseul replaced the bipartite system of administering the colonies by a single chamber, the chamber of agriculture, and assigned to it only advisory functions. Supreme authority for governing the colonies was vested in a superior council located at Martinique, Saint Domingue, Guadeloupe, and Cayenne, with representation at Versailles through a deputy.[12] The order creating the councils came in February, 1766.[13] On the question of disharmony and inequality which existed among the colonials and, in his attempt to remove trade monopoly

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[11]Hanotaux and Martineau, Histoire des colonies française, op. cit., pp. 478-479. Cayenne is the ancient colony and capital of Guyane. The first settlers in the colony came as early as 1604.

[12]Ordonnance du 24 Mars, 1763, A.N., Col. A. 8, fols. 340-357.

[13]Julien, Les Français en Amérique 1713-1784, op. cit., p. 45. The administrative reforms are discussed further below.

which the planters exploited, Choiseul wrote a Mémoire asking that the settlers begin "...to re-establish as much as possible, by means that I indicate, equality among the inhabitants..." Adding further that agreement among the people and the officials and between the two major races was essential to economic development, political stability, and strong defense, Choiseul wrote:

> If we do not disregard the means that I have mentioned in order to augment the forces of the colonies, independently of increasing the population, there would be nothing to fear about the intention of our enemies in spite of the superiority of their marine.[14]

Choiseul's reference to "the means" concerned improvement of relations with the various economic interest groups including free Negroes. He urged government officials "...to understand the Negroes for what they are and to engage them in government according to proper means."[15] He meant that humane treatment should be given to Negroes in order to avert the possibility of revolt and to maintain order, especially in times of war.

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[14]Mémoire sur les moyens de peupler les colonies et d'en augmenter la force sans dépense de la Métropole, A.N., Colonies en général, Col. F^{2}C. 7, fol. 39. "Rétablir autant qu'il serait possible par les voies que j'indique l'égalité entre les habitants." "Si on ne dédaigne pas les moyens que j'indiquerai pour augmenter la force des colonies indépendamment de tout acroissement de population on n'aurait rien à craindre pour elles de l'ambition de nos ennemis malgré la supériorité de leur marine."

[15]Ibid., fol. 43. "...connaître les négres pour ce qu'ils sont et les attacher au gouvernement par les moyens proposés."

It is more significant to note that the March, 1763, Ordinance dealt with military reforms. Writing to the Comte de Belzunce, lieutenant general of the army and governor lieutenant general of the Îles sous le Vent, and to De Clugny, intendant of the Îles sous le Vent, Choiseul said:

> Various events occurred to the French colonies of America during the last war. Having made sufficiently clear that they are in a poor state to resist and defend themselves, His Majesty took, immediately after the peace, the resolution to remedy vices found in their settlement, and to make new arrangements for them to secure all possible means to augment their condition during peace and to have sufficient forces for defense in time of war.[16]

By "new arrangements" Choiseul signalled that major proposals would be introduced at Versailles to be expedited in the colonies. It was these proposals which came on March 24, 1763, and remained in force in the colonies until the French Revolution, with the exception of Saint Domingue where it was modified in 1766 and again in 1775.[17]

The military measures constituted the major thrust

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[16]Mémoire du Roi, Isles sous le Vent, Année 1763, A.N., Minutes des Déspêches et des Ordres du Roi, Col. B. 116, fols. 142-143. "Les divers évènements qui sont arrivés aux colonies françaises de l'Amérique pendant la dernière guerre, aiant (sic) assez fait connaître combien elles sont peu en état de resister et de se défendre, Sa Majesté a pris immédiatement après la paix la résolution, d'une part de remédier aux vices qui se sont trouvés dans leur constitution, et de l'autre de faire de nouveaux arrangements pour leur procurer tous les moyens possibles d'augmenter leur culture pendant la paix et des forces suffisantes pour pouvoir être défendue en temps de guerre."

[17]Ordonnance du 24 Mars, 1763, A.N., Col. A. 8, fols. 340-357.

of Choiseul's colonial activities after the Peace of Paris. He saw that the defense forces in the colonies were in a devastated condition at the termination of the Seven Years' War. He discovered that when French troops withdrew from the Caribbean bases with the cessation of hostilities, the only defense remaining was the ancient milices. But the old institution was obsolete and could not serve in the military plan of Choiseul. The militiamen were inadequately trained and the milices poorly organized. The training program had been the work of governors who lacked military experience. A Mémoire from Le Mercier de la Rivière, governor of Martinique in 1763, described that the colonial governors lacked military skill and experience and consequently were unable to give leadership and organization to the milices of which they were in charge. As examples, Mercier referred to his predecessor, the Marquis de Beauharnais, and to Le Vassor de la Touche, governor of the French Windward Islands, neither of whom had any military credentials. It was this lack of training, explained Mercier, that accounted for the conquest of Martinique by the English in 1762.[18]

In the period before 1763, the milices were governed by no systematic policy and militiamen were hired mercenaries. Whereas in the English colonies militia duty fell

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[18]Le Mercier de la Rivière, Mémoire, August 5, 1762, A.N., Col. C. 8, fol. 64.

on poor whites, in the French colonies the poor whites ceased to do guard duty. Even the mercenaries themselves were given no military training or experience except in times of emergencies for which they turned out unprepared. Military laws had required militiamen to be in arms for exercise only upon every alarm given of an approaching ship from sea. Each time, to cite an example, the topsail or mast of a ship was seen from the island, a shot was fired followed by a series of other shots throughout the island to signal the congregating of the militia. There was no way to prevent a false alarm if the approaching ship was French. Sometimes the planters took the law into their own hands and declined to turn out to defend the island when they expected a convoy from England. The system of milices was irregular and ineffective, and everywhere in the French colonies the ancient institution had been deteriorating.

In addition to the milices the colonies suffered militarily from an ineffective system of fortifications. These had been built by Negro labor under the system of the corvée. Again the system reflected on the management of the local governors who sometimes found it expedient to suspend the corvée for want of funds, usually in kind, to pay for workmanship. The system of corvée was unpopular, disliked even by colonials who feared that it forced their slaves into company with other slaves from several estates,

thereby providing opportunity for corruption of manners or for plots against their masters. The use of free Negroes in both the militia and the corvée contributed to a weak defense and to the possibility of rebellion in the colonies. The inhabitants feared that once a revolt started it would spread to other colonies. It was such fear that brought into question the reliability of Negro military service and their capacity to conduct themselves respectfully. According to Mercier, the use of Negroes as soldiers and for the corvée system was useless; he added that they were lazy, cowardly, and unwilling to bear arms. This partly explains the nature of the system of defense and fortification in the period prior to 1763.

There were three types of fortifications existing in the colonies up to 1763. First, there was a system of batteries along the coast of the islands; second, there were regular forts defending important towns; and third, there were places of refuge in the mountains. These had proved inadequate during the Seven Years' War, resulting in English conquest of Guadeloupe and Martinique in 1762. Besides the absence of trained militiamen, the forts lacked adequate artillery. Guns were without emplacements and gunpowder was not always available.[19]

It was these conditions that led the March, 1763, ordinance to provide for suppression of the ancient milices

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[19]Le Mercier de la Rivière, Mémoire, op. cit., fol. 64.

and to replace them with regular French troops from the Métropole. The ordinance also condemned the system of fortification; it provided for the building of new ones, and for the stocking of supplies and artillery in magazines. Troops were to be recruited at the Île de Ré, France, with a permanent depot to be staffed initially with a commandant and four companies but increasing in a few years to a large officer corps. All military personnel needed for the various colonies were to be recruited at Ré. The depot was made port of embarcation as well as of reception of troops returning to France.[20] To facilitate and expedite communication and supplies between France and the colonies, paquebots were operative from the port of Rochefort. In 1763 six were in operation. From the port of Bordeaux provisions and goods were despatched for the maintenance of the troops.[21] These changes came about from the general ordinance on March 24, 1763. Subsequently, a number of specific ordinances were enacted for each colony in an attempt to repair or replace their defenses and prepare them in accordance with Choiseul's scheme for war.

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[20]Mémoire sur les colonies françaises de l'Amérique, 1765-1790, A.N., Colonies en Général, Col. F. 2, C7, Carton 8, No. 13. See also A.N., Col. A. 14, fol. 32, and A.N., Col. A. 15, fol. 9.

[21]Ordonnance concernant l'établissement des Paquebots, du 31, juillet, 1763, A.N., Col. B. 116, fols. 110 and 132. See also A.N., Col. A. 8, fols. 277-280.

Saint Domingue

Military reforms for the island of Saint Domingue began during the last phase of the Seven Years' War. In an attempt to strengthen local defense, Choiseul ordered the Comte de Belzunce, commandant of the French troops stationed at the island, to reorganize the milices into companies or battalions.[22] Belzunce reformed the local force, consisting of thirty-four companies, of which each had fifty men. The milices and the regular French troops together strengthened the island's defense, but the burden of providing security remained largely with the troops from the Métropole. After the Peace of Paris, however, France assumed complete responsibility for defending the island. On March 25, 1763, an ordinance was passed calling for suppression of the milices and establishment of regular French troops.[23]

In Saint Domingue, as in the other French islands, the milices served little purpose. To the ministry of the marine, which Choiseul directed until 1766, it was "mediocre" and useless in war. The inhabitants saw it as serving the interest of the petits-blancs and as a tool of the governor for military rule. Because of flagrant abuse, De Clugny, intendant at Saint Domingue, 1760-1763, and a proprietor on

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[22]Ordonnance du 30 avril, 1762, A.N., Col. A. 8, 1761-1763, fols. 121-122.

[23]Ordonnance du 25 mars, 1763, A.N., Col. A. 8, 1761-1763, fol. 212.

the island, advocated removal of the ancient institution. But its removal in 1763 and the substitution of French regulars created other problems. By emphasizing external rather than internal defense, French troops were alienated from the inhabitants. The result was uprising on the island leading to the re-establishment of the milices under the title of troupes royales on January 15, 1765.

> His Majesty ordered the Comte d'Estaing to re-establish the militia of Saint Domingue. It had been decided there, moreover, by consideration of the help which the clever governors could be able to have from the militia in the event of an invasion.[24]

Restoration of the militia did not mean removal of the regulars from local defense; rather the militia served as a liaison between the population and the alienated military. It was mainly responsible for suppressing local uprising and for augmenting French troops in time of war. This was expressed in a Mémoire from Choiseul stating that the milices could serve in the defense of the island. "The islander, exposed continually to the descent of corsairs who surround the island in time of war, must still be armed against the enemies from outside for the security of

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[24]Mémoire du Roi pour servir d'instruction à M. le Chevalier, Prince de Rohan, chef d'escadre der armée navale, gouverneur lieutenant général et intendant de îles sous le vent, 18 mars, 1760, A.N., Col. B. 123, fol. 59. The Comte d'Estaing became governor of Saint Domingue on January 1, 1764. "Sa Majesté a ordonné à M. le Comte d'Estaing le rétablissement des milices de Saint Domingue. Elle y avait encore été déterminée par la considération des secours que les gouverneurs habiles pouvaient tirer de ces milices dans le cas d'une invasion."

themselves and their possessions."[25] Re-establishment of the milices, therefore, guaranteed internal security, but the settlers objected to the reconstitution and restoration of the militia. They rejected integrating with colored militiamen. The Negroes, on the other hand, tried to escape service in the local force. Militia officers, generally disliked by the inhabitants for their authority, also objected to the re-establishment of the ancient institution.

The Comte d'Estaing, successor to Belzunce as governor and commander-in-chief of the French troops in Saint Domingue, aided in restoring the militia and directed in reforming the military and the defense of the island. In a memoir to him, Louis XV specified three military objectives for the administration of the colony. The first advised on the distribution of troops. Your "...primary object upon arriving must be to distribute in main places of the colony... the six battalions which will remain in garrison at Saint Domingue."[26] Earlier, the governors retained troops only

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[25]Mémoire du Roi, 18 mars, 1766, A.N., Col. B., Vol. 123, fol. 59. "Que des insulaire exposés sans cesseaux descentes des corsaires qui entourent l'isle en temps de guerre devoient encore être armés contre les ennemis du dehors pour la sûreté de leurs personnes et de leurs possessions."

[26]Mémoire du Roi, Cayenne. Anne 1764, A.N., Minutes des Dépêches et Ordres du Roi, Col. B. 119, fols. 20-35. (Hereinafter cited as Minutes des Dépêches.) In addition to being governor of Saint Domingue, d'Estaing was governor general of the Îles du vent and lieutenant general of the army and navy. "Son principal objet, en arrivant, doit être premièrement de distribuer dans les principaux quartiers de la Colonie...les six bataillons qui resteront en garrison à St. Domingue."

in certain important areas, for example, in the vicinity of his own residence and in important towns, leaving many places unprotected. In redistributing the troops a greater degree of protection was attained. The second objective concerned improvement of fortifications. Since the coastline of Saint Domingue extended 180 leagues, garrison protection was necessary and was to be provided by the French marine. Old forts were to be repaired and dockyards improved, including the building and stocking of magazines. The third objective raised the question of the possibility of war and the construction of an arsenal at the Cap. "The establishment of this last station is also necessary in order to forbid entrance to the English corsairs who take refuge in time of war to intercept our commerce...and to be in closer proximity to attack Jamaica in time of war."[27] Other communiqués to Estaing reminded him of his military duties and the needed preparation of the army to improve defenses of the island. Louis XV wrote in May, 1764, that the governor's mission was "...to set up a garrison which can be necessary in peace as well as in war."[28] The subject

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[27]Mémoire du Roi, Cayenne. Anne 1764, A.N., Minutes des Dépêches, Col. B. 119, fol. 25. "l'établissement de ce dernier poste comme étant aussi nécessaire pour en défendre l'entrée aux corsaire anglois qui s'y refugient en temps de guerre pour intercepter notre commerce...et être plus aportée d'attaquer la Jamaique en temps de guerre."

[28]Envoy d'un Mémoire concernant la police et la défense des colonies en paix comme en guerre, mai, 1764. Minutes des Dépêches, op. cit., fol. 113. "...et de proposer la garnison qui petit lui être nécessaire en paix comme en guerre."

of defense was raised again in September of the same year when Louis XV gave instructions regarding the kind of armaments to be used if war came. "We propose, therefore, to agree on a model fusil that is not too heavy, that is good and strong enough for the inhabitant to operate in time of war and also for a chase."[29] With the infusion of French regiments and artillery the defense of Saint Domingue was vastly strengthened. In 1763, for example, the island received the six battalions soon followed by 100 men from the royal artillery corps and two companies of canonnières-bombardiers. But Estaing did not carry out the reforms as expected; consequently, he was recalled to Versailles in 1766 and was succeeded by Prince Rohan-Monbazon, called Prince Rohan.[30]

The new governor arrived at Saint Domingue with a large fleet designed to increase the size of the island's marine, and in 1768 he organized a legion of Saint Domingue consisting of 400 recruits from the Île de Ré. The new recruits, organized into thirty companies a year later, contributed substantially to the defensive strength of the island. Three of the thirty companies consisted

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[29]Un Projet d'armement. Minutes des Dépêches, op. cit., fol. 185. "On propose en conséquence de convenir d'un modèle de fusil qui sans être trop lourd, soit assez bon et assez solide pour que les habitants s'en servent en temps de guerre et même pour chasser."

[30]Ordonnance du 13 janvier, 1768, A.N., Minutes des Dépêches, Col. B. 130, fol. 41.

of 60 grenadières each, another three of 102 men each, and each of the remaining companies of 104 fusillièrs. The companies were distributed throughout the island to cover every area susceptible to an invasion.[31]

Because of the Malouines crisis, the supply of soldiers and artilleries to Saint Domingue and the other French colonies increased greatly during 1768 and 1770. The crisis, which nearly erupted into a major conflict between England and Spain, involved France through the Pacte de Famille. It led to a "war scare" that significantly increased French military preparations in the Caribbean. After two years of negotiation France acted as conciliator. The crisis came to an end, but the affair had caused considerable alarm. The additional reinforcements which Saint Domingue received on March, 1768, consisted of two companies of workers, and in August, a regiment of 500 soldiers arrived, followed by two more companies of workers totalling 100 men; in December two companies of canonnières-bombardiers were received. Consequently, the military build-up on the island constituted a formidable force.[32]

Indication of the strength of the colonial force at

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[31]Lettres communes à M. le Chevalier Prince de Rohan de le Bongard, 12 janvier, 1769, A.N., Minutes des Dépêches, Col. B. 132, fol. 47.

[32]Ordonnance du mars, 1768, A.N., Minutes des Dépêches, Col. B. 130, fol. 69. See also Ordonnance du 11 août, 1768, ibid., fol. 107.

Saint Domingue at the end of 1768 is seen from the following list describing the type and volume of ammunition and artillery despatched.[33]

From Bordeaux

28 cannons with a calibre of 24
5 cannons with a calibre of 18
2500 rounds of cannon balls with a calibre of 18
1000 rounds of cannon balls with a calibre of 4

From Rochefort:

103 cannons with calibre of 24
9 cannons with calibre of 18
96 cannons with calibre of 12
2000 rounds of cannon balls with a calibre of 8
9 iron mortars
20 grills for 80 batteries
300 cuillères to shoot grenades

From Brest:

1790 bar-shots (boulets ramés) with calibre of 24
1290 bar-shots with calibre of 18
500 bar-shots with calibre of 12
1000 bar-shots with calibre of 8
500 bar-shots with calibre of 4

From Toulon:

500 quintaux of powder
8 cannons with calibre of 4
3500 rounds of cannon balls with calibre of 24
30 iron mortars
1680 bombs
2000 hand grenades

In 1769 the volume was greater. Hand grenades, for

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[33]Ordonnance du 13 janvier, 1768, A.N., Minutes des Dépêches, Col. B. 130, fols. 71-72.

example, were increased by 25,000. In the following year the same quota was allotted. Gunpowder, flint, bombs, mortars, bullets, and fusils were also increased substantially.[34]

Martinique

The island of Martinique witnessed increased military preparation similar to Saint Domingue. A military base was established in Martinique and in Guadeloupe. Choiseul anticipated that if war came both islands could support twenty-four battalions at little expense to the Métropole. In his 1765 memoir to Louis XV, he said that a war against England would not cost France as much as it would cost the enemies because the French colonies would be able to support the army of the Métropole and provide for their maintenance.[35] Earlier, in 1763, Choiseul had initiated a measure assessing the colonies for the support of troops and for the cost of reforms. In the case of Saint Domingue it was four million livres; for Martinique it was fifteen million livres.[36]

The selection of Martinique as a military base was

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[34]Envoy de l'état des articles nécessaires pour le service de l'artillerie demandé par les administrateurs de Saint Domingue, Guadeloupe, et Cayenne, le 21 août, 1767, A.N., Minutes des Dépêches, Col. B. 128, fols. 158-160. (Hereinafter cited as Envoy de l'état des articles.)

[35]Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

[36]Ordonnance du 19 août, 1763, A.N., Minutes des Dépêches, Col. B. 116, fol. 141.

due to the island's strategic location, being windward to the Îles du Vent, and its good harbors. These advantages, during the Seven Years' War, for example, had accorded to the island the privilege of the seat of administration for the Îles du Vent. In this arrangement Martinique profited by imposing tariff restrictions on all vessels entering the French Antilles. All French ships, to cite an example, were required to stop at Martinique. In this way the island obtained special revenue and trade. At the termination of the war, the island lost the economic advantage and the seat of administration of the Îles du Vent. An Ordinance in 1763 inaugurated separate governments for Martinique and Sainte-Lucie, thereby giving the administration of the remaining Îles du Vent--les Saintes, la Désirade, Marie-Galante, Saint Barthélemy and the French part of Saint Martin--to the government of Guadeloupe. This was part of the administrative reforms of Choiseul. Nevertheless, the military direction of the islands continued to be held by the government and armed forces at Martinique, a role which was continued through the period of the American revolution. Hence, Martinique played an important military part among French colonies in the Caribbean. Its strategic location also made the island the chief naval station for continental vessels during the revolution in the English colonies in America.

Aware of these advantages, Choiseul conceived a plan

in January, 1764, to overhaul the defense of Martinique. The plan was laid out in a document to Estaing. It contained a system of fortification under De Rochemore as director, and provided for a staff of engineers. It stated that the purpose was defense and security of the island from "...the fear that this colony must not have a new seize in a next war."[37] The document solicited improving canals, repairing Fort Royal, constructing a pâté opposite Fort Royal and preparing a citadelle on Mount Garnier "...capable of stopping every English effort to make a new seizure of Martinique by force [and] ...in order to defend Fort Royal and its vicinity." It added that Louis XV's "...intention is always to fortify Martinique in order to have security from an English enterprise."[38] The project cost France and the colony fifteen million livres but it was "...absolutely necessary..." to assure defense of the French. In his Mémoire to Louis XV Choiseul paid special tribute to Ennery, governor of Martinique, and to the Comte de Nolivos, governor of Guadeloupe, for progress made in the works of

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[37]Mémoire du Roi, 2 janvier, 1764, A.N., Minutes des Dépêches, Col. B. 119, fols. 34-35. "la crainte que cette colonie ne soit de nouveau enlevée à une prochaine guerre."

[38]Mémoire du Roi, 2 janvier, 1764, A.N., Minutes des Dépêches, Col. B. 119, fols. 34-35. "...capable d'arrêter tous les efforts des Anglois s'ils venaient entreprendre de nouveau le siège de la Martinique...par la force...pour défendre le fort Royal et les environs...son intention est toujours de fortifier la Martinique pour la mettre à couvert d'une entreprise de la part des Anglois."

fortification. He said that their contributions "...are good..." and "...are essential for the defense of America."[39]

As in the case of Saint Domingue, the milices of Martinique were suppressed and replaced by regular French troops provided by the general ordinance of March 24, 1763. Similarly, they were re-established in 1768, with the purpose of strengthening the defense of the island. Given military training, the militiamen contributed to the security of Martinique and its dependancy, Sainte-Lucie. Article Twenty-four of the ordinance for re-establishing the militia stated that "...in time of war and in the case where the militia would be in active duty with the French regiments, they would be commanded only by a colonel..."[40] This implied that the militia was able to share in the island's defense, but that the burden of defense rested primarily on French troops.

The supply of troops and artillery to Martinique increased during the "war scare" of 1768-1770. The island had received in 1766 a squadron of 600 men, followed a year later by two detachments of artillery from Le Havre

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[39]Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., pp. 19-20.

[40]Ordonnance du 1er septembre, 1768, A.N., Minutes des Dépêches, Col. A. 12, fol. 87. "En temps de guerre et dans le cas où les milices se trouveraient en service avec les régiments de France, celles-ci ne pouront être commandés que par un colonel..."

and Bordeaux.[41] With the crisis beginning in 1768, two companies of workers arrived "...armed and equipped as grenadiers of the legion..." of Martinique.[42] A company of gens d'armes in the milices was instituted and by 1770 the projects of fortification were near completion.

Guadeloupe

In many respects the pattern of military preparation was the same for the island of Guadeloupe, and to a lesser degree, the Îles du Vent. A specific ordinance on March 25, 1763, ordered structural changes in the government and the military. Administratively, the island was brought under firmer control from the Métropole; militarily, regular French troops replaced the militia.[43]

Improvement of defenses in Guadeloupe was based on the submission of a report in order "...to know by the report which pieces of artillery are neeessary for the defense of the colony."[44] The report indicated the existence of

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[41]Choiseul, Au sujet du passage de 600 hommes de recrues pour être incorporées dans les régiments qui sont à la Martinique, A.N., Minutes des Dépêches, Col. B. 125, fol. 507, and Envoy de deux états de l'artillerie, ibid., 127, fol. 492.

[42]Ordonnance du 20 mars, 1768, A.N., Minutes des Dépêches, Col. A. 12, fol. 89; see also Ordonnance du 20 septembre, 1768, ibid., fol. 91.

[43]Ordonnance du 25 mars, 1763, A.N., Minutes des Dépêches, Col. A. 8, fol. 211.

[44]Ordonnance du 28 septembre, 1763, A.N., Minutes des Dépêches, Col. B. 116, fols. 379-380. "Savoir par les états quelles sont les pièces d'artillerie qui sont nécessaires pour la défense de la colonie."

140 pieces of artillery, but these were in poor condition. Thus, in January, 1764, Choiseul ordered immediate repairs and building of fortifications. Concurrently, he despatched a squadron of 66 soldiers armed with mortars, cannons, bullets, and gunpowder. He transferred to Guadeloupe the French regiments of Saintonge, stationed at Cayenne, consisting of three battalions. These forces had been held as a reserve at Cayenne for the purpose of augmenting French forces in the Caribbean. As will be seen in the following chapter, the transfer of these forces from Cayenne was basic to Choiseul's plan of colonizing and militarizing in Guyane.[45] Additionally, Choiseul despatched to Guadeloupe a shipment of bayonets, muskets, and gunpowder and in 1768 re-established the milices which had been abolished in 1763.[46] These measures were expedited with some urgency, due to the Malouines conflict, as reflected in a communiqué in 1770:

> I requested you, Sir, by my despatch of the 22nd of September last, from the observation of M. d'Ennery and M. Boeuf on the weakness of fortifications made with dirt [soil, earth], that it was necessary to construct them in masonry; but the actual circumstances

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[45]Circulaire aux intendants, janvier, 1764, A.N., Minutes des Dépêches, Col. B. 119, fol. 244.

[46]Lettre du Roi, 21 décembre, 1767, A.N., Minutes des Dépêches, Col. B. 127, fol. 587. See also Envoy de l'état des articles nécessaires pour le service de l'artillerie, 27 août, 1768, ibid., Col. B. 121, fol. 158; and Col. B. 131, fol. 111. See also Ordonnance du 1er septembre, 1768, A.N., Minutes des Dépêches, Col. A. 12, fol. 90.

call for the greatest speed in putting the Îles du vent in the best state of defense possible.[47]

The need to accelerate defensive preparations "...for the next rupture..." was expressed in several letters, memoirs, and other communiqué during the crisis of 1768-1770. The following decade witnessed no relaxation of that need as French ministers strove to complete Choiseul's plan for a war of revanche. These ministers included the Comte de Maurepas, acting prime minister, the Comte de Vergennes, minister in foreign affairs, Anne Robert Jacques Turgot, controller of finance, Sartines, minister of the marine, Du May and the Comte de Saint Germain, war ministers. The ministers, Vergennes in particular, expected war with England; they tried, like Choiseul, to prevent it from starting on the continent; and they envisaged, consistent with Choiseul's policy, a colonial and maritime war. For this reason, and until the actual outbreak of war on the American colonies, military preparations in the French Caribbean colonies and in French Guyane continued.

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[47]Au sujet des fortifications aux deux Îles, 22 septembre, 1770, A.N., Minutes des Dépêches, Col. B. 135, fol. 227. "Je vous ai mandé, M. par ma dépêche du 22 septembre, dernier, d'après les observations de M. d'Ennery et M. le Boeuf sur le peu de solidité des fortifications en terre, qu'il fallait les faire en maconnerie, mais les circonstances actuelles exigeant la plus grande diligence pour mettre les Îles du vent dans le meilleur état de défense possible."

CHAPTER VI

GUYANE, AN EXAMPLE OF CHOISEUL'S PLAN FOR WAR

The colonial domain and military bases which Choiseul envisaged in his plan for a war of revenge encompassed a vast area stretching from the Gulf of Mexico to French Guyane. French possessions in this span of the Caribbean sea were both limited and scattered. It was hoped, however, that a military rearmament of these possessions would adequately provide France with forces needed to accomplish French foreign policy after 1763.

Choiseul's design in Guyane was primarily concerned with an augmentation of the defense at the ancient settlement of Cayenne similar to the program expedited in Martinique, Saint Domingue, and Guadeloupe. He also attempted to strengthen the French possession in Guyane by establishing new settlements which would contain sufficient, easily accessible reinforcements and supplies to aid the main French forces in the Caribbean. The Guyanese scheme contributed substantially to the inception and formation of Choiseul's plan for a war of revenge and to the strategy of diversion. For these reasons, and not to exclude an interest

in commercial expansion in Guyane and a desire to replace the loss of Canada and Louisiana, France embarked on an expansive colonization program in the ancient colony following the Peace of Paris. Guyane, therefore, played a vital part in Choiseul's plan for war, a part which historians seem to overlook but which constituted an essential ingredient of French militarism in the Caribbean. Although French military objectives were primary in Guyane, the secondary considerations were significant.

Economic interests and commercial enterprises in Guyane were of long standing. Actually, such activities originated as early as the seventeenth century under the direction of Colbert in the reign of Louis XIV. Colbert's mercantilist policies brought the settlement of Cayenne under the crown and led to a limited occupation of the colony at Cayenne. Exploration and studies promoted by French scientific societies in the seventeenth century, several of which were published, indicated that the soil of Cayenne was rich and that commodities produced there in abundance were of demand in Europe. Private companies attempted thereafter to gain a monopoly in Cayenne, trading with the Indians, and bringing to France such commodities as sugar, coffee, and cotton. The undertaking was profitable and considerable pressure was exerted on the French government throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth

centuries to found a permanent settlement in Guyane.[1]

One of the earliest works urging a permanent settlement came from the pen of Jean de Laon, Sieur d'Aigremont, traveller and explorer in the mid-seventeenth century. His account established that Guyane was suitable for habitation and that cultivation of the land would not require much labor.[2] In 1663, Colbert allowed another explorer in Guyane, Sieur Lefebvre de la Barre, to form a company, but the wars of Louis XIV against the League of Augsburg and of the Spanish succession prevented colonization and delayed indefinitely any plan to colonize Guyane.[3] Two decades following the Treaty of Utrecht, however, a Jesuit missionary, Père de Montville, in a letter published in 1736, once more created interest in Guyane. He described a wide variety of commodities that were grown plentifully in Guyane, naming in particular, cacao, sugar, coffee, and cotton, but little of a practical nature resulted.[4]

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[1]Antoine Biet, Voyage de la France Equinoxiale en l'Isle de Cayenne (Paris: F. Clouzier, 1664), p. xxiv. See also Victor de Nouvion, Extraits des auteurs et voyageurs (Paris: de Béthune, Plon, 1844), pp. 39-40. (Hereinafter cited as Extraits.)

[2]Sieur d'Aigremont, Relation du voyage des Français fait au cap du nord en Amérique, as quoted by Nouvion in Extraits, ibid., pp. 31-34.

[3]Sieur Lefebvre de la Barre, La description de la France Equinoxiale (Paris: J. Ribou, 1666). Also in Nouvion, Extraits, op. cit., pp. 43-44.

[4]R. Père de Montville, "Extrait d'une lettre du R. Père de Montville," Mémoire pour l'histoire des sciences et des beaux-arts, I (January, 1736), 826-836.

The Mémoire of Gilbert Guillouet, Seigneur d'Orvilliers, royal governor at the ancient settlement at Cayenne, 1730-1763, once more stimulated interest in a settlement. He wrote that living conditions were favorable, that crops were flourishing, and that opportunity was unlimited. The Mémoire coincided with Choiseul's creation of a plan of revenge against the English for losses sustained in the Seven Years' War, and suggested the establishment of a settlement at the mouth of the Kourou river, about eighteen miles north of Cayenne. The document impressed Choiseul. It was the publication of the Maison Rustique, however, authored by Brûletout de Préfontaine, a seigneur of Cayenne from 1742 to 1762, that generated greater interest and that contributed to the colonization in Guyane. Préfontaine described that life in the ancient colony was comfortable and prosperous. He dedicated his book to Choiseul, who ordered it published in 1763. "The object of this work," wrote Préfontaine, "has been to be useful to the [prospective] inhabitants of Cayenne and to the colonies in general."[5] Anticipating that Choiseul might seize the opportunity presented to colonize Guyane on a large scale, he addressed the future settlers:

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[5]Brûletout de Préfontaine, Maison Rustique à l'usage des habitans de la partie de la France équinoxiale connue sous le nom de Cayenne (Paris: J. B. Bauche, 1763), p. 1. For an extract of the book see Journal des Sçavans, LXXVI (January, 1764), 25-36. (Hereinafter cited as Maison Rustique)

> These are not mere speculation or conjectures that I offer; it is the experience of twenty years of habitation at Cayenne; it is the result of reflections and tests confirmed by experience.[6]

Choiseul, impressed by the book, appointed Préfontaine as counsellor of the marine. The appointment coincided with the French design to remilitarize her Caribbean possessions and to find additional bases. As recommended by Préfontaine, Guyane offered a strategic position. Choiseul was aware of this as early as 1762 when he had despatched a mission to investigate the use of Guyane as a military base during the Seven Years' War.[7] In 1763 Choiseul resuscitated the earlier project. He urged Louis XV that a base in the ancient settlement at Cayenne and a new settlement at Kourou, approximately eighteen miles north of Cayenne, would provide easily accessible aid to the French forces in the Caribbean in a war of revenge against England. The Maison Rustique encouraged Choiseul, although Préfontaine argued for a limited settlement expanding gradually to adjacent areas. But Choiseul was urgent. Unlike Préfontaine, he envisaged the settlement as "political and military" rather than commercial.[8] It was

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[6]Préfontaine, Maison Rustique, op. cit., p. 1. "Ce ne sont point de simples spéculations ou des conjectures hasardées que j'offre, c'est le fruit de vingt ans de séjour à Cayenne; c'est le résultat de réflexions et d'épreuves confirmées par l'expérience."

[7]This mission, led by Behague, a governor at Cayenne, is discussed later in the chapter.

[8]Ch. André Julien, Les Français en Amérique (1713-1784) (Paris: Centre de Documentation Universitaire, 1951), p. 92.

to fit into his larger plan for a war against England, and accordingly, he ordered Préfontaine to return to Guyane in 1763 to commence building at least tentative accomodations for the 14,000 settlers soon to be sent.

In addition to Préfontaine's book, several articles advocating colonization in Guyane were published by the Academy of the Marine, the Royal Society of London, and the Academy of Sciences. And from the pages of the Journal des Sçavans came a travel account of le Sieur Bellin, a member of the Academy of Sciences. The account encouraged the French government to explore the ancient colony and to colonize it.[9] Henry Pauillard, another traveller, showed in his report that Guyane possessed the richest soil of the French colonies and that it offered a substitute to Canada. The report made an impact on Choiseul and offered a rationale that Guyane might well serve France better than Canada.[10] The idea that Guyane was a good investment had been propounded even by the philosophes. Montesquieu, for example, had stated that the ancient colony was "most admirable" and that colonization should be started. In 1763 that admiration, aided by published reports, led to a wide scale colonizing expedition, the expedition at Kourou.[11]

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[9]Le Sieur Bellin, "Description Géographique de la Guyane," Journal des Sçavan, LXXVIII (November, 1763), 90-103.

[10]E. Daubigny, Choiseul et la France d'outre mer après le traité de Paris (Paris: Hachette, 1892), p. 32. (Hereinafter cited as Choiseul et la France d'outre mer.)

[11]Ibid.

The argument that Guyane was a good replacement for the loss of Canada also contributed to the expedition at Kourou. French possession of Canada prior to 1763 was a greater liability than an asset. The country was huge, unproductive, and unpopulated. Unable to maintain its own cost of administration, the cession of Canada to Britain at the Peace of Paris was not considered a great loss. On the other hand, the cession was a major development that meant the destruction of the French empire. In an effort to resuscitate the empire and to restore France as a colonial power, the expedition to Guyane was ordered. The Mémoire of Pierre Victor Malouet, inspector of embarkation of the colonists for Guyane in 1763, and later governor of Guyane in 1777, reported that "...after the Peace of Paris in 1763, the Duc de Choiseul conceived the hope of replacing the loss of Canada by a large establishment of European cultivators in Guyane."[12] It was Choiseul's purpose to relocate French Canadians as well as to offer to any other French citizens the chance to migrate to the new settlements.

The desire to replace the loss of Canada was, however, only a contributing reason for settling Guyane permanently. Some historians argue that personal gains accompanied the

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[12]Pierre Victor Malouet, Mémoires de Malouet, le Baron Malouet, ed., 5 vols. (Paris: E. Plon et Cie., 1874), I, 74. "Après la paix de 1763, le duc de Choiseul avait conçu l'espérance de remplacer la perte du Canada par un grand établissement de cultivateurs européen tentés dans la Guyane."

colonizing expedition at Kourou and that Choiseul anticipated inheriting large estates in Guyane. Henri Blet wrote that Choiseul "...granted himself a title of hereditary fief to all territory colonized."[13] Henri Coudreau stated that "...Choiseul, in his intention to remake his fortune, gave himself through Louis XV, the territory between Kourou and Maroni in order to distribute fiefs to younger members of his family who became his vassals."[14] And Jules Duval added that "when the Duc de Choiseul cast his eyes on Guyane in order to take up an honorable revenge, he obtained a title of hereditary fief and shared the property between the two branches of his family."[15] Other historians do not single out any one factor as responsible for the settlement in Guyane. For example, according to J. Saintoyant many factors led to French occupation of the colony.

> After having lost North America, a great possession of white population, the Duc de Choiseul looked to Guyane

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[13]Henri Blet, Histoire de la colonisation française (Paris: B. Arthaud, 1946), p. 287. "Choiseul se fit concéder à titre de fief héréditaire tout le territoire à coloniser."

[14]Henri A. Coudreau, "Histoire de la colonisation française en Guyane," Revue du monde Latin, VII (Octobre, 1885), 364. "Choiseul, dans l'intention de refaire sa fortune se fit donner par Louis XV le territoire entre Kourou et Maroni afin de la distribuer en fiefs aux cadets de sa famille, qui deviendraient ses vassaux."

[15]Jules Duval, Les Colonies et la politique coloniale de la France (Paris: Arthur Bertrand, 1864), p. 217. "Lorsque le duc de Choiseul...jeta les yeux sur la Guyane pour y prendre une honorable revanche, il commença par en partager la propriété entre les deux branches de sa famille à titre de fief héréditaire."

> and wished to find there a compensation, by creating a powerful center with the same population, forming at the same time a prosperous self-sufficient colony and a help within reach of the islands, whose preservation was important above all for national success and in which the disproportion between the races began to appear as very dangerous. Contrary to traditions, the aim of colonization was envisaged before that of trade in the plan, which was sufficiently advanced in 1762, so that it was possible to begin to realize it. It was decided to establish a center of colonization on the side of the Kourou river...The Duc de Choiseul and his cousin Choiseul-Praslin obtained concession to colonize all the territory between the ocean, the left side of Kourou, and the right side of the Maroni river.[16]

Several factors, therefore, played a role in the action of Choiseul in Guyane. Perhaps most important was that the Kourou expedition and the attendant permanent occupation of the ancient settlement at Cayenne, followed by attempts to establish additional settlements, supported a plan for war of revanche. Guyane was strategically located. Being on the mainland it gave France a hold in South America with the possibility of expanding along the Amazon coast, linking

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[16]J. Saintoyant, La colonisation sous l'ancien regime (Paris: La Renaissance du livre, 1929), p. 363. "Après avoir perdu l'Amérique du Nord, grande possession de race blanche, le duc de Choiseul regarda du côté de la Guyane et voulut y trouver une compensation, en y créant un centre puissant de même population formant à la fois une colonie prospère par elle-même et un secours à portée des Îles, dont la conservation importait par dessus tout à la fortune nationale et dans lesquelles la disproportion entre les races commençait à paraître pleine de dangers. Contrairement aux traditions, le but de colonisation fut envisagé avant celui de commerce dans le projet, qui fut suffisamment avancé en 1762, pour qu'il fût possible d'entrer dans la voie de sa réalisation. Il fut décidé d'installer un centre de colonisation sur les rives du Kourou...Le duc de Choiseul et son cousin Choiseul-Praslin se firent concéder à coloniser compris entre l'Océan, la rive gauche du Kourou et la rive droite du Maroni."

the French and the Spanish colonies for purposes of trade, obstructing English influence in British Guiana and the British West Indies, and averting a possible attempt by Portugal to create an empire in Brazil in case of a war of diversion.[17] More important was the proposed role Guyane would play in strengthening the French military forces on the islands of the Caribbean. Guyane offered a natural link to the French Antilles since it was located au vent to them. From this position support could be sent easily to the islands, particularly in time of war. Since Guyane was valuable militarily and contributed significantly to Choiseul's plan for war, most of the present chapter is devoted to discussing the military objectives and the intentions of the government of Louis XV in Guyane after 1763. Attention is given to a chronological development and to an assessment of several documents which support the position that, in spite of commercial goals, the desire to replace the loss of possessions in North America and to make a rich fortune, Guyane was colonized primarily to augment Choiseul's plan for war of revenge against England.

The Military Importance of Guyane

The intention of Louis XV in establishing a military operation in Guyane to support French policy for a war

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[17]The plan for a war of diversion was discussed in chapter three. Further consideration of this plan, however, is given below.

against England was based on two considerations. First, the military force in Guyane would be in a suitable position to augment the main French regiments of Martinique, Saint Domingue, and Guadeloupe in times of war. Second, the presence of a military base in Guyane could lead to expansion on the South American continent and to prevention of a Portuguese empire in Brazil, a development which Choiseul conceived as a consequence of his strategy in the proposed war of diversion in Europe.

These objectives were first developed in 1762 shortly before overtures were made for ending the Seven Years' War. They grew out of a report which Choiseul received from the Comte de Behague, whom he had sent to Guyane in 1762 on a military mission. Behague, lieutenant colonel and later commandant of Guyane, was charged with the task of exploring areas of defense in Guyane in the hope that an offense stemming from Guyane could be launched against England in 1762. He was instructed to examine potential areas of fortification and to propose ways to secure Guyane as an important colony "...capable of resisting by herself any foreign attack and able to render immediate assistance after a period of time to the other colonies, when circumstances existed...."[18]

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[18]Mémoire du Roi pour servir d'instruction à M. de Behague, Lieutenant Colonel de Dragons, 24, avril, 1762, A.N., Col. B. 114, fols. 129-130. "...capable de résister par elle-même aux attaques étrangères, et propre à voler avec le tems au secours des autres colonies, lorsque les circonstances pourroient l'exiger." See also l'Abbé G. T. Raynal, Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce, 5 vols. (Amsterdam: J. L. Pellet, 1770), V, 25. Comte de Béhague, from a noble Dutch family, became a lieutenant-colonel in France in 1761, and military commandant and governor of Guyane in 1763. He served until 1766.

The mission was designed to assess generally the existing defense force of the French in Guyane, to recommend needed reinforcements, and the type of ammunition and artillery required to establish a military base. In an evaluation of the mission of Behague to Guyane, historian Henri Froidevaux wrote that there were two objectives. First, to determine the southern boundary between French Guyane and Brazil. The boundary controversy was created at the Treaty of Utrecht when, by confusing the Vincent Pinson river with a branch of the Amazon, France lost about thirty leagues of land. Behague was asked to investigate the issue in the hope that France would gain the lost area. Second, the mission aimed at examining the ancient settlement at Cayenne for the possibility of building a port with adequate harbor facilities to accommodate ships with artillery and other supplies and to estimate the extent of repairs needed to fortify the port.[19] The state of the port at Cayenne was in a deplorable condition during the Seven Years' War. Such was the report reaching Versailles, earlier from Pierre Barrére, physician of the king in Guyane during the war. His report, confirmed by the report of Behague, established the need for extensive repairs. Both reports showed, for example, that Cayenne's defense consisted of five weak bastions and several pieces of cannons, most of which

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[19]Henri Froidevaux, "Une Mission Géographique et Militaire à la Guyane en 1762," Annales de Géographie, I (Octobre, 1891 à Juillet, 1892), 220-225.

had no carriage.[20]

Second, Froidevaux contended that the Behague mission concerned itself with an evaluation of the military strength of the French at Cayenne in an actual state of war with Portugal. Choiseul expected Spain to attack Portugal in an effort to divert English forces to the continent, thereby giving the French forces a free hand in assaulting English colonies in the Caribbean. The attack on Portugal would force the Portuguese monarch, Joseph (1750-77), to escape to Brazil to set up a Portuguese empire.[21] In such circumstances, the French forces in Guyane would play a leading role in preventing Joseph from succeeding or in augmenting the French forces in the Caribbean for an attack on Brazil. Other consequences resulting from a military contingent in Guyane would be the reducing of prevailing border conflicts, the restraining of the British and Dutch from expanding along the Amazon coast, and the strengthening of the Pacte de Famille with the Spanish colonies. These were some major considerations that led to the mission of Behague, during the Seven Years' War, in early 1762. At that time the strategy in the war began to change. Portugal invoked an English alliance in 1762, and Spain, prompted by the

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[20]Pierre Barrère, Nouvelle relation de la France équinoxiale (Paris: Piget-Damonneville, 1743), p. 43.

[21]Comment les Espagnols regardent le commerce des étrangers, Bibliothèque Nationale, Papers of l'abbé Béliardi, Fr. 10766, fol. 69. (Hereinafter cited as B.N., P.B.)

Pacte de Famille, invaded Portugal. The Portuguese army was augmented by an English force led by James O'Hara, second Baron, and John Campbell, fourth Earl of Loudoun. Soon after, preliminaries to a peace settlement began and tentatively changed French plans for continuing the war. In the meantime, Behague had begun his mission in Guyane and concluded his findings in a Mémoire. The mission of Behague was important nevertheless, for Choiseul studied the Mémoire after the signing of the peace in 1763 and used it to develop his plan for war in the colonies.

The Mémoire showed that in the event of war Guyane held a vantage position since fortifications could be built and a base of operation established. The document laid out a general plan of defense, reported on defensive measures taken by the administrative officials at Cayenne for internal and external defense and suggested that French forces in the colony be strengthened and supplemented.[22] The governor of Cayenne, Gilbert Guillouet, seigneur d'Orvilliers, supported the proposals of Behague.[23]

After signing the peace in 1763, Choiseul re-considered the recommendation of Behague and used it in planning and preparing for his war of revenge. The result was a proposal to implement a plan for war. This he reported to Louis XV in his Mémoire of 1765. In general, the plan called for an

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[22]Renseignement sur la Guyane française, Correspondance envoyée et ordres du Roi, 1763, A.N., Col. C. 14, 26, fols. 84-85.

[23]Ibid., fol. 133.

immediate colonization in Guyane on a large scale in order to commence preparing the colony for military use.

The Papiers de Chanvalon, consisting of letters, memoirs, and dossiers deposited at Archives Nationales and at the Bibliothèque Nationale, provide evidence to substantiate that Guyane was colonized in 1763 for military reasons. Thibaut de Chanvalon, intendant of the new settlement at Kourou in 1763, was charged with the military phase of the colonization. In his writings he stated that Guyane was more favorably positioned to prevent an invasion and maintain defense than the other French possessions in the Caribbean. The French islands, he wrote, encompassed a limited area and opened from all sides to foreign invasion. Their defense and fortifications were vulnerable and they would not withstand an English blockade, especially since England possessed a superior marine in the West Indies. But in Guyane the situation was different. He wrote:

> No one colony offers to France so many advantages as Guyane, to replace those which war has taken from us, to assure defense of that which remain to us, and to give us ways of attack and of diversion against our natural enemies or against their allies if war breaks out again one day between them and us.[24]

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[24]Copie tirée d'un projet d'établissement d'une nouvelle colonie dans la Guyane, 1763, B.N., Fr. 6244, fol. 83. (Hereinafter cited as Chanvalon, Copie Tirée.) "Aucune colonie n'offre à la France autant d'avantages que la Guyane, pour remplacer celles que la guerre nous a enlevées, pour assurer la défense de celle qui restent et pour nous procurer des moyens d'attaque et de diversion contre nos ennemis naturels ou contre leurs alliés, si la guerre se rallume un jour entre eux et nous." Jean-Baptiste-Thibauld de Chanvalon, born in Martinique (1725) was sent to Guyane as intendant. Arrested on his return to France after the Kourou disaster, he was condemned to perpetual imprisonment for embezzlement (1767). He succeeded in getting a fresh trial and was acquitted in 1776.

Chanvalon stated that Guyane offered unlimited opportunities, that its span into the interior and along the coast provided strategic military places where forts could be built and invasion by land or sea averted. He said, for example, that even if England intercepted French troops to Guyane by way of sea, that reinforcement, particularly Spanish, could be sent by land since the colony was on the continent.[25] Despite the superiority of English forces, wrote the intendant, Guyane would still be able to obtain foreign help by sea. The problem was not interception of help but the availability of adequate military strength in the colony to defend its vast coastal region extending to one hundred leagues. Chanvalon was aware of Guyane's weak defenses. The existing port of Cayenne, for example, was unable to harbor French ships of the line except five leagues from the coast. On several places along the coast there were sand and mud banks obstructing naval communication to the colony. These banks were liabilities to French shipping; at the same time they favored defense of the coast by grounding invading ships. "The mud bank is an advanced fortification which nature itself put in the way for defense," wrote Chanvalon.[26] But this argument was not meant to negate his proposal that at least one harbor should

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[25]Chanvalon, Copie Tirée, op. cit., fol. 83.

[26]Ibid. "Ce banc de vase est une fortification avancée que la nature elle même oppose pour sa défense."

be deep and adequate enough to admit large French ships.

In one communiqué Chanvalon suggested that Guyane would be a suitable asylum to soldiers of the Seven Years' War, a home for French Canadians, and above all an aid to the French islands. "Most important, we have seen," he wrote, "that being windward of the other islands she had a precious advantage for helping them and for furnishing them with what was most essential: defenders, wood, food from the country, and cattle."[27] He also supported the idea prevalent at that time in the ministry of the marine that a white settlement in Guyane would best serve the interest of France in the area of defense.[28] It was also Choiseul's idea that only a homogenous European population, similar to English settlements in the West Indies and in North America, could produce an impregnable defense and the capacity to aid other French islands in case of attack. Such a settlement, added historian Ternaux-Compans, was imprinted in the mind of Choiseul and was the basis for colonizing Guyane on a large scale.[29]

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[27]Papiers de Chanvalon, Mémoires sur la Guyane 1763-1764, A.N., Series no. 1024, dossier V. (Hereinafter cited as Papiers de Chanvalon.) "On a vu surtout qu'étant au vent des autres isles, elle avait un avantage prétieux pour les aider, et pour leur fournir ce qui leur était le plus essentiel des deffenseurs, du bois, des vivres du pays, et des bestiaux."

[28]Further discussion of the importance of a white settlement is given later in the chapter.

[29]H. Ternaux-Compans, Notice Historique sur la Guyane Française (Paris: Société d'études pour la colonisation de la Guyane française, 1843), p. 90. (Hereinafter cited as Ternaux-Compans, Notice Historique.)

Hence defense was the fundamental purpose for selecting Guyane, for excluding non-whites, for a massive settlement, and for immediate colonization. Chanvalon held that the purpose of planting a new colony in Guyane "...was a pretext in order to form there a depot of trained men or able to get trained soon, and placed there in a way to help out colonies in an unexpected attack, or to attack those of our enemies."[30] He added that a well fortified depot would be difficult for the enemies to capture. "The swiftness of the currents, and the coast which is flat, can be a little hindrance in certain respects, but it is a natural defense against the enemies."[31]

The Mémoire of Behague and the Papiers de Chanvalon present substantial evidence attributing the colonization of Guyane to military reason. Some historians propound the same view. "It appears that the design of the ministry," wrote Artur, physician of Louis XV in the ancient colony, "was rather to establish a colony which could furnish, in time of war and even at the same time,

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[30]Papiers de Chanvalon, op. cit., dossier V. "C'était un prétexte pour y former un entrepôt d'hommes aguerris, ou bientôt propres à le devenir, et placés là de façon à secourir d'un coup de main nos colonies, ou à attaquer celles de nos ennemis."

[31]Ibid. "La rapidité des courrans, et la côte qui est platte, peuvent être un petit obstacle à certains égards, mais c'est une défense naturelle contre l'ennemis."

supplies to the Îles du vent."[32] Agreeing, Gabriel Hanotaux and Alfred Martineau have stated that the settlement of Guyane intended to aid neighboring possessions in the French Antilles if the need existed. Recognizing at the same time that Guyane offered an economic advantage to France, they concluded "...such was not for the moment the essential aim; the object which they proposed was entirely political and military."[33] Another French historian, André Julien wrote: "The ministry insists on the military importance of the endeavour;" that since Guyane was windward to the French islands she was favourably situated to lend support in case of war.[34] In a medical dissertation Paul Henry said that Guyane was colonized to counterbalance the effect of the moral loss of Canada, but more important, in order to have "...a reserve of colonists capable of coming to the aid of the islands (Martinique and Guadeloupe), the French

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[32]M. Artur, Histoire manuscrite des colonies française de la Guyane, B.N., Nouvelles acquisitions françaises, No. 2571-2572, (2), fol. 781. (Hereinafter cited as Histoire manuscrite N.A. Fr. 2571-2572.) "Il paraît que le dessein du ministre était plutôt d'établir une colonie qui put fournir en temps de guerre et même en tout temps des subsistances aux Îles du vent..."

[33]Gabriel Hanotaux and Alfred Martineau, Histoire des colonies françaises et de l'expansion de la France dans le monde (Paris: L'Histoire Nationale, 1929), p. 591. "...mais tel n'était pas pour le moment le but essential: l'objet que l'on se proposait était tout politique et militaire."

[34]Ch. André Julien, Les Français en Amérique 1713-1784 (Paris: Centre de Documentation, 1951), p. 93. See also R. L. Saint-Remy, De quelques essais de colonisation européenne sous les tropiques (Paris: Paul Dupont, 1849), pp. 320-321.

government resolved to exert all its efforts to that end."[35] Another writer, Jean Chaia, concurred with the general thesis that France's main concern in colonization after 1763 was manifested in using Guyane to shelter French forces if the tide of war ran against them. "Perhaps it was not even a matter of revenge but of defense. In any case it was necessary to remain ready, seeing that England began to encounter serious difficulties in her American colonies."[36] The revolt against England was predicted by Choiseul as early as 1765, a prediction recorded in his Mémoire to Louis XV in that year.[37] Such a development would contribute significantly to fulfilling his plan for a war of revenge against England, a war in which France and her colonies would lend support to the American colonies rebelling against the mother country. Therefore Guyane was colonized, according to Alfred Lacroix as

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[35]Paul Henry, Sur une tentative de colonisation en Guyane (Thèse pour le Doctorat en Médecine: Faculté de Médecine de Paris, 1940), p. 11. "Une réserve de colons, capables au besoin de venir en aide aux Isles (Martinique et Guadeloupe), le gouvernement française résolut d'y porter tous ses efforts." See also R. L. Saint-Remy, De quelques essais de colonisation européenne sous les tropiques, op. cit., p. 12.

[36]Jean Chaia, "Echec d'une tentative de colonisation de la Guyane au XVIII^{e} siècle," Biologie Médicale, XLVII (Avril, 1958), xiii. "Peut-être n'était ce même pas de revanche qu'il s'agissait, mais de défense. De toute façon il fallait se tenir prêt, d'autant que l'Angleterre commençait a' recontrer dans ses colonies d'Amérique de sérieuses difficultés."

[37]Etienne François de Choiseul, Mémoire de Monsieur de Choiseul Remis au Roi en 1765 (Paris: Charles Giraud, 1881), p. 8. (Hereinafter cited as Choiseul, Mémoire.)

> ...one other colony, capable of serving as base of operations in case of a new war. Martinique and Guadeloupe being insufficient to play this role, he [Choiseul] considered Guyane, which had been pointed out to him as suitable for this purpose.[38]

The military concern for colonization was to remain unpublicized, however. The ministry of the marine needed time to achieve the necessary preparations in Guyane, as well as on the islands of Martinique, Saint Domingue, and Guadeloupe. Until the colonies were ready, every diplomatic rupture with England had to be amended. With this in mind, Choiseul ordered the expedition of Kourou in 1763.

Having decided to colonize Guyane in 1763, Louis XV and his chief minister, Choiseul, issued an order for preparation to be made immediately to recruit colonists and accommodate them in the new settlement. Several proposals reaching the ministry of the marine suggested the use of African labor and creation of a seignorial system for quick economic exploitation. Blind to the view and purpose of the French government in Guyane, the proposals were only interested in profits. One of these came from Le Sieur Nau, a merchant from La Rochelle, who suggested that the use of African slaves under white proprietorship would resuscitate French trade destroyed during the Seven Years' War. He

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[38]Alfred Lacroix, Notice Historique sur les Membres et Correspondants de L'Académie des Sciences (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1932), p. 40. "...d'une autre colonie, susceptible de servir de base d'opérations, en cas de nouvelle guerre. La Martinique et la Guadeloupe étant trop peu importantes pour pouvoir jouer ce rôle, il pense à la Guyane, qui lui avait été signalée comme propre à ce dessein."

estimated that 10,000 slaves and 6,000,000 livres would be sufficient for an initial settlement.[39] A suggestion from the son of d'Orvilliers, governor at Cayenne in 1763, which was incorporated into a memoir dated March 20, 1763, urged France to cultivate the production of sugar which was a staple crop in tropical countries. He pointed out that the commodity would flourish along the banks of the Kourou river where sugar refineries could be built. For the supply of labor, he recommended, similar to Nau, the use of African slaves. However impressive, the plan was rejected because it overlooked the military objective of Choiseul and because it required the government to support the colonists for the first three years.[40] A third proposal, from Morisse, pay commissioner at Cayenne in 1763, asked in a letter of March 25, 1763, that the government undertake a mass shipment of slaves from the African coast. As in the case of other proposals, this plan also aimed at profit.[41]

Choiseul rejected the above plans and recruited a white population which he believed would be able to create a military force capable of resisting and of launching an assault. He was convinced that a mixed or slave population did not have the potential for war. But how could France

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[39]Ternaux-Compans, Précis Historique, op. cit., pp. 6-8.

[40]Ibid., pp. 8-9. The mouth of the Kourou river is approximately 18 miles north of Cayenne, the ancient settlement in Guyane.

[41]Ibid., pp. 10-12.

obtain a large white population fully prepared in a short time to fulfill the military objectives? The answer was found in the launching of a wide publicity campaign which exaggerated opportunities to obtain wealth quickly while concealing the true reason for colonization. The advertisement used to recruit French Canadians, Germans, Alsatians, Swedes, and Belgiums read:

> Europeans who go to this beautiful country which yields two harvests a year, obtain there upon arriving, ownership of a piece of ground; they are fed, lodged, well clothed, and furnished with all that is necessary for them, their wives, and their children for two and a half years; we do not worry them because of their beliefs; we pay their travel to Rochefort from where we transport them free of cost to Guyane.[42]

The response was overwhelming. The Baron de Bessner, director of the campaign and later governor of Cayenne, reported to the ministry of the marine in November 5, 1763, that he had obtained tremendous success in the recruitment. He then proposed, as agreed upon in the campaign, that the ministry pay all expenses of the colonists to Guyane in return for which they would establish a seigniory composed of a village of ten families. The land given would span an area of 1600 acres, half to go to the lord and the other

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[42]Daubigny, Choiseul et la France d'outre-mer, op. cit., p. 44. "Les Européens qui passent dans ce beau pays qui donne deux récolte par an, y obtiennent un terrain en propriété en arrivant; ils y sont nourris, logés, bien habillés, et fournis de tout ce qui leur est nécessaire pour eux, leurs femmes et leurs enfants, pendant deux ans et demi; on ne les inquiète point sur leurs croyances; on leur paye leur voyage pour se rendre à Rochefort d'où on les transporte gratis à la Guyane."

half to the families. The system which Bessner worked out would lend itself to private ownership in which the families could redeem their share of the land by purchase, rent payment, or through manual service over a period of years. Bessner's plan was approved even though it meant, to some degree, as in the case of the rejected proposals, a substitution of one form of state servitude for another.

In describing the enthusiasm of the new planters for Guyane, a young officer of embarkation, and governor at Cayenne in 1777, Pierre Victor Malouet, wrote:

> It was a deplorable spectacle, even for my inexperience, this crazy multitude from all classes, each of whom was counting on speedy riches, and among whom, independently of the peasants, there were capitalists, young men of good education, entire families of craftsmen, bourgeois, gentlemen, a crowd of civil and military employees, finally a troop of musicians, destined to provide amusement for the new colony.[43]

The most important officer of the new settlement was the governor, Chevalier Etienne Turgot.[44] The governorship

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[43]Pierre Victor Malouet, Collection de Mémoires et correspondances officielles sur l'administration des colonies, 5 vols. (Paris: Baudouin, 1802), I, 5. (Hereinafter cited as Mémoires et Correspondances.) "C'était un spectacle déplorable même pour mon inexpérience, que celui de cette multitude d'insensés de toutes les classes qui comptaient tous sur une fortune rapide, et parmi lesquels, indépendamment des travailleurs paysans, on comptaient des capitalistes, des jeunes gens bien élévés, des familles entières d'artisans, de bourgeois, de gentilshommes, une foule d'employés civils et militaires, enfin une troupe de comédiens, de musiciens, destinés à l'amusement de la nouvelle colonie."

[44]Chevalier Etienne Turgot, Marquis de Cousmont, brother of the famous statesman, belonged to a Norman family. He was first a knight of Malta and commanded a gallery.

was obtained because of his support to the plan of Choiseul. However, Turgot failed to carry out his task. He administered the new settlement from Versailles instead of from Kourou and when the effort to plant the new colony failed, he was accused of dereliction of duty. The precarious position in which he found himself was responsible for the problems that developed at the Kourou settlement and ultimately for the complete failure of the new colony.

Turgot's official representative at Kourou was the intendant, Thibaut de Chanvalon. The intendant was experienced in colonial affairs, having lived at Martinique where he was a member of the superior council. He was given the responsibility to settle the colonists, to extend the initial settlement to other parts in Guyane, and to prepare the defenses of the colony in keeping with the intention of Louis XV and Choiseul. Next in rank was the commandant, Préfontaine. The commandant was ordered to depart from France as early as March 1, 1763, with a crew of workmen and some colonists to begin temporary accommodation for the bulk of settlers soon to follow. The early departure was occasioned by the urgency of the colonizing project and by the climatic conditions in Guyane. Leaving France as scheduled, Préfontaine and his party would arrive by the end of April, during the dry season, to begin erecting cottages and other buildings to house the new planters. Preparations were expected to be completed before the advent

of the rainy season which in Guyane meant incessant rainfalls that commonly resulted in floods.

The new settlement was to be located at Kourou, on the right bank at the mouth of the Kourou river. The cite selected was for strategic reasons and in the event it was necessary to expand the camp to the three small islands located off the mouth of the Kourou river. The islands, called Îles du Diable, potentially were excellent defensive positions. The commandant described the islands in a communiqué on February 28, 1764. He wrote that the islands were separated from one another by a narrow body of deep water suitable for docking. On both sides of the islands were huge rocks treacherous to ships unfamiliar with passage between the islands. The position, size, and elevation of the rocks facilitated the defense of the colony, for in addition to the difficulty of passage, ships approaching the colony could be identified from some distance. Additionally, fortifications could be built on the rocks and cannons fired from various positions. The islands also blocked the view of the new colony, hence approaching ships were unable to locate the French position, an advantage which would make enemy invasion difficult. For these reasons the Îles du Diable were included in the plan for the new settlement.[45]

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[45]Chanvalon (Cayenne) to Choiseul (Versailles), February 28, 1764, B.N., Fr. 6239, No. 12, fol. 148.

However, the plans for settlement and defense on the islands and at Kourou suffered in execution from the beginning. The stage for a succession of difficulties was set when Préfontaine failed to leave France as scheduled, thus wasting valuable time needed for preparing the camp for the planters. His delay was caused by indecision on the precise location for the camp on the bank of the Kourou river, by uncertainty in obtaining Indian labor to construct cottages, and by inadequate funds to purchase land surveying equipments. It is difficult to comprehend why these reasons, as stated in Précis Historique, justified the delay when the Kourou expedition was so urgent and so basic to Choiseul's plan.[46]

In addition to the delay, difficulties at Kourou came because of inadequate information supplied to the ministry of the marine and false news dissipated to the colonists. The new colonists did not have access to information from published reports dealing with the problems of settlement in Guyane. Their source of information was the publicity campaign engineered by the ministry of the marine to recruit large groups of planters for an early settlement. The ministry was equally misled about the difficult physical and climatic conditions in the proposed colony and the type of settlers suited under such existing situations. Emphasis was placed on the numbers not on the quality of colonists, and the message preached was an opportunity to get rich

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[46]Ternaux-Compans, Précis Historique, op. cit., p. 17.

quickly. The result was an overwhelming response of French planters who urged eagerly to be despatched to seize the fortune awaiting them. But the conditions advertised did not exist; consequently disappointment, dissatisfaction, and dissension were the order of the day beginning with the first convoy to the last.

Finally, obtaining thirty workers to help with preparation at Kourou, and 1,300,000 francs for transporting and maintaining 2,000 persons for one year, Préfontaine left France on May 17, 1763, with an ititial convoy of 127 planters in three ships, la Comtesse de Grammont, le Jason, and l'Américain. He arrived at Cayenne two months later, on July 14, during the rainy season.[47] Before proceeding from the ancient settlement to Kourou, Préfontaine sought additional help from the Comte de Behague, governor at Cayenne. Realizing that he arrived late, the commandant tried to secure as much help as available to hasten with the preparation at Kourou before any additional convoys arrived. Behague, however, uninformed about the Kourou expedition, felt that he had been insulted by the failure of the ministry of the marine to inform him about the future colony at Kourou and consequently refused to render any assistance whatever. The displeasure of Behague forced Préfontaine to embark for Kourou without help. Some relief was obtained, however, from a Jesuit camp located a few miles

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[47]Ternaux-Compans, Précis Historique, op. cit., p. 20.

up the Kourou river. Since 1762 the Jesuits had been expelled from France and French colonies. But their mission was still maintained in Guyane at the time of Préfontaine's arrival. Their director, Pierre P. Ruelle, provided eighty Negroes to help with clearing land and building cottages at the Kourou settlement. When the aid terminated a month later Préfontaine turned to the Indians for assistance, using at the same time whatever slave labor he could secure.[48] Faced with a shortage of labor and having only a few days before the arrival of more colonists, Préfontaine turned to governor Behague at Cayenne and sought help once more.[49] In a letter to the commandant, the governor gave assurance that relief would be forthcoming from the Jesuit mission which had given help earlier.[50] To this effect in a letter to Ruelle the governor ordered that a crew of slaves be sent to the Kourou settlement.[51] But Ruelle replied that temporary relief could not be continued due to the emergence of problems at the mission camp.[52] Consequently the

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[48]Behague (Cayenne) to the ministry of the marine (Versailles), December 15, 1763, A.N., Col. C. 14, 31bis., No. 11, fol. 1.

[49]Préfontaine (Kourou) to Behague (Cayenne), November 13, 1763, A.N., Col. C. 14, 31, No. 11, fol. 4.

[50]Behague (Cayenne) to Préfontaine (Kourou), November 15, 1763, A.N., Col. C. 14, 31, No. 11, fol. 4.

[51]Behague (Cayenne) to Ruelle (Jesuit mission), November 15, 1763, A.N., Col. C. 14, 31bis, No. 11, fol. 4.

[52]Ruelle (Jesuit mission) to Behague (Cayenne), November 15, 1763, A.N., Col. C. 14, 31bis, No. 11, fol. 4.

settlement was far from complete when, on December 22, 1763, a second convoy of eleven ships disembarked 1,429 colonists under the command of Chanvalon.[53]

A brief description of the settlement will partly explain why the Kourou expedition failed almost from the onset. The immediate problem which the planters encountered upon arrival was the difficulty of arranging for their transportation from the port of Cayenne to Kourou. The water passage to Kourou, especially to the mouth of the Kourou river, was obstructed by sand banks and rocks which made passage for large ships impossible. This situation became aggravated when, during rainy seasons, northerly winds swerved over the river and swept boats to the sand banks or against huge rocks. More serious, however, than transportation was the inadequate housing awaiting the new colonists. The camp was small, covering an area of approximately 2,300 feet long and 800 feet wide. The only building that stood on the camp at the time of Préfontaine's arrival was an old church built by the Jesuits. Préfontaine constructed several buildings around the church, including a hospital, an army service corps (intendance), and a magazine. He built four rows of carbets out of tree trunks, with roofs made of leaves and floors of mud. Streets, named after officials of the settlement, were laid out in parallel columns between rows of sheds. A well was dug in the center

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[53]Ternaux-Compans, Précis Historique, op. cit., pp. 31-32.

of the camp and, at the left of the church, several cottages were constructed, including a store, and a house each for the governor and commandant. Additional buildings were constructed only after the arrival of Chanvalon. These comppised of two guard houses, ten rows of carbets, a bakery, a laboratory, and a blacksmith shop.

In front of the Kourou camp ran the swift Kourou river; at the rear was a thick wooded forest. During the rainy season floods surrounded the camp and threatened its survival. The problems were compounded by overcrowded living conditions, insufficient food supplies, insubordination of the settlers, and disrespect for law and order.

As new colonists were assigned to cramped living quarters, others arrived. Forced to relocate the planters, the intendant transported several hundred of them to the Îles du Diable where temporary housing was in construction. Since the islands provided the only rescue for the colonists, their names were changed to the Îles du Salut. The change of title was significant in another respect. As cited above, the islands offered a natural protection and defense of the colony as explained in a letter from the intendant.

> This form announces the facility that we will have to defend and fortify them. They are even defending themselves reciprocally and can easily protect the ships which will be in the bay and close the entrance to the enemies by crossfiring cannons up and down, which would be established in the three islands...Finally, in occupying these islands

> we deprive the enemies of a shelter which they could use in time of war to make incursions and intercept the boats.[54]

The expansion of Kourou to the islands brought no lasting relief to the colonists, for shortly thereafter a widespread epidemic swept throughout both camps, resulting in deaths by the hundreds. Chanvalon wrote the ministry of the marine requesting that no more convoys be sent.

> The camp where we are located must not be extended; I have had the honor to inform you of that by sending you the plan,...the sickness and contagion would spread soon; we have the experience of that since the number of persons is augmented. But to increase the camps is to increase the expenses in vain, to increase the abuse and the necessity to confide the results of the colony and the interests of the king to a larger number of persons...I am placed at this time in the most violent and dangerous crisis.[55]

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[54]Chanvalon (Kourou) to Choiseul (Versailles), February 18, 1764, A.N., Col. C. 14, 31bis, pièce 28, No. 12. See also B.N., Fr. 6239, No. 12, fol. 148. "...cette forme annonce la facilité qu'on aura à les défendre et à les fortifier. Elles se défendent même réciproquement, et pourront protéger facilement les bâtiments qui seront en rade, et en fermer l'entrée aux ennemis par le feu croisé des batteries de bas et d'en haut, qui seraient établies dans les trois îles...Enfin, en occupant ces îles, nous privons les ennemis d'un asile dont ils se servaient en temps de guerre pour être à portée de faire des incursions et d'intercepter les bâtiments."

[55]Chanvalon (Kourou) to Choiseul (Versailles), March 29, 1764, A.N., Col. C. 14, 31, pièce 31, No. 49. "Le camp où nous sommes établis ne saurait s'étendre, j'ai eu l'honneur de vous l'annoncer en vous envoyant le plan;...les maladies et la contagion s'y répandraient bientôt; nous l'éprouvons depuis que le nombre des personnes est augmenté. Mais multiplier les camps, c'est multiplier infructueusement les dépenses, c'est multiplier les abus et la nécessité de confier les effets de la colonie et les intérêts du Roi à un plus grand nombre de personnes... Je me trouve, à ce moment, dans la crise la plus violente et la plus critique."

The letter and other similar correspondence failed to reach the ministry in time and the Centaure brought 348 settlers in April, 1764. In May another 960 arrived, soon followed by 1,650 more. By July a total of 14,000 persons had arrived and 30,000,000 livres had been spent.[56]

The beginning of the rainy season in July greatly increased the spread of the epidemic and the death toll. The resultant floods crowded the settlers into their crammed quarters. But in entertainment halls the unafflicted participated indiscriminately in sham festivals, regular banquets, and marriage celebrations as long as the supply of women lasted. The colonists tried to provide a lively spirit in order to pass the time; yet when weather permitted, they refused to work on the land, and claimed that the promoters of the settlement had broken their promise and failed to provide them with conditions agreed upon.[57]

When word finally reached the ministry of the marine regarding the devastation of the Kourou settlement, Louis XV and Choiseul charged Turgot with irresponsibility since he was governor of the new colony. A wave of resentment against the government swept France. Louis XV demanded Turgot's immediate departure for Kourou with vast powers to remedy the situation and to relocate the survivors, since

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[56]Malouet, Mémoires et Correspondances, op. cit., I, 6.

[57]Ternaux-Compans, Précis Historique, op. cit., pp. 53-54. See also A.N., Col. C. 14, 31, pièce 32, No. 61.

the Kourou crisis had temporarily halted the plan of the French in preparing for a war of revenge. His correspondence to Turgot discussed below, shows the high value placed on the Kourou scheme.

Louis XV's Intention in Guyane Reaffirmed

Anticipating that the Kourou disaster could be remedied by relocating the survivors in another settlement in Guyane, Louis XV reminded Turgot of his intentions in Guyane, not only at the new settlement of Kourou but also at the ancient settlement of Cayenne. The Kourou crisis, advised the king, should not delay too long enforcement of a French policy in Guyane or French diplomacy in the Caribbean. It should be also observed, as discussed in the following chapter, that while France attempted to build forces and a base at Kourou, measures were taken simultaneously to improve defenses and strengthen fortification at Cayenne. Both colonies constituted, therefore, the defense force in Guyane according to the plan of Choiseul, a plan reiterated by Louis XV in his Mémoire in 1764. Since Turgot failed to take up his appointment as governor of Kourou and of Cayenne in 1763 and consequently failed to implement measures to build French forces, he was instructed once again about the intentions of Louis XV. These are contained in the eighty-one article document which unfolds the plan of the French government in ordering augmentation of the military at Cayenne and colonization at Kourou in 1763. It sought to broaden French occupation in

Guyane by suggesting, further, that settlers from the Kourou colony be relocated along the Approuague river which, being windward to the ancient colony of Cayenne and which was navigable by larger ships of the line, offered a better chance for settlement. The expansion would also be a relief to the overcrowded conditions at Kourou while at the same time facilitating the possibility of the survival of the critical settlement. The Mémoire authorized the governor to recruit help from the Indians in clearing land for the colonists, to establish friendly relations with the Dutch and Portuguese in their adjacent territories, and to do whatever was necessary to fortify the French position in Guyane.

Article Thirty-five described the military objective of France in Guyane, emphasizing that a new settlement was ordered capable to augment French forces elsewhere in the Caribbean.

> Le Sieur Chevalier Turgot must not lose sight that the intention of His Majesty is to establish the new white colony as well because this population is more consistent with the views of justice and humanity which aroused His Majesty, and because it is more proper to secure in a state a degree of force capable to be respected. This system of population is so much the more necessary that the English made their conquests in the last war only by means of their northern colonies which are almost uniquely peopled with whites, and that, actually forming, at Dominique, a colony from which Negroes are excluded, it is easy to see that they planned to conquer, by its means, Martinique and Guadeloupe in the first occasion of war. His Majesty can only oppose their armed forces with equal forces by giving a white population to Guyane, which...is very favorably situated in order to give them help and even to act offensively against the English Islands. Consequently Turgot receives order to take care

> of knowing the various sorts of culture convenient to white people, to encourage them and to inspire the same views to those who will be in command during his absence.[58]

The Mémoire is important particularly for giving evidence of the nature of French military position in Guyane after 1763 and for the indication that Louis XV intended to maintain that position in spite of the failure of the Kourou expedition. Interpreting Louis XV's intention, the ministry of the marine stated very clearly in Précis Historique, edited by H. Ternaux-Compans, published in 1842, that the object of French involvement in Guyane after the Seven Years' War was neither exploitation of soil nor

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[58]Mémoire du Roi pour servir d'Instructions au Sieur Chevalier Turgot, Gouverneur Lieutenant Général de la Guyane, le 31 août, 1764, A.N., Col. C. 14, 27, fols. 46-47. (Hereinafter cited as d'Instructions à Turgot.) See also A.N., Col. C. 14, 29, fol. 220 and B.N., Fr. 6251, fols. 8-9. "Le Sieur Chevalier Turgot, y est-il dit, ne doit point perdre de vue que l'intention de Sa Majesté est d'établir la nouvelle colonie en blancs, tant parce que cette population est plus compatible avec les vues de justice et d'humanité qui animent Sa Majesté, que parce qu'elle est plus propre à procurer à un Etat un degré de force capable d'imposer. Ce système de population est d'autant plus nécessaire, que les Anglais n'ont fait leur conquêtes, dans la dernière guerre, que par le moyen de leurs colonies septentrionales, qui sont presque uniquement peuplées de blancs, et que, formant actuellement, à la Dominique, une colonie dont les noirs sont exclus, il est aisé de voir qu'ils méditent de faire, par son moyen, la conquête de la Martinique et de la Guadeloupe à la première occasion de guerre. S.M. ne peut donc leur opposer des forces capables de balancer les leurs qu'en peuplant aussi de blancs la colonie de la Guyane, laquelle...est très favorablement placée pour leur porter des secours, et même pour agir offensivement contre les Îles Angloises. En conséquence elle charge le M. Chevalier Turgot de s'occuper avec soin de connoître les divers genres de culture qui conviennent spécialement aux Blancs, de les encourager et d'inspirer les mêmes vues à ceux qui seront chargés de commander en son absence."

research of new products, nor of a new outlet.

> He wished to populate Guyane because it is situated windward of the French islands of the Gulf of Mexico and thus very favorably placed to send to them immediate help, at the same time to act offensively in need against the English islands.[59]

Continuing, the ministry added that the king wanted "...to establish on the continent of America, in proximity with our colonies of the Antilles, a race of men capable of assisting the mother country in her future wars."[60] In consequence Turgot was ordered to investigate living conditions suitable for the propagation of a French white population for Guyane and to provide for its settlement. Fulfillment of the task required Turgot to explore the ancient colony completely and to see if it could produce adequately for the settlers and to carry on trade with the Îles du Vent and Sous le Vent. After fulfilling these tasks, Louis XV held, the forces of the colony would be sufficient.[61]

From the above references it is obvious that Turgot

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[59]Ternaux-Compans, Précis Historique, op. cit., p. 4. "(L'objet principal n'était ni l'exploitation du sol, ni la recherche de nouveaux produits ou d'un nouveau débouché.) On voulait peupler la Guyane parce qu'elle est située au Îles des Vent françaises du golfe du Mexique, et ainsi très favorablement placée pour leur envoyer un prompt secours, de même que pour agir offensivement, au besoin, contre les Îles anglaises."

[60]Ibid., p. 1. "...établir, sur le continent de l'Amerique, à portée de nos colonies des Antilles, une race d'hommes capables d'assister la mère-patrie dans ses guerres futures."

[61]Instructions à Turgot, op. cit., fol. 9.

was delegated plenary powers to correct the problems at Kourou and to establish new settlements; at the same time he and the intendant were held responsible for the problems caused by failure to perform their duties as stipulated in the Mémoire of September, 1763. "His Majesty charged equally to the governor and intendant to render mutually to themselves the acts of respect to which they are bound as servants."[62] Turgot's powers, conferred in 1763, included presiding in the superior council at Cayenne, appointing and suspending military and civilian officers in all settlements in Guyane, planning for security measures against invasions, not only from the English but the Dutch in the neighboring territory of Surinam and the Portuguese in Brazil. Reference to border conflicts and invasion from the Dutch and Portuguese augmented the importance of a successful French colonization in Guyane. In effect, Guyane was colonized to serve Choiseul's design for war with the English while at the same time to avert a Dutch and Portuguese threat. The Mémoire stated that Turgot

> ...will not neglect to take precautions that he believes necessary in time of war. His Majesty, being informed that the Dutch in Surinam sometimes crossed the Maroni

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[62]Mémoire du Roi pour servir d'instructions communes à M. Chevalier Turgot gouverneur général et Thibaut de Chanvalon Intendant de l'ancienne et nouvelle colonie de la Guyane, 20 septembre, 1763, A.N., Col. C. 14, 26, fol. 254. (Hereinafter cited as Mémoire du Roi à Turgot et Chanvalon.) "Enjoint également Sa Majesté au gouverneur et à l'intendant de se rendre mutuellement égards qu'ils se doivent comme étant personnes publiques..."

> river in the interior and that this river is the natural boundary that separates the French and Dutch territory; he recommends to Turgot not to suffer any usurpation and since the Dutch governor built a small fort on the mouth of the Maroni river although on his territory where he placed a detachment,...Turgot will examine if it would not be convenient, for the safety of French territory in this area, to erect a similar fort and place a detachment of comparable men.[63]

The threat stemming from Holland and Portugal, discussed fully in the following chapter, was not considered imminent at the time of the Kourou expedition in 1763, nor was it considered necessary at that time to increase the military force--the regiment of Saintonge--garrisoned at Cayenne. A year later, however, with the failure of the Kourou expedition and the occurrence of border agitations caused by the two neighboring powers, greater emphasis was placed on augmentation of the military. Consequently, in another Mémoire of August, 1764, the powers of the governor were increased, as stated in Article Sixty-Five of the Instructions. "All that concerns the military will be under the jurisdiction of the lieutenant governor

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[63]Mémoire du Roi aux Turgot et Chanvalon, op. cit., fol. 256. "...il ne négligera point de prendre les précautions qu'il croira devenir nécessaires dans un temps de guerre. Sa Majesté étant informée que les Hollandois de Surinam ont passé quelque fois la rivière de Maroni et que cette rivière est la frontière naturelle qui sépare le territoire françois et hollandois, elle recommande au Chevalier Turgot de ne souffrir aucune usurpation et comme le gouverneur hollandois a fait construire à l'embouchure de la rivière de Maroni quoi que sur son terrain un petit fort où il a mis un détachement,...Turgot examinera s'il ne conviendroit par pour la sureté du territoire françois dans cette partie d'élever un fort semblable à celui des Hollandois et d'y placer un détachement d'un pareil nombre d'hommes."

general alone..."[64] Further, he was instructed to fill all vacancies in the army, to regulate its composition, and to improve its discipline. Additionally, Turgot was given powers to form a milice. "The intention of His Majesty" stated the same article, "being that His colony of Guyane, must be capable in case of attack to put up the most effective resistance, he charged Chevalier Turgot to form a project of general militia for the colony."[65] In Article Sixty-Nine Turgot was empowered to appoint an officer charged with military power in each canton in a new settlement, and to take all possible means (Article Seventy) to improve defenses, internally, and externally, and to repair and erect forts. In the event of war or any other emergency he was authorized to initiate other actions for the maintenance of defense and security.

With such extraordinary powers, Turgot finally arrived in Guyane on December 21, 1764, but he stayed at the ancient settlement instead of at the new settlement. The governor feared the epidemic which by that time had destroyed the Kourou colony, leaving only 918 survivors out of a total of 14,000 colonists. Consequently, it was from Cayenne that

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[64]Instructions au Turgot, op. cit., fol. 14. "Tout ce qui concerne le militaire ressortira à gouverneur lieutenant général seul."

[65]Ibid., "L'intention de Sa Majesté étant que sa colonie de la Guyane soit capable en cas d'attaque de faire la plus vive résistance, elle charge le chevalier Turgot de former un projet de milice générale pour la colonie."

he began to investigate the catastrophe and to bring charges against the intendant and his officers whom he accused of dereliction of duties, embezzlement of funds, abuse of royal investment, and illegal commerce.[66] The intendant suffered imprisonment and physical torture from an order of the governor, an order subsequently used against Turgot as evidence for irresponsibility. This, and his failure to personally investigate the devastating settlement, to bring relief to the helpless survivors, to relocate the colony, and in general to carry out the intentions of Louis XV, led to serious charges against the governor. When he returned to France on April 5, he was tried and condemned to imprisonment.

The failure of Turgot's mission, however, did not change the course of French policy to remilitarize Guyane. Choiseul continued to strengthen the defenses at the ancient colony where regular French soldiers began to augment the local militia and where armaments were sent to improve defenses. Additionally, he sent other expeditions to Guyane in the hope that new conquests might be made for colonies. These followed shortly after the crisis at Kourou subsided.

The Mission of Bessner

The failure of the Kourou expedition meant that Cayenne continued to exist as the only French stronghold in Guyane

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[66]Turgot (Cayenne) to Choiseul (Versailles), December 31, 1764, A.N., Col. C. 14, 31bis., pièce 23, No. 2.

and in South America. France was not prepared to abandon the ancient colony. Instead, every attempt was made to improve, expand, and use it as the bulwark of French forces in Guyane. At the same time that Choiseul and his successors, Vergennes in particular, tried to strengthen the ancient colony, other exploratory missions in Guyane were undertaken. The purpose was to establish new colonies. An example was the mission of Comte de Bessner who had proposed, as early as 1763, to open a new settlement for German families in Guyane along the Approuague river, approximately eighteen miles south of Cayenne. The proposal sought to establish a seigniory, barony, or county in which to settle the families. It anticipated obtaining help from Préfontaine and the Kourou settlers in order to expedite clearing of the land and laying out of the plots. It envisaged the use of help from the Indians and the slaves. But the Approuague project was tentatively postponed following rumors of the disasters at Kourou.[67] However, Louis XV's Mémoire to Turgot in 1764 made reference to the prospect of a settlement at Approuague and once more the project came to the fore. Louis XV offered Turgot to relocate the Kourou survivors at the Approuague river and to build a new capital there in place of the old capital at Cayenne.[68] As intimated

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[67]Proposition approuvée par le ministre du projet du baron de Bessner, 5 novembre, 1763, A.N., Col. C. 14, Vol. 31, pièce 10, No. 24.

[68]Instructions au Turgot, op. cit., Article 17, fol. 43.

above Turgot did not carry out his duties; consequently, the project for Approuague failed a second time. The failure of Turgot in implementing the "intentions" of Louis XV affected colonizing activities in Guyane but not French plans to remilitarize the colony. It led to the sending of another mission to investigate the Kourou crisis and the problems which prevented Turgot from carrying out the tasks that had been assigned to him in the Mémoire of 1764.

Bessner was ordered to obtain detailed information on the Kourou crisis and to seek possible ways to establish a new settlement on the coastal plain as well as in the interior of Guyane and to report on the state of the defenses of the colony.[69] In another document to Bessner, Louis XV added he should also estimate the number of men required to form a new colony, the reforms needed, and to recommend ways to strengthen the French in the colony.[70] The departure of Bessner to Guyane on September 14, 1765, with a detachment of French troops, renewed hopes in the ministry of the marine that Guyane, together with the French islands in the Caribbean would assure success of Choiseul's

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[69]Les motifs qui avaient déterminé le Roi à employer à la Guyane M. le Baron de Bessner, 22 mai, 1765, A.N., Col. B. 121, No. 19, fol. 565. See also lettre du 22 mars, 1765, ibid., No. 11, fol. 557.

[70]Mémoire du Roi pour servir d'instruction au Baron de Bessner Colonel d'Infanterie et inspecteur général à la Guyane, 1765, A.N., Col. C. 14, 31bis., pièce 46, Nos. 64 et 66.

plan. Writing to this effect, during the same year of Bessner's departure, Choiseul stated in his Mémoire to Louis XV that in spite of some difficulties in Guyane, he believed that his plan would work and that the enemies would be threatened and success would prevail in America.[71]

An immediate result of Bessner's mission was a proposal to begin an agricultural colony on the right bank of the Tonnégrande river about six leagues from Cayenne.[72] The proposal reached Versailles at the time when a change was taking place in the ministry of the marine in which Choiseul handed over the ministry to his cousin, the Duc Choiseul-Praslin. The new minister approved the Tonnégrande project, and in 1766 eighty discharged soldiers were sent to Guyane, involving an expenditure of 800,000 livres. Fate, however, was against any new settlement in Guyane, and the colony at Tonnégrande also failed. Bessner made another attempt in 1776 to colonize Guyane when he organized the Compagnie de la Guyane. But like earlier attempts, this too failed. Nevertheless, he kept on promoting the idea that Guyane was a suitable place for settlements. It was in 1777, however, that France once again renewed interest in establishing new colonies in Guyane. This came when Sartines became head of the ministry of the marine. The

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[71]Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., p. 20.

[72]Note relative au plan des concessions en seigneurie proposé par Bessner pour l'établissement de colons en Guyane, 1765, A.N., Col. C. 14, 31bis., pièce 44.

new minister instructed Pierre Victor Malouet, governor at Cayenne in 1777, to look into the possibility of another settlement. However Malouet was not impressed with Bessner's hope that a new colony could be founded.[73] At this time France was preparing to join the American colonies in a war of revolution against England. France supported the American colonies and 1778 witnessed the final manifestation of a war of revenge.

French plans to establish new colonies in Guyane never materialized until after the French Revolution. According to H. A. Coudreau, France spent over 100 million livres and 30 thousand people in trying to colonize Guyane.[74] All attempts failed, but the effort to strengthen the French position at Cayenne succeeded. Bessner was partly responsible for this. In keeping with the terms of his mission he was ordered to investigate the condition of the military in the colony and to propose a plan for improving the defenses. In response he submitted a "plan of defense and of fortification" to Choiseul on October 25, 1768. He asserted that the forts in the colony should be strengthened and the service of two engineers and a military expert (architecte militaire) should be obtained. He asked, in addition, for a company of fifty workers and that the system

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[73]Malouet, Mémoires et Correspondances, op. cit., I, 6-8.

[74]H. A. Coudreau, "Histoire de la colonisation française en Guyane," Revue du Monde Latin, VII (October, 1885), 369-370.

of corvée abolished by Turgot be reinstated. Recognizing the need to establish defenses in the interior, he suggested that roads be built to connect the coast with the hinterland since communications would be indispensable in times of war.[75] In another communiqué Bessner described the skills needed in the company of fifty workers. He included carpenters, joiners, edge-tool makers, and stone cutters.[76] These workers together with others recommended by the officials at Cayenne began to reform and improve the defenses in the ancient colony. Consequently, the Guyane forces, similar to forces in the Caribbean islands, engaged in preparation for self-defense and for war.

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[75]Bessner (Cayenne) to Choiseul (Versailles), October 25, 1768, A.N., Col. C. 14, 37, fols. 210-211.

[76]Etat de la compagnie d'ouvriers proposée pour l'entretien de fortification et d'artillerie de la Guyane, 25 octobre, 1768, A.N., Col. C. 14, 37, fols. 213-214.

CHAPTER VII

FRENCH MILITARISM AT CAYENNE

When Choiseul ordered in 1763 that preparation should begin to undertake the Kourou expedition in Guyane, he sent a ship, the Diligente, to the ancient colony to convey word that peace with England had been made. Following the announcement, the colonial officials were instructed that a plan for Cayenne had been made to increase the defenses and the military in the colony and to prepare for an eventual war between France and England. In such a war with England, France and her colonies would take revenge for the defeat sustained in the Seven Years' War. Reference to the plan is seen in a correspondence from Orvilliers, governor at Cayenne in 1763.[1] In a second correspondence the governor indicated that the work of reconstruction would commence as soon as the plan was put into effect.[2]

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[1]Orvilliers (Cayenne) to Choiseul (Versailles), February 20, 1763, A.N., Col. C. 14, fol. 5. Gilbert Guillouet, seigneur d'Orvilliers, was governor of Cayenne from 1736 to 1763.

[2]Orvilliers (Cayenne) to Choiseul (Versailles), March 27, 1763, A.N., Col. C. 14, fol. 139. See also letter dated February 22, 1763, ibid., fol. 137.

The plan is contained in a Mémoire by Louis XV in September, 1763, to Turgot and Chanvalon, future governor and intendant, respectively, at Cayenne and the new settlement to be colonized at Kourou. The Mémoire, discussed in the previous chapter, instructed the governor to take precautions in time of war, to not suffer any usurpation from the neighboring Dutch in Surinam (Dutch Guiana) or the Portuguese in Brazil, and to construct defenses along the French borders.[3] No specific reference was made at this time to England or to the English in British Guiana. This came a year later in another document to Turgot, the new governor of Cayenne. In addressing him, August, 1764, Louis XV expressed his "intentions" regarding the security and recovery of the French possessions in the Caribbean. He said that the colony of Guyane should be capable, in case of attack, to put the most effective resistance and "...to act offensively against the English Islands."[4]

The Instruction à Turgot called for implementing an administrative and military policy which was simultaneously carried out in other colonies in the French Antilles. At

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[3]Mémoire du Roi pour servir d'Instructions communes à Chevalier Turgot, gouverneur général et Thibaut de Chanvalon, intendant de l'ancienne et nouvelle colonie de la Guyane, September 20, 1763, A.N., Col. C. 14, 26, fols. 254-259. (Hereinafter cited as Instructions Communes à Turgot et Chanvalon.)

[4]Mémoire du Roi pour servir d'Instructions au Sieur Chevalier Turgot, Gouverneur Lieutenant Général de la Guyane, August 31, 1764, A.N., Col. C. 14, 27, fols. 46-47. (Hereinafter cited as Instructions à Turgot.)

the same time when the Mémoire of 1764 was written, Louis XV expected that the crisis at Kourou could be arrested and the problems solved. It was his hope that Kourou and Cayenne would not only maintain an able force in Guyane but would easily come to the support of the French forces in the Caribbean in the event of need. The reverse was true in the case that such a need existed in Guyane. The failure of the Kourou project did not change the "intention" of the French. Instead it augmented support for reforms and reconstruction of the military at the ancient colony. Except for a brief period following the impact of the Kourou catastrophe, the defense forces at Cayenne received continued attention throughout the 1760's and in the next decade.

The military at Cayenne witnessed the beginning of a new course after the termination of the Seven Years' War and following the general ordinance of March 24, 1763. As in the case of the other French colonies, the ordinance provided for administrative and military reforms, aimed at strengthening the colony against invasion, and supported the French colonial policy of a war of revenge. The reforms were stipulated in several ordinances, particularly the ordinance of March 26, 1763. The latter sought to reform ten companies of soldiers of the marine and an infantry regiment of Saintonge that had been stationed at Cayenne since December 10, 1762.[5] At the same time it ordered

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[5]Ordonnance du 26 mars, 1763, pour la réforme des troupes qui sont à Cayenne, A.N., Col. A. 8, No. 6, fol. 215.

two companies of one hundred men to Guyane to assist in establishing the new colony at Kourou until the arrival of Turgot.[6] Additionally, it instructed the Swiss regiment of the Comte de Hallwyle, stationed at Louisiana, to transfer to Guyane in order to strengthen defenses there.[7] These changes, structural and substantive, reflected a change of direction in France's colonial policy not only in Guyane but throughout the remaining French empire. As in the other French colonies, the milices at Cayenne were replaced by regular French troops from the Métropole, an action which immensely changed the character and strength of the military. The burden of defense was no longer the responsibility of the local force. This meant, in addition, that the military at Cayenne could request additional troops and arms, a course of action which was made throughout the period of Choiseul's administration and in the administration of his successors. In consequence, May, 1764, saw the arrival of twenty companies to be called "national troops" at Cayenne to augment the French troops sent there in 1763.[8] Two companies of canonnières-bombardiers,

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[6]Ordonnance du 26 mars, 1763, pour la réforme des troupes qui sont à Cayenne, A.N., Col. A. 8, No. 7, fol. 217. See also Col. B. 116, fol. 513.

[7]Ordonnance du 19 mars, 1763, A.N., Col. B. 118, No. 34, fol. 76. See also No. 129, fol. 170, dated 18 juillet, 1763. The Comte de Hallwyle was a Swiss general serving in the French army.

[8]Ordonnance du 1er mai, 1764, pour l'établissement de vingt compagnies sous la dénomination de troupes nationales à la Guyane, A.N., Col. A. 9, No. 23.

a company of engineers and another of workers followed in August of the same year.[9] The national troops were enlarged in September by twenty-five companies of soldiers and by a company of canonnières.[10] The steady growth of the military gave to Guyane, for the first time in her military history, a large force of French troops. However, in 1765 the colony witnessed a reduction of the military occasioned by the impact of the Kourou catastrophe. The reduction was encouraged when, in France, the public reacted against the promoters of the Kourou expedition. Public sentiment was unfavorable to any further attempts to colonize Guyane, and this led to a withdrawal of several companies of troops.[11] But the colonial officials at Cayenne, particularly the newly appointed governor, Louis Thomas Jacau de Fiedmond, and his pay commissioner, Maillart Dumsle, argued against the withdrawal.[12] They urged maintenance of a strong force.

Choiseul's reaction to the Kourou crisis and consequently to the military at Cayenne is significant. He wrote to Louis XV in 1765, expressing profound concern about the

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[9]Ordonnance du 1er août, 1764, A.N., Col. A. 9, No. 35.

[10]Ordonnance du 6 septembre, 1764, A.N., Col. B. 119, No. 35.

[11]See Ordonnance du 21 août, 1765, A.N., Col. B. 121, Nos. 39-40, fols. 585-586; du 21 septembre, 1765, and 21 octobre, 1765, ibid.; also 1er octobre, 1765, Col. A. 9, fol. 68.

[12]Fiedmond (Cayenne) to Choiseul (Versailles), April 24, 1765, A.N., Col. C. 14, 28, fol. 40.

failure of attempts to settle in America (French Antilles) and in Guyane. He charged both Estaing, governor of Saint Domingue, whom he recalled in 1766, and Turgot, governor at Kourou and Cayenne, who was imprisoned for not fulfilling his duties, for failure in implementing his plan.[13] He wrote that he wanted to establish a European system in America, but he had erred in selecting governors who were incapable.

> I have chosen subjects to govern who have thrown me into terrible misleading paths; some were greedy, others despotic, ignorant and unreasonable. One, such as M. Estaing whom I thought had a superior intelligence, is nothing but a fool and a dangerous fool; his intendant nonetheless dishonest. M. Turgot is crazy and dishonest at the same time. Finally, the disorder in this part [referring to Kourou] has been extreme. I have had great griefs. My experience taught me to avoid errors. I have changed some of the governors; I have reduced expenses. We must change Estaing and his intendant next year; and if we cannot prevent the evil that occurred from having taken place, at least, with patience and a smooth and wise administration, we will suppress it; but this will still demand a lot of work.[14]

Choiseul admitted the failures in Guyane and in the Caribbean, but he exonerated himself by placing immediate-

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[13]Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

[14]Ibid., pp. 19-20. "J'ai fait choix de sujets pour gouverneur qui m'ont jeté dans des écarts épouvantables les uns étaient intéressés, les autres despotiques, ignorants et déraisonnables. Un, tel que M. d'Estaing à qui je croyais un talent supérieur, n'est que fou et fou dangereux; son intendant pour le moins un fripon. M. Turgot est fou et fripon en même temps. Enfin le désordre dans cette partie a été extrême; j'en ai eu de grands chagrins. Mon expérience m'a appris à me réformer; j'ai changé une partie des gouverneurs; j'ai restreint les dépenses. Il faudra changer M. d'Estaing et son intendant l'année prochaine; et, si l'on ne peut pas empêcher que le mal fait ne le soit, du moins, avec de la patience et une administration douce et sage, le réprimera-t-on; mais cela demande encore du travail."

responsibility on the colonial governors. Such failures, however, did not change his plans for reforms or for his preparations of the French colonial forces. Determined to carry out his program Choiseul only replaced the governors and other officials. Even to the very last year of his ministry, he was determined to carry out his plan and to fulfill his designs to use the colonies to support the Métropole against her enemies.

In effect, Choiseul reported that his plan for the Caribbean suffered because of the failure of Estaing in Saint Domingue and of Turgot in Guyane. But he assured Louis XV that Estaing would be replaced by Rohan and Turgot by Fiedmond, governors whom he felt would be more capable.[15] At the same time, he informed Louis XV that he was pleased with the leadership of Ennery, governor at Martinique, and of Nolivos, governor at Guadeloupe, both of whom performed their duties satisfactorily.[16] Then he asserted: "These two points are essential for the defense of America."[17] Accordingly, the burden of implementing Choiseul's program depended to a large degree on the role of colonial governors. This was particularly true of Fiedmond, governor at Cayenne,

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[15]Estaing's role and that of Rohan's were discussed in chapter five. The role of Fiedmond constitutes most of this chapter.

[16]For the role of Ennery and Nolivos, see chapter five, and Choiseul's Mémoire, op. cit., p. 20.

[17]Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., p. 20. "Ces deux points sont essentiels à la défense de l'Amérique."

in 1766. His administrative and military skills facilitated the continuity of a strong military force in Guyane following the troop withdrawal in 1765. Shortly after taking office, the governor personally surveyed the entire French possession, including the interior, noting the condition of forts, the strength of the armed forces, and those areas susceptible to invasion. It was clear to him that Guyane was vulnerable to invasion from the Portuguese, Dutch, and English. For this reason, he submitted a report to the ministry of the marine and a "plan of defense." Subsequently, as situations in Guyane deteriorated, Fiedmond revised his plan and resubmitted it to the ministry. Since Choiseul was no longer head of the marine from 1766 on, Fiedmond's plans were received by Choiseul's successors, for example, the Duc de Praslin, cousin to the former minister of the marine, who served from 1766 to 1770.

Fiedmond's Plan of Defense in 1766

The important task awaiting governor Fiedmond upon taking office in January, 1766, was to improve the military and to strengthen the defenses of Guyane. Instructed by Praslin to examine the nature of French forces and defenses, the governor despatched to Versailles several documents in support of defense measures in the colony. A letter on January 22, 1766, discussed a potential invasion by sea in the event of an Anglo-French war. He argued that the port of Cayenne could not support resistance. The letter added

that invasion was likely also from the interior of Guyane, where the Portuguese or Dutch, taking advantage of the Anglo-French differences, could make an incursion at any time.[18] In May of the same year, Fiedmond sent Praslin a memoir showing that the fort at Cayenne had decayed beyond repair and that forts elsewhere had become obsolete.

> For the preservation of the colonies in general such as the latter [Guyane] being susceptible to be attacked by the marine, against which she cannot resist without immediate help by forces of the same kind, the arrival of which is not always certain, there is no hesitation on the choice of defenses; the interior defense is most sure when we cannot be assisted and the enemy maintains sea superiority.[19]

Fiedmond proposed that measures be taken as soon as possible for extensive repairs. Judging by the extent of the French sea coast, he contended that Guyane could not maintain an effective defense from the coastline, particularly given the superiority of the English sea power. The maintenance of a coastal defense would depend much on support from the French navy. If such support was not given,

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[18]Fiedmond (Cayenne) to Praslin (Versailles), January 22, 1766, A.N., Col. C. 14, 32, fols. 6-7. For other correspondence of Fiedmond, see 1765, A.N., Col. C. 14, 28, fols. 31-91. Further treatment of border conflicts from the Portuguese and Dutch is given later.

[19]Mémoire sur la défense de cette colonie, 22 mai, 1766, A.N., Col. 14, 32, fol. 16. "Pour la conservation des colonies en général telles que celle-ci susceptible d'être ataquée par de la marine, contre la quelle elle ne peut resister sans être promptement secourue par des forces de même nature dont l'arrivée et toujours incertaine il n'y a point à balancer sur le choix de défenses; celle de l'intérieur est la plus sûre quand on n'est pas à portée d'être secouru et l'ennemi conservant la supériorité sur mer."

the colony would have no defense and would remain at the mercy of the enemy.

> In short, everything is to be feared for Cayenne. In addition to its great weaknesses, her two neighbors will always lean on the side of our natural enemies [England] as even our colonists for their own interest which will always carry them to submit themselves as early as possible for the safety of their habitations, their slaves, their families and their lives; and there is no reason to expect that they will expose themselves to the fatigue and danger of an uncertain and useless defense.[20]

Since it was unlikely to receive much support from the French navy, the defense of Guyane was to be assured, not from the coast, but the interior. By this he did not suggest leaving the coast entirely defenseless. His plan called for erecting a series of forts on the coast and at ports of entry.

At the same time, in the interior his strategy called for a concentrated line of defense that would cut off enemy invasion from both land and sea. Fiedmond argued that an English invasion by sea would lead to grave difficulty to penetrate beyond the coast line because of the dense forest. Similarly, an invasion on land via Dutch Guiana or Brazil would pose serious problems traversing the thick

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[20]Mémoire sur la défense de cette colonie, op. cit., fol. 17. "Enfin, tout est à craindre pour Cayenne; outre son extrême foiblesse, ces deux voisins pencheront toujours du côté de nos enemis naturels comme nos colons même pour leurs intérêts particuliers, qui les porteront toujours à se soumettre le plutôt possible pour la sûreté de leurs habitations, de leurs esclaves, de leurs familles et de leur vie; et il n'y a aucun lieu d'attendre qu'ils s'exposent aux fatigues et au danger d'une défense incertaine et même inutile."

hinterland.[21] Fiedmond's plan was also based on the assumption that Indians would be recruited to strengthen defense measures. Further, he proposed that free Negroes be transported to Guyane to be used in strengthening the military. This was contrary to Choiseul's plan. But the governor contended that the Negroes were less dangerous to the French than the enemies. Additionally, he held that free Negroes were useful in cultivating land, in surviving tropical conditions, and in accepting servitude.[22] The governor explained that the French colonists were unwilling to live in the interior and that they preferred to remain on the coast despite susceptibility to greater risks. The interior, Fiedmond claimed, provided a degree of natural safety as well as defense. In an effort to encourage the colonists to move to the interior, Fiedmond requested that some compensation be given to them to aid their settlement.

Part of the defense plan of Fiedmond provided for reconstructing the ancient city of Cayenne and for adding to its limited defenses. Since the Seven Years' War, Cayenne's defenses had deteriorated steadily and no extensive repairs had been undertaken. Forts were decayed, garrisons weakened, and magazines emptied. Most of the artillery that remained lacked mortar for firing, or the

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[21]Further discussions of Fiedmond's coastal and interior plan of defense are given below.

[22]Mémoire sur la défense de cette colonie, op. cit., fols. 18-19.

battery was without carriage and platform, and guns were rusted. Failure to replace and increase armaments and to augment the regiments, warned Fiedmond, meant that Cayenne would be unable to resist any invading navy even if the latter consisted of only four large frigates. Such an invasion would take only three hours to bombard Cayenne. He proposed, therefore, that the colony be sent arms immediately, that the old obsolete fort be rebuilt, that palisades, walls, and parapets be reinforced with cannons, and that a series of batteries be erected. He asked that a huge concrete vault and a magazine be constructed to store gunpowder and arms, and that houses be built to accommodate the sick and wounded. The houses in peace time would be used as jails which were also needed to improve efficiency of police administration.

In addition, Fiedmond wrote that Cayenne possessed a natural form of defense consisting of a huge rock emerging from the sea and on which artillery could be erected to attack invading ships. "We would considerably augment the defense of the port [Cayenne] by use of a rock which emerges out of the water in proximity of the passage, to place a battery there at the door of the port which is, to say, unserviceable."[23] From the position of the rock incoming

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[23]Mémoire sur la défense de cette colonie, op. cit., fol. 24. "L'on augmenterait considérablement la défense du port en profittant d'une roche à fleur d'eau qui avoisine le chenal, pour y placer la batterie de la porte du port pour ainsi dire inutile."

vessels could be spotted and identified and the bombardment of enemy ships commenced. A similar plan was conceived by Préfontaine and Chanvalon at the Îles du Diable for the protection of Kourou.[24] The rock could support large cannons, for example, which from different heights could be disastrous to enemy targets. From such a vantage position the defense of Cayenne would be increased considerably.

Fiedmond also proposed the creation of an entirely new colony near Cayenne to be encircled and fortified with bastions and fenced with concrete structures or thick wooded walls. The purpose of the new settlement would be to complement the defense of Guyane from Cayenne. On the question of troop augmentation, he proposed the selection of only able men capable of withstanding tropical conditions. "This troop, prepared in that manner for the preservation of the colony, for its interior tranquility at all time could...contribute also to its augmentation."[25] Even a small select regiment, advised Fiedmond, would be more useful and effective than a battalion of soldiers unaccustomed to fighting in a hazardous tropical situation.

> In consequence of the project of augmentation of the colony in 1763, I had proposed to raise and form four companies destined to the service of artillery,

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[24]See chapter six.

[25]Mémoire sur la défense de cette colonie, op. cit., fol. 27. "Cette troupe ainsi disposée pour la conservation de la colonie en temps de guerre, pour sa tranquilité intérieure en tout temps...contribuerait aussi à son augmentation."

> composed of all kinds of workers...and all the men necessary relative to the prospect of a vigorous external and internal resistance in time of war and to be able to fulfill many other objects in time of peace.[26]

Augmentation of troops constituted a major phase of Fiedmond's plan of defense in 1766. Throughout the remaining years as governor, he despatched several letters and other official communiqués in which he consistently sought additional regular French troops and armaments. The guns sent to Fiedmond were shorter and lighter than those obtained earlier. The improvement resulted from the innovation of artillery that had taken place in France as part of the program of general reforms. The improved guns contributed to greater accuracy and efficiency of defense. The French regulars were also adequately trained, reflecting the reforms of the army in the Métropole.

Praslin responded to Fiedmond's plan of defense by sending an advisor, the Marquis de Beauval, in 1766 to make a detailed inspection of the troops in Guyane.[27] Beauval

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[26]Mémoire sur la défense de cette colonie, op. cit., fols. 27-28. Since Fiedmond was not in Guyane until 1765, his reference must be regarding an earlier proposal which he had made for Guyane as an official of the ministry of the marine. "En consequence du projet d'augmentation de la colonie en 1763, j'avais fait celui de lever et former quatre compagnies affectées au service de l'artillerie, composée d'ouvriers de toute espèce...et tous les hommes nécessaires relativement aux vues d'une vigoureuse resistance extérieure et intérieure en temps de guerre, et à pouvoir remplir tant d'autres objets en temps de paix."

[27]Colonel A. Costantini, "Problèmes militaires de la Guyane française durant la seconde moitié du XVIII^{e} siècle." Revue Historique de l'Armée, No. 3 (Trimestrielle, 1967), 81.

was followed by Laforest whom Praslin appointed as major commandant of the national troops at Cayenne.[28] Also the same year, the ministry of the marine despatched a corps of troops to Guyane under the command of the Comte d'Abbé, commandant in chief of artillery at Cayenne.[29] And in December another corps consisting of 250 men followed.[30] The reinforcement marked a new beginning of French militarism in the ancient colony.[31]

The Portuguese Threat

Fiedmond's plan of defense in 1766 originated from a fear of an English invasion. A similar fear existed regarding a Portuguese invasion from Brazil. The problem with the Portuguese began during the Seven Years' War when France engineered a plan to attack Portugal and Brazil in a war of diversion against England. As discussed before, the plan was based on Behague's military mission to Guyane in 1762. Determined to fight a war of revenge after 1763, Choiseul resorted to it once more. There was, however, another reason for re-examining the plan. It was to resolve

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[28]Laforest (Cayenne) to Praslin (Versailles), October 15, 1765, A.N., Col. C. 14, 28, fol. 233.

[29]Correspondance d'Abbé, 19 juillet, 1766, A.N., Col. C. 14, 28, fol. 177.

[30]250 Hommes de recrues destinées pour Cayenne, 5 décembre, 1766, A.N., Col. B. 124, fol. 170.

[31]For a list of ammunition requested and sent to Guyane in 1766, see letter of Fiedmond to Praslin, August 3, 1766, A.N., Col. C. 14, 31, fol. 223.

the unsettled French Guyane-Brazilian border conflict.

The border dispute and the possibility of a war of diversion led Brazilian authorities to make periodic incursions into French Guyane. The invasions were encouraged by the deterioration of Anglo-French diplomacy after 1763. The Portuguese, an ally of the English, took advantage of the situation.

> The Portuguese, our neighbor, will not act so because their political objectives obliged them to be on the side of the English...It was the intention of the [French] court at the end of the last war to make a diversion in this country. In order to be able to promptly execute such a plan...it is necessary to know the country.[32]

Praslin, in cooperation with Fiedmond, tried to obtain information on Brazil through the mission of the lieutenant of artillery at Cayenne, Sieur Jean André Bouichon Du Guers, who was instructed to survey the border in question. He was asked to recommend strategic places to build forts and "...to propose means which seem to him most proper to succeed and the advantages which could result from them for the state and the colony."[33]

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[32]Copie du projet sur la partie de la Guyane occupée par le Portugais, 18 décembre, 1765, A.N., Col. C. 14, 28, fol. 398. (Hereinafter cited as Guyane occupée par le Portugais.) "Le Portugais nos voisins n'en feront pas autant, puisque leurs raisons politiques les obligent de se ranger du côté des Anglais...C'était l'intention de la cour, vers la fin de la dernière guerre de faire une diversion dans ce pays là. Pour pouvoir mettre proptement en execution un tel projet... il faut nécessairement connoître le local."

[33]Ibid., fols. 308-309. "...proposer les moyens qui lui paroissent les plus propres à réussir et les avantages qui pourraient en résulter pour l'Etat et pour la colonie."

As a pretext for undertaking the mission Guers was authorized to negotiate a cattle trade with the Portuguese and was given certification that he was a botanist on an exploratory scientific mission. Thus he was able to conceal the real purpose of his investigation.

The Guers mission was to some degree similar to the mission undertaken by Behague in 1762 when Choiseul had originated the strategy for a war of diversion.[34] Guers provided valuable information, but Choiseul had no certainty when war should commence. The time element depended entirely on adequate preparation in France and in the colonies. Yet in 1763 he predicted that hostility would begin as soon as Pitt returned to office.[35] However, in 1765 he advised Louis XV that war would not come before 1769.[36] In 1770, the year of his dismissal from office, he wrote:

> We suppose, therefore, that war will not take place in 1770, and that we have time to prepare our projects and our means; but we must think that this period of delay is probably the last, and that in 1771 we will be very near to war....We believe in France that the diversion of Portugal is not only useful but is even necessary, in case that Spain made war with England. Moreover in France we think that no consideration must stop Madrid on this diversion which is the only powerful

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[34]Lettre de 22 septembre, 1763, A.N., Col. C. 14, 26, fol. 340.

[35]Discussed in chapter three.

[36]Lettre de 22 septembre, 1763, A.N., Col. C. 14, 26, fol. 340.

means to defend America or to compensate for the loss that we sustained there.[37]

The war of diversion, from the position of Fiedmond, presupposed completion of military preparations at Cayenne. But even in 1770 the forces and defenses in the colony were yet inadequate. This situation, and the fear that the Portuguese might take advantage of the Anglo-French hostilities and cause a grave border crisis, led Fiedmond to believe that if there were to be an invasion, it was as likely to come from the Portuguese as from the English. Fiedmond's position for the defense of Guyane was maintained throughout the 1770's until the actual outbreak of hostilities in 1778.

The Dutch Threat

The military preparation in Guyane was influenced not only by Choiseul's plan to establish bases for war purposes but also by a series of threats from the English, Portuguese, and Dutch. Like the other neighbors of the French colony, the Dutch in Surinam (Dutch Guiana) presented a threat.

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[37]Mémoire des questions préalables à la guerre du Portugal, 20 janvier, 1770, B.N., Mss. Fr. 10770, fols. 43-44. "Nous supposons donc que la guerre n'aura pas lieu en 1770, et que nous avons le temps de préparar nos projets et nos moyens; mais il faut penser que ce temps de délai est vraisemblablement le dernier et qu'en 1771 nous serons très près de la guerre....L'on croit en France que la diversion de Portugal est non seulement utile, mais même est nécessaire, en cas que l'Espagne ait la guerre avec l'Angleterre. L'on pense de plus en France qu'aucune consideration ne doit arrêter à Madrid sur cette diversion qui est le seul moyen puissant de défendre l'Amérique ou de compenser les pertes que l'on pourra y faire."

Fiedmond wrote about the Dutch problem in a letter to Praslin: "We suspect the Dutch from Surinam of making incursions on French territory; a new war between the latter and the runaway Negroes is imminent."[38] Declaring that the French government was obligated to protect the Indians in the interior and to prevent the Dutch from trespassing into French territory, the governor added:

> The defense of our rights and the protection which must be given to the Indians of our territory who can be considered as your subjects will be the only reason that will make us act...in the manner compatible with the honor of the nation and the interest of a colony.[39]

Subsequent letters convey that the Dutch threat had increased and that immediate attention ought to be paid to the security of the inhabitants of Guyane.[40]

The Dutch situation caused Fiedmond to re-examine the strength of the French forces and thus to revise his plan of defense of 1766. On June, 1767, he submitted a new plan to Praslin. "I send you the plans and outlines of battery,

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[38]Fiedmond (Cayenne) to Praslin (Versailles), March 10, 1767, A.N., Col. 14, 34, fols. 25-26. "On suspecte les Hollandais de Surinam de faire des incursions sur le territoire française; une nouvelle guerre entre ceux-ci et les nègres marrons est imminente."

[39]Fiedmond (Cayenne) to Praslin (Versailles), March 11, 1767, A.N., Col. C. 14, 34, fol. 190. "La défense de nos droits et la protection qui est due aux indiens de notre territoire qui peuvent être considérés comme sujets de Sa Majesté seront les seuls motifs qui le feront agir...de manière compatible avec l'honneur de la nation et les intérêts de la colonie."

[40]Fiedmond (Cayenne) to Praslin (Versailles), March 17, 1767, A.N., Col. C. 14, 34, fol. 47.

of large pieces projected for defense of this port..." the document stated.[41] Following his description of work proposed, of materials needed, and of expense involved, he stated that the completion of such projects would substantially contribute to the improving of defenses. Additionally, he requested more guns, muskets, mortars, and bombs. He reported that a training school for target shooting had been started under the direction of Valée, artillery major and commander of the company of canonnière-bombardiers. The school constructed fifty-five gun carriages and provided military training for the officers.[42]

In April, 1768, Fiedmond again revised the plan of defense. Based largely on the first and second plans, the new plan proposed two main areas of defense; one from the coast and the other from the interior. He supported the interior system of defense as being more practical and safer and argued that even though it was less attractive and more rigorous, it would present immense difficulties for enemies invading from the sea. Forts established in the interior, wrote Fiedmond, could be connected readily to the coast by means of rivers, facilitating reception of supplies and reinforcements from the French Antilles. As in the

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[41]Un plan de défense du port de Cayenne, 23rd juin, 1767, A.N., Col. C. 14, 34, fol. 95. "Je vous envoi les plans et profils de la batterie, de grosses pièces, projettée pour défendre de ce port."

[42]Ibid., fol. 95.

earlier plans, Fiedmond did not ignore the importance of maintaining heavy resistance on the coast. He proposed rebuilding coastal forts, erecting batteries on the treacherous rock jutting out of the sea near to Cayenne, constructing similar batteries on a wall around the ancient colony, and establishing a garrison. Similarly, he reiterated his proposal to build a new colony in the savannah adjacent to Cayenne and to surround it with mortars and cannons.[43]

The ministry of the marine accepted the plan of 1768, and in a decision on April 23 acquiesced to Fiedmond's recommendation to construct a new colony and to strengthen defenses. Under the command of Bessner, newly appointed commandant en second and head of the national troops in Guyane, a French regiment was despatched to Cayenne.[44] Contributing to Fiedmond's plan of defense, Bessner requested restoration of the corvée, increasing the company of workers, and obtaining services of a military architect and an engineer. To these requests, Fiedmond added reform and augmentation of national troops, construction of a gunpowder factory, and enlargement of the canonnière-bombardiers and of the chasseurs.[45]

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[43]Défense de Cayenne, avril, 1768, A.N., Col. C. 14, 36, fols. 140-143.

[44]Bessner and his contribution to colonization to the military has been discussed in chapter six.

[45]Projet d'Ordonnance en interprétation de celles rendues le 1er octobre, 1765, 5 août, 1768, A.N., Col. C. 14, 36, fol. 101. See also la construction de la poudrerie, octobre, 1768, A.N., Col. C. 14, 36, fol. 254; Envoi de 100 recrues, 18 mai, 1768, A.N., Col. B. 130, fol. 103, and 500 fusils pour Cayenne, 18 mars, 1768, A.N., Col. B. 120, fol. 29.

In addition to sending Bessner to Guyane, the ministry of the marine commissioned Victor-Thérèse, Comte d'Ennery, governor of the Îles du Vent and of Martinique, to inspect the troops of the ancient colony.[46] The purpose of the inspection was expressed in a correspondence to Fiedmond:

> He will examine with you the various positions of Cayenne and Guyane, the resources for defense, the means to employ them...and finally everything that could contribute to the safety of this colony. I recommend you, therefore, to [give] him all explanations of which he will have need on the actual state of the military, of fortification and of artillery and to communicate with him all ideas that you have relative to his mission.[47]

Ennery submitted two reports to Praslin on the state of defense at Cayenne affecting the French possession of Guyane. The first, dated February 5, 1769, was concerned with the immediate artillery needs of the ancient colony. It urged that an adequate supply of batteries, cannons, and fusils be shipped promptly in order to afford the minimum degree of security in the event of attack. He informed the ministry of the marine that mortars and gun carriages were

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[46]Victor-Thérèse, Comte d'Ennery, was governor of the Îles du Vent since 1763, and governor of Martinique since 1765.

[47]Sur les moyens de mettre la colonie de Cayenne en état de défense en cas de guerre, 30 septembre, 1768, A.N., Col. B. 129, fol. 481. "Il examinera avec vous les différentes positions de Cayenne et de la Guyane, les resources pour la défense, les moyens d'en faire usage...et enfin tout ce qui pourra contribuer à la sûreté de cette colonie. Je vous recommande en consequence de lui tous les éclaircissements dont il aura besoin sur l'état actuel du militaire, de fortification et de l'artillerie et de lui communiquer toutes les idées que vous pourrez avoir relativement à sa mission."

needed, concluding "...that is approximately, Sir, the main articles necessary for the defense of Cayenne, and that it is to be sent there immediately."[48]

In a second report written two weeks later en route to Martinique, Ennery added a list of work to be undertaken to strengthen Guyanese defenses. There was nothing new that had not been recommended earlier by Fiedmond. The list included new forts, palisades, batteries, artilleries of various kind, and a magazine.[49] Assuring Praslin that the colony could be secured from enemy attack and war, the report added:

> In order to do all this work promptly...it is necessary that you augment the company of artillery by fifty workers whom you will send from France, that you send as quickly as possible to the national troops 200 recruited men, that you order the soldiers to work at the fortifications and to work only for the king while there will be work to do.[50]

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[48]Demandes de canons et de munitions, 5 février, 1769, A.N., Col. C. 14, 38, fol. 196. "Voila à peu près Monsieur le Duc, les principaux articles nécessaires à la défense de Cayenne, et qu'il est instant d'y faire passer."

[49]Rapport sur le voyage d'inspection qu'il a fait à Cayenne, pour examiner les moyens de défense de la colonie, 18 février 1769, A.N., Col. C. 14, 39, fol. 224.

[50]Rapport sur le voyage d'inspection qu'il a fait à Cayenne, pour examiner les moyens de défense de la colonie, 18 février 1769, A.N., Col. C. 14, 39, fol. 226. "Pour faire tous ces travaux promptement...il est nécessaire que vous augmentiez la compagnie d'artillerie de cinquante ouvriers que vous enverrez de France, que vous envoyez aux troupes nationales le plus promptement possible deux cents hommes de recrues, que vous ordonniez que les soldats travaillent aux fortifications, et ne puissent travailler que pour le roy tandis qu'il y aura des travaux à faire."

Fiedmond supported the Ennery report and repeated his earlier request to augment the effectifs of the company of canonnière-bombardiers and the company of chasseurs. He also estimated that the total cost of repair and building would be approximately 176,973 livres.[51]

A month earlier Fiedmond had sent another document to the ministry listing the conditions of guns, fusils, and cannons which were unusable and in need of replacement.[52] Many of the requests were not acted upon immediately, and in some cases no action was taken. On June 22, 1769, however, the ministry of the marine authorized 100 new recruits to be despatched from the depot of the Île de Ré, to be followed by a supply of ammunitions in August.[53] The supply consisted of 320 bombs for mortars of twelve inches, 1,000 for mortars of nine inches, four cannons, and 300 cannon balls.[54] In fulfillment of Fiedmond's request the company of canonnière-bombardiers was increased by fifty men and the governor was instructed to re-establish the local militia.[55] With the

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[51]Fiedmond (Cayenne) to Dubuq (Versailles), March 17, 1769, A.N., Col. C. 14, 38, fol. 110.

[52]Rapport sur le voyage d'inspection militaire fait par le Comte d'Ennery, 10 février, 1769, A.N., Col. C. 14, 39, fols. 7-10.

[53]Praslin (Versailles) to Fiedmond (Cayenne), June 22, 1769, A.N., Col. B. 132, fol. 23.

[54]Etat des bouches à feu et munitions d'artillerie à envoyer à Cayenne en 1769-1770, 26 août, 1769, A.N., Col. B. 132, fol. 393.

[55]Ordonnance du 29 décembre 1769, A.N., Col. A. 12, fol. 40.

use of local inhabitants, he also created a company of infantry and of artillery and a company of dragons and of chasseresse de milice (light infantry soldiers).[56] To the officer corps of these companies the Métropole would offer pensions, promotions, and compensations.[57] In addition, the ministry of the marine passed an order to send Dessingy, engineer and land surveyor, to Cayenne. He was assigned to survey the interior relative to Fiedmond's plan of defense, and "...to make a map before helping to organize the defense of the hinterland in case of war."[58] Under Dessingy's initiative the interior was given limited defense measures through placement of patrols to ensure that the old forts were repaired and fortified and by organizing Indians and free Negroes into a company of soldiers. "I found nothing more indispensable and more immediate," wrote Fiedmond, reflecting on the work of Dessingy, "than the augmentation of the companies of chasseurs which is composed of mulattoes and free Negroes..."[59]

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[56]Ordonnance du 29 décembre, 1769, concernant le rétablissement des milices à Cayenne, A.N., Col. A. 12, fol. 41.

[57]Ordonnance concernant les encouragements accordés aux officiers de milices de la Guyane, 29 décembre, 1769, A.N., Col. A. 12, fol. 42.

[58]Voyage de Dessingy, ingénieur géographe dans l'intérieur des terres, 15 octobre, 1769, A.N., Col. C. 14, 38, fols. 89-90. "...pour lever une carte devant servir à organiser la défense de l'arrière-pays en cas de guerre."

[59]Fiedmond (Cayenne) to Dubuq (Versailles), February 3, 1769, A.N., Col. C. 14, 38, fols. 3-5. "Je ne trouve rien de plus indispensable et de plus pressé que l'augmentation de la compagnies des chasseurs qui est composée de mulâtres et nègres libres..."

The institution of patrols in the interior served not only to maintain some degree of security from outside invasion but also to check the flow of Indian migration to Surinam where they escaped military duties. The exodus to Surinam was evident as early as the Seven Years' War. In 1766 Fiedmond established two military posts on the French-Dutch border in an attempt to restrain the flow of migration. He also posted a detachment of fifty soldiers on the border.[60] But, encouraged by the Dutch, the natives continued to escape, hence the basis for hostilities between French Guyane and Surinam. Following Dessingy's investigation, French regulars were sent to the interior to augment the patrols and colonists were encouraged to settle there. Fiedmond wrote about this in 1770.

> I have had the honor, Sir, to present to you different points of view about defense. I do not know of any greater safety than in the interior of the country.... In order to create our needed establishments in the interior, missionaries will perform marriages between soldiers and Indian women, between Indians and free Negro and mulatto women in order to augment, also by population, the defenses which can become more and more impregnable in time.[61]

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[60]Fiedmond (Cayenne) to Praslin (Versailles), October 10, 1766, A.N., Col. C. 14, 32, fols. 63-64.

[61]Fiedmond (Cayenne) to Dubuq (Versailles), March 20, 1770, A.N., Col. C. 14, 40, fols. 5-6. "J'ai eu l'honneur, Monseigneur, de vous présenter différents points de vue de défense. Je n'en crois pas de plus sûr que cette dans l'intérieur des terres....Pour former nos établissements nécessaires dans l'intérieur, les missionnaires marieront les soldats avec les indiennes et les indiens avec les nègresses et mûlatresses affranchissement à fin d'augmenter aussi par la population les défenseurs qui peuvent devenir de plus en plus inexpugnables par succession de temps."

Time was, indeed, an important factor in the strategy of the French at Cayenne as well as that of the diplomacy of the ministry of the marine. Just as Choiseul wanted time to prepare for a war against England, so did Fiedmond need time in planning against a possible invasion from the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the English. All three border powers threatened the French; but the English presented the greatest menace. Consequently, Fiedmond continued in the 1770's to face the possibility of an invasion. His military preparation, influenced by the threat, supported the plan of the ministry of the marine. To this extent Guyane contributed to the maintenance of the French military system in the Caribbean.

War Rumors

In 1771 war rumors began to circulate in Guyane. The news made Fiedmond apprehensive.

> The rumors that the last French ships announced here about the probability of war have greatly alarmed this colony which recognizes its weakness and limited resource for defense in case of an attack. It would be necessary that we were warned if this war was immediate or remote.[62]

Fiedmond used the occasion to request reinforcements and to express willingness to accelerate preparations if

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[62]Bruit de Guerre, 10 avril, 1771, Cayenne, A.N., Col. C, 14, 40, fol. 20. "Les bruits que les derniers batiments de France ont répandu ici sur les apparences de la guerre ont beaucoup effrayé cette colonie, qui connaissait sa faiblesse et le peu de ressources pour la défense en cas d'attaque, il serait bien essentiel que nos fussions avertis si cette guerre était prochaine ou éloignée."

war came. In an earlier correspondence he reported the activities of England on the Îles Turques, and wrote: "You see, Sir, that the English have established lately on the anchorage a battery of sixteen cannons of twelve and that additional help from Europe were being awaited. It is of the greatest consequence for us to destroy this establishment."[63] A similar warning about the English came from Praslin in 1770. He wrote to Fiedmond:

> I inform you, Sir, that England made considerable armament whose destination we do not know. It is necessary at all events that you be on guard and make preparation for the safety of the colony.... We are attentive of what is happening in England and the king [Louis XV] will send you advice and help as circumstances necessitate."[64]

Several other letters were exchanged between Cayenne and Versailles describing English activities in the West Indies and along the South American coast. One of these in 1772 described that English troops were gathered on the Îles St. Vincent to reduce the Carib Indians who had

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[63]Fiedmond (Cayenne) to Praslin (Versailles), July 28, 1768, A.N., Col. B. 131, fol. 162. "Vous verrez, Monsieur, que les Anglais ont établi depuis peu sur le mouillage une batterie de 16 canons de 12 et qu'on y attendait de nouveaux secours d'Europe. Il est de la plus grande conséquence pour nous de faire détruire cet établissement."

[64]Praslin (Versailles) to Fiedmond (Cayenne), September 29, 1770, A.N., Col. B. 135, fol. 294. "Je vous préviens, Monsieur, que l'Angleterre fait un armement considérable dont nous ignorons la destination. Il est nécessaire qu'à tous événements vous teniez sur vos gardes et que vous fassiez vos dispositions sur la sûreté de la colonie....nous sommes attentifs à ce qui se passes en Angleterre et le roi vous fera parvenir les avis et les secours que les circonstances exigeront."

resisted their military establishment.[65] Another, from Versailles, reported that England had built forts at Dominique.[66] Also, English squadrons were reported on the Île de Crabe.[67]

The effect of this correspondence not only exposed some of the whereabouts of the English forces in the West Indies but made the French forces alert to the possibility of an invasion. It led Fiedmond to request two large ships with adequate military supplies and gun boats. Additionally, he requested that the effectifs be increased including the canotiers, bateliers, and coureurs des bois, and that the French marine be despatched to Cayenne immediately in the event of war. He reminded the ministry of the marine that until sufficient French battalions were received, the defense of the colony would be aided by employment of mulattoes and free Negroes in the armed forces.[68]

Fiedmond's request did not receive attention immediately. Following the dismissal of Choiseul, several changes took place in the ministry of the marine. Praslin was replaced in December, 1770, by Joseph Marie Terray,

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[65]Fiedmond (Cayenne) to Nozières (Versailles), September 11, 1772, A.N., Col. B. 141, fol. 75. See also letter of December 4, 1772, A.N., Col. B. 141, fol. 106.

[66]Fiedmond (Cayenne) to Nozières (Versailles), October 30, 1774, A.N., Col. B. 148, fol. 56.

[67]Fiedmond (Cayenne) to Nozières (Versailles), July 7, 1774, A.N., Col. B. 148, fol. 39.

[68]Bruit de Guerre, op. cit., fols. 21-25.

former controller general. The latter, in turn, was replaced by Pierre Etienne Bourgeois de Bogue in the following April. Another change in August, 1774, brought in Antoine Raymond de Sartine as head of the ministry of the marine after an interim of one month under Anne Robert Turgot. The changes delayed action. But with the advent of Louis XVI in 1774 measures were taken to improve the military at Cayenne, for in that year an ordinance effected a new form for the national troops and regulated the officer corps and all companies of the military. It provided for more arms and for the standardization of the composition and administration of the companies.[69] In the years following, when it was clear that English privateers had patrolled along the coast of Guyane, Fiedmond accelerated the defense at Cayenne. When the Franco-American treaty was signed in 1778, Fiedmond obtained permission to double the strength of the national troops. He reported, at that time, to the French ministry of the marine that English ships from New England had made incursions at the Approuague River, south of Cayenne. But Fiedmond received little help because French forces had begun to cross the Atlantic to aid the American colonies, a course of action predicted by Choiseul since 1765. However, when word reached Versailles that the César, the main defense ship at the entrance at Cayenne, had been captured by the English in 1779, a French regiment

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[69]Ordonnance du 8 août, 1775, A.N., Col. A. 15, fol. 24.

of 100 men and sixteen cannons were despatched to the colony. Then on March 22, 1779, Fiedmond received orders to prepare the colony for an attack. The Guyanese forces were summoned immediately to augment the French Caribbean forces, and the war of revanche, which had been predicted since 1765, had finally come.[70]

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[70]Costantini, "Problems Militaires de la Guyane Française durant la seconde moitié du XVIII[e] siècle," op. cit., pp. 84-85.

CHAPTER VIII

TEST CASES OF FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY

In the foregoing it was held that French foreign policy after 1763 aimed at saving the French empire from total ruin and revenging England for the defeat sustained in the Seven Years' War, that France followed such a course on the assumption that her war-time alliance with Spain would be strengthened to enable the Bourbon powers to regain what they had lost from the war. The accomplishment of such a policy was also based on military and naval preparation in Europe and in the colonies. Time was an important factor to allow for adequate preparation of the forces, and throughout the period Choiseul tried his best to prevent any eruption of hostilities between the Bourbon powers and England. He was convinced that after "a few years" France would be able to carry out the course which she had begun in 1763. As preparations continued, however, one event after another threatened the peace of Europe and the colonies and France was forced, against her will, to intervene on behalf of her Bourbon ally to avert the beginning of a major conflict. In the course of Choiseul's negotiation with

Spain and England, military and naval preparations in the French colonies increased and espionage missions to English colonies and England were ordered to assess the intention and position of the traditional enemy. Under the administration of Choiseul's successor Vergennes, France continued to send out espionage missions and to prepare for war. Convinced that Choiseul's foreign policy was sound, Vergennes followed the same course. He wanted France to recover from the loss of 1763 and, like his predecessor, he was determined to maintain the peace until France was adequately prepared for war. In 1778 it became clear to him that the peace of Europe could no longer be maintained and that war was inevitable. Choiseul's prediction of 1765 that there would be an American revolution was accurate and his policy of revanche, which had been sustained for almost two decades, came to fruition. In 1778 France formally declared war with England and joined the American colonies in rebellion against the mother country.

Isle of Turk

There were several events which contributed to the disturbance and eventual rejection of the peace of Europe. One was a controversy in 1764 over the Isle of Turk. The island formed a link of the Bahamas connecting Santo Domingo and Cuba and affording communication with Jamaica. In 1764, French authorities demanded the expulsion of the English from the island. The French explorer, the Comte de Guichen,

after securing permission from the Spanish governor of Santo Domingo, arrested the English colonists and captured eight of their ships. For several months correspondence was exchanged by the courts of London, Madrid, and Versailles in an attempt to negotiate a settlement.[1]

George III protested against the expedition of Guichen and demanded restoration; at the same time Charles III expressed his determination to hold the island of Turk at the cost of war if necessary. Choiseul thought that the English demands should be satisfied since a conflict over such a small island was not worth the cost of breaking the peace. In the end, the English government dropped the matter, an action which revived in Lord Rochfort, the English ambassador at Madrid, hopes of restoring the English party at the court of Spain and of breaking the power of the Family Compact. That Compact was not broken until after the French Revolution, but there were incidents during the administration of Choiseul that weakened Franco-Spanish ties. One of these was an attempt to secure commercial and military bases on the Philippines. The issue arose out of an expedition to the South Seas by an English Admiral, Biron, in 1765. In an effort to remove English influence on the islands and to strengthen the Bourbons in the Pacific, the French ambassador, Ossun, pressed the ministers of

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[1]Louis Blart, Les Rapports de la France et de L'Espagne après le Pacte de Famille (Paris: Librairie Felix Alcan, 1915), pp. 126-127.

Charles III to put the Philippine Islands in a state of defense. It was also proposed that Spanish vessels to the East Indies be allowed to stop at the Îles de France and de Bourbon, and that, in exchange, a French mercantile house be established on one of the islands in the Philippine. The arrangement would enable France to secure a base of operation which would benefit the commerce and position of both Bourbon countries in the east. Spain at this time, however, declared unwillingness to accept the arrangement because of her fears of precipitating a conflict with England.[2]

The Manila Episode

A more serious threat which disturbed the peace of Europe and the colonial world was the controversy and struggle for the Malouine Islands.[3] Spain and England attempted to control the islands in 1766, and in the years following their failure to reach an agreement erupted into a diplomatic war. Believing that it was in the French interest to intervene, Choiseul supported his Bourbon ally and negotiated for a settlement. Unwilling to allow, once more, a rupture of the peace of Europe, Choiseul

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[2]Blart, Les Rapports de la France et de L'Espagne après le Pacte de Famille, op. cit., pp. 140-147.

[3]The Malouine Islands, known as Falkland Islands, are situated in the Atlantic Ocean, east of the Straits of Magellan, below the fiftieth parallel, south latitude and about the sixtieth degree longitude.

"...invited him [Charles III] to propose an arbitration; he advised to avoid war at all cost. It is true that the two crowns, I speak especially of France, are not ready as they will be in three years."[4] Choiseul recognized the inadequate state and the incomplete preparation of the Bourbon navies and the necessity of avoiding an illusion of readiness for war. On the other hand, he considered the possibility that France might be forced into an earlier conflict with England if no settlement was reached in the Malouine episode. Consequently, he conceded that if France should be drawn into a war "...it would be necessary to have it last a long time, which will be advantageous to us."[5] The Pacte de Famille committed France to Spain. Hence if Spain made war France would have no alternative but to defend her; in the circumstances war would have to endure a long time. Why a long time? The answer is seen in his Mémoire to Louis XV of 1765 in which he said that a long and expensive war would ultimately lead England to financial collapse and to colonial defeat. In consequence he proposed to Grimaldi

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[4]Lettre particulière du Duc de Choiseul au Marquis de Grimaldi, 21 mars, 1766, Affaires Etrangères, Espagne, Vol. 545, fols. 213 et seq. "Il l'invita à proposer un arbitrage; lui conseilla d'éviter à tout prix la guerre. Il est vrai que les deux couronnes, je parle surtout de la France, ne sont pas prêtes comme elles le seront dans trois ans."

[5]Ibid., See also Choiseul, Mémoire, op. cit., pp. 9 and 18. "Il faudrait la faire durer longtemps. Mettons nous bien dans la tête que ce ne sera que le temps, et un temps très long, qui nous donnera l'avantage."

that any war with England had to be well planned to ensure success.

> Write me, my dear colleague, if you approve of my preliminary ideas and if they are pleasing to the Spanish king. I will present them also to my master. It is for them to determine how to be served; it is for us to execute it for the best. I will certainly not leave, but I will say that I will be very useless in a war that, if it is not conducted with as much skill as of wisdom, of fidelity and of work, would dishonor the crown. I came in office at a time when the war had a bad beginning. This time I want neither the beginning nor the end to be the same.[6]

The Manila problem was crucial. It occurred at a time when France was deeply engaged with colonial reforms and preparations of her forces. It made international relations among colonial powers tense. A war scare was evident. In order to see the impact of the Manila crisis after 1766, some historical background is essential.

It is uncertain when the group of islands called the Malouines were discovered, but between 1592 and 1594 two English navigators, John Davis and Richard Hawkins, were reported to have seen the islands. The Dutch made claims to them in the seventeenth century when an expedition was

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[6]Lettre particulière du Duc de Choiseul au Marquis de Grimaldi, 21 mars, 1766, Affaires Etrangères, Espagne, Vol. 545, fols. 213 et seq. "Mandez-moi, mon cher confrère si vous approuvez mes idées préliminaires et si elles sont du goût du roi d'Espagne. Je les présenterai de même à mon maître; c'est à eux à régler leur service, c'est à nous à l'exécuter de notre mieux; je ne déserterai pas certainement, mais je dirai que je serai fort inutile dans une guerre qui, si elle n'est pas conduite avec autant d'adresse que de sagesse, de fidélité et de fermeté, déshonorerait la couronne. Je suis entré en place au milieu d'une guerre mal enfournée. Je ne voudrais pas cette fois-ci, que le commencement ni la fin fussent les mêmes."

undertaken by a navigator, De Weert. In the early eighteenth century, French navigators crossed the Pacific and stopped at the islands for water and supplies. At that time they named the islands Malouines. Then in 1763 another French explorer, the Chevalier de Bougainville, in the course of one of his voyages around the world, disembarked on the îles Malouines and took possession of it in the name of Louis XV. He settled about 150 colonists on the island. In 1765 he returned with more colonists and supplies and founded Port Saint Louis as a permanent French settlement. During this time England despatched two expeditions to settle the same group of islands in the name of King George III. These were launched in 1764 under the command of Captain John Byron and the islands were named Falkland. Byron returned to England shortly thereafter and in 1766 an English squadron was sent to the Falkland islands and founded Port Egmont. In December of the same year another English captain, Marbride, came to the Grande-Malouine island which had become Spanish and demanded the expulsion of the Spaniards. It was at this time that Anglo-Spanish relations deteriorated and that France entered into the negotiation on behalf of Spain.

Actually, the deterioration of Anglo-Spanish relation began in 1762 when the city of Manila was captured by England. Shortly thereafter the city was spared from pillage on the assurance that a ransom of 4,000,000 pesetas was paid. It was agreed that half of the amount would be

paid on the spot with the remainder to be secured by a draft, signed by the archbishop of Manila, to be redeemed on demand in Spain. The incident was not mentioned at the Peace of Paris in 1763, hence no reference of it was made in the treaty. However, when the transaction was reported to the Spanish government, it disavowed the act of the archbishop of Manila and refused to honor the arrangement. Spain protested that the whole affair was contrary to international law and that the archbishop had no authority to commit the Spanish government.[7]

The English government rejected the Spanish arguments and demanded full payment. In early 1766, Choiseul entered into the negotiation in support of Spain. In the initial stage, he informed Ossun that England was not likely to press her case for the ransom since she was busily occupied with internal problems and with colonial disputes. Choiseul expressed, however, that war should be avoided in 1766 and that Spain should honor the ransom. On the other hand, he conceded that the coming of a war depended not on payment as on the expected return of Pitt to office. He wrote: "With regards to war I doubt that we will have it this year; Spain will pay the ransom of Manila and we will gain time, but the next year will be difficult to pass if

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[7]Julius Goebel, Jr., The Struggle for the Falkland Islands: A Study in legal and diplomatic history (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927), pp. 224-226.

Sir Pitt returns this year."[8] In all probability it was Choiseul's intervention in the Manila crisis that revived England's stand on the ransom question. England informed her ambassador at Madrid, Rochfort, that she expected a response from Spain. The message was communicated to Grimaldi who in turn sent a copy to Choiseul. Concurrently, Choiseul learned that an English squadron was being equipped that was destined, most likely, for the Malouine Islands. Accordingly, he wrote to Durand, the French Ambassador in London, to keep informed about the destination of the squadron. Undoubtedly, the armament of the squadron created suspicions and gave Choiseul reason for supporting his Spanish colleague.[9]

Choiseul maintained close watch on diplomatic relations between Spain and England between 1768 and 1770. He corresponded regularly with Grimaldi and in general, advised that a rupture was inopportune in 1766. "I say therefore that we must try for our common interests to

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[8]Lettre particulière du Duc de Choiseul au Marquis d'Ossun, 22 mars, 1766, Affaires Etrangères, France, Mémoires et Documents, Vol. 574, fol. 184. (Hereinafter cited as A.E.M.D.) "Quant à la guerre, je doute que nous l'ayons cette année; l'Espagne payers la rançon de Manille et nous gagnerons du temps, mais l'année prochaine sera difficile à passer si Sir Pitt rentre cette année."

[9]Choiseul (Versailles) to Durand (London), July 12, 1766, Affaires Etrangères, Correspondance Politique, Angleterre, Vol. 470, fols. 224-225. (Hereinafter cited as A.E.C.P.)

avoid war for the next eighteen months," he wrote.[10] He advocated the lessening of tension and the avoidance of conflict. Hoping that peace would be maintained, he reminded Grimaldi that Article Eight of the Treaty of Utrecht gave England the right to settle in the Malouine Islands. Yet he argued that if an English establishment in the islands presented a serious threat to Spain then "...we must prepare to have war in eighteen months on this single object."[11] He conveyed the same message to Ossun: "I must say with truth that France is not in a position to enter[war] in this moment and that I have never promised to be ready before 1768."[12] Choiseul was very concerned about using all the time at his disposal to prepare for war, not to provoke one. And if war came sooner, he wished it would be sufficiently timed to allow for maximum preparation and acceleration.

Choiseul's time-table for war was flexible. As mentioned earlier, in 1765 he predicted the outbreak of

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[10]Lettre particulière du Duc Choiseul au Marquis de Grimaldi, 2 octobre, 1766, A.E.C.P., Espagne, Vol. 547, fol. 152 et seq. "Je dis donc qu'il faut tâcher pour nos intérêts communs d'éviter la guerre d'ici à dix-huit mois."

[11]Lettre particulière du Duc de Choiseul au Marquis de Grimaldi, 2 octobre, 1766, A.E.C.P., Espagne, Vol. 547, fol. 152. "Il faut se préparer à faire la guerre dans dix-huit mois sur ce seul object."

[12]Lettre particulière du Duc de Choiseul au Marquis d'Ossun, 5 octobre, 1766, A.E.M.D., Espagne, Vol. 575, fol. 25. "Je dois dire avec vérité que la France n'est pas en état d'y entrer [en guerre] dans ce moment-ci et que je n'ai jamais promis d'être prêt avant 1768."

hostilities in 1768. Shortly thereafter he wrote that France would be more prepared if the date was changed to 1769. Once again he changed it to 1770. He wrote: "We cannot deny that the two courts will be in a better position in 1770 than in 1769, and in 1769 than in 1768."[13]

Between 1766 and 1767 Choiseul was instrumental in preventing a diplomatic rupture between Spain and England, and he should be credited for averting the outbreak of war. On February 23, 1768, however, the maritime powers entered another phase of the struggle. On that date Spain gave orders to Bucarelli, governor of Buenos Aires, and to Afanuel de Amat, Viceroy of Peru, in addition to other Spanish officials in the Malouine Islands, to expel English settlers and to capture their establishment on the islands. A copy of the order was sent to Choiseul for his approval. Unsure of the proper course to follow but being aware of increasing difficulties in the English cabinet and troubles in the English colonies in America, Choiseul sanctioned the Spanish order to Bucarelli.[14] The orders were finally carried out on June 10, 1770, after over two years of diplomatic correspondence among the three powers. Those

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[13]Lettre particulière du Duc de Choiseul au Marquis d'Ossun, 24 mars, 1767, Affaires Etrangères, Espagne, Vol. 548, fol. 253. "On ne peut pas nier que les deux cours seront plus en état en 1770 qu'en 1769 et en 1769 qu'en 1768."

[14]John F. Ramsey, Anglo-French Relations, 1763-1770, A Study of Choiseul's Foreign Policy (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1939), pp. 204-205.

years witnessed increasing tension and "a war scare" that led to accelerating the preparation in the military, navy, and artillery. It is generally agreed among French historians that France was ready to join Spain if Charles III went to war with England. But in late 1770 Choiseul began to experience much difficulty in his ministry and at court. His colleagues, René-Nicolas-Charles-Augustin de Maupeau, the chancellor and Joseph-Marie Abbé Terray, the controller-general, disliked him. They were supported by Choiseul's subtle enemy, Jeanne Antionette Poisson Pompadour, mistress of Louis XV. Accused of discrediting France in diplomacy and of almost involving France in a war with England, Choiseul was dismissed from office. In the weeks before his removal Choiseul wavered between war and peace. Before he left office, however, Choiseul advised Grimaldi to accept peace at all cost. His dismissal on December 24 forced Spain to formulate a change of course regarding the Malouines. Failing to obtain assistance from Louis XV, the Spanish ambassador in London signed a humiliating note disapproving the removal of the English colonists and promising the restoration of Port Egmont to England despite the general acknowledgement in Spain that the group of islands was Spanish. Concurrently, Charles III wrote to Louis XV appealing to his pride as a Bourbon and urging him that preparations be continued in the event war was inevitable. In a letter to Charles III announcing the dismissal of his

foreign minister, Louis XV explained that France was in no condition to engage in war, and urged the king of Spain to make concessions to preserve the peace.[15] Seeing that it would be impossible to engage in war, Charles III decided to submit to the English propositions.[16]

In the Malouine crisis Choiseul can be accused of having brought France to the brink of war. Indeed, he pursued a policy of revenge, and consequently of war. But he was reluctant to engage in war prematurely. He wanted adequate preparations and proper timing. In addition, Choiseul conceived of a war of diversion and one essentially maritime and colonial. These conditions were not present during his ministry, and as a result he rebuffed Spain's attempt to drag France into a major confrontation. But conditions changed after he was succeeded by Vergennes, and the decade of the 1770's witnessed the coming of war with England.

Secret Missions

In pursuit of revenge, Choiseul sent secret agents to the English colonies in America and to England to collect pertinent information relative to the plans and positions of the enemies in case of war. The agents, acting in

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[15]Lettre du Roi d'Espagne au Roi de France, 27 décembre, 1770, Affaires Etrangères, Espagne, Vol. 561, fols. 455, 561 et seq.

[16]Lettre du Roi d'Espagne au Roi de France, 2 janvier, 1771, Affaires Etrangères, Espagne. Vol. 562, fol. 11.

similar capacity as officers of the quartermaster staff which Bourcet had introduced in 1766, prepared topographical sketches of the provinces or coasts to be invaded.[17] The first mission was despatched in 1764. The agent, Pont-le-Roy, a lieutenant in the French army, was charged with engaging in espionage activities in North America.[18] Documentation on Pont-le-Roy's activities is scanty, but according to C. A. Julien he was instructed

> ...to sail to every American port, to be informed about the time of the year that the English arrive, the strength of their convoy, the means to be used to disturb their commerce in times of war, the proper time we could attack them with most success upon their arrival or return.[19]

According to a report coming from the French Embassy in London, Pont-le-Roy visited New York, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Florida, and Georgia.[20] The report was limited; nevertheless, according to Julien it indicated some degree of

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[17]See chapter four for further discussion.

[18]Mission de Pont-le-Roy, Lieutenant de Vaux, Mission dans les colonies angloises de l'Amérique, A.M., Fonds Marine, B. 4, Vol. 107, fols. 91-92.

[19]C. A. Julien, Les Français en Amérique 1713-1784: Le Canada, La Louisiane, La Guyane. La Politique Américaine de Choiseul (Paris: Centre de Documentation Universitaire, n.d.), p. 86. (Hereinafter cited as Les Français en Amérique.) "...de naviguer dans tous les ports de l'Amérique, s'instruire des saisons auxquelles les Anglais ont coutume d'y arriver, de la force de leurs convois, des moyens dont on pourrait se servir pour troubler leur commerce en temps de guerre, du moment où on les attaquer avec le plus de succès, soit à leur arrivée, soit à leur retour."

[20]Mission de Pont-le-Roy, op. cit., fols. 91-92. See also A.E.C.P., Vol. 471, Angleterre, fols. 7-8.

England's preparation in North America, and it showed that there were about 10,000 infantrymen without cavalry.[21] The report confirmed Choiseul's expectation that England was planning for war and his own plans that France should continue preparing for the eventual hostility.

In 1767 a second espionage mission was sent. It was led by the Baron de Kalb, a lieutenant in the French army. His purpose was "...to investigate the sentiments of the people, and their ability to furnish munitions of war and competent officers, to ascertain how many troops they could raise, the probability of a revolt against England, and of its success if it were attempted."[22] Julien agrees that Kalb was instructed "...to enquire of the resources of the colonies and of their possibilities of revolt..." against England.[23] He had to investigate the types of weapons which the colonists possessed, the extent of their unwillingness to submit to the yoke of England, and their plan and strategy for revolt.[24] Kalb sent a series of reports to Choiseul indicating that the colonists objected to the Stamp Act and the imposition of duties on tea, and that they

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[21]Julien, Les Français en Amérique, op. cit., p. 86.

[22]James B. Perkins, France in the American Revolution (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1911), p. 27.

[23]Julien, Les Français in Amérique, op. cit., p. 86. "...de s'enquérir des ressources des colonies et de leurs possibilités de révolte."

[24]Instructions to De Kalb, M. et D., A.N., Fond Divers, Etats Unis, Vol. 2, fol. 4.

needed military help to resist and reject England. "I met with the same opinions as in the provinces I had already visited, only expressed with greater violence and acrimony."[25] But when Kalb returned to Versailles in June, 1768, he discovered that Choiseul's interest in American affairs had diminished. The minister was occupied with the annexation of Corsica and the Malouine crisis, and there seemed to be no immediate prospect of pursuing further the interest in the English colonies. Simultaneously, Choiseul kept a close watch on England. His aim was to maintain peace; on the other hand, he wanted to know of any move by England that would threaten the peace. For this reason, in 1767 he sent a secret mission to London. Its purpose was to check on military and naval activities. Margaret Morison wrote in an article that Choiseul despatched the London mission because he was definitely planning to attack England sometime between 1768 and 1770.

> With these thoughts in view, Choiseul caused in the year 1767, a thorough survey to be made of all the ports along the northern coast of France, to ascertain their exact condition, and the number of ships they were capable of harbouring; and in the same year he started the far more delicate undertaking of examining the southern coast of England with a view to descent on her shores.[26]

Morison contended that Choiseul deliberately planned

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[25]Perkins, France in the American Revolution, op. cit., p. 28.

[26]Margaret C. Morison, "The Duc de Choiseul and the Invasion of England, 1768-1770," Royal Historical Society Transactions, Third Series, IV (1910), 86-87.

an offensive war "...within ten years of the late peace being in a position once more to take the offensive..." Then she added:

> There can be little doubt that the plans which Choiseul had in view, as soon as the resources of France would enable him once more to take the offensive, were to make direct and sudden attack upon England. This was a scheme which from its very nature would strongly appeal to the brilliant French statesman, but there was also much sound policy to recommend it...He believed, a point which they had failed to grasp, that the only effectual way to attack England was to strike at London; if once the capital lay at the mercy of a hostile army, the invaders, he thought, would be able to dictate their own terms.[27]

Morison's position does not agree with the position discussed in this research; for it has been said above that in 1768 Choiseul was not planning for war; he tried to prevent one. This was obvious in his treatment of the Malouine situation and in his exhortation to Grimaldi to maintain the peace at all costs. Indeed, Choiseul was preparing for war, but in 1768, even in 1769 or in 1770, the necessary preparations were not accomplished. Therefore, Choiseul did not plan to initiate a war with England between 1768 and 1770. Rather, it was Choiseul's expectation that if war came during this period or earlier, it would be the initiative of England. In addition, the war of Choiseul was to be a colonial and maritime war, not a continental one; and even if England attacked France on the continent, the war was to be diverted to other parts of the continent

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[27]Morison, "The Duc de Choiseul and the Invasion of England, 1768-1770," op. cit., p. 86.

and to the colonies. As seen in the French negotiation of the Malouine crisis, Choiseul pursued a policy of peace, a policy which he consistently defended, and one to be maintained until a French declaration of war.[28] In particular, Morison stated that Choiseul had sent Colonel Grant of Blairfindy, a Scotchman who took service in France, to investigate the military activities and position of England in 1767. Grant was instructed to visit the southern coast of England, to examine places for a French debarkation, and to ascertain the nature of the physical features between the sea coast and London.[29] Grant's report showed that England's militia regiments were weak and that they included fifty-two battalions each consisting of three hundred men. Describing the confusion of English political affairs and the weakness of the English defenses, the report concluded with a plan of attack on Sussex or Kent where the main French regiment would land. He said that the march on Sussex would have three advantages: "Firstly, because it would cut off the enemies' retreat; secondly, it would cut off their communications with the north; lastly, by the

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[28]The reference which Morison makes about her sources is Mémoires Militaires faits par ordre du Ministre, par M. Grant de Blairfindy, Colonel des Troupes Légères. Année 1767, and covers 110 folio pages in manuscript. She also states that most of the memoirs are now among the Pitt Papers (Chatham MSS; Vol. 86) deposited at the Public Record Office. She added further that some of the sources stemmed from "Anonymous informer" and "secret memoirs." Additional research is needed to sustain the thesis of Morison.

[29]Ibid., p. 87.

loss of Tilbury and Gravesend, they would have no resources left on the Thames."[30] Morison contended that Choiseul sent other secret missions to London and alternate plans were submitted to Choiseul for the invasion of England. But, she conceded, these plans coincided with Choiseul's involvement with the Malouine problems and led to a revision of policy in 1770. She wrote:

> His despatches are full of conventional phrases expressing a desire for peace; yet he never took the only real means of securing it, namely, that of telling Spain that France would not join her in a war she considered unjustified; on the contrary, he always promised cooperation.[31]

In addition to Blairfindy's plan, another was submitted during the administration of Vergennes by the Duc de Broglie. This ambitious plan sought the conducting of a secret reconnaissance mission on the English seaboard or on the coast of Ireland in 1778.[32] But by this time France had begun overtures for a Franco-American alliance. A treaty was concluded in 1778 and the Broglie plan was no longer necessary. The revenge for which France had prepared since 1763 finally came. It was to this task that the Vergennes ministry and the French colonies began to undertake.

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[30]Morison, "The Duc de Choiseul and the Invasion of England, 1768-1770," op. cit., pp. 91 and 93.

[31]Ibid., p. 103.

[32]Dallas D. Irvine, "The Origin of Capital Staffs," Journal of Modern History, X, No. 2 (June, 1938), 167.

CHAPTER IX

FRANCE IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Choiseul's policy of revenge against England was finally realized in the American Revolution. This was brought about in 1778 when France signed a treaty with the American colonies supporting their rebellion and cession from England. The rebellion had been predicted by Choiseul as early as 1765 as indicated in his Mémoire to Louis XV. He expected that the colonies would sever relations from England thereby giving France the chance to lend her support and to bring the plan for revenge into reality. Certain of the coming of the American revolution and of the defeat of England, Choiseul expected the return of the French empire and of the power of France. However, his ministry ended almost unexpectedly in 1770 when France saw neither the beginning of revenge nor the fulfillment of his prediction of the coming of the American revolution. But he did live to see the continuity of his policy in the ministry of Vergennes beginning in 1774. The year also saw the commencement of a new administration under the reign of Louis XVI. Faced with increasing domestic problems, the new king made

little progress in foreign affairs. But Vergennes was alert to the problems which he inherited and which continued to face France. He renewed the task of re-establishing the dignity and pride lost in the Seven Years' War, of continuing the bond with Spain contracted in the Pacte de Famille, of maintaining the strength of the armed forces attained by Choiseul's reforms, and in general, of carrying out the foreign policy France begun after the Peace of Paris in 1763. These were some important objectives which the Vergennes ministry attempted to carry out.

The army received further reforms during the administration of Vergennes. Under the leadership of a Prussian army officer, Pirch, who had entered the French military service, the French army saw some additional changes. In a memoir Pirch criticized the Instructions of 1769 which Choiseul had adopted for light infantry. Pirch also rejected Guibert's Essai Général and submitted in its place an elaboration of his earlier work, Mémoire raisonné sur les parties les plus essentielles de la tactique, to the minister of war, the Prince de Monteynard. Additionally, he drew a new set of ordinances for the infantry contained in the Instruction which he issued on May 30, 1775. His ideas on tactics, adopted in the army, were notable for prescribing fire drill for troops who were to fire at targets at ranges from a hundred yards and to perform various commands of firing. To a considerable degree the search

for flexibility and speed gave way to an attempt to achieve precision and accuracy. The innovation took on major importance when France entered the American revolution.[1]

Foreign Policy of Vergennes

The emergence of Vergennes as head of the ministry of foreign affairs in 1774 witnessed no marked departure of policy that had been present under the earlier ministry of Choiseul. Like his predecessor, his central idea was the glory of France, and he defined his position shortly after assuming office. In a memoir to Louis XVI on December 8, 1774, describing the political situation of France vis-à-vis the other European powers, Vergennes asked that the alliance with Spain be strengthened. The Spanish alliance would not only consolidate the Bourbon forces in times of war but would also threaten England's position in the colonies. Vergennes argued that the duration of the Peace of Paris for twelve years was not a guarantee of its continuity and of the removal of the threat to France, that the best way to assure the maintenance of peace was not to fear the advent of war. He added:

> Indeed, the example is not lacking of a case in which the cry of war against France has united parties in England. Let us add that we should find ourselves involved in a naval war, even contrary to the wishes of the court of London as well as to our own; we have a treaty with Spain which makes common cause

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[1]Robert S. Quimby, The Background of Napoleonic Warfare (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), pp. 202-205.

> with her in any war, offensive and defensive....The engagement is a burdensome one, no doubt; but in spite of this appearance, it is probably more advantageous to France than to Spain....If there is anything that will impress her and keep her [England] in check, it is the spectacle of France and Spain united, and the certainty that the first cannon fired by her against either will be replied to immediately by both.[2]

The document indicated Vergennes' expectation of war with England, a position clearly similar to the one held by Choiseul. But unlikek Choiseul, who had laid out a definite plan for war--a war of diversion--Vergennes did not have a plan at the time the memoir was written. Only when developments in the American colonies degenerated and pointed to the inevitability of war with England did he lay out his strategy for war. Events in the English colonies had hardly developed sufficiently in 1774 to foreshadow the coming of war and, at that time, Vergennes failed to grasp the American revolt compared with the quick discernment of Choiseul, a decade earlier. Therefore the decision for war was not reached in 1774; yet Vergennes reported to

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[2]Henri Doniol, Histoire de la participation de la France à l'établissement des Etats Unis d'Amérique, 5 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1886-1892), I, 19. "Il n'est pas sans example que le cri de la guerre contre la France a été le signal du ralliement des partis qui divisaient l'Angleterre. Ajoutons que nous pouvons nous trouver engagés dans une guerre de mer contre le voeu de la cour de Londres de même que contre le nôtre; nous avons un traité avec l'Espagne qui doit nous rendre commune toute guerre, soit qu'elle soit offensive ou défensive....L'engagement est sans doute très onéreux; mais, tout onéreux qu'il parait, peut-être cependant est il plus avantageux à la France qu'à l'Espagne....Si quelque chose la retient et lui impose, c'est la représentation de la France et de l'Espagne unie, c'est la certitude que le premier coup de canon qu'elle tirera contre l'une ou l'autre sera répondu par toutes les deux."

Louis XVI the logical premises for war. He said that war would come "...but his policy was to maintain peace until such time as France might wage war with some hope of success."[3]

At the same time that Choiseul redoubled his assurances to England of the peaceful disposition of the French government, he kept informed of developments between the English colonies in America and the mother country. He watched the negotiations of England with the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel for a levy of troops to be sent as mercenaries to fight the English colonists in America.[4] He instructed the Marquis de Noailles, French Ambassador to the Hague, to follow developments from reports circulating in the Netherlands pertaining to rumors of war in the English colonies. Vergennes also ordered the Comte de Guines, French ambassador to London, to obtain information concerning an alleged agreement with the Empress of Russia, Catherine the Great, to furnish 20,000 troops to aid England to put down revolt in her colonies. At the same time he ordered that the French embassy in St. Petersburg confirm the truth of the agreement.[5] From all over Europe the French foreign ministry collected

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[3]John J. Meng, ed., France: Ministère des Affaires Etrangères. Historical Documents. Institut français de Washington. Dépêches et Instructions de Conrad Alexandre Gérard, 1778-1788 (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1939), p. 44. (Hereinafter cited as Dépêches et Instructions.)

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid.

information, as it had during the Choiseul ministry, concerning developments between England and her American colonies. The idea that France might support the colonists against England, pursuant with the plan and prediction of Choiseul, germinated to fruition in the mind of Vergennes by late 1775. But according to some historians, Tower in particular, overtures for war began as early as August, 1774, when Vergennes addressed his memoir to Louis XVI. Vergennes wrote:

> ...that a nation could be free itself from the arrogance of a successful rival, that is to say, revenge itself for former defeat, was bound to do so. This meant war. He never concealed the fact that the possibility of war must always be kept in view by France.[6]

Edward S. Corwin contended that the line of reasoning by which France was brought into the American revolution comprised for the most part the following ideas:

> that France was entitled by her wealth, power, and history to the preponderating influence in continental affairs; that she had lost this position of influence largely on account of Great Britain's intermeddling; ...that America, become independent, would be an almost total loss...that since the two were rivals, whatever abased the power of Great Britain would elevate the power of France. This...was the main chain of reasoning, but there were also supporting ideas that should not be lost to view.[7]

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[6]Charlemagne Tower, The Marquis de Lafayette in the American Revolution with some account of the attitude of France toward the war of Independence (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1901), p. 68.

[7]Edward S. Corwin, "French Objectives in the American Revolution," American Historical Review, XXI (October, 1915), 60.

Corwin added that it was not a question of intervening or not intervening but rather that France knew that she would find herself, sooner or later, at war with England in defense of the French West Indies and that France seized the opportunity to reduce a power which threatened her expansion in the colonial world and her influence in Europe.

Van Tyne asserted that Choiseul urged "...ceaselessly that England must be destroyed....When Choiseul fell and Vergennes rose to power the new minister had the same policy toward England." Continuing to show that Vergennes made no significant change in the course of French foreign policy, Van Tyne added that the minister expressed his position to Louis XVI in a Mémoire stating that England

> ...is an enemy at once grasping, ambitious, unjust, and perfidious. The invariable and most cherished purpose in her politics has been, if not the destruction of France at least her overthrow, her humiliation, and her ruin....It is our duty then to seize every possible opportunity to reduce the power and the greatness of England.[8]

Van Tyne concluded that "...besides this motive of revenge Vergennes' memoir and many others of the time dwell upon the fact that the fundamental economic interests of the French nation were at stake."[9] But in addition to commerce the motive of revenge was supported by other considerations. The thesis supported by Professor Frederick

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[8]C. H. Van Tyne, "Influences which determine the French Government to make the Treaty with America, 1778," American Historical Review, XXI (April, 1916), 529-530.

[9]Ibid.

Jackson Turner showed that France expected territorial gains by aiding the English colonists, that France hoped to replace England in Canada and Spain in Louisiana, and that after the war France induced Spain to give her the ancient colony of Louisiana.[10] But these objectives merely augmented an attempt to redress the preponderance of power gained by England in 1763. They reflected no innovation in 1770's; they emphasized the traditional position of France held a decade earlier. According to Corwin, Vergennes followed a policy that had been engineered in the past. "Able, ambitious, conservative, of vast experience, yet not a little pedantic, Vergennes was thoroughly indoctrinated in the traditional methods.[11] Robson's monograph stated that in 1778, inspired by the motive of revenge and untroubled by European distractions, France was able to play a decisive part in the operation in the new world.[12] The primary consideration, therefore, which led Vergennes to become increasingly involved in the American revolution was the desire to strike against England.

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[10]Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Policy of France toward the Mississippi Valley in the period of Washington and Adams," American Historical Review, X (January, 1905), 250-254.

[11]Corwin, "French Objectives in the American Revolution," op. cit., p. 58.

[12]Eric Robson, The American Revolution in its Political and Military Aspects (New York: W. W. Norton & Co. Inc., 1966), p. 142.

The Pacte de Famille Strengthened

When news reached France of the outbreak of hostilities in the English colonies of America, Vergennes thought at first that the revolt was not serious enough to warrant French intervention. But early in 1775 the shipment of troops by England to the colonies and the rumors that England had made an extensive preparation for war attracted Vergennes' attention. He was then convinced that a confrontation was imminent. Before making any commitment to aid the English colonists, Vergennes followed the policy of Choiseul in which the defensive and offensive alliance, contracted with Spain in the Pacte de Famille, was strengthened. As in the period of the 1760's, the alliance was the cornerstone and bulwark of French foreign policy.

Through Ossun, Vergennes drew Spain's attention to developments in the English colonies in America. He reported to Charles III about England's subjugation of the colonies and the fear that this might be perpetuated to other English colonies in the West Indies. He said that such a course of action would threaten Franco-Spanish colonies in the Caribbean and in South America. In addition, Louis XVI wrote a letter to Charles III on August 7, 1775, on the occasion of the birth of a son to the Comte d'Artois, brother of Louis XVI, informing him about the English threat.

> I take advantage of this occasion to present to Your Majesty some reflections upon the present state of affairs. I know the aversion which Your Majesty has

> to war, and I agree sincerely with you in this sentiment. Possibly there never was a time when a war with England seemed less probable...England is very much engaged with her colonies in America ...I think therefore, that we ought to direct our attention on the preparations which we must make to implement there and take mutually the most effective precaution to prevent war...I believe that we ought not now to neglect our precautions.[13]

In his reply on August 21, 1775, Charles III wrote: "I am even convinced that if the English recognize that we are ready or able to be ready at every point they will let us alone, and we shall enjoy that peace which we are anxious to preserve..."[14] The pledge of Spanish support and consequently, the strengthening of the Family Compact, cleared the way for French intervention to render military assistance to the English colonies in their revolt against England. To this end Vergennes wrote to Ossun:

> ...we believe here that upon the first open act of hostility committed by England we should no longer feel called upon to use moderation but that we should

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[13]Doniol, Histoire de la participation de la France à l'établissement des Etats Unis d'Amérique, op. cit., I, 131. "Je saisis en même temps cette occasion pour lui présenter quelques réflexions sur l'état present des affaires. Je connais l'aversion de V. M. pour la guerre, et je partage bien sincèrement ce sentiment. Peut-être n'y eut-il jamais d'occasion, où les aparences d'une guerre avec l'Angleterre soient moins probables...Elle est très occupée dans ses colonies de l'Amérique...je pense donc qu'il faut porter toute notre attention sur les préparatifs qu'on doit y à porter, et prendre de concert les précautions les plus utiles pour éviter la guerre...Je ne crois pas cependant qu'il faille négliger les précautions."

[14]Ibid., I, 140. "Je suis même convaincu que si le Anglois nous reconnoissent prêts ou en mesure sur tous les points, ils nous laisseront en repos, et nous jouirons de cette paix, que nous désirons de conserver..."

seize immediately all English ships which will be found in ports and in the high sea.[15]

He added that the colonists should be aided in their struggle to free themselves from the yoke of England, and that the Bourbon powers should even issue a joint declaration recognizing them as a free people and inviting them to use French and Spanish ports for privileges of commerce.

Like his predecessor, Vergennes sent secret agents to the English colonies in America for the purpose of assessing their position with England and for enquiring whether French aid was needed. The mission was conducted by Bonvouloir who had been attached to the regiment "du Cap" and had knowledge of the colonies. Bonvouloir's report revealed that the colonists were prepared to relinquish ties with England and that they had recruited a force of 50,000 soldiers and a large number of volunteers to fight for their separation from the mother country.[16] The report served little purpose, for Vergennes had already believed that a war with England was certain. What he was awaiting next was firm commitment that Spain would join France in assisting the colonies in their rebellion against England.

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[15]Doniol, Histoire de la participation de la France à l'établissement des Etats Unis d'Amérique, op. cit., I, 126. "...nous pensons ici qu'au 1er acte d'hostilité bien avoué de la part de l'Angleterre ce ne sera pas le cas d'user de modération, mais qu'il sera à propos de se saisir de tous les navires anglois que l'on pourra rencontrer à la mer et qui se trouveront dans les ports."

[16]James B. Perkins, France in the American Revolution (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1911), pp. 45-48.

The French historian Doniol wrote that France was aiming a blow at England but with the support of Spain, that Vergennes departed to some degree with Choiseul's plan by not using the strategy of a war of diversion which had been accepted a decade earlier. But Vergennes was justified in dictating a new strategy. Whereas earlier, when war was expected on the continent and by Pitt's initiative, in the seventies it was on the opposite side of the Atlantic and from the colonists' initiative. Therefore a change of plan was necessary. In addition, the war in 1778 was colonial, just as Choiseul had predicted. The strategy in fighting such a war, Vergennes contended, was to concentrate the attack. To divert the enemies to the Caribbean would weaken the offense and prolong the war. Nevertheless, Vergennes was aware that in the event the war spread, the Bourbon colonial forces could be employed in a two-front attack. As it turned out the French and Spanish islands were ready. They played an important part in the war and contributed to success in the American revolution.

An important document which throws some light on France's decision to help the English colonists was <u>La Paix ou la Guerre</u> by Pierre-Augustin Beaumarchais. It states that

> ...we must help the Americans....
> .....
> If England triumphs over America, it can only be at enormous cost both in men and money. Now the only compensation which the English have in view for so

> great a loss is to seize in turn the French Islands.... In that event, Sire, it would only remain for you to choose between beginning too late an unproductive war or sacrificing to the most shameful, idle peace all your American colonies [French Antilles].[17]

Undoubtedly Vergennes was beginning to formulate his plans for war. He committed at the same time Spanish involvement into the American revolution by requesting Charles III to grant a loan of one million livres to the English colonists. The loan created a hostile attitude between Spain and England and led to a new phase of Anglo-Spanish diplomacy.

Vergennes Plan for War

In late 1775 and early 1776 a widening breach was created between France and England. Supplied with reports from secret missions conducted in London, France was kept informed of the latest developments of the war in the English colonies. During these months Vergennes received reports indicating that the colonists in America desired help, and in March, 1776, he expressed firmly his American policy and plan for war. This was contained in his Considération. Since the document is important it is quoted extensively.

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[17]Doniol, Histoire de la participation de la France à l'établissement des Etats Unis d'Amérique, op. cit., I, 203-205. "Il faut secourir les Américains....
.....
Si l'Angleterre triomphe de l'Amérique, ce ne peut être qu'avec une dépense énorme d'hommes et d'argent; or le seul dédommagement que les Anglais se proposent de tant de pertes est d'enlever à leur retour les îles françaises....Alors, Sire, il vous resterait uniquement le choix de commencer trop tard une guerre infructueuse, ou de sacrifier à la plus honteuse desspaix inactives toutes vos colonies d'Amérique."

> The position of England vis-à-vis her American colonies ...present all kind of reasons for the most serious attention on the part of France and Spain...We can from one side regard the continuation of the civil war as infinitely advantageous to the two crowns...that the English ministry defeated upon the continent of America may seek compensation at the expense of France and Spain...
>
> .....
>
> These various propositions can almost certainly lead to a war more or less remote with France and Spain. The first because, with the forces which the court of London has prepared, she could be tempted to employ them in the very easy conquest that is offered in the West Indies. Second, because the subjugation of the Métropole can be accomplished only by fomenting the national hatred and jealousy of the American colonies by a war the duration of which would make England accustom to the yoke...
>
> .....
>
> It would be necessary therefore to neglect no possible means in order to make the next approaching campaign as active as possible and in order to secure advantages for the Americans. The degree of fury and exhaustion of both parties that would result would determine the moment to strike such decisive blows which would make England into a second rate power.[18]

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[18]Doniol, Histoire de la participation de la France à l'établissement des Etats Unis d'Amérique, op. cit., I, 273-275. "La position de l'Angleterre vis-à-vis de ses colonies de l'Amérique...à toutes sortes de titres, l'attention la plus sérieuse de la part de la France et de l'Espagne...On peut d'un côté regarder la continuation de la guerre civile comme infiniment avantageuse aux deux couronnes...que le ministère anglais, battu sur le continent de l'Amérique, ne cherche un dédommagement aux dépens de la France et de l'Espagne...

.....

Ces différentes suppositions peuvent presque également conduire à une guerre plus ou moins éloignée avec la France et avec l'Espagne. La première, parce que, avec les forces que la cour de Londres a préparées, elle peut être tentée de les employer à la conquête trop facile que les Indes occidentales lui offrent. La deuxième, parce que l'asservissement de la métropole ne pourrait s'opérer qu'en flattant la haine et la jalousie nationale par une guerre dont la durée la formerait au joug...

.....

Il faudrait alors ne négliger aucun des moyens possibles pour rendre la campagne prochaine aussi vive qu'il se pourrait, et pour procurer des avantages aux Américains. Le degré d'acharnement et d'épuisement des deux partis qui en résulterait déterminerait alors l'instant de frapper des coups décisifs qui feraient rentrer l'Angleterre dans l'ordre des puissances secondaires."

The central thought of the document was that France and Spain were threatened with war, whatever might be the outcome of the American revolt. In reviewing the state of the colonial struggle, of domestic troubles in British politics, and of the danger of an eventual war, Vergennes argued that the Bourbon powers, desirous of peace, should not compromise themselves with England. He said the continuation of the American war for at least another year would be to the advantage of the Bourbon crowns, for it would enfeeble England and allow France and Spain more time to prepare for an eventual attack. The best way to achieve this goal, he said, was to convince England of their peaceful intentions and at the same time sustain the Americans by secret aid in order that the colonial quarrel might not be settled at once and become the prelude to an Anglo-American attack on France and Spain and their possessions.[19] The Considérations was submitted to the Comte de Maurepas, Prime Minister, Anne Robert Jacques Turgot, Controller General of Finance, Antoine Sartine, Minister of the Marine and the Comte de Saint Germain, Minister of War. Of these only Turgot opposed intervention. Spain approved the policy embodied in the Considérations and the objectives of Vergennes began to be realized. From the spring of 1776 France arranged for the support of the insurgents and

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[19]Doniol, Histoire de la participation de la France à l'établissement des Etats Unis d'Amérique, op. cit., I, 273-275.

persuaded Spain to do the same. This marked the beginning of Franco-Spanish active intervention in the cause of the American revolution to revenge themselves against England.

Role of French Antilles

From the beginning of the French intervention in the American revolution, France concentrated her forces in the Caribbean. Britain's only hope of carrying on the campaign in North America depended largely upon her ability to retain all sea communications intact. If France had secured North American bases immediately the British would have had to withdraw from want of supplies. Instead France concentrated her military strength in the Caribbean and collected her colonial forces that had been prepared in order to secure her sugar colonies retained in 1763. Consequently, British ships made their way to New York for almost two years with little obstruction from the French. However, when Washington finally secured the active support of a strong French fleet in 1781, it was indicative that the war was coming to an end and that American Independence was to be realized. Joined by Spain in 1779, France was in a position not only to challenge British superiority but actually to win control of the sea. The forces of France, Spain, and their colonies emerged as a combined force for which England was not prepared. To this effect George III wrote in June 24, 1781, that "...if we could demolish either a considerable

French or Spanish squadron, we should then be in a situation to gain our wanted superiority at sea, without which an honorable end to the war is not to be effected."[20]

The Bourbon forces in the Caribbean joined in the fighting with the intention not only of assisting the revolution but also of seizing or plundering British possessions in the Caribbean. For the first time in the eighteenth century the French and Spanish fleets were able to establish a superior force in the Caribbean. The French navy had been greatly expanded and strengthened under Choiseul. The Spanish was less efficiently prepared and manned, but it included many new ships of excellent design built under French influence. On the other hand, British ships, tied down in support of the armies in America, were unable to launch a strong force in the Caribbean to blockade French ports. Thus French and Spanish navies were able to cross the Atlantic to attack in North America or in the Caribbean when weather and other favorable conditions permitted.[21]

The French Antilles served French and Spanish forces well in supporting the revolution in America. In the campaign of 1781, for example, supplies and reinforcement from

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[20]As quoted in Robson, The American Revolution in its Political and Military Aspects, op. cit., pp. 145-146.

[21]P. M. Sherlock and J. H. Parry, A Short History of the West Indies (New York: St. Martins Press, 1957), pp. 135-137.

Martinique and St. Domingue contributed to the admirable concentration at Yorktown. The operation of the Antilles, says Hanotaux, was one of the main objects of activity of the marine in the war; the islands provided for defense and assured security for the French establishments and traffic.[22]

Also, the chief naval stations for American continental ships were in the Antilles. These were at St. Pierre in Martinique, Cap François in Hispaniola, and at Havana. The American colonies had commercial agents at these ports. At Martinique the continental vessels were refitted, repaired, and provisioned whenever it was convenient, or if stress of weather compelled docking. More significantly, the Antilles contributed in the revolution through the expansion of the war in the Caribbean.

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[22]Gabriel Hanotaux et Alfred Martineau, Histoire des colonies françaises et de l'expansion de la France dans le monde (Paris: L'Histoire Nationale, 1929), pp. 496-497.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

It is evident that the basic objective in French foreign policy after the Seven Years' War was preparation for another war to avenge the destruction of the French empire. Beginning immediately after the Peace of Paris, this policy marked the advent of a new era in French international affairs, and one can say that the year 1763 was a water-shed in French history since the decline of the greatness of France at the end of Louis XIV's regime.

In the new era France made vigorous attempts to recover from the Seven Years' War and to chart a course in foreign affairs that guaranteed stability and influence in Europe and continuity and leadership in the colonial world. Prompted by these objectives, France made basic changes at home and in the colonies in the period after 1763. Also she tried to strengthen diplomatic ties with Spain.

Frenchmen saw the deep humiliation and staggering defeat in the Seven Years' War as the beginning, not the end, of France's colonial activities. Accordingly they revised policies and reconstructed defenses. In the words

of the historian Charlemagne Tower

> ...nobody in France believed that the Seven Years' War was definitely closed....But to all Frenchmen the Treaty of Paris was not a peace; it was a cessation of hostilities. Its obligations, honestly assumed, meant to their minds effacement, national destruction, and disgrace.[1]

Hence a common chorus to resume the war echoed throughout the land. French minister, Choiseul and Vergennes in particular, believed that in addition to restoring national pride and material resources, France had to strike once more against England to ensure a lasting peace in Europe and security in the colonies. Choiseul championed these objectives and chartered the new course. A skillful architect in planning for war and an able diplomat in obtaining Spanish support for French policy, he set forth his plan, immediately following the signing of the peace. Until the actual outbreak of a war of revenge against England in 1778, his plan became the cornerstone of French foreign policy which rested largely on renewing the war-time alliance with Spain contracted in 1761 in the Pacte de Famille and on the general overhauling of French continental and colonial defenses. In 1765 he made it clear to Louis XV in a memoir that a Franco-Spanish alliance was more reliable than the Franco-Austrian Alliance of 1756. He described the alliance with Austria as "precarious" whereas that with Spain was

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[1]Charlemagne Tower, The Marquis de La Fayette in the American Revolution, with some account of the attitude of France toward the war of the Independence, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1901), II, 61.

"fundamental." Choiseul assured Louis XV that if the bond with Spain was strengthened and France became involved in a war with England, Spain could be summoned to the aid of France. Conversely, if Spain was in war, France would come to her help. Together, he declared, the Bourbon nations would be able to deal with the traditional enemy.

Louis XV accepted Choiseul's argument and began negotiation with Spain for closer diplomatic relations and a coordination of policies in the colonial world. As discussed above, Choiseul undertook, concurrently, necessary reforms in France to reorganize the army, reconstruct the navy, and improve the artillery. Changes were also evident in the administration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of the Marine, and Ministry of War. The ministries were strengthened and made more efficient and their work coordinated. These developments clearly reveal that France had embarked on a new era in foreign affairs.

Students of French foreign policy during this period give little recognition to the important role which the colonies played in Choiseul's plan for another war. While not completely ignoring the colonies, they emphasize the part undertaken by the Métropole; that is, they give attention to the reforms carried out in France, and the negotiations for the Pacte with Spain as constituting the thrust of France's preparation. And when reference is made to the French colonies, they say little. Perhaps scholars have

lacked interest in the French colonies during this period and consequently they have not investigated these times. Such neglect seems hardly justifiable, it would appear, when documentary sources are available in French archives, the Bibliothêque Nationale, and colonial archives in the Caribbean.

This present study, however, has attempted to show the considerable degree of influence which the French Caribbean exerted in Choiseul's plan for war. The evidence given supports the thesis that the objectives contained in French diplomacy were not to be carried out by the French alone, without the help of her colonies, particularly since the proposed war was essentially maritime and colonial. Choiseul was aware of the potential and location of the Caribbean bases which constituted an important part of his plan for a war of revenge. To some degree the presence of the forces in the colonies were decisive in persuading him to undertake another war immediately following the conclusion of the Seven Years' War. Recognizing the fact of the destruction of the French army and navy, the great debt incurred in the war against England, and France's loss of prestige and power in Europe, Choiseul searched for adequate ground to convince Louis XV to resume the colonial struggle. He succeeded by showing that the forces in the Caribbean could be greatly enlarged and strengthened and that the colonies would play a major part in another war, the expense

of which they would share. Choiseul's arguments to Louis XV were, therefore, based on a plan for a war to be waged in the colonies.

At the same time that Choiseul turned his attention to preparing for a colonial war, he did not ignore the possibility of a continental war which he expected might be launched by England if Pitt returned to office. For this reason his plan bore the marks of a war of diversion that would lead to division of English forces in Europe. When this happened the colonial war would come to fruition and English colonies, being defenseless, would be invaded.

In addition to contending that the French colonies as a whole contributed significantly to the inception and formation of Choiseul's war plans, this present thesis brings to the fore the role of Guyane as a specific example of the vital part shared by the colonies. The thesis gives a "new dimension" to the study of French foreign policy and it opens an avenue to investigate the importance of the colonies to France, both in connection with their contribution to the American revolution and to the coming of the French Revolution.

As earlier discussed in this study, and for purposes of review, the Kourou expedition was designed to create a military base to link with similar bases in the French islands and to establish a formidable white settlement. Even though the settlement failed almost from the very

beginning, Choiseul did not abandon his plan. Instead he ordered a relocation of the settlement. This too, having failed, did not change his colonizing motives in Guyane. Choiseul was convinced that the ancient colony was valuable for purposes of defense; consequently, he despatched commissions to survey the military needs at Cayenne, the ancient colony in Guyane, and later he replaced the local officials with instructions to recommend necessary measures to maintain a French stronghold. The instructions were supplemented by direct orders from Louis XV himself as seen in the memoirs to Turgot in 1764. The governor was specifically informed about the "intentions" of Louis XV to use the ancient colony for military purposes. Failing to carry out the important mission, Turgot was dismissed and imprisoned. The task assigned to him was then delegated to such other officials as Bessner and Fiedmond. When Bessner failed to establish a new settlement, France built the weak defenses at Cayenne. Under the leadership of Fiedmond and with the augmentation of troops and supplies of artillery from the Métropole, a formidable base was established. Cayenne became the French military stronghold in Guyane which linked with French bases in the Caribbean. Such an important development not only supports the position that the ancient colony was vital to French war plans but adds, as indicated earlier, a "new dimension" to the study of Anglo-French rivalries after 1763.

Hence Guyane and the French Antilles influenced French foreign policy and contributed to the preparation for a war of revenge against England. Consequently, one cannot overlook the importance of the colonies in analyzing French international diplomacy between 1763 and 1778. Even though Choiseul failed to add strategic bases in the Caribbean, he succeeded in implementing his military, naval, and artillery reforms for war. Further, the thesis holds that the fall of Choiseul from office in 1770 did not alter the course of French policy, that his successor, Vergennes, continued the program laid down since 1763, and that, when in 1778 it became clear that a major conflict with England was imminent, the new minister finally brought the war of revenge first planned by Choiseul to fruition.

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