

The Spanish-Moroccan Military Campaigns in the Context of European Colonial History

Las campañas hispano-marroquíes en el contexto de la historia colonial europea

Geoffrey Jensen
Virginia Military Institute, Estados Unidos
jensenrg@vmi.edu

Abstract: This essay explores the broader context of the Spanish army's Moroccan campaigns during the first decades of the twentieth century and the relatively peaceful period of occupation thereafter. It does so by comparing the military history of Spain in Morocco with that of other countries. The aspects of colonial military history that this essay examines include the frequently inconclusive nature of the campaigns, the links between “hard” and “soft” military methods of conquest and occupation, and the role of cultural perceptions in shaping military behavior after the major combat operations have ended. It argues that the Spanish military leaders initially shared with their European counterparts a tendency to think in conventional terms, elevate tactics to the level of strategy in response to the elusiveness of decisive outcomes, and to neglect the political components of modern war, especially in its colonial manifestations. The essay also makes an argument for studying military conquest and post-conflict occupation and administration as part of the same historical process, and it explores the changing relationship between kinetic and non-violent methods employed by the armed forces throughout this process.

Keywords: Spain, Morocco, Imperial Warfare, Colonial Warfare, Rif War, Civil Affairs, Military History, Counterinsurgency

Resumen: Este artículo explora el contexto general de las campañas marroquíes del ejército español durante las primeras décadas del siglo XX y el período relativamente pacífico de ocupación posterior. Lo hace comparando la historia militar de España en Marruecos con la de otros países. Los aspectos de la historia militar colonial que examina el texto incluyen la naturaleza muchas veces inconclusa de las campañas, los vínculos entre los métodos militares "duros" y "blandos" de conquista y ocupación, y el papel de las percepciones culturales a la hora de modelar las conductas militares cuando el grueso de las operaciones llegó a su fin. Se argumenta que los líderes militares españoles inicialmente compartieron con sus homólogos europeos una tendencia a pensar en términos convencionales, elevar las tácticas a nivel de estrategia en respuesta a la ausencia de victorias decisivas, y descuidar los componentes políticos de la guerra moderna, especialmente en sus manifestaciones coloniales. El ensayo también presenta un argumento para estudiar la conquista militar y la ocupación y administración después del conflicto como parte del mismo proceso histórico, al tiempo que explora la cambiante relación entre los métodos cinéticos y no violentos empleados por las fuerzas armadas a lo largo de este proceso.

Palabras clave: España, Marruecos, guerra imperialista, guerra colonial, Guerra del Rif, asuntos civiles, historia militar, contrainsurgencia

Para citar este artículo: Geoffrey JENSEN: "The Spanish-Moroccan Military Campaigns in the Context of European Colonial History", *Revista Universitaria de Historia Militar*, Vol. 8, N° 16 (2019), pp. 17-40.

Recibido 04/03/2019

Aceptado 18/06/2019

The Spanish-Moroccan Military Campaigns in the Context of European Colonial History*

Geoffrey Jensen

Virginia Military Institute, Estados Unidos

jensenrg@vmi.edu

Although long overshadowed by the imperial campaigns of other European powers, the Spanish military presence in twentieth-century North Africa has attracted some noteworthy scholarly attention, especially over the last few decades.¹ Admittedly, many accounts still focus on traditional operational history, and they often reveal the lingering influence of colonialist perspectives. Others, however, go well beyond “guns-and-trumpets” military history to analyze the wars in their political, social, and cultural contexts, while eschewing the blatant orientalism of the past.²

* Many thanks to Jochen Arndt, Irene González González, Alberto Guerrero, Sasha Pack, and the anonymous outside readers for their comments and suggestions on earlier versions of this article. I am also grateful to Alfonso Iglesias Amorín and the editors of *RUMH* for inviting me to participate in this special issue. This article was supported by the Spanish government-funded research project “Hacia un estudio comparativo del colonialismo español en África y de sus efectos en las poblaciones colonizadas de Guinea Ecuatorial y del Rif,” directed by Paz Moreno Feliu, UNED (HAR2016-79164-P).

¹ Thorough, albeit somewhat dated, surveys of research on Spain in Morocco are María Rosa de MADARIAGA: “Los estudios sobre el Protectorado español en Perspectiva”, in Bernabé LÓPEZ GARCÍA and Miguel HERNANDO DE LARRAMENDI (eds), *Historia y memoria de las relaciones hispano-marroquíes. Un balance en el cincuentenario de la Independencia de Marruecos*, Sevilla, Ediciones del Oriente y del Mediterráneo, 2007, pp. 21-44, and Vicente MOGA ROMERO: *La cuestión marroquí en la escritura africanista: una aproximación a la contribución bibliográfica y editorial española al conocimiento del norte de Marruecos (1859-2006)*, Barcelona: Bellaterra, 2006. See also Alicia CAMPOS SERRANO, Irene GONZÁLEZ and Francesco CORREALE: “Spanish Colonial Rule,” *Oxford Bibliographies*, 28 Aug 2018, and Rocío VELASCO DE CASTRO: “Presentación: Las relaciones hispano-marroquíes: tendencias e investigaciones”, *NORBA. Revista de Historia*, vol. 29-30 (2016-2017), pp. 11-15.

Many thanks to Jochen Arndt, Irene González González, Alberto Guerrero, Sasha Pack, and the anonymous outside readers for their comments and suggestions on earlier versions of this article. I am also grateful to Alfonso Iglesias Amorín and the editors of *RUMH* for inviting me to participate in this special issue. This article supported by the Spanish government-funded research project “Hacia un estudio comparativo del colonialismo español en África y de sus efectos en las poblaciones colonizadas de Guinea Ecuatorial y del Rif,” directed by Paz Moreno Feliu, UNED (HAR2016-79164-P)

² On the traditionalist focus of much military historiography of Spain in Morocco, Manuela MARÍN: *Testigos coloniales: españoles en Marruecos (1860-1956)*, Barcelona, Bellaterra, 2015, p. 13. In fact, for decades some of the leading books covering the Spanish military campaigns in the Maghreb have in fact gone well beyond the confines of traditional operational military history. For example, David S. WOOLMAN: *Rebels in the Rif: Abd el Krim and the Rif Rebellion*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1968; C.R. PENNELL: *A Government with a Country and a Flag. The Rif War in Morocco 1921-1926*, Wisbech MENAS, 1986 (rev.

Yet despite the many merits of the new scholarship, it has largely ignored the place of Spain's military experiences in Morocco in the wider history of modern European imperial warfare and military occupation. General histories of colonial armies and warfare during this period sometimes incorporate examples from the Spanish zone of the Moroccan protectorate, but most historians whose work focuses on these wars do not return the favor and analyze the conflict in the context of colonial warfare in general.³ The same can be said about most scholarship on the Spanish military's role in Morocco after the suppression of significant organized armed resistance in 1927. Historians have acknowledged the French influence on the Spanish officers who policed, administered, gathered intelligence, and set policies in Morocco, but we still lack thorough and systematic comparative studies of the Spanish and French forms of occupation in North Africa.⁴ This historiographical void mirrors the insufficient understanding by political and military leaders throughout history of the importance and complexities of military occupation in general.⁵

Spanish edition: *La guerra del Rif. Abdelkrim el-Jattabi y su estado rifeño*, Melilla, UNED-Centro Asociado de Melilla, 2011); Shannon E. FLEMING: *Primo de Rivera and Abd-el-Krim: The Struggle in Spanish Morocco, 1923-1927*, New York, Garland, 1991; María Rosa de MADARIAGA: *España y el Rif. Crónica de una historia casi olvidada*, Melilla, Ciudad Autónoma de Melilla and UNED-Centro Asociado de Melilla, 1999; and Sebastian BALFOUR: *Deadly Embrace: Morocco and the Road to the Spanish Civil War*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002.

³ For example, V. G. KIEMAN: *Colonial Empires and Armies, 1815-1960*, Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998, pp. 203-205, and Dierk WALTER: *Colonial Violence: European Empires and the Use of Force*, trans. Peter LEWIS, London, Hurst, 2017. The frequent comparisons in Balfour, *Deadly Embrace*, with the French military in the Maghreb and Shannon Fleming's suggestion that historians of the Rif War view the conflict as a "frontier war" are exceptions to the general tendency to eschew transnational comparisons. Sebastian BALFOUR: *Deadly Embrace*, and Shannon E. FLEMING: "The Rif War as a Frontier Conflict", in Brian D. BUNK, Sasha D. PACK, and Carl-Gustaf PACK (eds.), *Nation and Conflict in Modern Spain. Essays in Honor of Stanley G. Payne*, Madison, Parallel Press, 2008, pp. 123-136, <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/History.NatCon> (accessed 24 February 2019). For a brief analysis of the Moroccan campaigns in the context of other Spanish imperial military actions, see Stephen JACOBSON: "Imperial Ambitions in an Age of Decline: Micromilitarism and the Eclipse of the Spanish Empire, 1858-1923", in Alfred W. MCCOY, Josep M. FRADERA, and Stephen JACOBSON (eds.), *Endless Empire: Spain's Retreat, Europe's Eclipse, America's Decline*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 2012, pp. 74-91, 87-91.

"Spanish Morocco" was technically not a colony but instead consisted of a "zone of Spanish influence" in France's Moroccan protectorate. But Spanish *colonos* nonetheless settled there, and the theoretical distinction between a protectorate and a colony (which also applied to the French in Morocco) does not preclude interpreting the Spanish military experience in Africa in the context of European colonial wars in Africa.

⁴ Although military history is not its primary focus, Sasha D. Pack gives a brief summary comparison of the two zones after 1927. Sasha D. PACK: *The Deepest Border: The Strait of Gibraltar and the Making of the Modern Hispano-African Borderland*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2019, pp. 179-180. Balfour, *Deadly Embrace*, makes scattered references and some valuable comparisons to the French case and its possible influence on the Spaniards, but the book's aim is not a thorough or systematic comparison.

⁵ In 2003, for example, US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld responded incredulously to a general's suggestion that the occupation of Iraq might require as many troops as defeating the country's armed forces in war. In Rumsfeld's view, it was "not logical" that post-combat occupation would require more troops

In fact, warfighting and occupation are often components of the same process sharing the same long-term goal, and flawed military occupations can nullify the grand strategic benefits that the wars that preceded them were supposed to bring about.⁶ Moreover, studying wars and occupations together makes sense from the standpoint of the historical protagonists themselves; in the Spanish zone of the Moroccan protectorate, for example, many of the same people who waged war against Moroccans also had a hand in carrying out the more peaceful aspects of the Spanish imperial project. Nonetheless, the cultural-political and the more traditional, kinetic aspects of the military endeavors are rarely analyzed together.

With the aim of filling some of the scholarly lacuna, this essay explores ways of contextualizing Spain's Moroccan campaigns beginning in 1909 and the army's role in the relatively peaceful period of occupation after the end of significant armed resistance in 1927. It does so by comparing aspects of the military history of Spain in Morocco with the colonial military history of other countries. It is not feasible here to consider all the comparative possibilities, and this article limits itself primarily to secondary sources. Nonetheless, even this admittedly tentative and incomplete analysis can help to identify themes in the Spanish military history of North Africa that lend themselves to profitable comparison with other imperial wars and occupations, thereby shedding light on Spain's place in modern European military and imperial history and pointing out possible avenues for future scholarship. Typically, studies of military actions and behavior treat war and post-war occupation separately or skim over one or the other. This essay, however, treats them as part of the same historical process. For the Spaniards in North Africa, any barrier between combat and "peaceful" military actions was largely artificial; viewing them together in the broader context of European colonial military history thus helps us to understand both the war and the occupation. The characteristics of colonial military history that this essay examines include the frequently inconclusive character of colonial wars, the relationship between "hard" and "soft" military methods of conquest and occupation, and the role of cultural perceptions in shaping military behavior after the major combat operations have ended. The article limits itself to the colonialist perspective; a full comparative

than those needed to win the combat phase of the conflict. David M. EDELSTEIN, *Occupational Hazards: Success and Failure in Military Occupations*, Ithaca (NY), Cornell University Press, 2008, p. 164.

⁶ On the importance of military occupations in interpreting the long-term success or failure of wars, see *ibidem*. Admittedly, most studies of military occupation by political scientists define it in such a way as to exclude colonial situations. Edelstein, for example, argues that the «critical distinction between occupation and colonialism» lies in how the occupying powers define their goals, especially the intended length of the occupation. *Ibidem*, 3-4. Nonetheless, the military perceptions, problems, aims, and means of colonial armies in conquered territories do not have to differ significantly from those of more narrowly defined occupation forces, as the period immediately following the Rif War illustrates. For a wide-ranging survey of examples of military occupation in history that encompasses colonial and non-colonial situations, see Eric CARLTON: *Occupation: The Policies and Practices of Military Conquerors*, New York, Routledge, 1992.

history would also entail consideration of those who took arms against the European armies.

Patterns of Colonial Warfare

Dierk Walter offers a framework of European colonial warfare that can serve as a useful starting point for analyzing the Spanish-Moroccan campaigns from a comparative perspective. Walter maintains that the fundamental patterns of colonial warfare have remained basically the same for centuries, going as far as to suggest that these patterns persist even in today's (nominally) postcolonial world. According to Walter, as a rule peripheral wars—a designation including colonial wars and more recent neo-colonial military interventions—have been “temporally, spatially, and structurally open-ended, primarily political conflicts.”⁷ As we will see, in most ways Walter's assertion applies to the Spanish campaigns in Morocco.

Temporally, the Spanish army's efforts to suppress armed resistance were indeed open-ended, at least until the 1920s. From 1909 until then, the Spanish army repeatedly undertook military operations that in themselves had scant hope of bringing a definitive end to violent opposition to Spain's presence, even if they did provide temporary solutions to local Spanish security dilemmas. As was common in European militaries then, Spanish commanders had been taught to seek out the kind of decisive defeats on the battlefields that European military culture of the day expected, but this proved especially difficult in North Africa.⁸ Spanish writings may have portrayed Spanish military campaigns in monumental terms, but in fact they had scant grand strategic significance. The inconclusiveness of the Spanish army's actions was in no small part an outgrowth of the nature of the Spanish-Moroccan conflict as a whole, which consisted of a combination of retaliatory strikes, battles, and individual campaigns of limited aims. Some military commanders may have worked toward the general goal of gradually extending territorial control through use of the “oil spot” method associated with Hubert Lyautey—whom Spaniards explicitly praised—and with

⁷ Dierk WALTER: op. cit., pp. 265-266. On his conception of “war on the periphery” see *ibidem*, chapter 1. This article makes use of only a small portion of Walter's analytical framework.

⁸ On the problematic nature of the decisive battle in colonial warfare, see Hugh STRACHAN: “A General Typology of Transcultural Wars – the Modern Ages”, in Hans-Henning KORTÜM (ed.), *Transcultural Wars from the Middle Ages to the 21st Century*, Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 2006, pp. 85-103: 93, and Dierk WALTER: op. cit., pp. 30-31, 207-208. On the evolution of decisive battles in history and historiography, see Yuval Noah HARARI: “The Concept of ‘Decisive Battles’ in World History”, *Journal of World History*, 18:3 (2007), pp. 251-266.

more recent counterinsurgency campaigns.⁹ But until well into the Rif War there was no clear consensus between or within the centers of Spanish civil and military power on the overall goal of the Spanish military actions or how to achieve it—in other words, the strategy to adopt. For Spanish business interests the primary aim was sufficient security and a political situation congenial to the profitable extraction of natural resources; for leading military *africanistas*—many of whom derided such capitalist motives—it was a matter of national and imperial pride, professional advancement, and a chauvinistic desire to keep the French from infringing on “Spanish” territory; and for the government in Madrid it was the need to satisfy all these goals but also to maintain international treaty obligations, with the emphasis fluctuating as the political constellation in Madrid frequently changed and leading ministers changed their minds on strategy.¹⁰

The socio-political makeup of the Spanish zone also hindered the Spaniards’ attempts to achieve definitive military victories. Decentralized and lacking strong, powerful leaders, the zone did not offer the kind of strategic targets upon which the military could focus its efforts. Thus, with the exception of the Sharif Muley Ahmed el Raisuni in the western zone, there was no equivalent to the “great Quids” of the French zone who could serve as a primary focus for the Spanish military and political efforts.¹¹

In 1909, for example, the Spanish military operation near Melilla was a response to the killing of six Spanish railway workers, an act of local resistance that grew out of the elimination of the regional warlord and pretender to the throne of Morocco, Bou Hmara, also referred to as El Rogui (the pretender), who had alienated some of the locals by selling mining concessions to Spaniards.¹² In other words, a power vacuum set the stage for the attack on Spanish interests that sparked the military campaign. But Spain was unable to identify a political-military *Schwerpunkt*, or center of gravity, of the kind that European armies typically sought in hopes of winning a decisive victory, and the Moroccans astutely avoided providing such a target. Without that kind of vital point against which to concentrate their forces, the Spanish op-

⁹ Pedro MAESTRE: *Divulgación y orientación del problema de Marruecos. Intervención civil, intervención militar*, Granada, La Publicidad, 1924, pp. 53-54; Sebastian BALFOUR: op. cit., p. 54,

¹⁰ María Rosa de MADARIAGA: *En el Barranco del Lobo. Las guerras de Marruecos*, Madrid, Alianza, 2006, pp. 51-52; Sebastian BALFOUR: op. cit., pp. 28-30, 43-44.

¹¹ María Rosa de MADARIAGA: *En el Barranco del Lobo...*, p. 97.

¹² On the mining concessions and Bu Hmara, see Ross E. DUNN: "Bu Himara's European Connection: The Commercial Relations of a Moroccan Warlord", *Journal of African History*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (1980), pp. 235-253, and *ibid.*, "The Bu Himara Rebellion in Northeast Morocco: Phase I", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 17: 1 (1981), pp. 31-48. For a clear and concise operational history of the 1909 campaign and its antecedents from the Spanish perspective, see Roberto MUÑOZ BOLAÑOS: "La Campaña de 1909", in Antonio CARRASCO (ed.), *Las campañas de Marruecos (1909-1927)*, Madrid, Almena, 2001, pp. 9-72.

erations of 1909 added up to little more than a localized attempt to put down an independently-fueled insubordination and slightly extend the area under Spain's control. As the General Staff's study of the campaign conceded, the lack of "a regular and well-defined enemy" not only made it difficult to distinguish between enemy and friendly forces, but it also "diminished the consequences of battlefield victories."¹³ The Spanish operations may have deterred Moroccan resistance for a time, offering some assurance of the continued exploitation of natural resources from the area, and they served political purposes in the metropole by demonstrating an energetic response to the well-publicized tragedy of the ambush at Wolf Ravine (*Barranco del Lobo*). But the army's actions alone could hardly have achieved control of the Spanish zone as a whole, as subsequent events would soon demonstrate. Similarly, the Kert River (1911-1912), Jebala (1913-1920), and Melilla (1912-1919) campaigns remained mostly tactical affairs, the components of which were often reactions to separate instances of Moroccan resistance or French pressure that did not add up to a well thought-out and coordinated strategy.¹⁴ Eventually, the addition of "political" methods to the military endeavors in the Jebala and Melilla campaigns—consisting of the common colonial military practice of making payments in return for loyalty—betrayed the uncomfortable truth that force alone would not suffice, even if many military and political leaders still failed to digest the implications of this fact fully.

Until the mid-1920s, the Spanish-Moroccan campaigns thus remained, to use Walter's language, "open-ended"—a feature of colonial warfare in general. Indeed, in his classic turn-of-the-century manual of colonial warfare, *Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice*, British army officer Charles Callwell had noted that "such campaigns are most difficult to bring to a satisfactory conclusion."¹⁵ In many peripheral wars, moreover, the unfulfilled hope for a decisive military action that would eliminate all armed resistance contributed to the sense of frustration that fueled a tendency toward extreme methods, as happened in the colonial campaigns of other European forces. In nineteenth-century South Africa, for example, British frustrations in deal-

¹³ «La falta de un enemigo regular y definido, pues la lucha es contra las cabilas del territorio en que se combate y aun contra otras que se agregan á ellas, dificulta la determinación de qué habitantes son hostiles y cuáles pacíficos, y merma el resultado á los combates victoriosos, que será preciso hacer más efectivo que en las personas, en sus intereses, á los cuales aman tanto como á su fe.» Estado Mayor Central del Ejército: *Enseñanzas de la Campaña del Rif en 1909*, Madrid, Talleres del Depósito de la Guerra, 1911, p. 11.

¹⁴ On Spanish military tactics in the Moroccan campaigns, José Vicente HERRERO PÉREZ: *The Spanish Military and Warfare from 1899 to the Civil War*, Cham, Switzerland, Palgrave MacMillan, 2017, chapter 3; Alberto GUERRERO MARTÍN: "Los procedimientos tácticos en las campañas de Marruecos", *Guerra colonial*, 3 (2018) <http://www.guerracoloniales.es/medias/files/3.3.-los-procedimientos-tacticos-en-las-campanas-de-marruecos-3.pdf> (accessed 25 February 2019); and Andrés CASINELLO PÉREZ: "El ejército español en Marruecos. Organización, mandos, tropas y técnica militar", in Manuel ARAGÓN REYES (ed.), *El protectorado español en Marruecos. La historia trascendida*, Bilbao, Iberdrola, 2013, pp. 271-279.

¹⁵ C. E. CALLWELL: *Small Wars. Their Principles and Practice*, London, General Staff – War Office, 1906, quoted in Ian BECKETT: "Introduction", in *Modern Counterinsurgency*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2007, xii.

ing with guerrilla warfare in South Africa had fueled the employment of “total war” measures against the Xhosa, and this tendency of course had its antecedents in Napoleonic Spain and elsewhere as well.¹⁶

The Spanish experience in the Moroccan protectorate shared other common patterns of European colonial wars. In theory, the Spanish army was not at war with Morocco but solely with those rebellious Moroccans who resisted the authority of the Sultan, whose domains Spain and France were “protecting.”¹⁷ To regard the Moroccan “insurgents” otherwise would have accorded them a legitimacy that contradicted the recognition of the Makhzan’s unitary sovereignty, and it would have affected Spain’s own claim to authority and legitimacy in the zone. From a solely military perspective, this situation resembled that of other imperial European powers during the twentieth century. In such cases the colonial army often did not fight a centralized state with a “national” army, capital city, or other easily discernible strategic focus point (at least to European eyes). Thus the Europeans often either failed to think beyond tactical actions, such as the limited Spanish campaigns of 1909 and thereafter, or they elaborated strategies based on the more “total” methods of economic and other unrestrained forms of warfare, as exemplified by the Germans in southwest Africa.¹⁸

Even interpreting the results of battlefield actions can be difficult in peripheral wars. Before the defeat of ‘Abd al-Karim al-Khattabi (best known in the West as Abd el-Krim), the Spaniards did not always agree whether certain military actions served strategic goals, in no small part because the relationship between the military, political, and territorial aims remained unclear, making it difficult if not impossible to define a national strategy in the first place.¹⁹ Like in many other imperial wars, within the military sphere the relationships between tactical, operational, and military-strategic goals were also muddled. In concert with what often occurred in colonial campaigns, for the Spaniards in Morocco battlefield victories scattered over time and space were more likely to stem from reactions to new security threats or imperial ri-

¹⁶ Dierck WALTER: op. cit., pp. 82-85, 266; Jochen ARNDT: “Treacherous Savages and Merciless Barbarians: Knowledge, Discourse, and Violence during the Cape Frontier Wars, 1834 -1853”, *Journal of Military History* 74:3 (2010); Wayne LEE: *Barbarians and Brothers: Anglo-American Warfare 1500-1865*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2011; and Isabel V. HULL: *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2004. For another view of German warfare in Africa, see Susanne KUSS: *German Colonial Wars and the Context of Colonial Violence*, Cambridge, Mass, Harvard University Press, 2017.

¹⁷ Daniel MACÍAS FERNÁNDEZ: “Las campañas de Marruecos (1909-1927)”, *Revista Universitaria de Historia Militar* 3: 2 (2013), pp. 58-71: 59-60; María Rosa de MADARIAGA: *En el Barranco del Lobo...*, p. 103; Juan PANIAGUA LÓPEZ: “La red de servicios secretos españoles durante la guerra del Rif (1921-1927): los Servicios Especiales Reservados dirigidos por Ricardo Ruíz Orsatti”, *Historia contemporánea*, 57 (2018), pp. 491-521, 493.

¹⁸ Susanne KUSS: op. cit.

¹⁹ On the ambiguities of Spanish aims in Morocco, Sasha D. PACK: op. cit., pp. 8-9.

valry than from a comprehensive strategy, which was largely lacking in the first place. In the terminology of today's counterinsurgency theorists, the Moroccan insurgents were locally-based actors with limited territorial goals and little or no connection to a country-wide centralized organization or outside central state. On the other side, the Spanish army's tactical actions did not come together sufficiently well at the operational level of war to bring strategic victory. Even when some military leaders such as General Dámaso Berenguer finally devised well thought-out plans on paper, realities on the ground hindered their development into successful strategies.²⁰

Furthermore, the disconnect between Spain's military opponents in North Africa and the Moroccan state cast doubt on the effective scope of any possible armistice or peace treaty. (Abd el-Krim's self-proclaimed Rif Republic was a telling exception, as we will see.) In the meantime, and as the Spanish military and political leadership would eventually learn, victory required the integration of tactical aims into broader operational and strategic planning. The limited nature of what Callwell categorized as "Campaigns to wipe out an insult or avenge a wrong" did not suffice.²¹ Coinciding with the decline of the decisive battle in regular continental warfare, in colonial wars—whether in Spanish Morocco or elsewhere in Africa—a single engagement rarely served to resolve a metropole's military-imperial predicament. For this reason, assessing the success of military actions was also problematic, especially without conscious and systematic analysis of the relationship between tactical, operational, and strategic aims.

Paradoxically, it was Abd el-Krim's ability to unite various peoples of Northern Morocco during and in the wake of his massive rout of Spanish forces that began near Annual (Anwāl)—the largest defeat of a European colonial army in twentieth-century Africa—that helped make it possible for the Spaniards to establish military control of the zone.²² Not only did the unprecedented alliance of many normally divided Moroccan factions under Abd el-Krim impel the Spaniards to transform their "Army of Africa" into such a large and effective fighting force, but the unification of the many factions under Abd el-Krim greatly magnified the consequences of the Rifians' setbacks when they began to occur, fueling a remarkably singular disintegration of military power. By bringing together groups that had previously fought separately and for their own interests, he dramatically demonstrated the potential of strength through unity. But once the Rifians were fighting together and—perhaps more importantly—linked at least somewhat politically, a military defeat at the hands of the

²⁰ Sebastian BALFOUR: op. cit., p. 54.

²¹ C. E. CALLWELL: op. cit., pp. 26-27.

²² Recent military histories of the Annual "disaster" include Julio ALBI DE LA CUESTA: *En torno a Annual*, Madrid, Ministerio de Defensa, 2016; and Fernando CABALLERO ECHEVARRÍA: *Intervencionismo español en Marruecos (1898-1928): Análisis de factores que confluyen en un desastre militar*, Annual, PhD. thesis, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2013.

Europeans would have far greater consequences. Thus when the Spanish army began to win against Abd el Krim's forces, the same kind of snowball effect that had facilitated the overwhelming defeat of the Spaniards at Annual in 1921 now worked in reverse: large numbers of his erstwhile allies submitted to the Spaniards and changed sides in relatively rapid succession, thereby setting the stage for the final definitive establishment of Spanish military control of the entire zone. Political centralization had significant military consequences. The uncharacteristically high degree of centralization of Abd el Krim's military movement, which saw the Spaniards lose control of virtually their entire zone except the major cities, ironically made it possible for the Spanish Army of Africa to deviate from Walter's norm and solve the Moroccan "problem" decisively.²³

It is worth remembering, however, that the finality of the last battle of the Rif War was relatively rare. Until then, the Spanish military actions not only tended to be open-ended, but they shared other characteristics with much European colonial warfare. Because of what Walter calls the "internal logic" of imperialism, for example, the military budgets of France and Britain naturally favored metropolitan armies over their colonial counterparts. Admittedly, Spain differed from richer European countries in that its metropolitan military force did not suck up resources in preparation for a possible large-scale, regular war against another great European continental power. But even without the danger of entering into a major European conflict, Spain's metropolitan forces received most of the country's military budget, and the Spanish Army of Africa was, like many other colonial forces, underfunded and badly equipped.²⁴ The Spanish forces also joined other colonial armies in facing formidable logistical challenges when operating in Africa.²⁵

The scant resources were not just material but human too, and Spain, like France, Britain, and Portugal, had to rely on indigenous manpower in order to conquer its enemies and maintain control. This use of "native" troops was of course a fundamental characteristic of colonial warfare in Africa, and in the twentieth century the Spaniards used them from the 1909 campaign onwards. Another reason for the primarily political and open-ended nature of imperial armed conflict was the irregular style of warfare that indigenous forces tended to favor, the extensive space that was often at their disposal, and the corresponding rarity of traditional, set-piece battles in colonial campaigns. And as we have seen, the dispersed social and political organiza-

²³ On the final battle of the Rif War, see Julián PANIAGUA LÓPEZ: "La última batalla de la Guerra del Rif," *Guerra colonial*, 3 (2018), <http://www.guerracoloniales.es/medias/files/3.4.-la-ultima-batalla-del-rif-3.pdf> (accessed 25 February 2019).

²⁴ Sebastian BALFOUR: op. cit., pp. 53, 55.

²⁵ Susanne KUSS: op. cit.

tion—often described as “tribal”— of Spanish Morocco and other colonial lands made it more difficult to bring wars to a conclusive resolution.

Atracción política, acción política, and penetración política

The failure of European armies to recognize what Walter calls the “primarily political” nature of colonial warfare also contributed to the elusiveness of decisive military actions. Twentieth-century revolutionary guerrilla warfare, or “insurgency,” would grow out of what Ian Beckett describes as the “fusion of traditional guerrilla tactics with political and, especially, ideological objectives.”²⁶ In reaction, twentieth-century colonial armies learned to develop and employ the methods of what we now call counterinsurgency, with clear political and “hearts-and-minds” or “psychological” components.²⁷ In this way as well, the Spanish case fit the European colonial military model.

During the early campaigns in Morocco, many Spanish military and political leaders failed to grasp that the solution to the Moroccan problem would have to be political as well as military. Although the official study of the 1909 campaign had stressed the necessity of following up military victory with occupation and “uniting political and commercial action with that of arms,” influential officers would continue to favor an almost-exclusive emphasis on the use of military force.²⁸ In the meantime, the political sophistication and ideological ingredients of the anti-Spanish struggles continued to grow, reaching their peak under Abd el-Krim. Only then did leading Spanish military officers fully grasp that politics—broadly defined to include cultural, social, economic, and ideological factors—would have to play a significant role in winning the Rif War and, above all, maintaining control thereafter. Until then, and for many officers even thereafter, the importance of political factors paled in comparison to the use of traditional military force.

At the time, in Spanish military writings the term “political” referred to non-kinetic steps that aided in gaining control of Morocco; indeed, the methods of “politi-

²⁶ Ian BECKETT: op. cit., p. xiii.

²⁷ “Hearts and minds,” widely associated with Cold War British counterinsurgency, did not in fact exclude the use of force, in spite of the widespread perception to the contrary. Here we use it, like the French military concept of “*action psychologique*” to refer to methods aimed at winning over people emotionally and intellectually, rather by force or not. For a critical history of the term and concept of “hearts and minds,” see Paul DIXON: “‘Hearts and Minds’? British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq”, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 32:3 (2009), pp. 353-381.

²⁸ Estado Mayor Central: *Enseñanzas...*, p. 14.

cal action” were often described in explicit contrast to those of “military action.”²⁹ Of course, the use of the word “political” to denote all non-violent methods did not in itself create or explain Spanish military views or doctrines, the latter of which were based above all on a combination of military culture, concrete experiences, practical concerns, and foreign influence—especially that of the French. But the pejorative use of the words “politics” and “political” does shed light on the mindsets of those Spanish officers, including future dictator Francisco Franco, whose interest in the political and cultural elements of conquest and military occupation would always remain superficial.³⁰

In particular, the use of the adjective “political” to describe the controversial policy of paying subsidies to local Moroccan leaders and elites in order to retain their support, a practice that the Spaniards dubbed “*atracción política*” (“political attraction”), offers a linguistic clue about Spanish military sentiments toward the non-violent methods subsequently associated with “civil affairs” and counterinsurgency in its softer forms. The buying-off of potential enemies had a long history in the protectorate—even Abd el-Krim’s father had benefited from such payments—and it was hardly uncommon among European armies.³¹ But the perception that paying for docility and loyalty constitutes a dishonorable “political” act corresponded to the negative views many Spanish officers held then toward politics in general. In the eyes of a growing number of influential military figures, parliamentary politics threatened the very essence of the *patria* they had sworn to defend.³² In Morocco, these officers criticized their colleagues and politicians back in Madrid—who had conveniently served as scapegoats for military mishaps since at least the Cuban war—for promoting the practice of *atracción política*, which they regarded as a dishonorable and ultimately self-defeating.³³

Of course, neither a disdain for civilian politics nor the creation of a *Dolchstosslegende* blaming civilian politicians for military losses was unique to Spain. Moroccan resistance to the Spanish presence was not a purely military problem, and the solution would thus need political as well as military components. But this realization did not

²⁹ For example, Pedro MAESTRE: *Divulgación...*

³⁰ See, for example, Franco’s article in the *Revista de Tropas Coloniales* in April 1924, quoted in María Rosa de MADARIAGA: *En el Barranco del Lobo...*, pp. 338-339

³¹ María Rosa de MADARIAGA: *Abd-el-Krim El Jatabi: La Lucha por la Independencia*, Madrid, Alianza, 2009 y *En el Barranco del Lobo...*, pp. 107-113. On what the US military calls “civil affairs,” see Raymond MILLEN: “*Bury the Dead, Feed the Living*”: *The History of Civil Affairs/Military Government in the Mediterranean and European Theaters of Operation During world War II*, Carlisle (PA), Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, 2019.

³² For a bitter satire of Spanish parliamentary politics by a future Spanish High Commissioner in Africa, see Capitan X [pseudonym for Ricardo Burguete]: *Así hablaba Zorrabastro. Un libro para nadie y para todos*, Valencia, F. Sempere, [no year].

³³ Sebastian BALFOUR: op. cit., pp. 59-60.

come naturally to many army officers. It is perhaps not a coincidence, moreover, that some of the same officers who gave less credence to the cultural, economic, and political components of conquest and pacification were also particularly vocal in their dissatisfaction with civilian politicians back in Spain. Francisco Franco and José Millán-Astray, for example, strongly criticized their more enlightened military colleagues who diverged from the force-based military approach they advocated in Morocco, and they publicly opposed civil authorities whom they deemed insufficiently committed to a robust program of military action in the protectorate.³⁴ Admittedly, there were also influential, perceptive, and relatively enlightened Spanish officers, such as Tomás García Figueras, Osvaldo Capaz, José Villalba Riquelme, and Alberto Castro Girona, who understood that more than brute force was necessary, and they attained considerable respect and influence in the armed forces.³⁵ Indeed, there had long been a small but vocal segment of the officer corps that sought to bring attention to the strategic benefits of political and cultural endeavors in the protectorate. Officers such as García Figueras and Riquelme, for instance, vociferously advocated a more culturally-based approach to military expansion in North Africa, and the army set up schools and other programs and institutions aimed at Moroccan civilians. Indeed, when Spanish business interests attempted in 1911 to set up their own schools for Moroccans in the protectorate, Spain's military authorities reacted vigorously against such threatened encroachment into their educational domain.³⁶ The army even set up schools for Moroccan children in areas only partially controlled by Spain, categorizing them as "advanced schools." The ideas of these more culturally-oriented officers also figured heavily in the thinking in the development in the system of *interventores*, whom we discuss below.³⁷

At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, leading Spanish military figures mostly viewed resistance in Morocco, which often took the form of guerrilla warfare, as a military problem, and the growing anti-liberal segment of the officer corps after 1898 came out of the culture that these leading Spanish officers helped shape. The failure of more officers to give credence to non-kinetic methods was of course a common feature of military cultures everywhere, reflecting the core institutional purpose of armies. During the first half of the twentieth century, for example,

³⁴ Gustau NERÍN: *La guerra que vino de África*, Barcelona, Crítica, 2005, pp. 49, 56.

³⁵ *Ibidem*; María Rosa de MADARIAGA: *Abd-el-Krim...*, pp. 141, 152-153, 168-172; Sebastian BALFOUR: *op. cit.*; Vincent SHEEAN: *An American Among the Riffi*, New York, Century, 1926, p. 240; C. R. PENNELL: "The responsibility for Anual", *European Studies Review*, XII (1982).

³⁶ Victor RUIZ ALBÉNIZ (el Tebib Arrumi): *España en el Rif*, Madrid, 1921, pp. 164-72; Geoffrey JENSEN: "Toward the 'Moral Conquest' of Morocco: Hispano-Arabic Education in Early Twentieth-Century Morocco", *European History Quarterly*, 31:2 (2001), pp. 205-229.

³⁷ Irene GONZÁLEZ GONZÁLEZ: *Spanish Education in Morocco 1912-1956: Cultural Interactions in a Colonial Context*, Brighton, Sussex Academic Press, 2015. On the "advanced schools," see *ibidem*, pp. 53-55.

the German high command tended to disregard the political (and strategic) elements in war, the writings of Clausewitz on this topic notwithstanding.³⁸ Of course, no one in the Spanish military advocated renouncing the use of force all together, and even the more liberal officers understood that violence and the threat thereof would have to play major roles in pacification. But many other officers could conceive of using nothing but traditional military methods to achieve their goals; suggestions to the contrary could trigger scorn from their colleagues.³⁹

There was also a tendency to conceive of military and political-cultural methods as belonging to wholly distinct and separate spheres rather than comprising two sides of the same coin, with unfortunate consequences for Spanish strategy. Even when officers acknowledged the importance of both spheres, they often portrayed them as separated by an impenetrable barrier. A novel from the 1930s by one of Spain's most influential military *africanistas*, Tomás García Figueras, vividly illustrated the dichotomy between the "hard" and "soft" schools of colonial warfare in Spanish military culture. In the opening section of the book, an officer who wants to use generosity, reason and the values of Spanish-Arabic brotherhood to secure peace in the protectorate clashes with a hardened Spanish Legion veteran, who believes that the only way to end the conflict is through the use of brute force, which in his eyes is the only thing the "Moors" are capable of understanding.⁴⁰

This dichotomous outlook precluded the kind of holistic approach to strategy that integrates cultural, social, economic, political and intelligence-related endeavors with traditional, force-based military actions, adjusting the relative emphasis according to the circumstances. Not without reason, Clausewitz's "remarkable trinity" has received renewed attention in Western military thinking since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and corresponding growth in interest in irregular, asymmetrical, and hybrid warfare. Rather than concentrating solely on the employment of traditional military force or separating politics and war into separate domains, the famous Prussian military philosopher conceived of wars as the interplay of three kinds of forces: violence, which he associated with popular passions; the realm of probability and chance, within which the military commander operates; and the political direction of the government. War, he wrote, was like a pendulum hanging between the three elements of the trinity, with each exerting a pull upon it. Thus military success depended upon more than lines of operations, firepower calculations, the maneuver of troops, and other standard elements of military art and science. If we accept Walter's characterization of colonial war as "primarily political," then Clausewitz's trinity, with its

³⁸ Isabel V. HULL: *op. cit.*

³⁹ Gustau NERÍN: *op. cit.*, pp. 49, 56.

⁴⁰ Tomás GARCÍA FIGUERAS: *Ramadán de paz*, Larache, Editora Marroquí, 1946.

strong consideration of non-military factors, is especially apt, as is his characterization of war as an extension of policy. But the commanders of colonial armies made little if any attempt to incorporate Clausewitz into their military thinking, with the important exception of their shared belief in the importance in war of morale and fighting spirit—what the Prussian theorist called “moral” factors.

It is telling that one of the primary architects of the successful conclusion of the war against Abd el-Krim, General Manuel Goded Llopis, made a point of portraying Spain’s eventual as a multi-phase process involving violent and nonviolent military actions. For him, a combination of firepower, better tactics, operations and strategy, logistics, administration, intelligence, the collecting of weapons, changing cultural perceptions, and the setting up of effective administrative, judicial, and economic structures all played roles in the process, which he significantly framed within a chronology that extended well past the military defeat Abd el Krim’s forces and his capture. In other words, he regarded the political end state an integral part of the overall military project. He did not go as far as to argue that non-violent methods predominated or even equaled traditional military actions in importance, but he acknowledged the former to a much higher degree than most high-level Spanish officers then. Significantly, his long book recounting the “stages of the pacification” of Morocco extended beyond the Rif War to include the methods and tasks of post-conflict occupation as well.⁴¹

Regardless of Goded’s insights, however, the tendency to separate “military” and “political action” persisted in the minds of many army officers even after Annual. Goded’s relatively holistic, military-political vision of warfare in the Maghreb was not institutionalized, and the dichotomy thus lived on. Although the relative emphasis of political, cultural, and kinetic military considerations varied with time, none completely overshadowed the other. Hence even the periods of intense fighting between Spaniards and Moroccans saw influential Spanish military figures advocate the methods of “peaceful penetration,” while long after the suppression of the Rif rebellion, violence and the threat thereof continued to have a place in the Spanish military toolbox. From neither a temporal nor a methodological perspective was the shift from wartime to postwar occupation abrupt.

⁴¹ General GODED: *Marruecos. Las etapas de la pacificación*, Madrid, Compañía Ibero-Americana, 1932. Goded had a distinguished career in Morocco, playing a key role as a colonel in the large-scale amphibious landing at Al Hoceimas (Alhucemas) Bay in 1925 that helped bring about Abd el-Krim’s eventual defeat. After his promotion to the rank of general, he then came to head the Spanish general staff in Morocco. In 1936 he would lose his life as a participant in the military uprising that sparked the Spanish Civil War.

Cultural Perceptions and Military Policies of Occupation: A Spanish Exception?

Although the balance between violent methods and the “political” approach in the protectorate did not reverse itself overnight, a shift in the army’s overall focus after 1927 was unmistakable. After all, conquest differs markedly from occupation and administration. Unsurprisingly, the emphasis on cultural and other non-kinetic methods increased as the threat of large-scale, organized armed resistance declined. Spanish military behavior was then shaped more heavily by ideology, cultural perceptions, and the political climate of the Spanish Civil War and thereafter, when the Franco regime had to justify its paradoxical use of tens of thousands of Moroccan Muslim troops in a conflict it presented as a war against infidels.⁴²

On the surface, the history of the Spanish army in Morocco after pacification appears to diverge considerably from those of other European colonial armies in similar positions, unlike the wartime operations that we have analyzed above. Most visibly, the myth of Spanish-Arab brotherhood and the perceptions of shared history, geography, culture, and race distinguished Francoist imperialist propaganda from that of other European powers, even if there was some overlap with Portugal’s Lusotropicalism.⁴³ This brotherhood ideal could not have contrasted more with Germany military commander Lothar von Trotha’s characterization of the campaign he led in Southwest Africa as part of a worldwide “race war” that would lead to the utter annihilation of blacks.⁴⁴ Although not that extreme, for the French in the Maghreb

⁴² Ali Al TUMA: *Guns, Culture and Moors: Racial Perceptions, Cultural Impact and the Moroccan Participation in the Spanish Civil War*, New York, Routledge, 2018; Sebastian BALFOUR: op. cit.; J. A. GONZÁLEZ ALCANTUD (ed.): *Marroquíes en la guerra civil española. Campos equívocos*, Barcelona, Anthropos, 2003 and *Lo moro. Las lógicas de la derrota y la formación del estereotipo islámico*, Barcelona, Anthropos, 2002; Miguel HERNANDO DE LARRAMENDI and Irene GONZÁLEZ GONZÁLEZ: “Islam y colonialismo en la España contemporánea”, in Julio de la CUEVA, Miguel HERNANDO DE LARRAMENDI and Ana PLANET (eds.), *Encrucijadas del cambio religioso en España. Secularización, cristianismo e islam*, Granada, Comares, 2018; Eloy MARTÍN CORRALES: “Entre el ‘moro’ violador y el ‘moro’ seductor. La imagen de los marroquíes en la guerra civil según las fuerzas republicanas”, in Ángeles RAMÍREZ and Bernabé LÓPEZ GARCÍA (eds.), *Antropología y antropólogos en Marruecos. Homenaje a David M. Hart*, Barcelona, Bellaterra, 2002, pp. 221-236; and María Rosa de MADARIAGA: *Los moros que trajo Franco. La intervención de las tropas coloniales en la Guerra Civil Española*, Barcelona, Ediciones Martínez Roca, 2002.

⁴³ Studies of the Spanish-Moroccan brotherhood discourse include Josep Lluís MATEO DIESTE: *La hermandad hispano-marroquí. Política y religión bajo el Protectorado español en Marruecos (1912-1956)*, Barcelona, Bellaterra, 2003, and Rocío VELASCO DE CASTRO: “La imagen del ‘moro’ en la formulación e instrumentalización del africanismo franquista”, *Hispania*, LXXIV:246 (2014), pp. 205-236. On the vision of Spanish-Moroccan brotherhood exalted by the prominent officer Ricardo Burguete, who would become Spain’s High Commissioner in Africa after Annual, see Manuel MARÍN: *Testigos coloniales...*, p. 52, and Geoffrey JENSEN: *Cultura militar española: modernistas, tradicionalistas y liberales*, Madrid, Biblioteca Nueva, 2014, chapter 4.

⁴⁴ Jürgen ZIMMERER: “Annihilation in Africa: The “Race War” in German Southwest Africa (1904-1908) and its Significance for a Global History of Genocide”, *GHI Bulletin*, 37 (2005), pp. 51-57.

the indigenous peoples were certainly not “brothers” either, and French military writings about North Africa revealed a stronger tendency toward orientalist views of North Africans than those seen in the Spaniards.⁴⁵ Anti-Moroccan prejudices and racism clearly existed in the Spanish military, but the widespread perception of deep-rooted, common historical and racial characteristics made it more difficult for Spaniards to cast Moroccans in the role of a fully oppositional Other than it was for the French.

If we look deeper, however, we see that in essence the Spanish army as an occupational force fit the European colonial military mold nearly as well in peace as it did in war. Many of the same kinds of perceptions about the occupied lands and their peoples found in other colonial military administrators also shaped Spanish behavior. The ways in which cultural stereotypes informed Spanish policies in manners similar to those of other European colonial powers become clear when we examine the *interventores*, key figures in the Spanish enterprise who were almost exclusively career military men. They were basically a mixture of colonial administrators, intelligence officials, security officers, and military recruiters, tasked with fostering economic progress, education, and loyalty to Spain in their respective districts, while also reporting on the political climate and possible threats to Spanish rule.⁴⁶ The *interventores*, who included such figures as Jesús Jiménez Ortoneda, Capaz, García Figueras, and Emilio Blanco Izaga, have been called with good reason the cornerstone of the Spanish presence in the Maghreb. They resembled France’s “Native Affairs” officers in both form and function, although there were also some differences.⁴⁷

A field manual meant to guide the *interventores* in their work sheds light on how prejudices shaped occupational policy, as do writings by the *interventores* themselves

https://www.perspectivia.net/rsc/viewer/ploneimport3_derivate_00002991/zimmerer_annihilation.pdf?page=8 (accessed 21 June 2019).

⁴⁵ Following Kathleen Biddick, I use the term “alterism” here to mean “belief in the absoluteness of cultural and/or historical difference”. Kathleen BIDDICK: *The Shock of Medievalism*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 1998, p. 206.

⁴⁶ José Luis VILLANOVA VALERO: *Los interventores. La piedra angular del Protectorado español en Marruecos*, Barcelona, Bellaterra, 2006. Other studies of the *interventores* include Mateo DIESTE: *La ‘hermandad’...*, especially chapters 2-4.

⁴⁷ José Luis VILLANOVA: op. cit.; José Luis VILLANOVA and Luis URTEAGA: “Jesús Jiménez Ortoneda, Interventor Militar en el Rif (1911-1936)”, *Hispania*, LXIX:232 (2009), pp. 423-444. David Montgomery Hart draws attention to some of the differences between the *interventores* and the French native affairs officers in his introduction to Emilio Blanco Izaga. David MONTGOMERY HART: *Emilio Blanco Izaga: Coronel en el Rif*, Melilla, Ayuntamiento de Melilla and UNED-Centro Asociado de Melilla, 1995, pp. 41-52. See also Vicente MOGA ROMERO: *El Rif de Emilio Blanco Izaga. Trayectoria militar, arquitectónica y etnográfica en el Protectorado de España en Marruecos*, Barcelona, Bellaterra - Ministerio de Defensa, 2009 [Parte II of the book *El interventor y sus tribus. La praxis militar y etnográfica en el Rif (1927-1942)*.]

and the textbooks and other documents from the training academy for *interventores*.⁴⁸ The manual linked some of the allegedly innate practices of Moroccans in war and peace to Islam, and it suggested that the *interventores* take advantage of the natural tendency toward rivalry and intrigue that it claimed all Moroccans and Arabs shared to acquire intelligence and limit the possibility of concerted anti-Spanish actions.⁴⁹ Such language echoed that of other European military and intelligence officers in the Middle East and North Africa, reflecting typical Western stereotypes. The influence of the French on the Spanish military *africanistas*, especially the latter's perception of the *bureaux arabes* in Algeria, was especially strong.⁵⁰

The enhanced role of the *interventores* reflected a more general recognition of the importance in non-kinetic factors in maintaining order and control in the Spanish zone. The educational policies and practices that the Spaniards aimed at Moroccan Muslims, and to a lesser extent Jews, also revealed this tendency. The same can be said for other such undertakings, including public works and economic development projects and other elements of Spain's "civilizing"--or, increasingly after World War II—"modernizing" policies, which paradoxically attempted to combine the Franco dictatorship's traditionalist ideology of "National Catholicism" with the modernization theory and the contemporary tenets of economic development.⁵¹ At the same time, the peculiarly Spanish emphasis on the alleged "brotherhood" of Moroccans and Spaniards continued to leave its mark in the educational and other discourse throughout this period.

The Spanish state's ideological vision of the Moroccan project was indeed unique in many ways, but it served a common imperialist purpose and the same kind of geopolitical and security-related concerns typical of other military occupations. There was certainly a difference in degree between the French and Spanish tolerance of Moroccan nationalism, for example, and the Spaniards made a bigger show of preserving indigenous practices and beliefs. But the end goals of both European powers in North Africa were undeniably imperialist. Spanish administrators, for example, echoed their French counterparts in seeking to use "native" schools for metropolitan

⁴⁸ *Manual para el Servicio del Oficial de Intervención en Marruecos*: Madrid, Inspección General de Intervención y Fuerzas Jalifianas, 1928.

⁴⁹ Goded had also recommended using Moroccans' own *codicia* against them to gather intelligence and for other purposes. General GODED: op. cit., pp. 446, 449-450.

⁵⁰ For example, in Pedro MAESTRE: op. cit., which also served as sort of handbook for *interventores*. On the perceptions of Western military intelligence organizations of Islam and the "Arab world" and their role in colonialism, see Martin THOMAS: *Empires of Intelligence: Security Services and Colonial Disorder after 1914*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2008, and Dina REZK: *The Arab World and Western Intelligence: Analysing the Middle East, 1956-1981*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2018, chapter 1.

⁵¹ Geoffrey JENSEN: "The Peculiarities of 'Spanish Morocco': Imperial Ideology and Economic Development", *Mediterranean Historical Review* 20:1 (2005), pp. 80-101.

ends, engendering loyalty to the occupying power while preparing some young Moroccans for service in the colonial administration.⁵² Along these lines, just as the *supremo* of French Morocco, General Hubert Lyautey, had adopted an explicitly “associationist” approach in Morocco, the Spanish system preserved traditional power hierarchies and administrative structures. Indeed, it would have been legally problematic for the Spaniards to do otherwise in a protectorate.

Thus when Moroccan nationalists sought to gain control of the Spanish zone’s educational policy, which they rightly saw as a key weapon in the ongoing struggle for hearts and minds, the Spaniards employed a divide-and-conquer strategy typical of colonial occupation. Building upon the same allegedly innate Moroccan tendencies toward jealousy, treachery, and the creation of rivalries that *Interventores* were supposed to exploit, Spanish policy makers attempted—in some cases with success—to turn possible agents of anti-Spanish Moroccan nationalism against each other. This is clear in the way the Spaniards ran the educational institutions and programs, which Moroccan nationalists sought to control.⁵³ Hence in spite of the rhetoric about shared Hispano-Arabic traits and a common identity, Spain’s military officials tried to use supposedly innate characteristics of Moroccans—such as their “naturally” jealous disposition—as a means to control them, thus employing a typical colonialist playbook.

Outwardly, Spanish protectorate authorities differed from their counterparts in other colonial territories by adopting a more conciliatory attitude toward indigenous nationalists, whose demands they made a point of publicly taking under consideration. Indeed, the French considered the Spanish tolerance of the nationalists to be so excessive as to pose a danger to their own security, and not without reason. The Spanish zone’s authorities allowed the nationalists to disseminate their views publicly to a degree that would have been unthinkable in the French zone, and eventually Moroccan nationalists from the French zone began to take refuge in its Spanish counterpart to the north.⁵⁴ Moroccan nationalists then returned the favor of Spain’s relative tolerance by causing fewer problems for Spanish authorities than for their French counterparts. But the relative quiet of the Spanish zone stemmed as much as anything from the nationalists’ knowledge that France represented a far greater obstacle to their fi-

⁵² Irene GONZÁLEZ GONZÁLEZ: *Spanish Education in Morocco, 1912-1956: Cultural Interactions in a Colonial Context*, Brighton, Sussex Academic Press, 2015.

⁵³ *Ibidem*. As González demonstrates, in fact with time Spanish control over educational policies in the protectorate increased, in spite of an official posture that conceded control of such matters to Moroccans.,

⁵⁴ J. P. HALSTEAD: *Rebirth of a Nation. The Origins and Rise of Moroccan Nationalism 1912-1944*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1967, p. 56. On the adoption of an ostensibly more conciliatory attitude to Moroccan nationalists by Spanish authorities during the 1930s than their French counterparts, see *ibidem*, p. 56, and Geoffrey JENSEN: “Rico Avello en Marruecos”, in Juan PAN-MONTOJO (ed.), *El sueño republicano de Manuel Rico Avello (1886–1936)*, Madrid, Biblioteca Nueva, 2011, pp. 132-139.

nal goal of independence than Spain, and that in the meantime they could take advantage of the relative freedom of the Spanish zone to pursue their agenda.⁵⁵

Yet this toleration of the Moroccan nationalists also served Spanish propaganda purposes, and no important Spanish military figure appears to have considered the possibility of Moroccan independence in anything but highly theoretical terms. Moreover, conflicts between the Spanish colonial authorities and Moroccan nationalist leaders hardly disappeared during the Second Republic or thereafter. Moroccans took advantage of this situation accordingly, tactically employing the discourse that they knew Spanish authorities wanted to hear about *convivencia*, brotherhood, and peaceful collaboration with Spain when it suited their own interests.⁵⁶ Displaying a similar degree of cynicism, Spanish military administrators co-opted nationalist leaders and curbed educational reforms the Spaniards viewed as detrimental to metropolitan interests. From the 1930s on, they attempted to placate the nationalists by giving them positions in educational delegations and soliciting their participation in reform projects.⁵⁷

The Spaniards' main aim in incorporating the nationalists was to control potential criticism, exemplified by their integration of Moroccan nationalists into the Supreme Council on Islamic Education. Spanish officials took these steps with the view that the supposedly natural Moroccan tendency toward rivalry would foment disputes between nationalist Moroccans on the Council. To ensure the success of this approach, the Spaniards placed Moroccans of opposing views in this and other such councils. It appears that Spain achieved at least some measure of success in these endeavors; the nationalists, in spite of their periodic protests about Spanish intervention and the gap between the promises and deeds of the colonial administration, clashed enough on key issues relating to education to hinder the formation of a united front.⁵⁸

Admittedly, the official ideology of Spanish Morocco differed from that of other European colonial powers in its relatively low degree of alterism, and it is true that some of Spain's leading *africanistas* continued to praise the perceived shared traits of Spaniards and their Moroccan "brothers" in ways unimaginable in the African territories occupied by many other European powers. But in their concrete actions, Spanish military authorities often copied other colonial armies in trying to take advantage of

⁵⁵ José Luis NEILA HERNÁNDEZ: *La segunda república española y el mediterráneo*, Madrid, Dilema, 2006, pp. 197-209; Jean WOLF: *Les secrets du Maroc espagnol. L'épopée d'Abd-el-Khaleq Torres*, Paris and Casablanca, Balland-Eddif, 1994, p. 179

⁵⁶ For example, the remarks by the prominent Moroccan nationalist Abdeljalak Torres quoted in *Heraldo de Madrid*, 22 Nov 1935 and in *La Libertad*, 27 June 1934.

⁵⁷ Irene GONZÁLEZ: op. cit.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*. During the Spanish Second Republic, the Spaniards also bought off at least some key nationalists, thereby reducing nationalist resistance. Geoffrey JENSEN: "Rico Avello...", p. 135.

the supposed cultural characteristics of the colonized to weaken resistance and anticolonial nationalism. The methods of the Spanish occupation served the same goals as the wars of conquest that Spain and other European powers had typically employed in their colonies.

Conclusion

Overall, the Spanish campaigns in North Africa and the military presence that followed fit the basic mold of European colonial warfare and occupation, at least according to the criteria I have employed here. The stages leading to the Spanish army's eventual victory over Moroccan armed resistance depended upon customary military force but also various kinds of non-kinetic endeavors, demonstrating that political and civil actions joined military operations in determining the course and outcome of the decades-long history of the Spanish campaigns in Morocco. This conclusion should not come as a surprise. Prominent protagonists from both sides of colonial and peripheral wars and of various political and national stripes—from Hubert Lyautey to Mao Zedong to David Petraeus—have stressed the role of political, economic, cultural, and other non-kinetic elements of military operations in colonial wars and insurgencies. The Spanish case thus supports the argument that many of the most important characteristics of colonial warfare transcend political and national boundaries.

Admittedly, counterinsurgency and colonial military doctrines, like “ways of war” in general, develop according to national-historical traditions.⁵⁹ It is not difficult, for example, to identify differences between British and French colonial military thinking. The counterinsurgency manuals and traditions of the British army, with their ostensible emphasis on minimum force and leaving a small footprint in occupied areas, differ considerably from the views of the French military officers in Algeria who developed the counterinsurgency theory of *guerre révolutionnaire*, which emphasized the “total” character of modern warfare and the supposed disappearance of a distinction between peace and war.⁶⁰ In this last point, the advocates of *guerre révolutionnaire* revealed that they had broken free from the tendency among more conventional military professionals to separate the traditional wartime use of military violence from the civil and political activities usually associated with occupation. For these French of-

⁵⁹ Ian BECKETT: *op. cit.*

⁶⁰ Paul DIXON: “‘Hearts and Minds?’”; Michael J. M. FINCH: “A Total War of the Mind: The French Theory of la guerre révolutionnaire, 1954–1958”, *War in History* 24: 3 (2017), pp. 1-25.

ficers, civil, military, political, cultural, and psychological activities all fit within the “the enlarged parameters of warfare.”⁶¹

The obvious differences between the French and the British approaches should not, however, blind us to what the two militaries had in common, and the Spanish case gives further support to the existence of shared characteristics in European colonial warfare in general. The British may not have concurred with the “total” approach of the French advocates of *guerre révolutionnaire*, but they too appreciated the significance of the political and civil components of counterinsurgency. In fact, the British emphasis on the importance of politics and civil affairs in counterinsurgency, popularized in modern times by Sir Robert Thompson in Malaya and then enshrined in British doctrine, eventually found its way into the US Army and Marine Corps’ most recent manual on counterinsurgency.⁶² In short, Walter’s argument about the “primarily political” nature of colonial warfare is difficult to refute, and the acceptance of a similarly inclusive view of the sphere of military activities in Morocco eventually took hold among leading Spanish generals. As was true for their counterparts from other European colonial armies, however, it was not an easy intellectual shift to make.

The Spanish case also conforms to historians’ observations about the tendency of European military leaders in colonial campaigns to think in conventional terms, seek decisive battles, elevate tactics to the level of strategy, overlook the political components of modern war, and then take more extreme measures when their conventional tactics fail to produce the desired results.⁶³ After Annual, however, Spanish military and political leaders, like some of their more successful European counterparts elsewhere, understood the need to think more broadly about Spain’s means, ways, and ends in military and political terms, incorporating all into a comprehensive strategy. Goded understood that military success in Morocco entailed the use of all these approaches, even if he put much of his emphasis on traditional military force until February 1926, when the army’s “political” endeavors to subdue the Rif rebellion began in earnest.⁶⁴ Furthermore, he envisioned the military project in Morocco as encompassing both war and occupation, which together facilitated long-term pacification.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, p. 21.

⁶² Robert THOMPSON: *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*, New York, Praeger, 1966; *The U.S. Army / Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual: U.S. Army Field Manual No. 3-24: Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2007; *British Army Field Manual Volume 1 Part 10 Countering Insurgency* (Army Code 71876 October 2009), http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/16_11_09_army_manual.pdf (accessed 5 March 2019).

⁶³ On these tendencies among colonial European militaries in general, Hugh STRACHAN: *European Armies and the Conduct of War*, London, Routledge, p. 88.

⁶⁴ Julián PANIAGUA LÓPEZ: *op. cit.*, p. 71.

This kind of holistic approach to war and occupation, entailing analysis of military mechanisms and patterns from a comparative perspective, could prove as useful to historians as to military practitioners, helping them to understand more fully the military history of Spain and Morocco. Historians of the Spanish army in North Africa, like the most noteworthy of the protagonists they study, would do well to rise above the “tactical” level and integrate analysis of politics, culture, and military and civil affairs, framing their findings within the parameters of transnational, “total” history.