

CAPITAL SHIPS, COMMERCE, AND COALITION: BRITISH STRATEGY IN THE  
MEDITERRANEAN THEATER, 1793

William C. Baker, B. S.

Thesis Prepared for Degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

August 2014

APPROVED:

Michael V. Leggiere, Major Professor  
Richard Lowe, Committee Member  
Geoffrey Wawro, Committee Member  
Richard B. McCaslin, Chair of the  
Department of History  
Mark Wardell, Dean of the Toulouse  
Graduate School

Baker, William C. *Capital Ships, Commerce, and Coalition: British Strategy in the Mediterranean Theater, 1793*. Master of Arts (History), August 2014, 164 pp., 3 maps, bibliography, 178 titles.

In 1793, Great Britain embarked on a war against Revolutionary France to reestablish a balance of power in Europe. Traditional assessments among historians consider British war planning at the ministerial level during the First Coalition to be incompetent and haphazard. This work reassesses decision making of the leading strategists in the British Cabinet in the development of a theater in the Mediterranean by examining political, diplomatic, and military influences. William Pitt the Younger and his controlling ministers pursued a conservative strategy in the Mediterranean, reliant on Allies in the region to contain French armies and ideas inside the Alps and the Pyrenees. Dependent on British naval power, the Cabinet sought to weaken the French war effort by targeting trade in the region. Throughout the first half of 1793, the British government remained fixed on this conservative, traditional approach to France. However, with the fall of Toulon in August of 1793, decisions made by Admiral Samuel Hood in command of forces in the Mediterranean radicalized British policy towards the Revolution while undermining the construct of the Coalition. The inconsistencies in strategic thought political decisions created stagnation, wasting the opportunities gained by the Counter-revolutionary movements in southern France. As a result, reinvigorated French forces defeated Allied forces in detail in the fall of 1793.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank my advisor and mentor, Dr. Michael V. Leggiere, for his patience and support throughout this process. His guidance made this work possible. I would also like to my other committee members, Drs. Geoffrey Wawro and Richard Lowe, for their mentorship over the past two years. A special thanks to the Department Chair, Dr. Richard B. McCaslin, for his support in making the process easier for an army officer with limited time for graduate school. The Military History Center and the Department of History provided financial support for research abroad that contributed to this thesis. I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Nate Jarrett, my travelling buddy and research partner for our month living in an attic in Kew Gardens while desperately avoiding the onset of scurvy. Special thanks to Jordan Hayworth and Eric Smith, who always gave of their time to read pages and provide feedback throughout the writing process.

Outside of the University of North Texas, I would like to thank Dr. Frederick Schneid of High Point University for providing his expertise on the Sardinian sources from the Revolutionary period. I also extend my thanks to the friendly staff of the Caird Library at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich for creating a wonderful atmosphere to conduct research.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for their support over the last two years. My parents, Sean and Patti Baker, cultivated my interest in history and supported my endeavors. Words cannot express the love and admiration for my wife, Rebekah, and our son, Henry. None of this work is possible without them.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In February 1793, Great Britain embarked on a war against Revolutionary France that few suspected could last with little rest for over twenty years. Even fewer British officials anticipated the transformation of their oldest enemy from a volatile republic during the Terror into a French Continental empire under the leadership of Napoleon Bonaparte. British war efforts ensued around the globe in 1793 from India to North America. Along with the Caribbean and Flanders, the Mediterranean offered a third major theater to resist French expansionary and revolutionary policies. The campaign in the Mediterranean began in 1793 with promise as British and Spanish diplomats overcame their differences to build an alliance with several Italian states. However, major problems in coordinating government efforts in the region transformed the theater from one with limited British involvement into a major Anglo-led operation intent on the collapse of the French National Convention. The strategic decisions and the coordination between British officials that undermined the Mediterranean war is the subject of this thesis.

No study has yet comprehensively assessed the strategic vision of the British government in the Mediterranean and how this conservative approach to war with Revolutionary France succumbed during the summer and fall of 1793. In terms of chronology, British accounts attempt to minimize the Revolutionary wars in order to emphasize the Napoleonic duo of Horatio Nelson and Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington. Desmond Gregory's *The Ungovernable Rock* remains one of the few studies that examine British efforts in the Mediterranean during the Revolution. He

orients British strategy on Corsica, considering the capture of the island a continuation of traditional maritime policy in the region. Even Gregory avoids the influence of the first year of the war, considering the occupation of the island the ultimate goal of British interests.<sup>1</sup> Understanding the strategic value of the Mediterranean during the Revolutionary period continues to be underappreciated in the historiography, as authors continue to explore the conclusion of these wars without a clear understanding of the difficult years of failure and adversity.

Recent studies of the other British theaters during the War of the First Coalition have provided more objective assessments of war policy and strategic efforts. Michael Duffy's *Soldiers, Sugar, and Seapower* places incredible value of the West Indies for funding the British and Coalition war efforts. Duffy emphasizes the importance of securing the Caribbean as the logistical and financial base for a European war, highlighting the traditional model of British imperial power.<sup>2</sup> More recently, Nate Jarrett's 2013 study of the Flanders campaign identifies British military commitment on the Continent as a tool of diplomacy to keep the wavering European powers focused on France.<sup>3</sup> These works portray the administration of William Pitt the Younger, Prime Minister of Great Britain, as a more competent and calculating organization than previously assessed. The Mediterranean theater requires a similar assessment to complete the picture of British foreign policy and military objectives.

<sup>1</sup> Desmond Gregory, *The Ungovernable Rock: A History of the Anglo-Corsican Kingdom and Its Role in Britain's Mediterranean Strategy in the Revolutionary War (1793-1797)* (London: Associated University Presses, 1985), 43-48.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Duffy, *Soldiers, Sugar, and Seapower: The British Expeditions to the West Indies and the War against Revolutionary France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 368-375.

<sup>3</sup> Nathaniel Jarrett, "The Enemy of My Enemy is What, Exactly? The British Flanders Expedition of 1793 and Coalition Diplomacy" (MA Thesis, University of North Texas, 2013), 121-134.



The traditional narrative of the Mediterranean war condemns two major actors: the British Cabinet and the Allies. Condemnation of the Pitt administration during the early years of the Revolution reflects with hindsight on the twenty-three years of almost continuous war on the European Continent between 1792 and 1815. As a result, Pitt and his ministers are viewed in a damning light when compared to more successful administrations that followed the Treaty of Amiens (1802). Richard Glover's *Peninsular Preparation* considers the Revolutionary wars as a total failure for the British government, saved by reforms enacted at the end of the decade and executed by Wellington during his campaigns in Iberia (1808-1814). Glover even suggests that no British government possessed a coherent strategy to combat France until 1807.<sup>4</sup> John Fortescue's multi-volume *A History of the British Army* personally indicts Pitt and Henry Dundas, the Home Secretary and *de facto* Secretary of War, for being utterly devoid of military thought and lacking a basic understanding of European affairs. Fortescue presents their war planning as a haphazard process with no appreciation for time, distance, and the limitations of British army.<sup>5</sup> Incompetence is the prevailing thought among historians examining the creation and execution of war policy.

The historiography also points to the weakness of the Allies, who are portrayed as being incapable of supporting the British in the Mediterranean due to their poorly trained troops led by foolish officers. These opinions grew out of the disdain many British officials expressed after the evacuation of Toulon, greatly influencing early histories of the war. A sense of regret and frustration permeates British accounts over the inability to change the trajectory of the French Revolution and prevent decades of

<sup>4</sup> Richard Glover, *Peninsular Preparation: The Reform of the British Army, 1795-1809* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 2-4.

<sup>5</sup> J. W. Fortescue, *A History of the British Army* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1906), 4:70-72, 171-174.

war and suffering. William Laird Clowes' influential history, *The Royal Navy*, blames the Spanish and Neapolitans for every problem Admiral Samuel Hood encountered in the Mediterranean, citing jealousy, treachery, and cowardice.<sup>6</sup> The opinion of Clowes reflected many works of the eighteenth century that celebrated the rise of the Royal Navy, negating any failures as systemic Allied problems. Adolphus Ward and George Gooch's influential *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy* castigates the Austrians, Spanish, and Neapolitans for the failures in the Mediterranean.<sup>7</sup> The "stab in the back" delivered by the weak European Allies during the Revolution is only overcome by the rise of the two heroic Britons: Nelson and Wellington.

Despite any effort to combat this shortsightedness, these positions still impact more modern works. Bernard Ireland's *The Fall of Toulon*, the most recent study of the siege at the tactical and operational levels of war, unconvincingly argues that the Mediterranean campaign represented the last chance to defeat the Revolution and alter the course of European affairs. Ireland echoes earlier works that Allied incompetence and a lack of political support undermined Hood's tactical successes.<sup>8</sup> Arthur Bryant's *The Years of Endurance* states that "alone among the allies the British realized the opportunity" in supporting the counter-revolutionaries in France. In ignorance, however, the Pitt administration simply remained idle as the French government, led by Lazare

<sup>6</sup> William Laird Clowes, *The Royal Navy: A History from the Earliest Times to the Present*, vol 4 (London: Sampson Low, Marsten, and Company, 1899), 211. Clowes' extensive history builds on two earlier Anglophile works. Both exonerate British command in the Mediterranean while chastising Allied support. See Edward Pelham Brenton, *The Naval History of Great Britain*, vol. I (London: Henry Colburn, 1824); William James, *The Naval History of Great Britain*, vol. I (London: Richard Bentley, 1837).

<sup>7</sup> A. W. Ward and G. P. Gooch, *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, 1783-1919* (New York: Macmillan, 1922), 1:241.

<sup>8</sup> Bernard Ireland, *The Fall of Toulon: The Last Opportunity to Defeat the French Revolution* (London: Cassell, 2005),

Carnot, mobilized armies to defeat the Allies.<sup>9</sup> These narrow views of the war continue to ignore strategic plans developed in London and the desperate conflicts raging in the Alps and Pyrenees that created national crises for Britain's Continental partners.

In contrast, the Royal Navy is regularly exonerated for mistakes during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. The struggle with France is often a way to explain the ascension of the British navy as the unquestionable masters of the sea. Many histories minimize the failures during the First Coalition to focus on this triumphal march toward global hegemony. Commentary prefers to focus on the rare naval engagement such as the Glorious First of June and the Battle of Nile while avoiding the difficulties that preceded these British victories.<sup>10</sup> Hood receives similar treatment from most historians, his reputation shielded in the past two hundred years by his role as a mentor to Nelson. Michael Duffy's short biography, the only examination of the admiral in the past seventy years, portrays him as a 'gambler' during the 1793 campaign that ultimately salvaged a tremendous victory at Toulon by permanently maiming the French fleet.<sup>11</sup> Most analysis focuses on his tactical decisions, but no author has yet weighed his ability as a strategist or a coalition member. His decision-making deserves a serious reexamination.

Historians more clearly explain the reasons why the French Republican forces triumphed in the fall of 1793. The Mediterranean campaign is a component of a much

<sup>9</sup> Arthur Bryant, *The Years of Endurance, 1793-1802* (London: Book Club Associates, 1975), 91, 97-98.

<sup>10</sup> For example, Richard Harding, *Seapower and Naval Warfare, 1650-1830* (London: University College London Press, 1999), 257-280; David S. T. Blackmore, *Warfare on the Mediterranean in the Age of Sail: A History, 1571-1866* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Co., 2011), 151-160; Roy and Lesley Adkins, *The War for all the Oceans: From Nelson at the Nile to Napoleon at Waterloo* (New York: Viking, 2007), 4-6.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Duffy, "Samuel, First Viscount Hood, 1724-1816", in *Precursors of Nelson: British Admirals of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Peter Le Fevre and Richard Harding (London: Stackpole, 2000), 266-270. The previous biography, written in 1942 by a member of the Hood family, suffers from the expected biases.

larger series of French failures saved only through radical and desperate decisions by the National Convention in the summer of 1793. Combined with Spanish advances, the fall of Mainz in July, and the internal turmoil in the Vendée and southern France, the experiment of representative government in France appeared at an end. A total mobilization of the state by the Committee of Public Safety through the *Levée en Masse* squashed internal opposition while throwing back the various external threats to preserve the Revolution. Tim Blanning calls the summer of 1793 the point in time where France finally brought together the elements of revolutionary warfare and harnessed the tremendous assets of the state.<sup>12</sup> Georges Lefebvre's *The French Revolution* emphasizes the opportunistic nature of the Revolutionary government. Despite production and mobilization problems, the Committee of Public Safety fielded enough soldiers led by competent officers to take advantage of the divisive nature of the Allies to throw back advances on the frontiers.<sup>13</sup> While these explanations illuminate French efforts to prevent the reintroduction of a monarchy in Paris, understanding why the Allies, and particularly the British, failed during the same period remains elusive.

Traditional explanations of British struggles in the Mediterranean often fail to account for a number of important factors. First, the British entered the war with no firm European Allies, so the development of strategy changed as the foreign office mobilized support in the region. Second, previous assessments neglect the conservative nature of the war that ultimately collapsed with the impulse to seize control of the Toulon fleet in August of 1793. The war envisioned by the Cabinet acknowledged the scarcity of British resources and responded accordingly when Allied support faltered. This work

<sup>12</sup> T. C. W. Blanning, *The French Revolutionary Wars, 1787-1802* (London: Arnold, 1996), 100-101.

<sup>13</sup> Georges Lefebvre, *The French Revolution: From 1793 to 1799*, trans. John Hall Stewart and James Friguglietti (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), 2:81-83.

will redress some of the major national bias that plagues almost two hundred years of scholarship.

The task of examining British strategy in the Mediterranean requires a synthesis of many aspects of national power. Piers Mackesy's *The War in the Mediterranean, 1803-1810* contends that any study of the region requires the synthesis of naval and military affairs, foreign policy, economic interests, and resources to gain a true understanding of British intentions. Bringing these different lines of operation together possess their own challenges: lack of records concerning collective decisions, the long travel time of correspondence between London and the theater, and sparse notes among the controlling ministers concerning Mediterranean affairs when compared to the campaigns in Flanders or the West Indies are just a number of roadblocks facing modern scholars.<sup>14</sup> This work will examine British strategy during the first year of the war through this multifaceted lens while accounting for many of the structural difficulties associated with the research.

To properly assess the Cabinet's efforts in the Mediterranean during the first year, an analysis of military, political, and diplomatic efforts must each be explored equally with an understanding of the interplay between these lines of operation. Modern studies of military and naval affairs in the Mediterranean suffer from a myopic view of the war. J. Holland Rose's *Lord Hood and the Defense of Toulon* focuses on the affairs at the French port without an understanding of the larger political and diplomatic context. Rose's work, the first of modern scholarship on the 1793 campaign, limits its analysis to the actions of Hood and his officers during the siege. With such a narrow

<sup>14</sup> Piers Mackesy, *The War in the Mediterranean, 1803-1810* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1957), IX-X.

scope, Rose presents Hood as a tragic figure pursuing an aggressive campaign but thwarted by his government's inflexibility.<sup>15</sup> Minimizing diplomacy and politics prevents the proper appreciation for strategic decisions in the summer of 1793.

Political studies and biographies that target the key leadership in the Cabinet, account for the most developed aspect of the historiography. Major biographies exist of the Cabinet ministers during the First Coalition. Of most value is John Ehrman's three-volume work, *The Younger Pitt*, which provides the best understanding of war management and grand strategy. Ehrman, limited by the biographical aspects of the work discusses the Mediterranean in terms of operations without examining the economics or the regional strategic picture. Ephraim Douglas Adam's early work, *The Influence of Grenville on Pitt's Foreign Policy* and Jennifer Mori's *William Pitt and the French Revolution* identify the transformative qualities of the Mediterranean campaign in terms of politics and ideology. However, these works are very narrow in scope and avoid the military or diplomatic problems that developed during the summer of 1793.<sup>16</sup> The biggest drawback of these studies is the contention that the British government began the War of the First Coalition in a completely reactionary posture toward Continental affairs, disregarding the work by diplomats during the Spring and Summer of 1793. This work will consider those efforts to present a refined assessment of the policies of Pitt and his ministers.

<sup>15</sup> J. Holland Rose, *Lord Hood and the Defense of Toulon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), 82-84.

<sup>16</sup> Ephraim Douglass Adams, *The Influence of Grenville on Pitt's Foreign Policy* (Washington D. C.: Carnegie Institute, 1904), 19-25; Jennifer Mori, "The British Government and the Bourbon Restoration: The Occupation of Toulon, 1793," *The Historical Journal* 40, no. 3 (September 1997): 699-719; Jennifer Mori, *William Pitt and the French Revolution, 1785-1795* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 158-163.

Diplomatic histories of the First Coalition lag even further behind the studies of politics and military affairs. Coordination between Britain and the Eastern Powers dominate the historiography, leaving major gaps in Sardinian, Spanish, and Neapolitan relations. For example, no Anglo-Italian study of foreign policy in the late eighteenth century exists outside of commentary on the major treaties. Karl Roeder's *Baron Thugut* only briefly accounts for the impact of Anglo-Austrian relations on the Mediterranean.<sup>17</sup> John Sherwig's *Guineas and Gunpowder* delivers very little information on Mediterranean affairs, only mentioning the facts concerning subsidies paid to the Sardinians but providing little analysis.<sup>18</sup> While historians might argue that these smaller states simply submitted to the wishes of their more powerful neighbors, British officials struggled mightily to align these smaller regional powers into a coherent force. Furthermore, a number of Italian and North African states resisted British and French intrigue during the first critical year, a fact glossed over in almost all relevant texts. This work will attempt to put coalition building into an appropriate context to understand how Hood's actions diverged from the intended course of action advocated by the Cabinet.

This study is highly critical of the unity of command in the British Cabinet and management of a large and cumbersome war machine. For the Pitt administration to opt for war, the system required all elements – diplomatic corps, military, and the political leadership – to operate with the same goals and parameters. In short, the British government at war in 1793 looked more like a modern state than the Prussia of Frederick the Great where strategic decisions were encapsulated in one person. In

<sup>17</sup> Karl A. Roeder, *Baron Thugut and Austria's Response to the French Revolution* (Princeton University Press, 1987), 200-201.

<sup>18</sup> John Sherwig, *Guineas and Gunpowder: British Foreign Aid in the War with France, 1793-1815* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1969), 22-24.

contrast, Paddy Griffith's *The Art of War in Revolutionary France* portrays the Representatives-on-Mission in the French armies as their own strategic decision-makers, capable of diplomacy, political decisions, and operational command. This system provided rapid decision-making under the command of one individual, embodied ultimately in Napoleon as First Consul and Emperor.<sup>19</sup>

The British Cabinet, managing a bureaucracy operating over wide distances and with diverse missions, required clear cooperation between elements of the government to achieve success. Combined with Coalition partners, the task became infinitely more difficult. Roger Knight's *Britain Against Napoleon* emphasizes that the collective power of the government components sharpened over the course of the conflict, echoing studies by Piers Mackesy and Richard Middleton of earlier eighteenth century wars. Many of the departments, including the Admiralty and Foreign Office, reached maturation during the second half of the century. The triumvirate of Pitt, Dundas, and William Wyndham Grenville, Britain's Foreign Secretary, coordinated this massive organization that spread globally from the centralized offices at Whitehall.<sup>20</sup> While the French system operated effectively, particularly at the theater level, the British system required constant maintenance and experienced ministers at the helm to prevent deviations in strategy.

This thesis argues a more objective assessment of British strategic development and implementation in the Mediterranean. The British Cabinet approached the conflict

<sup>19</sup> Paddy Griffith, *The Art of War in Revolutionary France, 1789-1802* (London: Greenhill Books, 1998), 88-106. For the similar alignment of strategy under the control of Napoleon I, see Frederick Schneid, *Napoleon's Conquest of Europe: The War of the Third Coalition* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2005), 2-3.

<sup>20</sup> Roger Knight, *Britain against Napoleon: The Organization of Victory, 1793-1815* (London: Allen Lane, 2013), 61-66.



with a “short war” mentality, expecting the combined powers of Europe supported by an Allied blockade capable of extinguishing French aggression. This assumption left war planning open-ended, failing to provide diplomats and military commanders with plans to drive operations. Hood holds a considerable amount of blame in transforming the Mediterranean from a low-intensity theater with limited objectives to a strategic offensive backed by radical ideology and vast political goals. His actions at Toulon hijacked British strategy during the summer of 1793, creating conditions in the theater that diplomats and the Allies could not support. The surge forward of military operations left the Cabinet and diplomatic corps misaligned, susceptible to exploitation by the Republican armies in southern France.

This thesis also explores two important themes of the First Coalition: Anglo-Spanish relations and the coalescence of European states around Great Britain. First, Paul Schroeder’s *Transformation of European Politics* posits that the Revolutionary Wars were in reality an Anglo-French war. Each state attempted to organize Europe to secure its own interests.<sup>21</sup> Throughout 1793, the British government sought to eliminate neutrality in the Mediterranean, forcing smaller states to choose between British maritime power and French radicalism. Grenville first used diplomacy to convince these courts of his dual policy of containment and economic sanctions. To extend this policy to include the counter-revolution, Hood turned to intimidation and violence to divide the Mediterranean between French and British camps. The second theme, Anglo-Spanish relations, receives scant attention in other histories. This work examines the relationship with Madrid and assesses its influence in southern Europe. These two

<sup>21</sup> Paul W. Schroeder, *Transformation of European Politics, 1763-1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 117.

themes play a critical role in how British policymakers defined warfare in the Mediterranean.

Archival research conducted at a number of British institutions assist with defining the political and military decisions. Home Office and Foreign Office documents from the National Archives in Kew Gardens provide context to British relations with the Mediterranean Allies during the 1793 campaign. Admiralty records contain the reports submitted by Hood during the year as well as correspondence between regional diplomats. Select manuscripts from the British Library in London provide more personal correspondence between the controlling ministers and their agents at Allied courts. Finally, papers from the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich detail decisions made at Toulon as well as reports to Whitehall at critical junctures throughout the fall of 1793.

In addition, a number of published primary sources provide insight to the daily correspondence of the prominent British officials. Grenville's dispatches, published in *The Manuscripts of J. B. Fortescue, Preserved at Dropmore*, encapsulate one of the best views of the ministry. In the absence of Cabinet minutes, not a popular procedure until the mid-nineteenth century, these records offer an intimate view of the major influences in British war planning. William Eden, Baron Auckland, monitored the Allied situation from The Hague and wrote regularly to Pitt and Grenville in London. He also corresponded with his brother, Morton Eden, the ambassador to Vienna. His letters were published in *The Journal and Correspondence of William, Lord Auckland* and help to simplify the complicated Anglo-Austrian relationship. Gilbert Elliot, Pitt's political representative in southern France, saw firsthand how policy and guidance translated to war in the region. His three-volume correspondence, *Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert*

*Elliot, First Earl of Minto* opened the eyes of the ministry in November and December to the true nature of the war in the Mediterranean.

To assess British strategy in the Mediterranean during 1793, a chronological approach is necessary to examine political and diplomatic decisions in the context of military events. The second and third chapters explore the relationship between Great Britain and the Mediterranean states during the eighteenth century. In the first half of the eighteenth century, the British government maintained significant influence in the region with the assistance of Savoy-Sardinia and Austria. The strength of the Bourbon Family Compact combined with the commercial and political necessities in North America turned successive British governments away from the Mediterranean and Europe to secure the lucrative transatlantic colonial trade. A major shift in European policy isolated Great Britain for over three decades. However, the French Revolution provided an opportunity for Great Britain to reassert itself in the Mediterranean as part of a return to European affairs. These conditions allowed the Pitt administration to reach out to traditional Allies in northern Italy and approach their old enemy, Spain, to fight together against France.

The fourth chapter discusses efforts by Dundas and Grenville to build a British-led Coalition in the Mediterranean. Following the declaration of war by the National Convention, British diplomats endeavored to create a collective barrier against French arms and influence, particularly in Italy. In turn, the British government authored an embargo on French trade in the Mediterranean, courting Italian and North African states to sacrifice their economic security for the goals of a Coalition. While a number of states resisted the uniquely British definitions of blockade and neutral trade, Grenville

and Dundas managed to unite states on the frontiers of France to resist Republican expansion and strangled maritime trade in the Mediterranean.

The fifth chapter examines the friction between the Cabinet and Hood over a coherent Mediterranean strategy. Despite the chaos created in southern France by the Federalist Movement, Grenville and Dundas maintained a conservative position toward the war, preferring to fight through the Allies while avoiding the politically destructive aspects of the counter-revolution. Hood, on the other hand, approached Revolutionary France with a more radical view, joining the Federalists and Spanish to seize the military port of Toulon. The decision comprehensively reversed British strategy in the Mediterranean, forcing the Cabinet to define its position towards the exiled French monarchy. It also wrecked the grand strategic designs of Dundas, prompting the Cabinet to accelerate the movement of troops to southern France. Toulon forced the reconciliation of aggressive military operations and conservative national politics and diplomacy.

The sixth chapter explains the strategic paralysis created by Hood that plagued British officials from Toulon to London. An offensive into southern France placed tremendous demands on both the Allies and the Cabinet to satisfy the security needs of the French port. Hood's optimism during September and October prevented the Cabinet from understanding the desperate situation at Toulon. Diplomats lacked the influence at either Madrid or Vienna to strengthen the defense of the British objective. Furthermore, Hood siphoned troops from the fronts in the Pyrenees and the Alps, undermining the Cabinet's plans to contain French armies inside their borders. Hood significantly weakened the Allied war effort in the Mediterranean, undermining British

strength at sea while exposing the disconnected armies along the frontiers to stronger Republican armies.

The conclusion assesses responsibility for the failures of the campaign, examining British strategy along its political, military, and diplomatic lines of operations. It also provides a holistic evaluation of problems in managing a war over vast distances without clear guidance and directives. British efforts to encourage or coerce Coalition members as well as the neutral states in the Mediterranean are calculated. Finally, the work provides an assessment of Hood and his impact on national strategy and the Coalition partners.

CHAPTER 2  
BOTH FEET OUT: BRITAIN AND THE MEDITERRANEAN  
IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The Mediterranean, as a crossroads of trade and military power, played an integral role in the First British Empire. As a state with both colonial and Continental interests, the region provided economic strength and an entry point into European politics. In the first half of the eighteenth century, trade lanes in the 'Middle Sea' and relationships with states in the region constituted a significant part of British grand strategy. By the 1760s, the British lacked European allies to offset the naval power of Spain and France. Transatlantic trade superseded the Mediterranean and the larger European situation in priority. However, in the years after the American Revolution, the British government prepared itself for a return to European affairs, built on the traditional tools of economics and naval power.

In an era of mercantilism, the "fiscal-military state," as John Brewer refers to Great Britain, grew directly with the security of maritime networks. The government relied on a number of private companies to establish trade in North Africa, Italy, and Anatolia. By the end of the seventeenth century, most of these businesses fell under the direction of the Levant Company, a closely supervised organization that managed trade from Gibraltar to Palestine. As with other British trade cartels operating around the globe, customs drawn from the goods exchanged by the Levant Company fed

directly into the government accounts that provided hard currency for the growing empire.<sup>1</sup>

To protect merchants in the Mediterranean, the British government relied on two elements of national power: diplomacy and the navy. As trade became more regular, the British government disarmed the merchant companies, allowing the Royal Navy to protect the more secure routes.<sup>2</sup> For example, the Admiralty posted a squadron in the Mediterranean between 1690 and 1697 during the Nine Years War to provide security for merchant shipping. Prior to the naval base at Gibraltar, squadrons operated from the negotiated port of Tangiers on anti-privateering missions. A corollary emerged between the security of these trade routes and their profitability. For example, after the navy suppressed the Toulon fleet in 1694, the profits of the Levant Company exploded. The parallel growth of trade and sea power increased the protection of these routes.<sup>3</sup>

The other half of maritime trade protection involved aggressive European diplomacy. In a similar fashion, the Spanish and French also pursued mercantilist policies in the Mediterranean.<sup>4</sup> During times of European conflict, maritime warfare created fluctuations in trade. Pursuing its maritime economic strategy, London could not afford to allow opposing naval forces or privateers to disrupt these lines of communication and commerce. In the West Indies, the British navy handled trade

<sup>1</sup> Robert Ekelund and Robert Tollison, *Politicized Economies: Monarchy, Monopoly, and Mercantilism* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1997), 155-156; John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money, and the English State, 1688-1783* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 197-199.

<sup>2</sup> Michael J Braddick, "Government, War, Trade, and Settlement, 1625-1688" *The Origins of Empire: British Overseas Enterprise to the Close of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Nicholas Canny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 1:291-293.

<sup>3</sup> In addition to Brewer's work on the close relationship between revenues and the Royal Navy, see Nancy F. Koehn, *The Power of Commerce: Economy and Governance in the First British Empire* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994); Alfred C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935), 112. Before the capture of Gibraltar, the British government negotiated for annual support in the Port of Tangiers to control the Straits.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas J. Schaeper, *The French Council of Commerce, 1700-1715: A Study in Mercantilism after Colbert* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1983), 50-51.

security. In contrast, strong allies on the Continent augmented the Royal Navy in discouraging war in the Mediterranean. British foreign policy sought to perfect this balance of military strength and European partnership.<sup>5</sup>

Because of the unique requirements of Mediterranean trade protection, Great Britain needed influence in Italy. Due to the geopolitical location of the Italian peninsula between Europe and Africa, the maritime power that controlled Italy influenced the entire region. To maintain influence in Italy required partnership with Austria: a European power that lacked naval interests. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the British government favored an Italy influenced by Austria rather than France and Spain.<sup>6</sup> Because of its strategic location, Savoy also became an important tool in maintaining the *status quo* in southern Europe. Thus, British diplomats used Austria and Savoy to thwart the aggressive policies of both Louis XIV and the Spanish monarchs in Italy during the first three decades of the eighteenth century.<sup>7</sup>

Exploitation of these strategic concepts secured an economic foothold in the western Mediterranean. The pursuit of a balance of power in northern Italy enabled British commercial interests to grow throughout the region.<sup>8</sup> During the course of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Leghorn (Livorno) on the Tuscan coastline

<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of the need for a Mediterranean and Italian balance of power to secure British economic and diplomatic interests, see Brendan Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat: The Rise and Fall of the First British Empire, 1714-1783* (New York: Basic Books, 2007), 138-141.

<sup>6</sup> Geoffrey Symcox, *Victor Amadeus II: Absolutism in the Savoyard State, 1675-1730* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 166; D. B. Horn, *the British Diplomatic Service, 1689-1789* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 26-27. Horn's study is still the best summary of Anglo-Sardinian diplomacy during the period, despite its brevity.

<sup>7</sup> David Alan Francis, *The First Peninsular War, 1702-1713* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975), 22, 29; Christopher Storrs, "Savoyard Diplomacy in the Eighteenth Century," *Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy: The Structure of the Diplomatic Practice, 1450-1800*, ed. Daniela Frigo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 215. Storrs work covers the mechanics of Sardinian diplomacy without delving into the complex Anglo-Savoyard relationship. No work exists in the English language that comprehensively examines British diplomacy with the House of Savoy.

<sup>8</sup> Roger Morriss, *The Foundations of British Maritime Supremacy: Resources, Logistics, and the State, 1755-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 35.



became a center of British trade. That stronghold extended its economic impact to other Italian, Spanish, and North African ports.<sup>9</sup> In addition, a British military presence in the western Mediterranean assisted the Levant Company in negotiations with government officials in Aleppo, Smyrna, and Constantinople. British commercial projects grew at a continuous pace in the region, outstripping their French and Spanish rivals.<sup>10</sup>

With continuous expansion of trade in the region, the quest for a permanent British presence in the Mediterranean dated to the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1713/14). General Sir James Stanhope, the government representative in Spain during the conflict, considered the capture of Gibraltar or Port Mahon on Minorca one of the most important objectives of the war.<sup>11</sup> Sydney, Earl of Godolphin and John Churchill, the Duke of Marlborough, developed a strategy based on these principles in 1706. "If we have success in Spain, which you will know sooner than we," Godolphin wrote to Marlborough, "in all events we shall be able to assist the Duke of Savoy by sea, there being no doubt of our superiority in the Mediterranean."<sup>12</sup> A naval base between Europe and Africa provided a more consistent military presence to support Continental allies and the merchant marine.

<sup>9</sup> Michela D'Angelo, "British Trade and Merchants in the Mid-Mediterranean," *Anglo-Saxons in the Mediterranean: Commerce, Politics, and Ideas*, ed. Carmel Vassallo (Malta: Malta University Press, 2007), 99-100.

<sup>10</sup> For an understanding of the symbiotic relationship between the Levant Company and the Royal Navy in the late seventeenth century, see Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* and Mortimer Epstein, *The Early History of the Levant Company* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1908).

<sup>11</sup> Miguel Angel Casanovas Camps, "The British Presence in Minorca during the Eighteenth Century," *Anglo-Saxons in the Mediterranean: Commerce, Politics, and Ideas* (Malta: Malta University Press, 2007), 43-45

<sup>12</sup> Godolphin to Marlborough, 28 April 1706, in John Churchill, *The Marlborough-Godolphin Correspondence*, ed. Henry L. Snyder (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 2:529-530.

The results of the war significantly increased British influence in the Mediterranean. Gibraltar and Minorca, gained during the conflict, provided strategic positions to enforce economic and diplomatic influence. The 1713 Treaty of Utrecht divided Spain's holdings in Italy between Savoy and Austria. As both states possessed no naval power, the British government gained prestige by offering the Royal Navy to protect the interests of both Austria and Savoy. Although the Bourbons retained the throne in Madrid, the British-imposed peace greatly humbled the court of Philip V by aligning these two traditional allies against Madrid.<sup>13</sup> Lastly, Utrecht established British trade superiority in the Mediterranean, forcing the Spanish and French to acquiesce to an imbalance in duties and customs regulations.<sup>14</sup> The gains in the war awarded Great Britain a dominant position in southern Europe while earning the unending animosity of its oldest rivals.<sup>15</sup>

The results of the War of Spanish Succession allowed the British to shape Mediterranean affairs over the next two decades. In the War of the Quadruple Alliance (1717/18-1720), London allied with France, Austria, and the United Provinces to shield Italian principalities from Spanish claims to territory lost at Utrecht. Savoy even joined the war, eventually exchanging Sicily with Austria for the Island of Sardinia.<sup>16</sup> The

<sup>13</sup> Derek McKay and H. M. Scott, *The Rise of the Great Powers, 1648-1815* (London: Longman, 1983), 65, 95-96; George Whitney Martin, *The Red Shirt and the Cross of Savoy: The Story of Italy's Risorgimento, 1748-1871* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1969), 7-8.

<sup>14</sup> Government of Great Britain, *Foreign Policy and the Span of Empire, 1689-1971: A Documentary History*, ed. Joel H. Weiner (New York: Chelsea House, 1972) 1:34-39.

<sup>15</sup> John Lynch, *Bourbon Spain: 1700-1808* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 36-37; Richard Gillespie, *Spain and the Mediterranean: Developing a European Policy towards the South* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000), 8.

<sup>16</sup> The House of Savoy acquired the island of Sardinia in 1720. Other European powers began recognizing the Duke of Savoy as the King of Sardinia, or Piedmont-Sardinia, as part of the claim on the medieval title associated with the possession of the island.

exchange strengthened these buffer states to the benefit of Great Britain.<sup>17</sup> In 1725, Britain joined a defensive alliance with France and Prussia to protect Gibraltar from the threat of a Spanish attack.<sup>18</sup> With control of the Mediterranean states and consistent Austrian support, the British government effectively dictated alliances in southern Europe.

However, the ability to keep the European naval rivals divided did not last. In 1733, Philip V of Spain and Louis XV of France signed the Treaty of the Escorial, politically uniting the courts in common defense. A clear consequence of what became known as the Bourbon Family Compact included the strengthening of French and Spanish positions in the region.<sup>19</sup> The Toulon fleet and squadrons stationed at Carthage posed a threat to British trade interests in the Mediterranean. The British government countered by making a permanent “barrier” alliance with Austria to offset the two naval powers on the Continent.<sup>20</sup> Familial ties between Madrid and Paris presented a constant threat to British trade and the balance of power for the next sixty years.

The Bourbon Family Compact also complicated Britain’s relationships in northern Italy. Savoyard monarchs maintained dynastic ties with the ruling families in France and Spain. Sardinia chose to side with the Spanish and French instead of the Austrians in the War of Polish Succession (1733-1738).<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, Charles Emmanuel III

<sup>17</sup> Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat*, 138-141.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 191-186.

<sup>19</sup> Jeremy Black, *From Louis XIV to Napoleon: The Fate of a Great Power* (London: Routledge 2002), 81-83.

<sup>20</sup> Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat*, 219-223.

<sup>21</sup> McKay and Scott, *The Rise of the Great Powers, 1648-1815*, 49-51; John B. Wolf, *The Emergence of the Great Powers, 1685-1715* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951), 49; Jeremy Black, “British Neutrality in the War of the Polish Succession,” *The International History Review* 8, no. 3 (Aug 1986), 345-366.

chose the French and Prussians over the Austrians and British during the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748). Consequently, British influence in Sardinia remained tempered by its physical proximity to France and Spain. The economy of Sardinia relied on trade with southern France and certain goods from Iberian ports, despite a booming trade with British merchants in Oneglia and Villefrance.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, the amalgamated nature of Sardinia, which included territories belonging to the Holy Roman Empire as well as provinces in Lombardy seized from Austria in previous wars, made it an object of Vienna's desire.<sup>23</sup> The cooperation between France and Spain unseated Sardinia as a reliable British tool in a European war.

In addition, Britain began to lose its ties with Austria in northern Italy. Following the War of Austrian Succession, the rise of Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz as foreign minister in Vienna negatively impacted relations with Great Britain. Kaunitz strongly disliked the British and considered them a natural ally of Prussia. In 1749, he convinced Maria Theresa of Austria of the need to shift allegiances from Great Britain to France and Russia as a way to regain Silesia, lost during the Succession crisis. The immediacy of German interests broke the Anglo-Austrian alliance. For the Mediterranean, the change in policy left Britain diplomatically isolated.<sup>24</sup>

Despite the crumbling diplomatic situation with Austria, the British government found a way to reassert power in the Mediterranean. A triumph for the Newcastle administration, the Treaty of Aranjuez (1752) guaranteed Austrian and Spanish possessions in Italy. The agreement also secured Sardinia's position as a barrier to French interests. With the Spanish and Austrians dividing influence in Italy, the

<sup>22</sup> Harry Hearder, *Italy in the age of Risorgimento, 1790-1870* (London: Longman, 1983), 44.

<sup>23</sup> Christopher Storrs "Savoyard Diplomacy in the Eighteenth Century," 214.

<sup>24</sup> Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat*, 396-397.

agreement kept France out of the region. Despite losing the alliance with Austria, British officials maintained short-term control over a diplomatic picture that favored their Continental rivals.<sup>25</sup>

However, the weight of defending a transatlantic state exposed the weaknesses of the British Empire in southern Europe. Under the shadow of the Bourbon alliance, the Seven Years War (1756-1763) started with a British disaster. The surprise attack on Minorca in 1756 by a French fleet under the command of Armand de Vignerot du Plessis, duc de Richelieu forced the British to fall back on Gibraltar.<sup>26</sup> Great Britain, as Edmund Burke wrote:

Was engaged, directly or indirectly, in a war, not only with all the great continental powers, but what is more material, with the most considerable part of the maritime strength of Europe...the navy of Spain consisted of more than one hundred men of war, and though the French navy was greatly reduced, it became of consideration when added to the Spanish.<sup>27</sup>

With the main theater of the war in North America, the British government attempted to use diplomatic intrigue to protect the small naval presence in the Mediterranean. In 1762, British diplomats in Turin attempted to cede Corsica and Genoa to Sardinia but Étienne François, duc de Choiseul, foreign minister to Louis XV, thwarted the venture.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Arthur Hassall, *The Balance of Power, 1715-1789* (London: Macmillan and Company, 1900), 223; Black, *British Foreign Policy*, 268.

<sup>26</sup> Chris Ware, *John Byng: His Rise and Execution* (Barnsley, Yorkshire: Pen and Sword, 2009), 17-23; Franz A. J. Szabo, *The Seven Years War in Europe, 1756-1763* (Harlow, United Kingdom: Pearson, 2008), 16. For the theoretical discussion of possessing strategic naval bases in the Mediterranean, see Julian Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* (London, 1911), 31-34. For the impact of Byng on future British naval officers, see John A. Tilley, *The British Navy and the American Revolution* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1987), 126-127.

<sup>27</sup> Edmund Burke, *The Annual Register or a View of the History, Politics, and Literature of the Year 1762* (London: J Dodsley, 1787), 5. The cession of Genoa and Corsica to Sardinia masked Leghorn from French and Spanish naval power in the Mediterranean.

<sup>28</sup> Horn, *The British Diplomatic Service*, 28.

Despite the setback, the Pitt-Newcastle administration won the war through victories in North America and Germany.<sup>29</sup> The retention of Minorca at the end of the war resulted from keeping the Bourbon fleets separated until the Royal Navy destroyed the rival forces in detail.<sup>30</sup>

Despite the victories of the Seven Years War, two important developments turned national strategy away from Europe. First, the British government backed the Prussians during the war. With the ascension of George III, an exhausted administration decided to make peace in 1762. The desire to separate from the European conflict infuriated Frederick II of Prussia, Britain's last ally in Europe. Second, the collapsing political relationship with colonists in North America led the British government away from the entanglements of European struggles.<sup>31</sup> The renewal of the Family Compact during the conflict combined with the prioritization of North America enhanced the opinion among the French, Spanish, and Austrian courts that the British government cared little about its post-war influence in the Mediterranean.<sup>32</sup> With trouble abroad, the British government obliged, turned its back on Europe and accepting increasing isolation in the region.

An imbalance in British commerce accentuated the departure from Europe. The Mediterranean as a viable economic asset suffered from the shuffling of priorities in the mid-eighteenth century. Transatlantic trade experienced exponential growth in markets

<sup>29</sup> Daniel Baugh, *The Global Seven Years War, 1754-1763: Britain and France in a Great Power Contest* (Harlow, United Kingdom: Pearson, 2011), 170-174.

<sup>30</sup> Richard Middleton, *The Bells of Victory: The Pitt-Newcastle Ministry and the Conduct of the Seven Years War, 1757-1762* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 217.

<sup>31</sup> Robert Tombs, *That Sweet Enemy: The French and the British from the Sun King to the Present* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2007), 140; Schroeder, *Transformation of European Politics*, 5, 36.

<sup>32</sup> John Horace Parry, *The Spanish Seaborne Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 302-305; Alfred Bourguet, *Le Duc de Choiseul et L'Alliance Espagnole* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cer, 1906), 239-250.

that avoided the continual cycle of upheaval generated by European wars. Maritime trade in the western hemisphere created an intense rivalry between the British and French for control of the region. During the same period, Mediterranean markets grew, but not at the same rate as those in the West Indies and British North America. With a primacy of colonial trade, the ministry minimized the value of inter-European trade and the less profitable markets of the Ottoman Empire for the boom in the New World.<sup>33</sup>

Despite their isolation, British policymakers attempting to shape Mediterranean affairs after the Seven Years War had accomplished nothing. With concerns over the security of the North American colonies, the decrepit diplomatic situation in Europe persuaded Prime Minister William Petty, the Earl of Shelburne, to attempt to trade Corsica to the French in 1768 for a guarantee of neutrality. The ruse failed and the French purchased the island from the Genoese without surrendering any military flexibility.<sup>34</sup> A French-controlled Corsica significantly threatened the Leghorn trade network. Moreover, this apparent loss of influence in the Mediterranean and Italy eroded confidence in Britain's ability to contribute to future wars in Europe. According to Brendan Simms, other European diplomats concluded "the already widespread view that Britain had turned her back on the Continent and was interested only in America."<sup>35</sup> The failure of diplomacy in the Mediterranean in the 1760s accentuated Britain's lack of Continental influence.

<sup>33</sup> Francois Crouzet, "War, Blockade, and Economic Change in Europe, 1792-1815," *The Journal of Economic History* 24, no. 4 (Dec 1964), 568-569; Nancy F Koehn, *The Power of Commerce: Economy and Governance in the First British Empire* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994), 4.

<sup>34</sup> Geoffrey W. Rice, "Deceit and Distraction: Britain, France, and the Corsican Crisis of 1768," *The International History Review* 28, no. 2 (Jun 2006): 287-315; Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics*, 35-36.

<sup>35</sup> Brendan Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat*, 557.

Conversely, French influence in northern Italy grew, enhanced by British disinterest in European affairs and the barrier posed Bourbon sea power. Victor Amadeus III gained the Sardinian throne in 1773 and aligned his state with France, marrying his daughters to the Counts of Artois and Provence.<sup>36</sup> This decision directly reflected the shift of power in the Mediterranean. Victor Amadeus followed up this transfer of allegiances by participating in the French intervention of Genoa in 1782. With a Francophile sovereign in control of the Alpine passes, the safety of British economic interests in the Mediterranean decreased.<sup>37</sup>

The situation continued to deteriorate, especially after the revolt of the Thirteen Colonies drew sea power away from Europe to blockade American waters. A lack of naval support in Europe left British possessions, particularly in the Mediterranean, isolated. Unprotected bases provided easy targets for France and Spain. Prime Minister Frederick, Lord North, even offered Minorca to Empress Catherine II of Russia if she used her naval power to intimidate Britain's rivals, a half-hearted attempt to thwart Bourbon intervention.<sup>38</sup> After entering the war on the side of the British colonists, Spanish forces recaptured Minorca in February 1782. Without encountering naval resistance, the Spanish also besieged Gibraltar.<sup>39</sup> British positions in the region, already under diplomatic pressure, now teetered on the brink of collapse.

War in America represented a low point in British foreign policy in Europe. North's ministry mismanaged naval assets, allowing Franco-Spanish fleets to move

<sup>36</sup> Roberto Bergadani, *Vittorio Amedeo III* (Torino: G Paravia, 1939), 25-26. The two French aristocrats were the younger brothers of Louis XVI.

<sup>37</sup> Storrs, "Savoyard Diplomacy in the Eighteenth Century", 212.

<sup>38</sup> Thomas E. Chávez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), 145-146.

<sup>39</sup> Jonathon R. Dull, *A Diplomatic History of the American Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 111.



unimpeded in European waters, even sailing unmolested through the English Channel.<sup>40</sup> After the Thirteen Colonies secured independence, London was saved from total defeat only by naval victories over the French and Spanish in the West Indies. To guarantee peace in 1783 with the Bourbon courts, a permanent surrender of Minorca left the British with only Gibraltar.<sup>41</sup> In less than thirty years, Britain devolved from the guarantor of the Mediterranean balance of power to European bystander.

The collapse of the political coalition in Parliament at the end of the American Revolution between North and Charles James Fox opened the door for changes in military and political apparatuses. With the ascendancy of William Pitt the Younger, the twenty-four-year-old prime minister embarked on a series of reforms. Pitt's two political goals, state finance reform and naval expansion, provided the best bargaining chips in an alliance with Continental partners.<sup>42</sup> In terms of the Mediterranean, an emphasis on repairing these aspects of foreign policy harkened to the days of British dominance earlier in the century.

To do so, the British state needed liquidity. Pitt during the 1780s emphasized the rebuilding of state financial institutions. Holding the traditional roles of Chancellor of the Exchequer as well as prime minister, Pitt came to power in 1784 with palpable fears among many British politicians that the government might suffer insolvency. As George III lamented "every addition to the burdens of my people; but they will, I am persuaded, feel the necessity, after a long and expensive war, of effectually providing for the maintenance of our national faith and our public credit, so essential to the power and

<sup>40</sup> For the mismanagement of the war by the Cabinet during the activation of Franco-Spanish alliance with the American colonists, see Piers Mackesy, *The War for America, 1775-1783* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 279-300.

<sup>41</sup> Ward and Gooch, *The Cambridge History of Foreign Policy, 1783-1919*, 1:138.

<sup>42</sup> Dull, *A Diplomatic History of the American Revolution*, 160-161.

prosperity of the state.”<sup>43</sup> National debt became a major outcome of the American war.<sup>44</sup> Pitt’s fiscal policies proved successful, reducing indebtedness with only small incremental changes, a remarkable effort compared to the £170 million debt accrued since the end of the War of Austrian Succession.<sup>45</sup> During this period of isolation, British foreign policy retrenched in economic ventures with the goal of generating income for the government. With the intent of staying out of European affairs in the short term, making money became the priority of the Pitt ministry.<sup>46</sup>

The second tool of Pitt’s national strategy, the expansion of the Royal Navy, grew out of failures in previous wars and the realities of imperial inertia. As a maritime economic power, London could not allow the navy to constrict without strategic implications on the continued rivalry with Spain and France. Security of maritime trade, a worldwide presence, global logistics, and the constant need for ship repairs made shrinking the navy a much more difficult problem than simply demobilizing soldiers.<sup>47</sup> The Treasury and Admiralty earmarked £24,000,000 for the 1787 Navy Estimates alone, a tremendous amount of money, unmatched by the annual expenditures of Spain and France combined.<sup>48</sup> The expansion of the fleet “In Ordinary” during the 1780s

<sup>43</sup> George III, in address at the opening of Parliament, 17 May 1784, in *Two Hundred Fifty Royal Speeches, from 1760 to 1882* (London: John Hall, 1883), 14.

<sup>44</sup> J. Holland Rose, *William Pitt and National Revival* (London: G. Bell 1911), 178-179.

<sup>45</sup> Playfair, *the Commercial and Political Atlas and Statistical Breviary*, 83.

<sup>46</sup> John E. Crowley, “Neo-Mercantilism and The Wealth of Nations: British Commercial Policy after the American Revolution,” *The Historical Journal* 33, no. 2 (Jun 1990): 339-360; William Hague, *William Pitt the Younger* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 195.

<sup>47</sup> John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money, and the English State, 1688-1783* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1989), 35-37.

<sup>48</sup> Ward and Gooch, *The Cambridge History of Foreign Policy, 1783-1919*, 147; J. Holland Rose, *William Pitt and the Great War* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1911), 30-31; King George III to William Pitt, 30 March 1786, A. Aspinall, ed. *The Latter Correspondence of George III* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 1:215.

helped to alleviate the strategic problems facing earlier administrations.<sup>49</sup> During the Seven Years War, the threat of an invasion of the British islands forced the Newcastle Administration to commit the Royal Navy to the English Channel, leaving the Mediterranean possessions vulnerable. A similar situation occurred during the American Revolution with too many responsibilities for too few ships.<sup>50</sup> This expansion provided the potential for more strategic options in wartime and the ability to wage war in multiple theaters worldwide.

Without requirements for a European military presence and the end of a commitment in the American colonies, the Pitt administration allowed the British army to atrophy. State expenditures for the army dropped from nearly £4,000,000 in 1783 to approximately £1,000,000 annually between 1784 and 1792. A similar change to expenditures in ordnance reflected a paradigm shift from the need of a large army to garrison colonies to emphasizing the importance of maritime trade and colonial protection.<sup>51</sup> An unwillingness to commit money and effort to the British army, however, created conditions that made European intervention more difficult. Low pay for recruits in the 1780s made army expansion problematic. The Royal Navy required no fewer than eight British battalions to serve as marines on warships, shrinking the pool of available units for land service<sup>52</sup> Neglect of the army reflected both a preoccupation with maritime interests as well as a continued commitment to remain out of European affairs while the state recovered.

<sup>49</sup> "In Ordinary" is a British naval term identifying ships fully commissioned for war but currently not needed for active service. The British government used this system as a way to save money while retaining a higher level of readiness.

<sup>50</sup> David Syrett, *The Royal Navy in European Waters During the American Revolutionary War* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1998), 58-60.

<sup>51</sup> Playfair, *the Commercial and Political Atlas and Statistical Breviary*, 92-93.

<sup>52</sup> John W. Fortescue, *A History of the British Army*, 3:526.

With the American war over, Pitt attempted to redefine Britain's relationship with Europe based on economic value. To overcome the diplomatic difficulties of the previous two wars and a self-imposed isolation, Pitt turned to trade as a weapon to both bolster British commerce abroad and regain Continental prestige. The prime minister sought to reestablish an economic footprint on the Continent and recover lost revenues by targeting European markets. With a revamped economy backed by naval power, diplomats and agents set to work reestablishing commercial links with other European courts.<sup>53</sup> However, Pitt still sought a mercantile relationship with former colonies, a clear provocation of France. Areas like the Mediterranean experienced resurgence with the revival of traditional British economic pursuits. Furthermore, the decline of the French navy after the American Revolution presented an opportunity to exert influence in areas otherwise limited to British maritime power, including southern Europe. For France, which maintained similar economic interests in the Mediterranean, Pitt's two-fold approach represented a challenge to both colonial and Continental markets.<sup>54</sup>

Recovering rapidly from the American war, the Pitt administration capitalized on French economic problems. British strategic assessments in the 1780s identified the widespread troubles of French financial institutions and trade management. An inability to ratify standards of trade hampered relations between the two countries throughout the century. At the court of Louis XVI, mismanagement and poor spending habits created the conditions for a slow decline following the American Revolution. Pitt, a disciple of Adam Smith and a believer in the Neo-Mercantile concept of co-prosperity, made a commercial treaty with France one of his top priorities when he took office in

<sup>53</sup> Ehrman, *Commercial Negotiations*, 4.

<sup>54</sup> Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics*, 40.

1783. In his assessment, the treaty sought to bring France into cooperation under British terms not as an enemy, but as an economic partner:

Considering this treaty in its political view, he [Opposition Leader Charles James Fox] should not hesitate to contend against the too frequently advanced doctrine, that France was, and must be, the unalterable enemy of Britain...To suppose that any nation could be unalterably the enemy of another, was weak and childish.<sup>55</sup>

Parliamentary debate over the next three years centered on the concept of reciprocity with French merchants, a standard of trade that Pitt soundly rejected in favor of British manufactured goods.<sup>56</sup>

Unbeknownst to the British Cabinet, commercial negotiations concluded in 1786-1787 helped to expedite the economic and political collapse of France. Ambassador William Eden, primary negotiator for the agreement, rejected all protests from the French government over a dangerous imbalance of trade. The treaty promoted almost all of Britain's commercial interests at the expense of the French economy.<sup>57</sup> Tenets of the treaty lowered custom duties from fifteen to ten percent on most goods and abolished prohibitions on the import of British finished goods, both protective measures of French mercantilism. Eden expressed his happiness over the stunning diplomatic success. "I am firmly convinced that the proposed duty will give us a full access to the French markets," he wrote to Pitt following the conclusion of negotiations, "and will be

<sup>55</sup> "William Pitt's Speech in the House of Commons on the Commercial Treaty with France, 12 February 1786," *English Historical Documents, 1714-1815*, ed. D. B. Horne (London: Methuen and Co, 1967), 96; Hague, *William Pitt the Younger*, 194-195.

<sup>56</sup> Ehrman, *Commercial Negotiations*, 28-30.

<sup>57</sup> W. O. Henderson, "The Anglo-French Commercial Treaty of 1786," *Economic Historical Review* 10, no. 1 (1957), 104-112. For the text of the Eden Agreement, William Eden Auckland and Gravier de Vergennes, "Commercial Treaty of 1786," Foreign Office Division 94, Piece 73, The National Archives (TNA), London, United Kingdom.

thought so low here as to be the subject of much outcry.”<sup>58</sup> The treaty created British competition in the textile industries, drove up prices, and increased French unemployment in a state already struggling with massive debt dating from the Seven Years War.<sup>59</sup>

As unstable as Bourbon France was in 1787, perceptions of the commercial treaty with Britain meant much more than calculations and figures. As Eli Heckscher argues, many French politicians who blamed Louis XVI for surrendering the French economy to British merchants created an even more volatile situation. Public opinion in France plummeted after the industrial crisis the following year.<sup>60</sup> Many of Eden’s reports paired the economic problems with an intensely charged political environment that made each commoner think “himself a Brutus, and sees a Caesar in each noble.”<sup>61</sup> British economic superiority over France added fuel to a financial and political situation already out of control.

Furthermore, the trade race in both the Mediterranean and the New World forced France to maintain pace with the British. The British economy showed flexibility after the American war in finding new markets and adjusting priorities. The decentralized nature of the British state allowed for changes in trade. Conversely, France’s highly centralized economic plans lacked the elasticity to keep pace in a global race. The downfall of the French monarchy derived directly from being unable to spend money to

<sup>58</sup> William Eden to William Pitt, 23 August 1786, *The Journal and Correspondence of William, Lord of Auckland*, vol 1 (London: Richard Bentley, 1861), 154.

<sup>59</sup> Dull, *A Diplomatic History of the American Revolution*, 161-162; For a more detailed understanding of the complexities of the negotiations, see Marie Martin Donaghay, “The Anglo-French Negotiations of 1786-1787,” (Ph.D Dissertation, University of Virginia, 1970).

<sup>60</sup> Eli F. Heckscher, *The Continental System: An Economic Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922), 18-23.

<sup>61</sup> Huber to William Eden, 5 July 1789, *The Journal and Correspondence of William, Lord of Auckland* (London: Richard Bentley, 1861), 2:325-327.

match the British.<sup>62</sup> British merchants and their political partners slowly won the cold war for control of maritime trade, particularly in places of stiff competition like the Mediterranean.

British diplomats less successfully applied pressure to the other half of the Franco-Spanish partnership. Despite the American war and the close relationship with France, Great Britain remained Spain's largest consumer. Money collected from British exports to Spain ranked fifth highest in Europe.<sup>63</sup> A combination of colonial tensions and the unwillingness of José Moñino y Redondo, Conde de Floridablanca, Spain's prime minister, to completely turn his back on France hindered these pursuits. The Mosquito Coast incident derailed negotiations in 1786 but Pitt and foreign minister Francis Osborne, Marquess of Carmarthen, continued to pursue an agreement that sought to bring Spain further into the British economic sphere.<sup>64</sup>

Pitt's pursuits also attempted to undermine Spanish and French trade positions in the Mediterranean. The Kingdom of Naples offered commercial opportunities as a gateway for trade between British ports and the Levant. For decades, merchants and politicians longed for a centralized depot for finished merchandise in the region.<sup>65</sup> In 1786, the Neapolitan ambassador appealed to Carmarthen for a discussion over a mutually beneficial agreement. Negotiations with Naples could manipulate the Bourbon governments into joining the British economic program or face losses in the

<sup>62</sup> Schroeder, *Transformation of European Politics*, 39-40.

<sup>63</sup> Jean O. McLachlan, *Trade and Peace with Old Spain, 1667-1750: A Study of the Influence of Commerce on Anglo-Spanish Diplomacy in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), 16.

<sup>64</sup> British traders maintained trading outposts on the Mosquito Coast in what is today the Atlantic coast of Honduras and Nicaragua. Following the American Revolution, the British promised to evacuate a number of locales to satisfy Spanish demands. However, British officials did not evacuate the Mosquito Coast until 1787.

<sup>65</sup> Ehrman, *Commercial Negotiations*, 159.

Mediterranean. Over the next three years, both sides negotiated a permanent economic relationship but talks collapsed by 1791. Naples remained closely aligned with Spain and France, reflecting London's lack of diplomatic capital in the Mediterranean.

On the heels of the commercial negotiations with Britain, French royal and financial power crumbled. In turn, this prevented France from projecting power. During the 1780s, French agents supported the Patriot reform movement that sought to strip power from the Dutch Stadtholder. The British and Prussian states in turn backed William V, the Prince of Orange.<sup>66</sup> In late June 1787, revolutionaries captured the Princess of Orange and held her prisoner as ransom for political independence. The British Cabinet calculated that France lacked the financial and military capacity to fight alongside the Dutch revolutionaries. Frederick William II, the Prussian King and brother to the Princess of Orange, responded to the attack on his family. Prussian troops invaded The Netherlands and restored William V to power. Appeals from the paramilitary forces opposed to the Stadtholder received no response from the French government. Louis XVI's Comptroller-General of Finances, Loménie de Brienne, refused to marshal the monetary resources to support the rebels. Silence from Paris over the Dutch Revolt received the approval of Pitt and others who saw a France in decline as necessary for a more stable Europe.<sup>67</sup>

Throughout the first half of the eighteenth century, control of Italy and the Mediterranean remained a significant part of British economic and strategic policies.

<sup>66</sup> Blanning, *French Revolutionary Wars*, 25.

<sup>67</sup> Simon Schama, *Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands, 1780-1813* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1977), 126-131; Blanning, *The French Revolutionary Wars*, 25-26. Blanning provides a succinct narrative on the collapse of the French monarchy and also argues the date its demise to the summer of 1787.



The ability to influence alliances in northern Italy prevented France and Spain from negatively impacting British maritime trade in the region. Since the early reverses of the Seven Years War, British policy lost influence consistently in the Mediterranean, driven by a lack of Continental allies and an empire centered on transatlantic trade. While economic conditions remained steady during peacetime, war in Europe consistently threatened British positions in the Mediterranean. The low point in the effectiveness of British foreign policy in southern Europe occurred during the American Revolution, when the fleets of Spain and France eliminated Anglo competition in the region. However, the radicalization of French politics would help the British Cabinet reassert itself in European affairs, becoming a powerful influence in resisting the aggressive designs of the National Convention in Italy and the Mediterranean.

## CHAPTER 3

### STEPPING BACK IN: THE RETURN TO MEDITERRANEAN AFFAIRS, 1789-1792

At the outbreak of the French Revolution, few British politicians feared that an internal political dispute in Paris could comprehensively impact European affairs or threaten commercial interests. Pitt and his fellow ministers observed the revolution as an indicator of successful British policy towards their traditional rivals in Western Europe. Only with the condemnation of Louis XVI and the aggressive policies enacted by the National Convention did the British government begin to align itself with European partners. In the Mediterranean, this situation afforded an opportunity to renew the traditional relationships in northern Italy while courting a troublesome relationship with Spain. Isolated from Continental affairs for decades, the belligerence in Paris created conditions favorable to returning to military and diplomatic influence in southern Europe.

Problems in France reached a climax during the summer of 1789. The storming of the Bastille, fueled by food riots in Paris, government mismanagement, and financial weaknesses, threw the state into chaos. Most of the British Cabinet and Parliament viewed the Revolution as a positive development that could keep France at peace and transform the government to a constitutional monarchy like Great Britain. As long as the problems of the French state did not upset the balance of power in Europe, the British government remained unconcerned over France's internal strife. With few adjustments, this defined British policy for the next three years.<sup>1</sup>

Pitt looked no further than Spain to witness the reactionary policies toward the French Revolution. The preservation of Louis XVI and his throne became the mantra of

<sup>1</sup> Hague, *William Pitt the Younger*, 231.

Carlos IV from the outbreak of the Revolution. Over the first three years of political turmoil in France, domestic policies enacted by Floridablanca antagonized French merchants and businessmen living south of the Pyrenees.<sup>2</sup> The Spanish minister suppressed newspapers, strangled interstate trade, and quarantined all French citizens to within fifty miles of the border.<sup>3</sup> The court at Madrid identified the Revolution as a cancer requiring quarantine, making diplomatic overtures from the British government problematic.

However, upheaval in France allowed the British government to regain diplomatic ground elsewhere in the Mediterranean. Revolutionary rhetoric retrenched the Bourbon monarchy in Naples in a conservative stance. Close relationships between Neapolitan Queen Maria Carolina and her sister, Queen Marie Antoinette of France, magnified fears in the capital over the spread of liberal ideas to Italy. The promotion of English-born Sir John Francis, Baron Acton, to prime minister in late 1789 incited public protest among Neapolitan supporters of the Revolution. Acton helped to more closely align British and Neapolitan interests as a way of undermining French influence.<sup>4</sup> Ferdinand IV, economically and politically tied to monarchical France, now found himself looking for a new patron. His reactionary view of the French Revolution put him at odds with his capital's intellectuals and its large constituency of Francophiles.

In northern Italy, the court of Victor Amadeus III responded to the Revolution in a similar fashion as the Pitt administration. Savoyard monarchs relied on the balance of

<sup>2</sup> John Lynch, *Bourbon Spain*, 379-382.

<sup>3</sup> Barbara H. Stein, *Edge of Crisis: War and Trade in the Spanish Atlantic, 1789-1808* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 2009), 32-33; Carlos y Corona Baratech, *Revolución y reacción en el reinado de Carlos IV* (Madrid: Ediciones Rialp, 1957), 240-242.

<sup>4</sup> Hearder, *Italy in the Age of Risorgimento, 1790-1870*, 126-127.

power in Europe to protect their kingdom from larger neighbors.<sup>5</sup> Despite his familial ties with the French monarchy, Victor Amadeus rejected the counter-revolutionary doctrine generated by the *Émigrés* in late 1789. Unlike Carlos IV and Floridablanca in Spain, who called for the defense of kingship from the outset of the Revolution, political change inside the borders of France mattered little to the Sardinians between 1789 and 1792 as long as it remained inside the frontiers.<sup>6</sup>

In terms of foreign policy, Spain constituted a bigger problem for the Pitt administration during the first year of the Revolution. The test of the Family Compact came at a remote outpost in northwestern America. The Spanish viceroy in Mexico launched an expedition in the summer of 1789 to establish a permanent settlement in Nootka Sound to exploit fur and fishing opportunities. On arrival, the Spanish captain seized the first of three British ships anchored in the Sound.<sup>7</sup> Carmarthen, now styled the Duke of Leeds, responded on 26 February 1790 by verbally lashing Marques Bernardo del Campo y Pérez de la Serna, the Spanish ambassador to the Court of St. James. He concluded that Spain committed an act of aggression and must surrender the waters off of what is now Vancouver Island or face military consequences. The British foreign secretary ordered Campo to release the British ships before any discussion of trading rights and territorial claims in the Pacific Northwest could be

<sup>5</sup> Bergadani, *Vittorio Amedeo III*, 162.

<sup>6</sup> Black, *Foreign Policy in an Age of Revolutions, 1783-1793*, 342; Godechot, *The Counter-Revolutionary Doctrine and Action, 1789-1804*, 149-154.

<sup>7</sup> Spanish Captain Martinez's account of the seizure of the British ship in Nootka Sound, letter dated from 28 August 1789, TNA, Foreign Office Division 72, Piece 16.; Howard V. Evans, "The Nootka Sound Controversy in Anglo-French Relations, 1790," *The Journal of Modern History* 46, no. 4 (Dec. 1974), 611-613.

resolved.<sup>8</sup> Pitt also rebuked the Spanish ambassador, stating that British merchants could trade in Spanish ports without consent, a rather threatening gesture that impacted not only Spanish holdings in the New World but also trade in Catalonia and Oran in the Mediterranean.<sup>9</sup> At Madrid, Floridablanca refused to surrender the captured ships or the claimed territory. Both states mobilized for war and Carlos IV sent overtures to his familial ally for support. War between the three European naval powers appeared likely with the activation of the Family Compact.

However, appeals from Carlos for military assistance fell on deaf ears in Paris. The National Assembly refused to get involved in the crisis, declaring an unwillingness to ever again take part in aggressive campaigns. French politicians also stated that a declaration of war now required a legislative decision, not a royal decree.<sup>10</sup> Eden summarized the situation that “though many things seem to portend war, I cannot be induced to think that it is possible there should be one, at least of any long continuance, for who is to fight with us? France, in spite of the boasting of her *Assemblée Nationale*, is in a state of perfect impotence.”<sup>11</sup> The ongoing political and economic disaster of the Revolution left the French National Assembly ‘totally *hors du combat*’.<sup>12</sup> Inactivity at

<sup>8</sup> The Duke of Leeds to Marquis del Campo, 26 February 1790, TNA, Foreign Office Division 72, Piece 16; Freeman M. Trovall, *At the Far Reaches of Empire: The Life of Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra* (Vancouver: The University of British Columbia, 2008), 189-192.

<sup>9</sup> N. A. M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean, A Naval History of Britain, 1649-1815* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004), 365.

<sup>10</sup> Ross, *Quest for Victory*, 16-17.

<sup>11</sup> A. Storer to William Eden, 28 September 1790, *Correspondence of William, First Lord Auckland*, 2:371-373.

<sup>12</sup> Huber to William Eden, 26 September 1789, *Correspondence of Auckland*, 2:353-359; the report to Parliament of the Nootka Crisis was submitted on 5 May, *Parliamentary Register* (London: J. Debrett, 1790), 27:562.

Paris drove members of the British government to consider France a non-factor in a possible war with Spain.<sup>13</sup>

During the summer of 1790, the Spanish government found itself caught between a superior naval rival and an increasingly unstable ally. Regarding the Revolution as a more dangerous situation than a colonial dispute with Britain, Floridablanca reversed his position on the Franco-Spanish partnership. During the summer of 1790, he contemplated establishing a cordon across the Pyrenees to block communication with Paris, dealing with France as a “country infected with the plague.”<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, the instability of the Spanish court and continued mobilization forced Alleyne Fitzherbert, the newly appointed ambassador to Spain, and Leeds to contemplate in August the withdrawal of the diplomatic mission from Madrid, an act tantamount to a war declaration.<sup>15</sup>

With the National Assembly unwilling to initiate a war, Floridablanca simply maneuvered around Paris to negotiate directly with other Continental powers for support. British mobilization presented the Spanish minister an opportunity to discuss with the Prussian ambassador the possibility of an alliance with Austria against Great Britain, an arrangement with serious implications in the Mediterranean.<sup>16</sup> He sent overtures to Constantinople to bring the conflict between Russia and the Ottoman Empire to a close with the hope of unifying the Mediterranean naval powers against

<sup>13</sup> Ward and Gooch, *The Cambridge History of Foreign Policy, 1783-1919*, 1:197-201.

<sup>14</sup> Fitzherbert to the Duke of Leeds, 19 August 1790, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 18; Cayetano Alcázar Molina, ‘Ideas políticas de Floridablanca’, *Revista de Estudios Políticos* 53 (1955), 53.

<sup>15</sup> William Ray Manning, *The Nootka Sound Controversy* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1905), 410.

<sup>16</sup> Manning, *Nootka Sound Controversy*, 409-411.

Great Britain. Thoughts of a potential triple alliance without France loomed large at Madrid.<sup>17</sup>

The Nootka Sound Crisis also derailed renewed British hopes of a formal commercial relationship with Spain. In the wake of the diplomatic crisis caused by Nootka, discussions over economic cooperation floundered. Vice-consul Anthony Merry blamed Floridablanca and the Spanish court for utterly ignoring the established principles of trade. Moreover, he accused the Spanish government of encouraging the mistreatment of British merchants by port authorities at Cadiz and Corunna, vital commercial hubs. The interim ambassador expressed his frustration at being unable to gain ground with a treaty.<sup>18</sup> With a signed preliminary agreement but no movement to formalize the exchange, the Nootka Sound issue remained in the background of any negotiations and the specter of renewed hostilities a possibility for both courts throughout the early years of the Revolution.<sup>19</sup>

Troubles in France and the belligerence of Spain prompted British diplomats to contemplate a suspected change in the leadership of the Family Compact. Since the signing of the treaty in 1733, France always assumed the senior partner in the relationship. As relations between Madrid and London warmed after Pitt's October ultimatum, Leeds warned Alleyne Fitzherbert, the newly designated ambassador to Madrid, that France required Spanish approval in future conflicts. Nootka and the unwillingness of the National Assembly to back a power play by Floridablanca relinquished the lead of the Bourbon partnership to the Spanish court.<sup>20</sup> The willingness

<sup>17</sup> Fitzherbert to Leeds, 2 August 1790, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 17.

<sup>18</sup> Anthony Merry to Leeds, 20 May 1790, *ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt: The Reluctant Transition*, 77.

<sup>20</sup> Leeds to Fitzherbert, 1 September 1790, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 19.

of the Spanish government to risk its economy and colonies on a military gamble with Great Britain accented this change in leadership.

With tensions over Nootka declining, London and Madrid turned to face the problems posed by Revolutionary France. Anglo-Spanish discussions switched from war to the prospects of a defensive alliance. Fear that the Revolution could spread increased conversations over a “quarantine” of France.<sup>21</sup> While Fitzherbert regarded an Anglo-Spanish alliance as a positive step toward regular relations and creating better conditions for commercial agreements, Leeds disagreed. As early as December 1790, the minister wrote that the most important concern for British foreign affairs was to prevent Spain from drawing the British government into a Continental conflict. The situation in France involved an internal dispute between the French people and their king. Louis XVI, argued Leeds, would call on his family ties – Spain, Sardinia, Naples, and Austria – to defend him from his own subjects. The Bourbon dynastic connections would turn the Mediterranean into the primary theater of war.<sup>22</sup> Leeds feared that a reactionary response, charged by family relationships, could ignite a general European war.

Despite perceived success against the Bourbon monarchies, Pitt’s forays into balance of power politics in Eastern Europe met with failure. Before the Royal Navy demobilized following the rift with Spain over Nootka, Pitt decided to intervene in a Continental conflict over Russian possession of Ochakov on the Black Sea. Catherine intended to gain access to the Mediterranean during the Russo-Turkish War (1787-

<sup>21</sup> Manning, *Nootka Sound Controversy*, 435-437.

<sup>22</sup> The Duke of Leeds, “On a Defensive Alliance with Spain,” 23 December 1790, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 20.



1792), a position disagreeable to both the British and Spanish ministries.<sup>23</sup> Unwilling to yield his position, Pitt hoped to build a Coalition to guarantee Ottoman possessions in Crimea. Officials in the Admiralty organized a force under the command of Hood with the intention of attacking Russian interests in the Baltic Sea.<sup>24</sup> Unwilling to launch into struggles over European balance of power before Nootka, the political conditions in Western Europe now empowered Pitt to act aggressively on the Continent.

British forays in the balance of power in Eastern Europe backfired comprehensively. With limited intervention in European affairs for decades, Pitt misjudged the capabilities of the state to influence Russia. Ochakov divided the Cabinet over a Prussian-authored ultimatum to Catherine so thoroughly that it brought about the resignation of Leeds in protest and the elevation of Grenville to foreign minister.<sup>25</sup> Pitt's scheme also eroded due to a lack of political support at home. Opposition in Parliament considered France, not Russia, the major rival to British economic and political interests. Their voices eventually drowned out those Pittites who favored a Continental war.<sup>26</sup>

Following the Ochakov Crisis, the British Cabinet watched from a distance as events took their course between increasingly belligerent powers on the Continent. On 20 June 1791, Louis XVI and his family fled Paris for the French frontier before being apprehended the next day at Varennes and escorted back to the capital under guard.<sup>27</sup> Two weeks later, Leopold II of Austria and Frederick William II signed the Declaration of

<sup>23</sup> Paul C. Webb, "Sea Power in the Ochakov Affair of 1791," *The International Historical Review* 2, no. 1 (Jan. 1980): 18; Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt: The Reluctant Transition*, 2:13.

<sup>24</sup> Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt: The Reluctant Transition*, 2:17-18.

<sup>25</sup> Adams, *The Influence of Grenville on Pitt's Foreign Policy*, 13.

<sup>26</sup> Blanning, *The French Revolutionary Wars*, 57.

<sup>27</sup> Ross, *Quest for Victory*, 19; for the British account of the flight to Varennes submitted to the Cabinet, see Lord Hawkesbury to King George III, 12 July 1791, in A. Aspinall, *The Latter Correspondence of George III*, 1:547-550.

Pillnitz requesting cooperation from the European crowns if the National Assembly refused to restore Louis to full power. Parisian politicians responded by forcing Louis to sign the Constitution of 1791 and declaring a new revolutionary government, the Legislative Assembly. Pillnitz and the French response only increased animosity between the Assembly and the German states.<sup>28</sup>

Pitt and the Cabinet abstained from a ruling on the internal politics of France. Neutrality saved the government coffers and maintained political support from the merchant class. British policy would remain aloof as long as European belligerents avoided targeting the Scheldt River in Holland or commercial interests abroad. Britain continued to trade with Revolutionary France. As Grenville explained:

If, while they [the French] are gaining this experience, they will leave Great Britain and Holland to the undisturbed enjoyment of their external and internal tranquility, I know not what more we can wish. Our only danger (to either of us) is at home, and for averting that danger peace and economy our best resources; and with them I flatter myself we have not, and I hope Holland has not, much to fear.<sup>29</sup>

Avoiding an unnecessary European war allowed British merchants to profit in the Mediterranean from decreased competition due to the depressed French economy. Throughout 1791, Pitt and Grenville avoided any discussion of joining a conflict that threatened these commercial interests.<sup>30</sup>

British foreign policy remained disinterested after the outbreak of a European war. On 20 April 1792, the French Legislative Assembly declared war on the King of Hungary and Bohemia, prompting the Prussians to join the Austrians against France.

<sup>28</sup> Blanning, *The French Revolutionary Wars*, 58-59.

<sup>29</sup> Grenville to Auckland, 23 August 1791, in William Wyndham Grenville, *The Manuscripts of J. B. Fortescue, Esq., Preserved at Dropmore* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1892), 2:171-172. The Scheldt River in Holland provided commercial access to British merchants and protected the rights of the Belgians to trade. The closed status of the Scheldt dated to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. See Black, *From Louis XIV to Napoleon: The Fate of a Great Power*, 143.

<sup>30</sup> Blanning, *The French Revolutionary Wars*, 92-93.

The situation provided two strong Continental allies if the Pitt administration chose to enter the war. However, Austro-Prussian goals also included the partition of Poland, an issue that could not be construed as a policy in the best interests of Britain nor one that provided a *casus belli*.<sup>31</sup> Thus, the preferred solution for London remained to form a defensive alliance, most logically with Spain. A relationship with Carlos IV promised to shield British interests in the West Indies and the Mediterranean from a Continental war.<sup>32</sup> It also neutralized the Franco-Spanish alliance that challenged British policy for much of the previous century.

With the decline in monarchical power in France, Spanish foreign policy became even more erratic. After Carlos tired of Floridablanca and imprisoned him in February 1792, the octogenarian Pedro Pablo Abarca de Bolea, Count of Aranda, assumed power. In a complete reversal of policy, he chose to ignore the French Revolution and the possibility of military intervention with the expectation that differences with France would simply dissipate.<sup>33</sup> After the Legislative Assembly deposed Louis XVI in August 1792 and declared the French Republic one month later, Aranda became politically unsavory to the tumultuous members of the *Consejo de Estado*. Fears grew over a French invasion of Spain and few wanted to be led into a war by an impotent prime minister.<sup>34</sup> Council members voted a lack of confidence in the Secretary of State's

<sup>31</sup> Jeremy Black, *Natural and Necessary Enemies: Anglo-French Relations in the Eighteenth Century* (Athens: University of Georgia Press), 85.

<sup>32</sup> Black, *British Foreign Policy in an Age of Revolutions*, 432; Gooch and Ward, *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, 1:213.

<sup>33</sup> Douglas Hilt, *The Troubled Trinity: Godoy and the Spanish Monarchies* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1987), 30-31.

<sup>34</sup> Chastenet, *Godoy, Master of Spain*, 56.

Francophile policies and in November 1792 Carlos turned to the brash but inexperienced Manuel de Godoy.<sup>35</sup>

With no firm *casus belli* and lukewarm relationships with Mediterranean states, London gave ground over the invasion of Sardinia by French forces. The Army of the Alps, commanded by Anne-Pierre, Marquis de Montesquiou-Fezensac, attacked Savoy on 21 September 1792, the same day as the battle of Valmy, and met little resistance. Simultaneously, the *division du Var*, led by General Jacques Bernard d'Anselme, invaded Nice on 29 September as the Toulon squadron attacked Oneglia.<sup>36</sup> Grenville balked at coming to the aid of the Sardinians, citing the lack of a defensive agreement and an unwillingness to be dragged into a war over territory deemed unimportant in strictly strategic terms.<sup>37</sup> The third of France's revolutionary regimes, the National Convention, declared Savoy an integral part of France on 31 November 1792, a gesture that received little response from London.<sup>38</sup> Grenville even questioned the firmness of maintaining the French borders west of the Alps by considering the recent acquisition of Savoy "*un nouvel ordre de choses*."<sup>39</sup> Thus, the territorial integrity of Sardinia remained negotiable.

However, French aggression toward British interests in the fall and winter of 1792 continued to drive the Cabinet closer to joining the Coalition, which consisted of Prussia, Austria, and by extension the Holy Roman Empire. The National Convention declared

<sup>35</sup> Stein, *Edge of Crisis*, 40-41.

<sup>36</sup> Ramsay Weston Phipps, *Armies of the First French Republic and the Rise of the Marshals of Napoleon I* (Westport Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980), 3:69; Léonce Krebs et Henri Moris, *Campagnes dans les Alpes Pendant La Révolution* (Paris: E. Plon, Nourrit, et Co, 1891) 131-133; Burges to Lord Auckland, 7 September 1792, in *Correspondence of William, Lord Auckland*, 2:439-441.

<sup>37</sup> Jeremy Black, *British Foreign Policy in the Age of Revolutions, 1783-1793*, 406; Prince Augustus to George III, 29 October 1792, in Aspinall, *Latter Correspondence of George III*, 1:624-625; Bergadani, *Vittorio Amedeo III*, 166.

<sup>38</sup> Blanning, *The French Revolutionary Wars*, 89.

<sup>39</sup> William Pitt to Grenville, 16 October 1792, *Dropmore Manuscripts*, 2:322.

the Scheldt River open to navigation, a clear challenge to British commercial and security interests in the United Provinces.<sup>40</sup> Issued by the French government on 19 November 1792, the Edict of Fraternity offered assistance to all people supposedly oppressed, which prompted a response from the British Cabinet. Diplomatic communications opened with the Austrians, Prussians, and the Spanish as a prelude to military planning.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, Parliament passed sedition acts to suppress the rumored revolutionaries working in coordination with French agents.<sup>42</sup> On 1 December, the Privy Council ordered John Pitt, the Earl of Chatham and First Lord of the Admiralty, to prepare the navy in accordance with the Nootka Sound mobilization of 1790.<sup>43</sup> King George III also approved the summoning of militia regiments across the country to defend the maritime counties and London from an invasion.<sup>44</sup> By the end of the year, the British Cabinet transitioned from a government committed to neutrality to one contemplating military action, motivated by French aggression.

Silence from Paris concerning the safety of Louis XVI finally pushed Britain and Spain closer to a firm agreement to protect economic interests and sovereignty from French aggression. Before the trial of the French king, Godoy expressed interest in accepting Louis XVI as an exile in Spain in exchange for neutrality and a demilitarized

<sup>40</sup> Michael Duffy, "British War Policy, the Austrian Alliance, 1793-1801" (Ph.D Thesis, Oxford University, 1971), 3-7.

<sup>41</sup> Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt*, 212-213; Michael Rapport, *Nationality and Citizenship in Revolutionary France: The Treatment of Foreigners 1789-1799* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 178.

<sup>42</sup> Rose, *Pitt and the Great War*, 62-72; For an account of the government's attempts to quell unrest in Scotland, see Holden Furber, *Henry Dundas, First Viscount Melville, 1742-1811* (Oxford University Press, 1931), 77-94.

<sup>43</sup> Privy Council Order, 1 December 1793, TNA, Privy Council Records 2, Piece 139.

<sup>44</sup> Exchange of Letters between Lord Grenville and George III, 30 November and 1 December 1793, in A. Aspinall, *The Latter Correspondence of George III*, 1:632-633.

border.<sup>45</sup> Godoy also appealed to the British to assist in negotiations for the life of Louis XVI, an indication of the decrepit state of Franco-Spanish relations by the end of the year. By December 1792, Godoy and Carlos warmed to the idea of the defensive alliance with Britain first discussed in the days following the Nootka Sound Crisis.<sup>46</sup>

The response from the French government to the Spanish declaration only heightened tensions. Diplomats from the National Convention offered no answer to Godoy's requests of neutrality and demilitarization, but refused to guarantee the protection of Louis XVI. Instead, the French diplomats delivered an ultimatum to the Spanish government, demanding their neutrality in a European war.<sup>47</sup> Military buildup on both sides of the Pyrenees reached a frenetic level. The French government declined to withdraw troops stationed at Bayonne because of fear over security and the possibility of a preemptive strike attack by the British or Spanish.<sup>48</sup> With the French king deposed and condemned to the guillotine, both governments awaited a formal declaration of war to sever the sixty-year-old partnership between Madrid and Paris.

By the end of 1792, British war planning, couched in the eighteenth century balance of power concepts, began in earnest. On 29 December, Grenville proposed a European Coalition based on a concept of quarantining French ideas and forces behind the pre-war borders, harkening back to the negotiations with the Spanish government

<sup>45</sup> Godoy to Jackson, 1 January 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 26; Chasteney, *Godoy: Master of Spain*, 58; Hilt, *The Troubled Trinity: Godoy and the Spanish Monarchs*, 36; Auckland to Grenville, 11 January 1793, *Dropmore Manuscripts*, 2:365-366.

<sup>46</sup> Jackson to Grenville, 1 January 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 26; Manuel de Godoy, *Memoirs of Don Manuel de Godoy, the Prince of the Peace*, ed. J. B. D'Esmeard (London: Richard Bentley, 1836), 133.

<sup>47</sup> Government of Spain, *Spain under the Bourbons: A Collection of Documents*, ed. W. N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1973), 174.

<sup>48</sup> Jackson to Grenville, 17 January 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 26; Godoy, *Memoirs of the Prince of the Peace*, 134-135.

during the early days of the Revolution.<sup>49</sup> It was a statement in the rhetoric of the wars of Louis XIV, requiring support in the Mediterranean to secure the Pyrenees and the Alps. Grenville also could no longer ignore the plight of the Sardinians. The British foreign secretary explained on 10 January to his ambassador at Turin, John Trevor, that the security of northern Italy and interests in the Mediterranean required cooperation between Britain and Sardinia. He emphasized the defensive nature of the war and the need for cooperation between Sardinia, Great Britain, and the Holy Roman Empire, a clear reference to the situation in southern Europe after the Treaty of Utrecht. Grenville, however, reiterated that coordination with the Sardinians remained conditional on the commitment of the Spanish to the war. If Spain joined the conflict, the British government would take an active role in recapturing Nice and Savoy, reversing his three-month-old policy of accepting a redrawn map of the Alpine frontier.<sup>50</sup> French aggression thus offered a return to the Mediterranean alliance system that existed in the first half of the eighteenth century.

By this late date, Grenville believed an agreement between Godoy and the French government to be unlikely. The Spanish *Charge d’Affairs* at Paris presented an ultimatum to the National Convention for the safety of Louis XVI. Grenville thought Spanish demands a miscalculation, believing that the French government viewed Godoy and Carlos as weak. With this misstep, the probability of war increased for Spain as well as Britain due to the latter’s national security interests in the

<sup>49</sup> Michael Duffy, “British War Policy, the Austrian Alliance, 1793-1801,” 8; Johann Philipp Stadion to Ludwig von Cobenzl, 7 December 1792, in Alfred von Vivenot, *Quellen zur Geschichte der Deutschen Kaiserpolitik Österreichs während der französischen Revolutions-Kriege*, (Wien: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1874), 2:393.

<sup>50</sup> Grenville to John Trevor, 3<sup>rd</sup> Viscount Hampden, ambassador to the Court of Turin, 10 January 1793, TNA, Foreign Office Division 67, Piece 11.

Mediterranean. Grenville stressed the need to start collecting intelligence on both Spanish and French ports. If a general war initiated between the three naval powers over the safety of Louis XVI, the Spanish crown threatened to become the first casualty.<sup>51</sup> A Franco-Spanish conflict almost certainly demanded a theater of war in the Mediterranean. The pending conflagration only required the French government to formally break peace with both Spain and Britain, a move that manifested on the scaffold along the *Place de la Révolution* in Paris.

With the radicalization of French politics during the Revolution and the reactionary attitudes across Europe, the barrier to British influence began to erode. Pitt and Grenville initially showed very little interest in the Mediterranean. As long as neutrality protected trade and French upheaval remained internal, the British Cabinet expressed apathy toward the growing storm threatening the Alps and the Pyrenees. Initiatives during the early years of the Revolution only included commercial negotiations to take advantage of French internal strife and appeals to the Spanish for a bulwark against the spread of Revolutionary ideas. Only after the National Convention declared its expansionist policies and backed them with military action in the Low Countries did the Cabinet reverse course and attempt to align policy with the Sardinians, Austrians, and Spanish. The relationship between France and the Mediterranean states degraded to a threshold where Grenville could restart aggressive foreign policy in the region. With a half century of failures, the situation presented a difficult road ahead in cobbling together an alliance in the Mediterranean.

<sup>51</sup> Grenville to Jackson, 6 January 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 26.



## CHAPTER 4

### BRIDGING THE DIVIDE: CONTAINMENT, ATTRITION, AND THE FORMULATION OF A BRITISH MEDITERRANEAN STRATEGY, FEBRUARY – MAY 1793

After decades of avoiding conflicts on the Continent, the Pitt administration faced the daunting task in 1793 of transitioning from a neutral power to a combatant in a European war. The breakdown of the Franco-Spanish partnership afforded an opportunity to return to influence in the Mediterranean. British officials in that region focused their efforts on repairing relations with Spain and coordinating with the Italian states to block French aggression. The diplomatic corps sought to rally support for establishing a system of collective security against Revolutionary France. As in the previous wars of the eighteenth century, the British government pursued a system on the Italian peninsula that would prevent French armies from threatening maritime trade in the region. Targeting a reliance on overseas grains, British diplomacy also strove to comprehensively strangle French and neutral trade to hasten an end to the war. While security concerns produced alliances with Spain, Sardinia, and Naples, the economic and political aspects of Pitt's war policy failed to provide the comprehensive support needed for a war of attrition.

In early 1793, the Kingdom of Sardinia faced a security crisis. French warships stationed at Toulon remained a viable threat to the smaller states in the region lacking protection from the Spanish or the British.<sup>1</sup> On 13 January 1793, a French squadron of thirteen ships of the line, twelve frigates, and forty transports carrying 15,000 troops

<sup>1</sup> Griffith, *The Art of War of Revolutionary France, 1789-1802*, 263-264; E. H. Jenkins, *A History of the French Navy, From its Beginnings to the Present Day* (Macdonald and Janes, 1973); Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influences of Sea Power on the French Revolution and Empire, 1793-1812*, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1893), 1:42-63.

seized the island of St. Pietro off the coast of Cagliari, provincial capital of the Island of Sardinia. An invasion of the island threatened to undermine the kingdom's war effort and its defensive positions in the Alps. French control of the island would also hamper British trade in Italy.<sup>2</sup> French forces left two frigates and a garrison on St. Pietro and departed for Cagliari, bombarding the city on 21 January.<sup>3</sup> However, a failed landing of French troops along with the resistance of Corsican national guardsmen on the Maddelena archipelago on 23 February prevented an invasion of the northern end of the main island.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, with a continuation of the war anticipated along the Saorgio line in the Alps and the freedom of maneuver enjoyed by the French in the Mediterranean, Sardinia perched on the verge of a military defeat.

At the same time, French naval forces also attempted to undermine the southern end of Italy. After the National Convention declared the French Republic in September 1792, Ferdinand IV refused to recognize the ambassador from Paris. On 5 February, a French squadron under Vice-Admiral Louis-René Levassor de La Touche Tréville arrived in the harbor of Naples to threaten the Neapolitan royal family. Touche demanded that Acton and Ferdinand accept the French diplomat at court or face an attack on the city. After a council of state met, the Neapolitan government decided to receive the French ambassador to avoid a war.<sup>5</sup> In a race against time to destabilize

<sup>2</sup> Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power on the French Revolution*, 85; *London Gazette*, 25 January 1793; Bergadani, *Vittorio Amedeo III*, 210.

<sup>3</sup> Phipps, *Armies of the First French Republic*, 3:80; Krebs et Moris, *Campagnes dans les Alpes pendant la Révolution*, 158-165; *London Gazette*, 16 February; Virgilio Ilari, Piero Crociani, and Ciro Paoletti, *La Guerra della Alpi 1792-1796* (Roma: Stato Maggiore Dell'esercito, 2000), 79-82.

<sup>4</sup> Boycott-Brown, *the Road to Rivoli*, 76-77; Krebs et Moris, *Campagnes dans les Alpes pendant la Révolution*, 175-178; Ilari et al, *La Guerra della Alpi*, 82-83.

<sup>5</sup> Hamilton to Grenville, 4 February 1793, TNA, Foreign Office Division 70, Piece 6; Emma Hamilton, *Memoirs of Emma, Lady Hamilton: The Friend of Lord Nelson and the Court of Naples* (New York: P. F. Collier and Son, 1910), 139; Léon Guérin, *Histoire maritime de France* (Paris: Dufour et Mulat, 1854), 5:367-370; La Touche to Ferdinand IV, 4 February 1793 and Acton's reply to La Touche, 5 February

Italy before Spain and Great Britain could intervene, the French scored an initial success.

The pending break between France and Great Britain ignited a flurry of maritime decrees that initiated the economic war. On 21 January, Parliament passed laws against the shipment of cordage and hemp from ports in the British Isles, items critical to the French navy. After word of the execution of Louis XVI reached London, George III and the Privy Council ordered the French ambassador, Bernard-François, marquis de Chauvelin, to return to Paris on 24 January.<sup>6</sup> Privy Councilors on the same day banned the exportation of corn and wheat to French ports. In lieu of financial losses, the Treasury promised to purchase these commodities from any neutral ship in British ports bound for France.<sup>7</sup> These embargo declarations forecasted how the British government would pursue a war on French commerce in the Mediterranean.

A French declaration of war against Great Britain and the United Provinces on 1 February also invigorated diplomatic channels in the Mediterranean. The following day, the British Cabinet ordered Fitzherbert, the newly styled Baron St. Helens, at home in England, to return to Madrid to finalize a preliminary defensive alliance with Godoy. Grenville and Trevor sought the approval of Victor Amadeus III to negotiate a treaty in London with Philippe St. Martin, Count de Front.<sup>8</sup> Officials at Whitehall also issued

1793, in De Brett, *A Collection of State Papers*, 1:288-289; Pietro Colletta, *Histoire du royaume de Naples, depuis Charles VII jusqu'à Ferdinand IV, 1734 à 1825*, (Paris: Chez Ladvocat, 1835), 1:307-308.

<sup>6</sup> George III to Grenville, 24 January 1793, *Dropmore Manuscripts*, 2:372; Bergadani, *Vittorio Amedeo III*, 214; Jupp, *Lord Grenville*, 148. The order passed in the Privy Council that morning. Privy Council Order, 24 January 1793, TNA, Privy Council Records 2, Piece 137.

<sup>7</sup> Privy Council Order, 21 January 1793, TNA, Privy Council Records 2, Piece 137; for the debates in Parliament over the suspension of the Corn and Grain trade with France, see Kingdom of Great Britain, *Parliamentary Register*, 34:207; 436.

<sup>8</sup> Cabinet Minutes, 25 Jan 1793, *Dropmore Manuscripts*, 2:373, St. Helens to Grenville, 30 January 1793, *Dropmore Manuscripts*, 2:375-376; De Brett, *A Collection of State Papers*, 1:111-113. One of the stated

initial guidance to diplomats in the region on how best to negotiate alliances. British ministers pursued an accelerated diplomatic timeline in Madrid and Turin to create alliances before the military situation in southern Europe deteriorated irreversibly.

Always focused on the safety of trade, the status of the British merchant fleet became an immediate priority. The day after Chauvelin left London, Grenville ordered diplomats in the Mediterranean to halt any movement of British vessels in neutral ports until adequate security could escort them out of danger.<sup>9</sup> As word reached the British ambassadors in Italy and Spain of the execution of Louis XVI, each notified the local merchants of the threat from French warships.<sup>10</sup> Coordinating with the Neapolitan government, Acton and Hamilton dispatched ships into the channel between Sicily and Malta to inform British and Dutch ships coming from the Levant of the war with France.<sup>11</sup> The British government also reinforced the formal embargo on French goods by mobilizing privateers. On 11 February, the Privy Council opened letters of marque to British ships willing to intercept French grain convoys.<sup>12</sup> By mid-February, a state of war existed in the Mediterranean with the British merchant fleet frozen in port and privateers mobilizing in English waters and Gibraltar.

Despite these measures, security for the British merchant marine in the Mediterranean remained contentious. As a supplement to the Toulon fleet, French privateers constituted the biggest threat to commerce. A war in the region without minimal British naval protection threatened to impact shipping. Gaspard Monge,

reasons for a declaration of war included the violations of the commercial agreement of 1786 by breaking diplomatic and commercial correspondence with the National Convention.

<sup>9</sup> Grenville to Hamilton, 26 January 1793, TNA, Foreign Office Division 70, piece 6.

<sup>10</sup> Hamilton to Grenville, 12 February 1793, *ibid.*; Trevor to Grenville, 16 February 1793, *ibid.*, Foreign Office Division 67, piece 11.

<sup>11</sup> Hamilton to Grenville, 2 April 1793, *ibid.*, Foreign Office Division 70, piece 6.

<sup>12</sup> De Brett, *A Collection of State Papers*, 1:114-115.

director of the French *Ministre de la Marine*, ordered on 5 February the seizure of all Russian, British, Dutch, Austrian, and Prussian ships in the Mediterranean.<sup>13</sup> Reports poured into the offices of the regional diplomats in February identifying numerous corsairs deploying from Marseilles and Villefrance.<sup>14</sup> Merchants close to the British government appealed for protection, citing fears over French corsairs as far away as Malta. At one point, intelligence indicated roughly eighty privateers operating off the French and Italian coastline. While reports largely exaggerated the threat, the situation demanded caution.<sup>15</sup>

The current array of British warships in the Mediterranean presented few immediate military options to counter French regular and irregular forces. During peacetime, the British squadron in the Mediterranean consisted of only six ships of the line and a compliment of smaller vessels. Admiral Samuel Cranston Goodall, the commander of the Mediterranean squadron in February 1793, adapted a two-fold approach to overcome his limited resources.<sup>16</sup> First, he utilized Gibraltar as a consolidation point for Dutch and British ships, protected by the batteries of the garrison. By mid-March, he assembled over 100 Allied ships awaiting escort back to ports in northern Europe.<sup>17</sup> Second, Goodall ordered reprisals against French commerce, using the Straits of Gibraltar to ambush merchantmen travelling between the West Indies and Mediterranean ports. Coordinating with local privateers, the British

<sup>13</sup> Patrick Crowhurst. *The French War on Trade: Privateering, 1793-1815* (London: Scholar, 1989), 6.

<sup>14</sup> Trevor to Grenville, 1 February 1793 and Trevor to Grenville, 14 February 1793, TNA, Foreign Office Division 67, Piece 11; Jackson to Grenville, 8 March 1793, *ibid.*, Foreign Office Division 72, Piece 26.

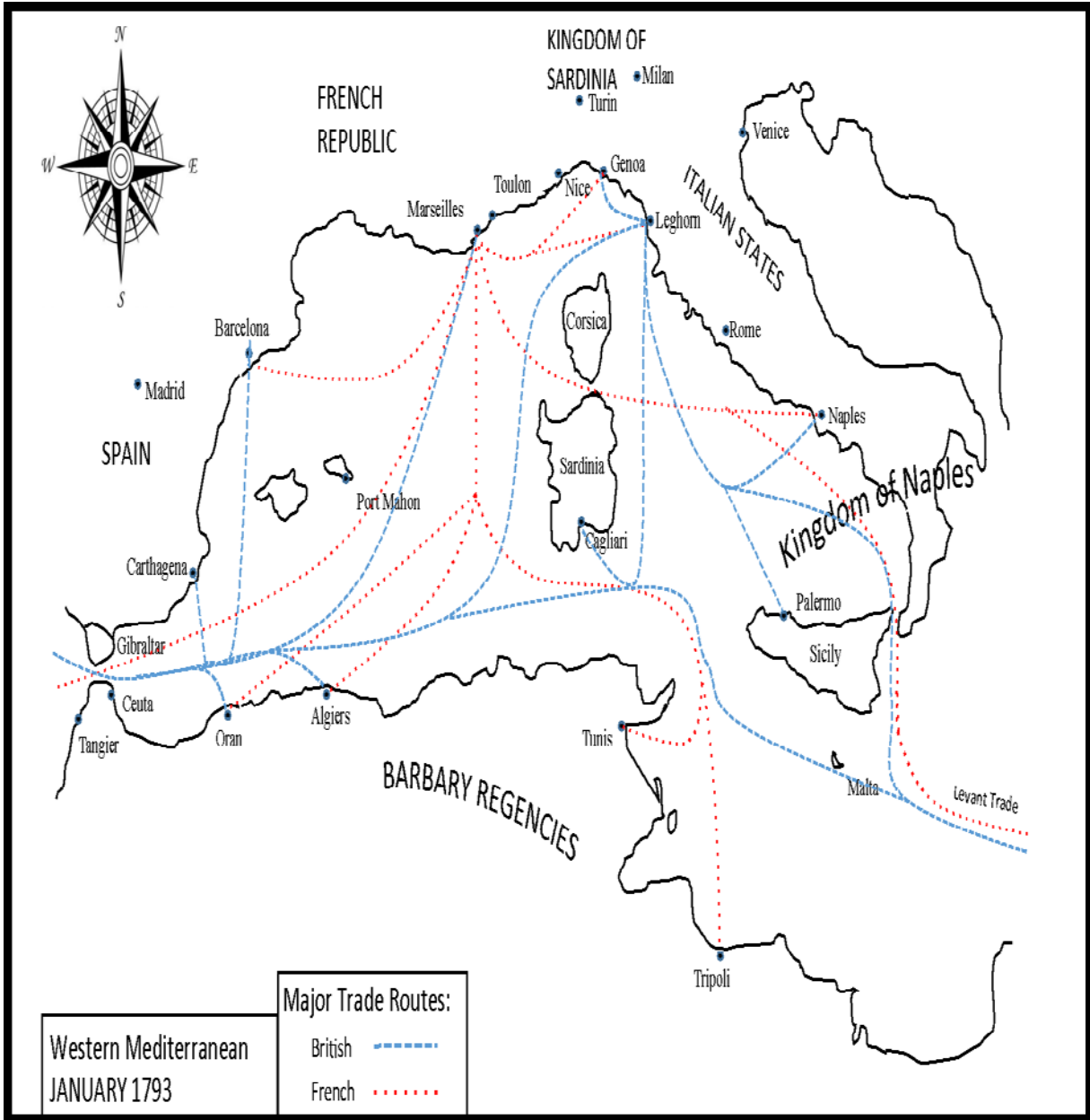
<sup>15</sup> Intelligence report collected by Trevor, 23 March 1793, *ibid.*, Foreign Office 67, Piece 11. Crowhurst, *The French War on Trade: Privateering, 1793-1815* 48-49; Patrick Crowhurst, *The Defense of British Trade, 1689-1815* (Folkestone, Kent: William Dawson and Sons, 1977), 40-41.

<sup>16</sup> James Ralfe, *The Naval Biography of Great Britain: Consisting of Historical Memoirs of those Officers of the British Navy who Distinguished themselves during the Reign of his Majesty George III* (London: Whitmore and Fenn, 1828), 337.

<sup>17</sup> Goodall to Stephens, 14 March 1793, TNA, Admiralty Records 1, Piece 391.

squadron captured seventeen French ships in early March en route to Marseilles carrying sugar, coffee, and indigo. Despite these minor successes, the situation remained tumultuous until the Admiralty could assemble a fleet large enough to challenge French maritime superiority in the region.<sup>18</sup> Immediate measures executed by the British government and diplomats momentarily stabilized the situation in the Mediterranean.

<sup>18</sup> Goodall to Stephens, 27 March 1793, *ibid.*



Map 1. Map of the Mediterranean, 1793

With temporary statutes in place, decisions of grand strategy required attention from the Cabinet. Pitt and Dundas envisioned a conflict in three theaters built on the strength of state finances and naval power. The defense of Holland from French armies threatening to invade the region remained of the utmost importance as that invasion

marked the *casus belli* of the war.<sup>19</sup> Cabinet ministers agreed that the reestablishment of the boundary between France and the United Provinces secured an area Edmund Burke described “as integral to Great Britain as Kent.”<sup>20</sup> The situation in Holland proved the most obvious challenge to British national security and the most pressing theater because of the proximity to the Home Islands and the economic importance of the Scheldt to British merchants dealing in European commerce.

However, the West Indies was expected to be a theater fought solely by British forces for national goals. Economic and maritime features of that theater represented a natural continuation of Pitt's focus on naval and financial reform. Security of the colonies in the West Indies and the routes to the Home Islands constituted the first strategic step in any war against the European maritime powers.<sup>21</sup> The cost of the peacetime maintenance of the army and navy in 1792 totaled in excess of £4,000,000, a sum dependent on colonial support.<sup>22</sup> With force expansion and the prospects of subsidizing Continental allies, securing commerce with the Caribbean impacted both the British and Allied war efforts.<sup>23</sup> Dundas conceived the West Indies as the most likely location of an offensive to gain territory in a settlement with France. He issued orders in late January to seize French colonies in preparation for a larger expedition planned for later in the year.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Rose, *Pitt and the Great War*, 116-117; Matheson, *Life of Henry Dundas*, 175.

<sup>20</sup> Adams, *The Influence of Grenville on Pitt's Foreign Policy, 1787-1802*, 21; Blanning, *The French Revolutionary Wars*, 92-93.

<sup>21</sup> Morriss, *The Foundations of British Maritime Ascendancy*, 33.

<sup>22</sup> Statistics compiled from Jeremy Gregory and John Stevenson, *The Longman Companion to Britain in the Eighteenth Century, 1688-1820* (London: Longman, 2000), 197, 199-200.

<sup>23</sup> For a discussion of the link between the Caribbean and the funding of British subsidies and loans in Europe, see Duffy, *Soldiers, Sugar, and Seapower*, 368-375.

<sup>24</sup> Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt: The Reluctant Transition*, 2: 262-263; Duffy, *Soldiers, Sugar, and Seapower* 30-31; Furber, *Henry Dundas, First Viscount Melville*, 98-99.



Third in priority, the Cabinet envisioned the Mediterranean theater as a barrier that would prevent both French arms and ideas from reaching Spain and the Italian states. As in earlier wars against France, securing allies in northern Italy would be paramount to protecting economic and strategic interests in the region. A defensive strategy offered a return to the containment policies utilized in earlier conflicts as well as a means of providing support to states fighting the same enemy but which had competing political goals. On 12 February, Grenville remarked in the House of Lords that the government would seek to erect “an effectual barrier to the farthest progress of a system which strikes at the security and peace of all independent nations, and is pursued, in open defiance of every principle of moderation, good faith, humanity, and justice.”<sup>25</sup> George III succinctly summarized this policy of containment, declaring, “France must be greatly circumscribed before we can talk of any means of treating with that dangerous and faithless nation.”<sup>26</sup> Maintaining France’s southern borders also resembled the plan in northern Europe, providing a consistency in British policy with respect to the balance of power.

Committing to a containment strategy also helped the Cabinet avoid discussion of French regime change. A noncommittal response to the question of restoring the monarchy in France remained an integral part of war planning. During the period of neutrality between 1789 and 1792, both Pitt and Grenville committed to the *status quo* in Europe while avoiding an official stance on the political turmoil in France. Despite pressure from both Spain and Russia to establish a policy denouncing the Revolution,

<sup>25</sup> Grenville, in an address to the House of Lords, 12 February 1793, in De Brett, *A Collection of State Papers*, 1:402.

<sup>26</sup> George III to Grenville, 27 April 1793, *Dropmore Manuscripts*, 2:393.

policymakers in London chose to remain silent on the return of the Bourbons in France.<sup>27</sup>

The expected collapse of Revolutionary France precluded any need for a British declaration in support of the monarchy. A decision on royal power involved an unnecessary political gamble given the strains placed on the French state by the war effort, internal strife, and food production. Pitt remarked after the declaration of war that he could predict a date when the French government would collapse, a comment couched in economics and political observations.<sup>28</sup> This expectation of quick victory appeared valid when considering the combined strength of the Allies and the fallout from the French Revolution, a political transformation that reshaped executive and legislative powers at the national level but did little to fix problems with local governance.<sup>29</sup>

The second part of the evolving British plan focused on an inherent weakness of the states in southern Europe. By 1793, a dependence on imported corn, wheat, and other grains from parts of Italy and the Barbary Coast became a prominent feature among many Mediterranean states. The contentious situation in the region did not help the efficiency of trade in these commodities. In February, Grenville requested information on corn and wheat harvests in the Mediterranean as an indicator of each state's capacity for war.<sup>30</sup> Naples suffered intense shortages during the year, even seizing Genoese grain ships in port to feed the poor of the city. With the rise of

<sup>27</sup> Jupp, *Lord Grenville*, 153; Adams, *The Influence of Grenville on Pitt's Foreign Policy*, 21-23; Blanning, *The French Revolutionary Wars*, 94.

<sup>28</sup> Fortescue, *History of the British Army*, 4:71.

<sup>29</sup> Cyril Matheson, *The Life of Henry Dundas, First Viscount Melville, 1742-1811* (London: Constable and Co., 1933), 180-181.

<sup>30</sup> William Gregory, Consul in Barcelona, to Grenville, 23 February 1793, TNA, Foreign Office Division 72, Piece 26.

revolutionary sentiment in the capital, Ferdinand and Acton worried about the safety of the crown, particularly after Touche extended a hand of friendship to the Jacobin clubs in the city.<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile, Spanish authorities, particularly at Barcelona, struggled to feed the population with grain and corn from the Adriatic. By early March 1793, British diplomats feared the situation could negatively impact Spanish mobilization.<sup>32</sup>

However, no state suffered from a dependency of overseas grain like France. The inability of the French government to effectively feed its population presented a prime target for the British navy in the Mediterranean. Grain distribution remained a problem since before the Revolution, a situation largely untouched by the continuous political turnover in Paris. The defense of the state now forced French armies fighting on the frontiers to draw grains from across the country to sustain the war effort.<sup>33</sup> With British agents inside Paris and at the provincial level, the Cabinet maintained a good understanding of the close link between the central government's economic problems and its ability to wage war.<sup>34</sup> Exploiting this dependency on Mediterranean grain

<sup>31</sup> H. C. Gutteridge, ed. *Nelson and Neapolitan Jacobins* (London: Navy Records Society, 1903), xviii; Emma Hamilton, *Memoirs of Lady Hamilton*, 140-141; Prince Augustus to George III, 16 February 1793, in Aspinall, *The Latter Correspondence of George III*, 2:7.

<sup>32</sup> Jackson to Grenville, 6 March 1793; TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 26; William Gregory, Consul in Barcelona, to Grenville, 23 February 1793, *ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> R. R. Palmer, *Twelve Who Ruled: The Year of the Terror in the French Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), 245; John Markoff, "Peasant Grievances and Peasant Insurrection: France in 1789" in T. C. W. Blanning, ed. *The Rise and Fall of the French Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 158-170; Malcolm Crook, *Toulon in War and Revolution: From the Ancien Régime to the Restoration, 1750-1820* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 126-127; Simon Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 305-308.

<sup>34</sup> Elizabeth Sparrow, *Secret Service: British agents in France, 1792-1815* (Woolbridge: Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1999), 24-25; For an understanding of British secret agents in France during the first two years of the Revolution, see Alfred Cobban "British Secret Service in France, 1784-1792," *The English Historical Review* 69, no. 271 (April 1954), 226-261. These works examine espionage and intelligence gathering, both inside and outside the diplomatic channels. During the interwar period, intelligence focused on French harbors and arsenals, but with the upheaval of the French Revolution, correspondence started to take note of the political instabilities inside France at all levels of government.

became an integral part of British strategy to isolate and starve the French government into submission.

The British Cabinet possessed its own unique definition of embargo. Starting in the 1730s, British wartime strategy included the interdiction of neutral trade bound for the Bourbon states. During the War of Jenkins' Ear (1739-1748), the British navy began intercepting ships flying the flag of France, a neutral power that continued to carry trade into Spanish ports. This represented a change in policy as belligerents had regularly avoided intercepting neutral shipping, particularly grains and foodstuff, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. At the outset of the Seven Years War, the Newcastle ministry approved the Rule of the War of 1756, a law that authorized the seizure of neutral trade of states at war with Great Britain. The law appealed to Parliament and merchants alike as a way to shape maritime markets and impact Continental wars without heavy commitment to a land campaign. While the system in the two previous wars sought to interdict trade during an era in which London had few European allies, Grenville sought to apply it to the Mediterranean as a way to generate cooperation. Along with bolstering allies on the frontiers with France, the seizure of "war material" destined for Mediterranean ports became an important concept in attempts to build regional support.<sup>35</sup>

The Pitt administration did not plan for only a maritime blockade of France, but a comprehensive suppression of all types of commerce, including interstate European

<sup>35</sup> For a thorough discussion of British policy on neutral rights, see Richard Pares, *Colonial Blockade and Neutral Rights, 1739-1763* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938), 180-204; Szabo, *The Global Seven Years War, 1754-1763*, 323-324; Edward L. Baines, *History of the Wars of the French Revolution*, vol. 1 (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1818), 534-536; Mlada Bukovansky, "American Identity and Neutral Rights from Independence to the War of 1812," *International Organization* 51, no. 2 (1997), 214-215.

trade. The self-isolation France accepted by going to war with Europe presented an opportunity to diplomatically influence other states to adopt these measures. This approach represented a continuation of the Anglo-French competition for markets in Europe and abroad. Oppressive British policy – the targeting of grains and neutrality – had irritated other powers in previous wars due to the impact on their own economies. Catherine’s League of Armed Neutrality, adopted in 1780, existed for the purpose of protecting Baltic trade from the invasive tactics of the British navy.<sup>36</sup> As sea power by itself provided an effective, albeit porous, system of blockade, Grenville’s goals in the Mediterranean included influencing other allies to accept these British initiatives to reorient European economic power against France.<sup>37</sup>

Strategic plans of both containment and attrition did not preclude an offensive into France. However, the prospects of an invasion depended on gathering enough strength between British and allied forces. Pitt and the ministers contemplated offensive landings at Toulon or Marseilles as early as 10 April, contingent on the ability to assemble an army of Sardinians, Spanish, Austrian, and British troops.<sup>38</sup> Offensive war on multiple fronts faced resistance within the administration, primarily from Charles Lennox, the Duke of Richmond and the Master-General of the Ordnance, who warned against wasting resources on many different fronts. From the beginning, the plan for a transition to the offensive remained on hold until the Coalition congealed into a cohesive force.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat*, 653.

<sup>37</sup> Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt: The Reluctant Transition*, 2:275; Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics*, 117; Judith Blow Williams, *British Commercial Policy and Trade Expansion, 1750-1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 212.

<sup>38</sup> Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt: The Reluctant Transition*, 2:266-267.

<sup>39</sup> Rose, *Pitt and the Great War*, 124; 130.

The development of a Mediterranean plan possessed major implications for both British grand strategy and the European Allies. Maritime access to the Mediterranean provided interior lines for the regional partners. Yet Sardinia faced a French spring offensive in the Alps while the militarization of the Pyrenees continued in earnest. Securing both of these frontiers presented opportunities to devastate French maritime influence and avoid an over-commitment by the British in the theater. Furthermore, keeping both Sardinia and Spain in the war with naval support would prevent French armies from combining on any frontier or influencing operations in northern Europe.<sup>40</sup>

Initial negotiations in the Mediterranean lacked the warships to back any British promises. Although naval preparations began the previous December, Chatham required months to assemble enough ships to satisfy the requirements of multiple theaters. The Flanders campaign and the English Channel claimed priority. N. A. M. Rodger controversially argues that the Admiralty at the outset of every eighteenth century war assumed a defensive posture, protecting the English coastline before acting aggressively in any theater. Assembly of the navy during the first months of the war reflected this posture.<sup>41</sup> Tasks included patrolling the waters off of France and protecting merchant convoys sailing from Gibraltar and the West Indies.<sup>42</sup> This policy complicated the task of British diplomats who sought to allay the fears of potential allies regarding the Toulon fleet and local privateers.

<sup>40</sup> For a discussion of the geographic significance of southern Europe, see Paddy Griffith, *The Art of War in Revolutionary France, 1789-1802*, 46-48; For a more specific discussion of Sardinia as a "Front-line State" in the war, see Michael Broers, *Napoleonic Imperialism in the Savoyard Monarchy, 1773-1821: State Building in Piedmont* (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellon Press, 1997), 165.

<sup>41</sup> N. A. M. Rodger, *Command of All the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649-1815*, (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004), 582.

<sup>42</sup> Hood to Stephens, 9 May 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391.

On the other hand, the timing of the war with France spared the British from having to court potential allies in the midst of the campaign season. Despite the long period of antagonism across Europe, British agents in the Mediterranean avoided firm discussions with foreign courts until a few months before the French declaration of war.<sup>43</sup> An alliance with the Mediterranean states required the swift conclusion of these agreements. Snows continued to fall on both frontiers until late April, protecting Sardinia and Spain from French advances.<sup>44</sup> Thus, the outbreak of war with France during the winter months provided an opportunity to establish a defensive network in the Mediterranean alongside these frontier states while the mountainous terrain remained impassible.

Unfortunately for Grenville and St. Helens, the indecisiveness of the Spanish court complicated the task of assembling a defense of the Mediterranean. Despite the death of Louis XVI, Godoy and Carlos IV remained hesitant over an alliance, fearing the increase of British maritime strength in the region and the general unpreparedness of the Spanish army for war.<sup>45</sup> After word of the French king's execution reached Madrid on 29 January, Godoy demanded that the French ambassador, Jean-François de Bourgoing, guarantee the safety of Marie Antoinette and promise an end to French aggression. The French diplomat possessed no authority to grant any of the Spanish minister's requests. On 19 February, Carlos ordered Bourgoing to leave Madrid, thus breaking diplomatic relations with the French Republic. In response, the National

<sup>43</sup> Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt: The Reluctant Transition*, 2:263.

<sup>44</sup> Trevor to Grenville, 3 April 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 67, Piece 11.

<sup>45</sup> Jacques Chastenet, *Godoy: Master of Spain, 1792-1808* (Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1953), 63; Charles Esdaile, *The Spanish Army in the Peninsular War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 36-37; William D. Phillips, *A Concise History of Spain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 197.

Convention declared war on Spain on 7 March.<sup>46</sup> Grenville expressed his relief over the end of Spanish neutrality and that “co-operation with Spain is now decided past recall.”<sup>47</sup> The barrier to a British campaign in the Mediterranean finally collapsed, opening options for military and diplomatic action across the region.

With Spanish neutrality finally at an end, the British Cabinet arrayed its forces for the first campaign in the Mediterranean. On 5 March, George III and Pitt decided to send eighteen to twenty ships of the line with frigates to support future alliances in southern Europe. Grenville determined that the fleet’s first task required the defeat of the French navy to secure the flanks of the armies fighting in the Alps and Pyrenees. With the French fleet driven from the sea, a British force could support the Spanish and Sardinian armies on either frontier. It also would prevent the Toulon fleet from sailing to the West Indies and disrupting trade and operations in that theater.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, a naval victory offered the Allies the benefit of interior lines and continuous pressure on the French supplies.

While the British government awaited overtures from Spain, diplomats in Turin formalized the agreement with the Kingdom of Sardinia. The Sardinian state lacked sufficient resources and capital to support an enlarged army for more than two campaigns. Under the direction of Austrian *Feldzeugmeister* Joseph, Baron de Vins, reorganization efforts in the Sardinian army continued in February and March to make it more effective. These reforms along with continued mobilization required large sums of

<sup>46</sup> Hilt, *The Troubled Trinity*, 37; Edmund D’Auvergne, *Godoy: The Queen’s Favorite* (London: Stanley Paul and Company, 1910), 64-66; John D. Bergamini, *The Spanish Bourbons: The History of a Tenacious Dynasty* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1974), 118-119. Pierre de Bourgoing, *Souvenirs Militaires du Baron de Bourgoing: 1791-1815* (Paris: E. Plon, Nourrit, et Cie, 1897) 5-7. Manuel de Godoy, *Mémoires du Prince de la Paix Don Manuel Godoy* (Paris: Chez Ladvoocat, 1836), 90-101.

<sup>47</sup> Grenville to William Eden Auckland, 8 March 1793, *Dropmore Manuscripts*, 2:383.

<sup>48</sup> Grenville to St. Helens, 5 March 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 26; Duffy, *Soldiers, Sugar, and Seapower*, 20, 23-24.



money.<sup>49</sup> With a lack of state funds and months before the annual tax collection, Sardinian insolvency loomed. Trevor succinctly summarized the predicament on the eve of the campaign season and its implication on British trade, emphasizing that “if Sardinia is not paid, it will fall. If it falls, Italy will fall.”<sup>50</sup> Victor Amadeus even promised to send the crown jewels to London as collateral for a wartime loan.<sup>51</sup> In desperation, he stripped the ecclesiastical revenues of Church lands in the kingdom to pay for the war.<sup>52</sup> To stave off a financial collapse, the British government promised £200,000 per year to sustain the Sardinian war effort in the Alps. Trevor and Grenville also pledged British naval support, a condition that helped ease fears in the wake of the amphibious attacks on Oneglia the previous fall.<sup>53</sup> Sardinia’s deteriorating situation became more manageable with the guarantees of warships and hard currency.

During negotiations with Sardinian ambassador Front in London, British diplomats reiterated a commitment to the pre-1792 boundaries of France. In a secret agreement signed subsequent to the treaty of alliance, Grenville promised British assistance to the Sardinians in the recapture of the counties of Nice and Savoy not as an offensive operation against France but as a return to the *status quo ante-bellum*.<sup>54</sup> An agreement to reclaim land on the border with France required secrecy due to

<sup>49</sup> Boycott-Brown, *The Road to Rivoli*, 76; Bergadani, *Vittorio Amedeo III*, 188-189.

<sup>50</sup> Trevor to Grenville, 1 March 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 67, Piece 11

<sup>51</sup> Trevor to Grenville, 19 March 1793, *ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Trevor to Grenville, 27 April 1793, *ibid.*; Bergadani, *Vittorio Amedeo III*, 245.

<sup>53</sup> Trevor to Grenville, 10 April 1793, TNA, Foreign Office Division 67, Piece 11;

<sup>54</sup> Secret agreement signed by Grenville and Count Front, TNA, Foreign Office Division 94, Piece 249, Part 2. For the Parliamentary Debate where the Tories invoked the previous treaties with Sardinia dating back to 1703 as justification for the generous points of 1793 treaty, See William Cobbett, *Parliamentary History of England: From the Norman Conquest to the Year 1803*(London: Bagshaw, 1817), 30:1314-1316.

Austrian interests in Lombardy and Spanish mistrust over British designs for the war.<sup>55</sup>

In discussions, both Trevor and Grenville made it clear that the return of Nice and Savoy to Sardinia would be a critical part of any peace with France, the traditional eighteenth century policy of aggrandizing the Savoyard buffer state in Italy.

An alliance with London also forced Victor Amadeus to concede to major tenets of the British plan. While naval dominance promised to control the shipping lanes and the coastline, Sardinia remained the only land barrier to a French invasion of Italy.<sup>56</sup> The treaty, completed on 25 April, stipulated that Sardinia maintain 50,000 troops under arms for the defense of Italy, with 20,000 available to cooperate with British forces.<sup>57</sup> Grenville also wanted assurances that Sardinian troops would intercept any Italian trade destined for France that travelled overland through Piedmont. Under the influence of Trevor, the Sardinian government passed an edict preventing the exportation of wheat and cattle to France.<sup>58</sup> In a country already at war for almost a year and having lost territory, security trumped any resistance over blockading Italian trade with the French Republic.

Negotiations with the Spanish proved infinitely more difficult than with the Sardinians. Years of animosity and the ongoing dispute over a more definitive alliance between the two states complicated an already strained relationship. The arrival of St.

<sup>55</sup> Ilari et al, *La Guerra della Alpi*, 85; D'Auvergne, *Godoy: The Queen's Favorite*, 65-66; Bergadani, *Vittorio Amedeo III*, 215-217.

<sup>56</sup> Grenville to Trevor, 22 April 1793, TNA, Foreign Office Division 67, Piece 11; For the text of the Anglo-Sardinian Treaty, TNA, Foreign Office Division 94, Piece 249, Part 1.

<sup>57</sup> Gooch and Ward, *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, 238; Government of Great Britain, *A Collection of State Papers Related to the War against France*, vol. 1 (London, John De Brett, 1802), 10-11. Victor Amadeus III, as early as 1791, conversed diplomatically with the other Italian heads of state over the concept for a defense of Italy due to the threat of a European war, Nicomede Bianchi, *Storia della monarchia piemontese dal 1773 sino al 1861* (Roma: Fratelli Bocca, 1878) 2:56-59; Colletta, *Histoire du royaume de Naples, depuis Charles VII jusqu'à Ferdinand IV, 1734 à 1825*, 306.

<sup>58</sup> Domenico Carutti, *Storia della corte di Savoia durante la rivoluzione e l'impero francese* (Torino: L. Roux, 1892), 1:215-217.

Helens at Madrid on 22 March energized discussions with Godoy and the volatile council of state over a war plan. The next day, the Spanish government formally declared war on France.<sup>59</sup> St. Helens pressed Godoy for an agreement renouncing any future ties to Paris. From Grenville's perspective, going to war allied with Spain provided an impetus for a breakthrough on the diplomatic and economic fronts. Part of the reason for St. Helens's immediate return to Madrid included his experience in negotiations with the Spanish during the inter-war period. The British foreign secretary hoped to restart the commercial agreements and the defensive alliance negotiations dating from the Nootka Sound controversy.<sup>60</sup>

This plan quickly ran into problems with the young Spanish minister. Godoy refused to incorporate commercial and political agreements as part of a military pact in the current war.<sup>61</sup> Frustrated with Godoy and the belligerent undertones of the Spanish court, St. Helens wanted to simplify talks by focusing on the war against France. Consequently, the British ambassador decided to drop discussions concerning long-term goals until Godoy gained some political experience, as the Spanish minister remained "very ignorant and boyish."<sup>62</sup> With little chance of Anglo-Spanish economic and political cooperation, discussions turned to the practical aspects of the present strategy.

<sup>59</sup> Government of Spain, *Spain Under the Bourbons*, trans. W. N. Hargreaves-Mawdsley (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1973), 172-175; Godoy, *Mémoires du Prince de la Paix Don Manuel Godoy*, 115

<sup>60</sup> St. Helens to Grenville, 29 Jan 1793, *Dropmore Manuscripts*, 2:376.

<sup>61</sup> Grenville to St. Helens, 15 February 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 26.

<sup>62</sup> St. Helens to Grenville, 26 March 1793, *Dropmore Manuscripts*, 2:386.

London wanted Spain to adopt the same aggressive approach toward grain imports and neutral shipping. Grenville explained to St. Helens the importance of getting Spanish cooperation in the seizure of French food supplies:

Another point of infinite utility which would arise from the adoption of this plan would be the cutting off all supplies to the French ports of corn and naval stores from the coasts of Italy and Africa. The importance of this point cannot be stated too highly especially as the present state of the North of Europe and the measures now taking by his Majesty on that subject are such as must deprive France of all resources of this nature except what she can draw from the Mediterranean.<sup>63</sup>

Godoy refused for a number of reasons. Spain depended on grain from both the United States and North Africa. Seizing neutral shipments could induce a break in relations with those countries who fed the Spanish population. Furthermore, American antagonism to these economic restrictions increased the likelihood of a transatlantic war. The Spanish government balked at a conflict with the United States for fear of losing more territory in the New World. For a state lacking the navy and resources of Great Britain, the backlash of attacks on neutral shipping could be tremendous, both in the Mediterranean and in the Americas.<sup>64</sup>

The post-war political landscape also continued to hamper negotiations. The British government wanted to avoid any discussion of indemnities with an unsteady ally. St. Helens worried over Godoy's plans to ask for Corsica as part of a settlement with France that would simply trade the island between two sworn enemies of England.<sup>65</sup> Grenville already made contact with Pasquale di Paoli on Corsica, hoping to support an insurrection on the island against the French garrison. He urged his ambassador in Spain to avoid any discussion over Corsica, stating, "I tremble when we come to

<sup>63</sup> Grenville to St. Helens, 10 March 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 26.

<sup>64</sup> Chastenot, *Godoy*, 63.

<sup>65</sup> St Helens to Grenville, 25 March 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 26.

discuss that tender point of indemnities.”<sup>66</sup> Negotiations continued with no definitive plan for how the British and Spanish would divide any gains made in a victory over France.

Despite the difficulties in negotiating an agreement, Spanish mobilization efforts met British approval. Even while attempting to remain neutral, Godoy issued orders to prepare the military for a conflict. St. Helens appreciated that the Spanish navy set sail prior to the declaration of war by the National Convention. While the decision undoubtedly raised tensions with France, it provided an opportunity to cover the time period before British forces arrived in the Mediterranean theater. Local *hidalgos* raised volunteers to serve in the army in addition to call-ups by the royal regiments. An outpouring of support from the Spanish population in a “holy war” against the French Republic promised a vigorous initial defense of the Pyrenees that met the expectations of the British Cabinet.<sup>67</sup>

Pitt’s ministry also invested in the Spanish war effort, although not in the form of currency. The Spanish government continued to suffer from a food shortage, a systemic problem in the Mediterranean. John Sherwig, the foremost expert on British subsidies in the Revolutionary Wars, considers that among the Mediterranean allies, only Sardinia requested and received substantial monetary support from the British government.<sup>68</sup> However, Dundas and John Fane, Earl of Westmoreland and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, negotiated in April with Irish merchants to send 1.6 million pounds of dried beef and pork to feed the Spanish navy. The gesture alleviated hardships

<sup>66</sup> Grenville to St. Helens, 13 April 1793, *Dropmore Manuscripts*, 2:392.

<sup>67</sup> Hilt, *The Troubled Trinity*, 38-39; Bergamini, *The Spanish Bourbons*, 119; Godoy, *Memoires du Prince de la Paix*, 120-122.

<sup>68</sup> Sherwig, *Guineas and Gunpowder*, 24-26.

expected on Spaniards living in maritime provinces due to the large mobilization of the navy and the dependency on overseas grains.<sup>69</sup>

In the end, security on the frontier of France hastened the completion of Anglo-Spanish negotiations. The alliance, signed on 25 May, guaranteed “an intimate and entire concert upon the means of opposing a sufficient barrier to those dangerous views of aggression and aggrandizement.”<sup>70</sup> The Treaty of Aranjuez also promised to strangle the commerce of any state that chose to trade with France, a strong warning to neutral shipping in the Mediterranean. It represented a failure by Godoy to resist British economic designs in the region, but British officials did not expect a vigorous pursuit of neutral shipping out of Spanish warships.<sup>71</sup> In essence, both sides guaranteed the territorial integrity of the region while applying direct pressure on any state that maintained commercial ties with France.

Bolstered by British promises of support and cooperation, Godoy took the first steps to regain Allied control of the Mediterranean. Carlos IV maintained a defensive alliance since 1752 with Sardinia, promising 8,000 infantry and 4,000 cavalry if attacked. Although Godoy and Carlos IV could not send troops to the Alps with the threat of invasion across the Pyrenees, they dispatched Admiral Don Francisco de Borja’s naval squadron of twelve ships of the line to attack the French still occupying St. Pietro.<sup>72</sup> In May, 500 French troops along with 300 sailors isolated on the island

<sup>69</sup> Dundas to Sylvester Douglas, First Secretary of Ireland, 9 March 1793; Westmoreland to Dundas, 18 March 1793, TNA, Foreign Office Division 72, Piece 26.

<sup>70</sup> Manuel de Godoy and Alleyne Fitzherbert St. Helens, Anglo-Spanish Treaty of Aranjuez, 25 May 1793, *ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*; De Brett, *A Collection of State Papers*, 13-15; Chastenet, *Godoy: Master of Spain*, 63.

<sup>72</sup> Godoy, *Memoirs of Don Manuel de Godoy* (London: R. Bentley, 1836), 235; *London Gazette*, 11 June 1793. The 1752 Treaty of Aranjuez guaranteed the sovereignty of Spain and Sardinian territory.

surrendered to Borja, who transported them back to Barcelona.<sup>73</sup> Spanish warships then established an Allied naval presence off the French coastline observing Toulon.

By completing agreements with Sardinia and Spain, British diplomats secured a unified stance on containing the French within their frontiers in southern Europe. Shielded by Allied armies and the dominating terrain of the Alps and the Pyrenees, Grenville and Dundas could now pursue the commitment of states around the periphery of the Mediterranean. The diplomatic discussions with other states revolved around contributing to the defense of the frontiers and tightening the blockade of France. However, with the economic and political complexities of the region, the agreements proved much more difficult to attain.

As the strongest of the other Italian states, Pitt desired an agreement with the Kingdom of Naples for a number of reasons. The ports of Naples and Palermo provided logistical capabilities to support a large British fleet. Furthermore, the Neapolitan army could join forces with the Sardinians in the defense of Italy and its profitable markets.<sup>74</sup> Southern Italy exported roughly 220 ships full of corn and wheat annually to Marseilles, a tremendous boom for the Neapolitan economy that created a profitable relationship with France.<sup>75</sup> An end to that trade could significantly impact the French war effort. Furthermore, a contribution from the small Neapolitan navy could secure trade routes to the Levant and augment the proposed Allied fleet.<sup>76</sup> In terms of British strategy, an alliance with Naples offered numerous important benefits.

<sup>73</sup> Krebs et Moris, *Campagnes dans les Alpes pendant la Révolution*, 177-178.

<sup>74</sup> Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt: The Reluctant Transition*, 2:279.

<sup>75</sup> Biagio Salvemini, "The Arrogance of the Market: The Economy of the Kingdom between the Mediterranean and Europe," *Naples in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Girolamo Imbruglia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 50-51.

<sup>76</sup> Colletta, *Histoire du royaume de Naples, depuis Charles VII jusqu'à Ferdinand IV, 1734 à 1825*, 311.

However, the relationship with other powers in Europe made an Anglo-Neapolitan alliance difficult to pursue. Personal animosity between Johann Francis de Paula, Baron Thugut, Austria's foreign minister, and Acton complicated the relationship with Vienna. This in turn created tension with the other Italian states within Austria's sphere of influence.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, mistrust between Spain and Naples made a full commitment to the war effort problematic. Acton believed that Spain would never come to the aid of Naples if attacked. Both Queen Maria Carolina and Acton prepared to side with the British in a war as early as 12 January but expressed concerns over the threat of the French navy.<sup>78</sup> The Toulon fleet dwarfed its Neapolitan counterpart and a declaration in support of the Coalition invited invasion. The prospects of an Anglo-Neapolitan agreement hinged on the ability to keep a secret between four diplomats separated by a thousand miles while avoiding detection from the French or Spanish governments.<sup>79</sup>

Grenville used the negotiations to reemphasize his vision of a Mediterranean theater built on containment and the weakening of French economic power. On 22 March, Paolo Ruffo di Bagnaria, the Prince of Castelcicala, formally opened negotiations in London.<sup>80</sup> Grenville stressed to the Neapolitan envoy that any negotiation should include the opening of ports to British ships as well as the interdiction of war material moving to France. Castelcicala refused an immediate agreement, reiterating that until the British government sent a fleet to the Mediterranean, Naples

<sup>77</sup> Roeder, *Baron Thugut*, 70-74.

<sup>78</sup> William Hamilton to Grenville, 12 January 1793, TNA, Foreign Office Division 70, Piece 6; Maria Grazia Maiorini, "Neapolitan Diplomacy in the Eighteenth Century: Policy and the Diplomatic Apparatus," in Frigo, *Politics and Diplomacy in Early Modern Italy*, 178.

<sup>79</sup> Hamilton to Grenville, 19 April 1793, TNA, Foreign Office Division 70, Piece 6; *A History of Italy, 1700-1860: The Social Strains of Political Change* (London: Methuen and Co., 1979), 158.

<sup>80</sup> *London Gazette*, 26 March 1793.



could not commit to the war.<sup>81</sup> The pace of naval mobilization and the security of the British islands slowed Grenville's goal of incorporating the Neapolitans quickly into the Coalition.

In addition, a number of problems plagued the negotiation process. With war conditions on the Continent, the travel time for dispatches between London and Naples exceeded one month. Bernabon Carccioli, Duc de Sicignano, the Neapolitan envoy with the authority to sign a treaty, committed suicide in London on 31 May.<sup>82</sup> While Castelvicala served as ambassador to the Court of St. James, he lacked the credentials to complete an agreement. Grenville decided to finish the negotiations at London and then send the treaty of alliance to Naples for Acton and Hamilton to sign, adding an additional month onto the process.<sup>83</sup> Overcoming the distance and diplomatic technicalities, Acton prepared to throw off the mask of neutrality in late June to side with the Allies.

Despite success in Sardinia and Naples, British attempts to rally forces elsewhere in Italy to form a commercial and military barrier met with apathy. Over the course of the first four months of 1793, Grenville's concept of defending a "unified Italy" came to no conclusion.<sup>84</sup> Venice, once the economic and military powerhouse of the Mediterranean, now possessed only a few warships. Despite a hostile stance towards France, the Venetian government remained neutral.<sup>85</sup> Thugut, in negotiations with Grenville, considered the republic part of a fair exchange for the loss of the Austrian

<sup>81</sup> Grenville to Hamilton, 22 March 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 70, Piece 6; Luigi Conforti, *Napoli dal 1789 al 1796* (Napoli: Ernesto Anfossi, 1887), 146-147.

<sup>82</sup> Grenville to George III, 31 May 1793, *Dropmore Manuscripts* 2:395; George III to Grenville, 1 June 1793, *Dropmore Manuscripts*, 2: 395.

<sup>83</sup> Hamilton to Grenville, 14 June 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 70, Piece 6.

<sup>84</sup> Grenville to Hamilton, 12 July 1793, *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> J. J. Norwich, *A History of Venice* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1982), 615; Woolf, *A History of Italy, 1700-1860*, 158; Godoy, *Memoirs of Don Manuel de Godoy, Prince of the Peace*, 1:219-220.

Netherlands. He maintained obscure discussions with Morton Eden, ambassador to Vienna, throughout 1793 over the possibility of partitioning Venice after the war. The once mighty state now served as only a bargaining chip in Anglo-Austrian negotiations.<sup>86</sup>

Both the Sardinians and the British required Genoa to end its neutrality as the strategic position of that republic threatened to undermine both Italian security and the embargo on French trade in the region. The Doge of Genoa, Michelangelo Cambiaso, instead chose neutrality to protect trade and his state's close political relationship with France.<sup>87</sup> Corn and grain shipments continued to Marseilles and Nice with regularity, to the chagrin of Trevor and Joseph Brame, the British consul at Genoa.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, the National Convention already poured millions of *assignat* into Genoa to promote egalitarian ideals in a state already closely aligned politically with Paris.<sup>89</sup> Despite pressure from Turin and London, nothing could be done to sway Cambiaso to join the war. Over the course of the spring, the British sought to end Genoa's thinly veiled neutrality under the weight of military and diplomatic influence.

British diplomats also needed assurances from the Grand Duchy of Tuscany over its willingness to halt trade with France. Tuscany suffered from both economic and political pressure, caught between a commercial relationship with France and dynastic connection with Austria. In peacetime, the port of Leghorn serviced all European

<sup>86</sup> Rose, *Pitt and the Great War*, 129, 200; Jupp, *Lord Grenville*, 202.

<sup>87</sup> Blanning, *French Revolutionary Wars, 1787-1802*, 95.

<sup>88</sup> Trevor to Grenville, 10 April 1793, TNA, Foreign Office Division 67, Piece 11; Palmer, *Twelve who Ruled*, 232.

<sup>89</sup> Jacques Godechot, *The Counter-Revolution Doctrine and Action, 1789-1804* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 176, Michael Kennedy, *The Jacobin Clubs in the French Revolution, The Middle Years* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 4.

powers, including the French.<sup>90</sup> While the duchy possessed no army to participate in the war and sold its navy to the Russians in the 1770s, its influence over maritime trade and its fertile countryside demanded British pressure to close the port to French merchants.<sup>91</sup> Grand Duke Ferdinand III, at twenty-three years old, hesitated to join the Austrians or the Mediterranean Allies in the war against France. In turn, Austria applied little pressure on Tuscany as Thugut considered Italy a minor inconvenience and immaterial to a war that made the Rhineland the primary theater.<sup>92</sup> Without significant influence in Italy, the British government needed Austrian support to bring Tuscany into the Coalition, a request that fell on deaf ears at Vienna.

Facing resistance from smaller states, thoughts among British diplomats turned to coercion. The arrival of the Spanish fleet off Cagliari and the capture of the French garrison induced British agents to force Genoa and Tuscany to join the growing Mediterranean system. On 22 May, John Augustus Hervey, the ambassador to the grand duchy, appealed to Ferdinand III for support in the war. The grand duke refused, citing the inevitable economic and political fallout associated with supporting the British. Hervey swore that Tuscan ambivalence survived at the whim of the Spanish and British courts and it could be ended through intimidation if the duchy did not comply.<sup>93</sup> Yet confusion reigned among British diplomats over the “avarice and complaisance” of both governments.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Lord John Augustus Hervey, Envoy to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, to William Hamilton, 10 June 1793, Egerton Manuscripts MS2638, British Library (BL), London, United Kingdom.

<sup>91</sup> Header, *Italy in the Age of the Risorgimento, 1790-1870*, 70.

<sup>92</sup> Roeder, *Baron Thugut*, 201; Ilari et al, *La Guerra della Alpi*, 86. Thugut directed Ferdinand III on 6 April to open Livorno up to the Allies and end their neutrality. Ferdinand ignored it and the Austrian government let the matter drop until the fall of 1793.

<sup>93</sup> Hervey to Terrifici, 22 May 1793; Terrifici to Hervey, 22 May 1793, in De Brett, *A Collection of State Papers*, 1:378-379.

<sup>94</sup> Trevor to Grenville, 1 March 1793, TNA, Foreign Office Division 67, Piece 11.

On 2 March, Trevor reflected on the need to encourage the compliance of these two states. "Genoa and Tuscany who will be an immense problem if they are suffered to maintain their neutrality," the ambassador noted, "May in justice, be made to purchase it by appropriate contributions. Four million (pounds) might thus be ransomed. Great Britain might consider double that sum with the greatest ease."<sup>95</sup> A unified Italian response under the direction of the British proved unconvincing to smaller states like Tuscany and Genoa. Viability of both states derived from regional relationships with France and Austria. Grenville's strategy offered nothing to these smaller states except war and economic hardships. Neutrality became a natural choice as a rejection of the British concept of containment and attrition.

Diplomats faced similar problems in North Africa, where the strangulation of France required submission from the Barbary States. French mercantilism thrived in North Africa in the eighteenth century, backed by the strength of the fleet stationed at Toulon. Merchants at Marseilles used over 300 ships annually, each carrying between 80 and 300 tons of trade, between that port and the Regency of Tunis alone.<sup>96</sup> Politicians in the National Convention maintained close supervision of the grain supplies arriving from the regencies.<sup>97</sup> British agents needed to exert diplomatic pressure on the Muslim regents to sever these profitable ties.

Algiers, Morocco, Tunis, and Tripoli also maintained a mostly amicable relationship with the Court of St. James throughout the eighteenth century. The threat of military action and the steady flow of British pounds into the pocket of the Berber

<sup>95</sup> Trevor to Grenville, 2 March 1793, *ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> John Jackson, *Reflections on Commerce in the Mediterranean* (London: W. Clarke and Sons, 1804), 4-5.

<sup>97</sup> Palmer, *Twelve Who Ruled*, 250.

rulers helped smooth the almost continuous succession crises that plagued these volatile states.<sup>98</sup> Goodall maintained a watchful eye in January and February 1793 on the logistical support provided to Gibraltar by Hassan III, the Dey of Algiers, and the Mulay Suleiman, the Sultan of Morocco. A British military presence in close proximity to the regencies would assure their compliance.<sup>99</sup>

Pitt's ministry also needed its European allies focused on fighting France, not wasting military power fighting Barbary corsairs. For other European states, dealing with the Barbary Regencies proved problematic, requiring regular British diplomatic support as an intermediary. Despite a war with France, the Muslim courts continued bellicose rhetoric toward Spain in 1793 due to their centuries' old rivalry in the western Mediterranean and on the Iberian Peninsula. Barbary pirates remained belligerent toward the Genoese, Venetians, and even Scandinavian traders in the Mediterranean because of their inability to retaliate effectively.<sup>100</sup> In times of peace, the British government welcomed the harassment of maritime rivals by the Islamic courts but a European war trumped these less dangerous concerns.<sup>101</sup> British diplomats watched warily as Algiers declared war in February 1793 on the United Provinces, catching the Dutch merchants in the Mediterranean off-guard, their trade protected by the sum total

<sup>98</sup> Nicholas B. Harding, "North African Piracy, the Hanoverian Carrying Trade, and the British State, 1728-1828," *The Historical Journal* 43, no 1 (March 2000): 30.

<sup>99</sup> Goodall to Stephens, 6 January 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391; M. S. Anderson, "Great Britain and the Barbary States in the Eighteenth Century," *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 29 (1956), 89. Viscount Richard Howe to George III, 8 January 1785, Aspinall, *The Later Correspondence of George III*, 1:126.

<sup>100</sup> J. E. G. de Montmorency, "The Barbary States in International Law" *Transactions of the Grotius Society* 4 (1918): 87-94; Ray W. Irwin, *The Diplomatic Relations of the United States with the Barbary Powers, 1776-1816* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1931), 58-59; H. G. Barnby, *The Prisoners of Algiers: An Account of the Forgotten American-Algerine War, 1785-1797* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 148.

<sup>101</sup> Lord Howe to George III, 10 May 1788, *The Correspondence of George III*, 1:374; Black, *British Foreign Policy, 1783-1793*, 229-230. John B. Wolf, *The Barbary Coast: Algiers under the Turks, 1500-1830* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1979), 328

of two warships.<sup>102</sup> Containment of France required maximum effort in the region, and dealing with the Barbary States required British capital and resources.

For their efforts in the spring of 1793, British diplomats accomplished little in smothering French trade with Africa. The Offices for Home and Colonial affairs, under the direction of Dundas, managed diplomacy in Barbary. In anticipation of the outbreak of the war, the Home Secretary tasked Envoy Simon Lucas to deliver gifts to the rulers at Algiers and Tripoli, requesting their assistance in a Mediterranean conflict.<sup>103</sup> Lucas also carried £2,000 worth of Spanish currency as gifts from Madrid, hoping to use British prestige to make peace between the Spain and the Muslims. The mission ended in a disaster due to the lack of a naval escort and French ships sailing off the African coastline, stranding Lucas in Algiers for over a year.<sup>104</sup> His inability to complete his task helped unravel support for the British during the fall of 1793.

Other diplomats also failed to make inroads at Tunis. Hammuda ibn Ali, the Bey of Tunis, expressed outrage over the execution of Louis XVI. The Bey ranted against French representatives who requested that he honor their present treaty, arguing that he made the agreement with Louis XVI, not the 'fictitious' French Republic. Hammuda desired war with France, but without a British fleet in the Mediterranean and the Tunisian fleet away, he agreed only to the temporary halt of grain shipments to France contingent on further negotiations with both states.<sup>105</sup> With French diplomats still at the Muslim courts in North Africa and no formal declaration, nothing could guarantee

<sup>102</sup> Goodall to Stephens, 8 February 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391.

<sup>103</sup> Simon Lucas to Evan Nepean, 8 February 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 76, Piece 5.

<sup>104</sup> Simon Lucas to Evan Nepean, 21 February 1793 and Lucas to Nepean, 5 April 1793, *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> Perkins Magra, Consul to the Regency of Tunis, to Dundas, 8 April 1793, *ibid.*, Foreign Office Division 77, Piece 3.

compliance from them without the threat of naval action.<sup>106</sup> The duplicity of the Barbary regencies in supporting the Allied war would continue to hamper British efforts in the Mediterranean.

Construction of the Coalition by British diplomats between February and May 1793 turned the war into a test of the logistical capacity of the French state. Grenville and Dundas sought to remain on the defensive in the Alps and Pyrenees, providing British monetary support and warships to help protect these positions. Strategy in the Mediterranean theater developed as a way for the British government to economize limited resources. British ministers planned to fight the war through the Allies while applying direct pressure on French supply lines in the region. Hopes remained that the British government could sustain forces on the frontiers long enough to use the navy to effect a collapse of the French war effort. Naval support tied Spain, Sardinia, and Naples to the British plan. Relying not simply on a blockade, British officials anticipated the smothering of the French trade of “war materials” a tool to force the National Convention to sue for peace in Europe.

British diplomats only made progress in alliance building in states with security concerns. Spain, Sardinia, and Naples faced threats that required little diplomatic capital to earn their commitment to a defensive plan. Even then, negotiations in Madrid floundered under the weight of prior grievances and the unclear future of Anglo-Spanish relations. Other states in Italy and North Africa faced no immediate security threat and possessed little military power to assist with the plan. Furthermore, the economic impact of the British attrition plan won few friends during the spring of 1793. Most states possessed a valuable economic and political relationship with France. Other

<sup>106</sup> Magra to Dundas, 20 May 1793, *ibid.*, Foreign Office Division 76, Piece 5.

states took orders from Austria. In terms of an attrition strategy, economics and political influence at the local level made the complete isolation of France from the Mediterranean impossible. The British system of blockading trade with France could only be maintained a gunpoint.

Furthermore, the Cabinet maintained a level of inconsistency, failing to understand the connection between an attrition strategy and the unstable political culture in France. Grenville and Dundas pursued economic warfare to influence the internal politics of France, lobbying for a general embargo in the Mediterranean. However, the Pitt administration continued to avoid a commitment to any French government, instead focusing on the external balance of power in Europe. The strategy developed by the Cabinet counted on a collapse of the French political system from within but possessed no interest in marrying British policy with anti-government forces inside France. This strategic duality created a very difficult situation to navigate after the Federalist Revolt ignited counter-revolutions across southern France in the summer of 1793. By then, the British government lost all control over the military and political situation in the theater.



## CHAPTER 5

### “BEHOLD IN US YOUR DELIVERERS”: FROM THE DEFENSE TO THE OFFENSE, SUMMER 1793

After four months of negotiations with the Mediterranean courts, the British Cabinet emerged with a strategy based on the strength of the navy and the weaknesses of the French economy. War policy sought to capitalize on the defensive by supporting the Allies with naval power and financial support. With an emphasis on a cooperative embargo enforced through the fleet, French supply lines in the Mediterranean became critical to ensuring a quick victory. This strategic design bred successes in June and July. However, the Federalist Revolt during the summer of 1793 created problems for the Cabinet in managing alliances while capitalizing on the military situation in southern France. On 29 August, the British fleet commanded by Hood sailed into the harbor of Toulon to accept the surrender of the port and arsenal. The capture of the city by Anglo-Spanish forces marked a comprehensive transformation of British strategy in the Mediterranean in terms of military operations, political objectives, and diplomatic cooperation.

Initial operations in the Pyrenees during the summer reflected well on the British orchestrated containment plan. Enthusiasm expressed during mobilization translated to Spanish successes in May and June. Opposed by untrained French national guardsmen, Captain-General Antonio Ricardos Carrillo de Albornoz led the Army of Roussillon north from Catalonia through the eastern Pyrenees with the objective of gaining the north side of the mountain range before the end of a short campaign

season.<sup>1</sup> Ricardos' 15,000-man force defeated the French at Mas d'Eu on 20 May, initiating a rout of the ill-trained *Armée des Pyrénées Orientales*.<sup>2</sup> Instead of pursuing the fleeing army, the Spanish general methodically attacked the French garrison at Bellegarde. He also laid siege to Collioure, a port where he hoped to unite with Admiral Don Juan de Lángara's Spanish fleet to supply his force from the sea. The fall of Bellegarde on 24 June opened the route to Perpignan, the key French position in Roussillon.<sup>3</sup> Capitalizing on a poorly trained enemy, the Spanish army displayed early enthusiasm for the defense of their country, an important part of controlling the Mediterranean region.

The Allied fleets also successfully established a blockade of the southern ports of France. After capturing the French force that attempted to seize the Island of Sardinia in May, Borja's squadron sailed along the French coastline in search of the Toulon fleet. The Spanish admiral attempted to entice the warships anchored in Toulon to deploy for battle but the French fleet declined, with many of the ships not even ready to sail.<sup>4</sup> Hood's fleet of sixteen ships of the line entered the Mediterranean on 26 June and met only minor resistance from scattered French frigates.<sup>5</sup> With relative ease, the naval

<sup>1</sup> Godoy, *Mémoires du Prince de La Paix*, 1:138; 151-153; Hilt, *The Troubled Trinity*, 39. The Spanish army in the eastern Pyrenees is sometimes referred to as the Army of Catalonia, where the regiments assembled. The name "Army of Roussillon" is used in the British diplomatic correspondence as well as the reports from Ricardos to Godoy.

<sup>2</sup> Blanning, *The French Revolutionary Wars*, 100; Phipps, *The Armies of the First French Republic*, 3:152-153; Godoy, *Memoirs of Manuel de Godoy*, 1:242-244; Anonymous, *Mémoire Raisonné sur la Retraite de l'armée Combinée Espagnole et Portugaise du Rousillon* (Lisbon, 1795), 4-7.

<sup>3</sup> Phipps, *The Armies of the First French Republic*, 3:153-154; Godoy, *Mémoires du Prince de La Paix*, 1:138; 151-153.

<sup>4</sup> Don Francisco Borja, Spanish naval squadron commander, to Hood, 6 July 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391.

<sup>5</sup> Kingdom of Great Britain, *A Collection of State Papers Relative to the War against France*, ed. John de Brett (London: John Stockdale, 1802), 1:489-490.

powers began to enforce the economic warfare Grenville and Dundas envisioned in the spring of 1793.<sup>6</sup>

Republican forces opposing external enemies across southern France also experienced the threat of internal uprisings. The long period of unrest in the urban centers of Provence gained strength with the purge of the Girondins from the National Convention between 31 May and 2 June. On 7 June, Lyon revolted against the Parisian government, declaring the city autonomous.<sup>7</sup> Sectional uprisings in Marseilles at the end of May reverberated in Toulon, particularly among workers at the dockyards and military arsenal. Protests forced the officers at the arsenal to issue a warning to the Jacobin government in the city to fix the shortages and pay the workers in hard currency.<sup>8</sup> With three major urban centers in revolt, the situation in southeastern France represented a serious danger to the National Convention.<sup>9</sup>

Revolts inside France helped accomplish one of the Cabinet's important strategic tasks: the neutralization of the French fleet. Counter-revolutionary thought by the summer of 1793 negatively impacted the Toulon fleet, dividing the sailors and officers between supporting the two competing political groups.<sup>10</sup> Even if they could reach a consensus, the presence of the Allied fleets made a naval battle too risky. The

<sup>6</sup> Rose, *Lord Hood and the Defense of Toulon*, 11.

<sup>7</sup> Godechot, *The Counter-Revolution: Doctrine and Action, 1789-1804*, 238; William D. Edmunds, *Jacobinism and the Revolt of Lyon, 1789-1793* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 205-206; Krebs et Moris, *Campagnes dans les Alpes pendant la Révolution*, 262-263.

<sup>8</sup> Crook, *Toulon in War and Revolution*, 127-129; Bill Edmunds, "'Federalism' and Urban Revolt in 1793," in Blanning, *The Rise and Fall of the French Revolution*, 399-401.

<sup>9</sup> Schama, *Citizens*, 727-728; Leon Guerin, *Histoire de la marine contemporaine de France* (Paris: Adolphe Delahays, 1855), 283. Crowhurst, *The French War on Trade*, 8-9.

<sup>10</sup> Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire, 1793-1812*, 1:63-64; Crook, *Toulon in War and Revolution*, 134. M. Z. Pons, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la ville de Toulon en 1793* (Paris: C. J. Trouve, 1825), 4-10.

combination of military and political concerns paralyzed French naval power, making the blockade of the port a relatively bloodless operation.<sup>11</sup>

With French ports blockaded and the enemy fleet unprepared to force an escape, the military situation simplified trade security in the region. While the French navy maintained other warships in the Mediterranean out of neutral ports, they lacked the numbers to influence commerce. By 1793, the Admiralty managed a proficient convoy system honed by the wars of the eighteenth century. By the time that Hood reached the region in the middle of June, British frigates already had escorted a majority of the Allied trade out of the Mediterranean. Between armed escorts and the ability to suppress the Toulon fleet, merchants suffered few losses during the first six months of 1793.<sup>12</sup> With Britain's own economic interests secured, naval efforts focused on further restricting French trade.

Applying pressure on neutral Genoa became Hood's most pressing concern. On 29 July, two French frigates, the *Modeste* and the *Badine*, sailed into Genoa to escort merchant ships to Marseilles. The French ships passed alongside the British frigate *L'aigle*, stationed outside the neutral harbor, before heading to sea with their convoy. In the rules of eighteenth century naval warfare, the close distance between ships presented a clear challenge to the British captain. Brame, the consul at Genoa, protested to the Genoese government and appealed to the British admiral for action.<sup>13</sup>

On 11 August, Hood dispatched Vice-Admiral Philips Cosby with four ships of the line to

<sup>11</sup> Léon Guérin, *Histoire de la Marine Contemporaine*, 284.

<sup>12</sup> Stein, *Edge of Crisis*, 42; Crowhurst, *The Defense of British Trade, 1689-1815*, 79-80; Crowhurst, *The French War on Trade*, 39.

<sup>13</sup> Trevor to Hood, 29 July 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391; Captain J. N. Inglefield to Hood, 29 July 1793, *ibid.*; Rose, *Lord Hood and the Defense of Toulon*, 47; Paul Cottin, *Toulon et les Anglais en 1793* (Paris: Paul Ollendorf, 1898), 77-78.

supervise commerce, effectively blockading the neutral port. The extension of the blockade from Marseilles to Genoa fulfilled one of the Cabinet's directives on intimidating neutral states.<sup>14</sup>

Despite early military victories and successes in the economic war, the British Cabinet remained committed to the conservative system developed in the spring of 1793. Grenville's orders in July and August highlighted the importance of maintaining a defensive posture while continuing to weaken French forces.<sup>15</sup> The Foreign Secretary believed the self-isolation created by the National Convention contributed to the starvation of its people. Continuous blockade of corn, grain, and other commodities only expedited the surrender of the French armies fighting on the frontiers. Grenville explained to St. Helens that this process required "support from across Italy and Spain" to be successful, a condition that necessitated diplomatic pressure.<sup>16</sup> Thus, attrition would remain the preferred approach in the Mediterranean theater.

The biggest question for the Cabinet in July and August 1793 became how best to translate the successes in the maritime war into support for the Allies. In June, Grenville predicted that the Toulon fleet would not risk a battle, but instead withdraw into its homeport to wait out the blockade.<sup>17</sup> With the expectation of a short war, the administration provided no guidance to Hood or the diplomats on how to proceed if the campaign progressed this well. British planning ended with the establishment of the blockade and the expectation of pressure from the Continental allies against the French armies. However, fighting continued in the Alps and Pyrenees without the Allies gaining

<sup>14</sup> Hood to Philip Stephens, 11 August 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391; Brame to Hood, 4 August 1793, *ibid.*; Palmer, *Twelve Who Ruled*, 227.

<sup>15</sup> Jupp, *Lord Grenville*, 156.

<sup>16</sup> Grenville to St. Helens, 9 August 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 27.

<sup>17</sup> Grenville to St. Helens, 23 June 1793, *ibid.*

the upper hand. With naval superiority in the Mediterranean, the Cabinet turned to the idea of gaining agency in a land campaign.<sup>18</sup>

Counter-revolutionary movements in southern France complicated the strategic conservatism of the ministry. Indeed, the British government struggled to define the relationship between the internal politics of France and a settled peace in Europe.<sup>19</sup> In a speech on 17 June, Pitt declared, “there is nothing . . . which pledges us not to take advantage of any interference in the internal affairs of France that may be necessary.”<sup>20</sup> Two months later in reference to the Mediterranean campaign, Grenville rejected any notion of supporting a cause in southern France:

Nor is there, as far as any judgment can be formed, such a disposition in the interior as would be necessary for the success of such a project. Under these circumstances, any declaration on the part of the allied powers in favor of a particular party or particular form of government in the interior would tend only to unite all those who were opposed to that system but could not be looked to as affording a reasonable prospect for the reestablishment of solid peace and permanent security.<sup>21</sup>

An official policy of Great Britain in the summer of 1793 could be defined as taking advantage of the internal problems of France without becoming entangled in the politics or ideology of either side. This stance extended to the Royalists plotting a return to France. Cabinet ministers avoided any discussions with the Count of Artois and refused to recognize his regency for Louis XVII.<sup>22</sup> From the administration’s perspective, the

<sup>18</sup> Rose, *Pitt and the Great War*, 143-144.

<sup>19</sup> Adams, *The Influence of Grenville on Pitt’s Foreign Policy*, 21-22; Mori, “The British Government and the Bourbon Restoration: The Occupation of Toulon, 1793,” 700-701.

<sup>20</sup> Pitt, in a speech to the House of Lords, 17 June 1793, in De Brett, *Parliamentary Register*, 35:675; Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt: The Reluctant Transition*, 2:303.

<sup>21</sup> Grenville to St. Helens, 9 August 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 27.

<sup>22</sup> Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt: The Reluctant Transition*, 2:300; Godoy, *Memoirs of Don Manuel de Godoy, Prince of the Peace*, 1:266; George III to John Pitt, the Earl of Chatham, 2 June 1793, George III, King of Great Britain, *The Latter Correspondence of George III*, 2:886. On 17 June, Fox as head of the opposition, made a motion in Parliament to bring an end to the war on the basis of containment to avoid

Mediterranean remained a theater focused on military and economic activities without defining the political characteristics of the war.

Grenville's apprehensiveness toward choosing sides in a civil war came from the information gathered through the diplomatic channels in southern Europe. British agents expressed concerns that an offensive into France, instead of supporting one faction against another, might simply unite combatants against the invaders.<sup>23</sup> Trevor heard rumors that the rebellious government at Marseilles conspired to surrender the port to the British fleet as early as 3 August but believed starvation and desperation to be their motivation. Agents in Lyon warned that the counter-revolutionary movement in that city would only initiate a violent reaction from the Army of the Alps. The situation grew grim with the mobilization of another army under Republican general Jean-François Carteaux, designated the *Armée du Midi*.<sup>24</sup> Rumors indicated that the Federalists sought to join the Allied cause only out of "fear of their too successful enemies than for love of us."<sup>25</sup> The diplomatic corps in the Mediterranean looked on the turmoil in southern France with a skepticism that was reflected in British policy.

Avoiding the subject of the counter-revolution only put the British government further at odds with Spain. Uprisings in Provence reignited the differences in opinion over regime change. Carlos IV and Godoy both pleaded with St. Helens in early July that the National Convention hung on the verge of collapse. The insertion of the Count of Artois to capitalize on the anarchy inside France became a point of contention

the discussions of regime change and indemnities. The motion failed by a wide margin. Kingdom of Great Britain, *A Collection of State Papers*, 1:413-415.

<sup>23</sup> Morton Eden to William Eden, Lord Auckland, 10 August 1793, in William Eden Auckland, *The Journal and Correspondence of William, Lord Auckland*, 3:105.

<sup>24</sup> Godechot, *The Counter-Revolution Doctrine and Action, 1789-1804*, 240-243; Phipps, *The Armies of the First French Republic*, 3:92-93.

<sup>25</sup> Trevor to Grenville, 3 August 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 67, Piece 12.

between the two courts.<sup>26</sup> Godoy asked the British ambassador for Grenville's policy toward the Royalists, thus raising concerns over Britain's commitment to the war. Grenville urged St. Helens to sell the Spanish on any cooperative endeavor, "but don't let them side with the *émigrés*."<sup>27</sup> Support for the counter-revolution meant aligning policy with Spain, a position unacceptable to the British foreign minister.

The disagreement over the counter-revolution constituted only one of a number of diplomatic problems festering between Madrid and London during the summer. Economic warfare fought by a fleet of mercenaries and amateurs created major problems for the two courts. Driven by a tradition of antagonism, privateers from both countries attacked merchant shipping without regard for the Treaty of Aranjuez. The Spanish ship *Atocha* attacked the British packet *Sybil* outside Cadiz on 23 July. St. Helens demanded an explanation for the attack. Godoy instead rebuked him over the seizure of the Spanish supply ship *Patagonia* in the Azores by a British privateer.<sup>28</sup> Unmanageable targeting of French and neutral ships threatened to undermine the very naval strength that successfully established Allied dominance in the Mediterranean.

Spanish relations worsened with the war in the Pyrenees grinding to a halt. On 17 July, the French repulsed the first attempt to breakthrough at Perpignan, throwing the Spanish army back with moderate losses. Ricardos expressed his trepidation to Godoy over the changing military situation on the north side of the Pyrenees. He received daily reports of Republican reinforcements, estimating that 30,000 French National Guardsmen joined the army opposing his passage in late July. By the

<sup>26</sup> General Ricardos Report to Godoy, 13 July 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 27. Jupp, *Lord Grenville*, 153-155; Godoy, *Memoirs of Don Manuel de Godoy, Prince of the Peace*, 1:263-265.

<sup>27</sup> Grenville to St. Helens, 9 August 1793, *Ibid*; Jupp, *Lord Grenville*, 159. For the same discussion with the Russians, see Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt: The Reluctant Transition*, 2:301-303.

<sup>28</sup> St. Helens to Grenville, 31 July 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 27.



beginning of August, Spanish and French armies faced each other between Narbonne and Perpignan, hindering efforts to move north with enemy fortresses still in the rear of Ricardos' force. The port of Collioure held out against the Spanish, preventing a linkup with Lángara's squadron. In August 1793, fighting on the Pyrenees frontier slowed to a war of position in the difficult terrain.<sup>29</sup>

Ironically, as the Allies in the Mediterranean gained strength, cooperation between the Spanish and British weakened. The possibility of a quick victory over France made the Spanish government suspicious of Coalition intentions in southern Europe.<sup>30</sup> Paranoia concerning Spain's status in relation to the other Allies gripped Carlos IV and his council. The Bourbon monarch wanted assurances that major military and political decisions received his approval.<sup>31</sup> Despite requests from London for the two fleets to cooperate, the British and Spanish conducted separate operations. Lángara remained in support of Ricardos at Roussillon while Hood blockaded the French ports alone. To get into the Mediterranean, the British government needed an alliance with the Spanish. Yet despite the collapse of French naval resistance, the prospects of a unified force between the traditional enemies faltered.<sup>32</sup>

In a shaky relationship with the Spanish and the military situation in the Pyrenees stagnated, the Cabinet turned to the Sardinians to explore prospects of an offensive into Nice or Savoy. In contrast, the Sardinian alliance represented the traditional ideas of the balance of power unimpeded by rhetoric and animosity. Grenville guaranteed the return

<sup>29</sup> Ricardos report to Godoy, translated and submitted by St. Helens to Grenville, 23 July 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 27; Adrian Muriel, *Historia de Carlos IV*, vol 1 (Madrid: Atlas, 1959), 159-160; Esdaile, *The Spanish Army in the Peninsular War*, 38.

<sup>30</sup> Lynch, *Bourbon Spain, 1700-1808*, 390.

<sup>31</sup> Godoy to St. Helens, 26 August 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 28.

<sup>32</sup> George III to John Pitt, the Earl of Chatham, 23 July 1793, George III, King of Great Britain, *The Later Correspondence of George III*, 2:63; St. Helens to Grenville, 3 July 1793 in Rose, *Lord Hood and the Defense of Toulon*, 116.

of Savoy and Nice to Sardinia, one of Britain's stated war aims. Victor Amadeus III also promised to loan the British a large body of troops, giving the Cabinet a free hand in shaping activities on that frontier. In a choice between the radical, uncontrollable Spanish and the malleable Sardinians, the Alpine frontier became a more attractive option for British support during the summer.<sup>33</sup>

The Federalists Revolt also helped set the conditions for an offensive in the Alps. Lyon, beset with counter-revolutionary fervor, rested on the lines of communication between Paris and the frontier. General François Christophe de Kellermann, the commander of the Army of the Alps, understood the danger facing his depots from the Federalists. Under the direction of Representative-on-Mission Edmond Louis Alexis Dubois-Crancé, he withdrew a large portion of his troops from Savoy on 9 July to march against Lyon.<sup>34</sup> The National Convention also withdrew troops from the *Armée d'Italie* in the midst of an attack on the Sardinian positions at l'Authion massif in Nice to reinforce Carteaux's army.<sup>35</sup> Weakening of defenses on the Alpine frontier represented an opportunity for exploitation by the Allies.<sup>36</sup>

The Cabinet, however, lacked accurate information on their investment in the Sardinian army. On 8 July, Dundas dispatched General Henry Phipps, the Earl of Mulgrave, from London to inspect the Sardinian war effort.<sup>37</sup> Dundas required an assessment of the condition and logistical capabilities of the Allies from an experienced senior officer. An inspection by the British general weighed the realities of taking the

<sup>33</sup> Kingdom of Great Britain, *A Collection of State Papers*, 1:10-11; Bergadani, *Vittorio Amedeo III*, 215.

<sup>34</sup> Paul R. Hanson, *The Jacobin Republic under Fire: The Federalist Revolt in the French Revolution* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2003), 218-219; Krebs et Moris, *Campagnes dans les Alpes pendant la Révolution*, 263-264.

<sup>35</sup> Phipps, *Armies of the First French Republic*, 3:92-93.

<sup>36</sup> Bergadani, *Vittorio Amedeo III*, 228-229.

<sup>37</sup> Matheson, *the Life of Henry Dundas*, 182.

offensive with the current forces in the Mediterranean.<sup>38</sup> Dundas also wanted to ensure that the Sardinians maintained the 50,000 troops stipulated in the alliance.<sup>39</sup> Mulgrave's task intended to weigh the strength of the Allies in northern Italy and their impact on British interests in the region.

The ministry needed to assess the probability of an offensive in Nice during the summer. Nice's location as a maritime province presented an opportunity for Hood's fleet to support the Sardinian army. Consequently, Dundas wanted all offensive objectives in the Mediterranean placed on hold until "Nice is reconquered, which is to be our first operation of the campaign."<sup>40</sup> An attack into Nice would capitalize on the Federalist movement without becoming inextricably involved in the political crisis. Mulgrave's duties included developing a campaign plan with Hood and the allied commanders in northern Italy and managing the war from Turin.

An offensive in the Alps also presented a way to approach the wary Austrians for assistance in the Mediterranean. Thugut disapproved of Sardinian troop requests without territorial compensation in Piedmont.<sup>41</sup> In efforts to circumvent the terrible relationship between Vienna and Turin, the British government appealed directly to the Austrian foreign minister for military aid. Trevor wrote to Ambassador Morton Eden in Vienna throughout the summer in pursuit of the 5,000 troops stationed idly in Milan.<sup>42</sup> The British ambassador to the Sardinian court also asked for assistance from Grenville in attempts to persuade Holy Roman Emperor Francis II of the importance of

<sup>38</sup> Furber, *Henry Dundas*, 99; Dundas to Grenville, July 1793, *Dropmore Manuscripts*, 2:407-408.

<sup>39</sup> Sherwig, *Guineas and Gunpowder*, 24-25.

<sup>40</sup> Henry Dundas to Henry Phipps, 8 July 1793, TNA, Home Office Division 50, Piece 455; Ireland, *The Fall of Toulon*, 144-145; Rose, *Lord Hood and the Defense of Toulon*, 17.

<sup>41</sup> Bianchi, *Storia della Monarchia Piemontese*, 2:98-101.

<sup>42</sup> Trevor to Eden, 14 August 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 67, Piece 12.

reestablishing the pre-war border between Italy and France.<sup>43</sup> The Cabinet never gained an appreciation of Austrian demands for compensation in Italy in exchange for Sardinian support. Despite endless letters from Eden, Trevor, and Grenville, British negotiations with Thugut for military aid in Italy during the summer failed.<sup>44</sup>

Fortunately, Neapolitan troops mobilizing in southern Italy promised an easier alternative to the manpower problem. The arrival of Hood's fleet in the Mediterranean triggered the mobilization of Naples on 23 July, supervised by Hamilton and Acton.<sup>45</sup> On 7 August, the Neapolitan government suppressed the Jacobin clubs in the capital, eliminating any resistance to the court joining the Allies. Terms of the alliance lent six ships of the line and 4,000 troops for British use.<sup>46</sup> Grenville responded to Neapolitan preparations by reasserting the importance of keeping Hood's fleet in support of the Italian armies. He wrote to Dundas recommending that the Neapolitans reinforce the war effort in Nice after they completed their mobilization at the end of August.<sup>47</sup>

However, Mulgrave's report to Dundas in mid-August discouraged the Cabinet from any further thoughts of an Allied offensive. The British general rated the Sardinian army inadequate for an advance in Nice. Despite the reorganization efforts of Vins and his Austrian advisors, the force consisted of inexperienced and undisciplined troops. The army on paper numbered approximately 54,000 men but the actual strength amounted to only about 30,000, with a large portion securing the capital and conducting

<sup>43</sup> Trevor to Grenville, 24 July 1793, *ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> Schroeder, *Transformation of European Politics*, 130; Duffy, "British War Policy with Austria", 53. Vins possessed roughly 6,000 Austrian troops already fighting in the Sardinian army in Nice.

<sup>45</sup> Hamilton to Grenville, 23 July 1793, Foreign Office 70, Piece 6, TNA; Conforti, *Napoli dal 1789 al 1796*, 146-147.

<sup>46</sup> Hamilton, *Memoirs of Emma, Lady Hamilton*, 140-141; Colletta, *Histoire du royaume de Naples, depuis Charles VII jusqu'à Ferdinand IV, 1734 à 1825*, 1:316-317.

<sup>47</sup> Grenville to Dundas, 7 August 1793, *Dropmore Manuscripts*, 2:411-412.

internal defense.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, Sardinian forces lacked the logistical support from Turin for an offensive. Mulgrave recommended training and preparation behind the strong defenses along the Alpine passes and Saorgio until the Sardinians reached a level of proficiency to ensure success in a future campaign.<sup>49</sup>

The Austrian officers with the Sardinian army agreed with Mulgrave's assessment. When asked the feasibility of capturing Nice during the summer, Vins replied "certainly not, with the number and nature of troops I have now upon the frontiers. They are reduced by action, by sickness, and above all by desertion which has been excessive."<sup>50</sup> The aged Austrian general explained that the Sardinians could only remain on the defensive. Reports indicated the French troops in Nice still outnumbered Allied troops by three to one, lowering the probability of success. Combined with the expectation of the first snows in late September, Vins and his officers believed that the Sardinians could not advance without significant support from the Coalition.<sup>51</sup>

Victor Amadeus III and the Savoyard leadership disagreed. Commanders from the three Sardinian armies wanted to simultaneously attack into Nice and Savoy before the first snows.<sup>52</sup> Vins, Mulgrave, and Ignazio Thaon di Revel, the son of Piedmontese General Carlo Thaon di Revel St. André, travelled to Genoa on 12 August to meet with

<sup>48</sup> Trevor to Grenville, 7 August 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 67, Piece 12.

<sup>49</sup> Mulgrave to Dundas, 19 August 1793, TNA, Home Office 50, Piece 455.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Trevor to Grenville, 7 August 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 67, Piece 12.; Mulgrave to Dundas, 10 August 1793, TNA, Home Office Division 50, Piece 455; Mulgrave to Dundas, Second Letter, 19 August 1793, TNA, Home Office Division 50, Piece 455; Boycott-Brown, *The Road to Rivoli*, 77-78; Bergadani, *Vittorio Amedeo III*, 188.

<sup>52</sup> Henry Costa, Marquis de Saint-Genis de Beauregard, *Un Homme d'Arrefois: Souvenirs Recueillis par Arriere-Petit-Fils le Marquis Costa de Beauregard* (Paris: E Plon et Cie, 1877), 159.

Hood's representatives to ask for support from the fleet.<sup>53</sup> In the harbor, the officers conducted a council of war to discuss the prospects of a coordinated operation between the Austro-Sardinian army and the British navy against Nice in September. Revel wanted a naval bombardment or diversion to help rupture the defenses along the Var River west of the city of Nice.<sup>54</sup> An offensive operation envisioned by the Sardinian commanders sought to take advantage of both the timing of the attack as well as the benefit of Allied naval superiority.

From a diplomatic and political standpoint, the plan matched British strategic policy. The incapacitation of the French fleet allowed for the concentration of warships along the coast of Nice. Without enough troops for a large-scale attack from the sea, the British contribution amounted to either a diversion or battery fire from the ships. The plan constituted little risk for British forces performing in a limited capacity. A coordinated effort aligned well with the overall British goal of assisting the Allies without overcommitting in a land campaign.<sup>55</sup>

Nevertheless, the British admiral refused to support the operation for a number of reasons. Naval officers reconnoitering the coastline of Nice considered the defenses formidable, particularly at the mouth of the Var. Hood admitted to the Allied commanders he possessed only two infantry regiments serving as marines in his fleet and could not risk them in a diversion. He also reiterated that the blockade of the French ports remained the primary task of the British fleet. With his forces already

<sup>53</sup> Ilari et al, *La Guerra della Alpi*, 88; Bianchi, *Storia della Monarchia Piemontese*, 2:128-130; Bergadani, *Vittorio Amedeo III*, 229-230. The Sardinian government conducted their own council of war on 20 August and set 7 September as the date for the Nice offensive.

<sup>54</sup> Vins to Hood, 12 August 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 67, Piece 12; Krebs et Moris, *Campagnes dans les Alpes pendant la Révolution*, 306-307; Carutti, *Storia della Corte di Savoia*, 234.

<sup>55</sup> Trevor to Hood, 21 July 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391.

stretched, he could not withdraw ships from the blockade to assist in an operation. If the Sardinians attacked the French in Nice, the British admiral did not intend to help them.<sup>56</sup>

Depressing reports from Mulgrave and the inability to formulate an offensive plan to take advantage of the situation in France returned the Cabinet to a defensive strategy. The weakness of the Mediterranean allies offset any advantages gained by the revolts in southern France. With the approval of Pitt, Dundas conceded on 27 August, “nothing of vigorous exertion can be accomplished in the Mediterranean this campaign, and any attempt on our part to supply the deficiency of the Sardinian Force would only cripple our other important exertions in Flanders and the West Indies.” Dundas ordered Mulgrave to remain in Turin to advise Victor Amadeus III and ensure that the Sardinian army enacted operational and logistical reforms while in winter quarters.<sup>57</sup> In the minds of the controlling ministers, the theater reached an *impasse*, which would remain until the Allies could resolve the organizational and manpower problems.

With a halt to a summer offensive in the Mediterranean, Dundas decided to use the winter to make major strategic decisions in preparation for the 1794 campaign season. The condition of the Sardinian army demanded that the British intercede in negotiations with the Austrians to ensure both powers contributed significant troop numbers to the region. He also planned to consolidate 12,000 British troops at Gibraltar to train for a Mediterranean offensive as early as May 1794. This proposed army included regiments stationed in Ireland and on General Charles Grey’s expedition in the

<sup>56</sup> Hood to Trevor, 13 August 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 67, Piece 12; Mulgrave to Dundas, 19 August 1793, TNA, Home Office 50, Piece 455; Bergadani, *Vittorio Amedeo III*, 229-230; Krebs et Moris, *Campagnes dans les Alpes pendant la Révolution*, 307.

<sup>57</sup> Dundas to Mulgrave, 27 August 1793, TNA, Home Office Division 50, Piece 455.

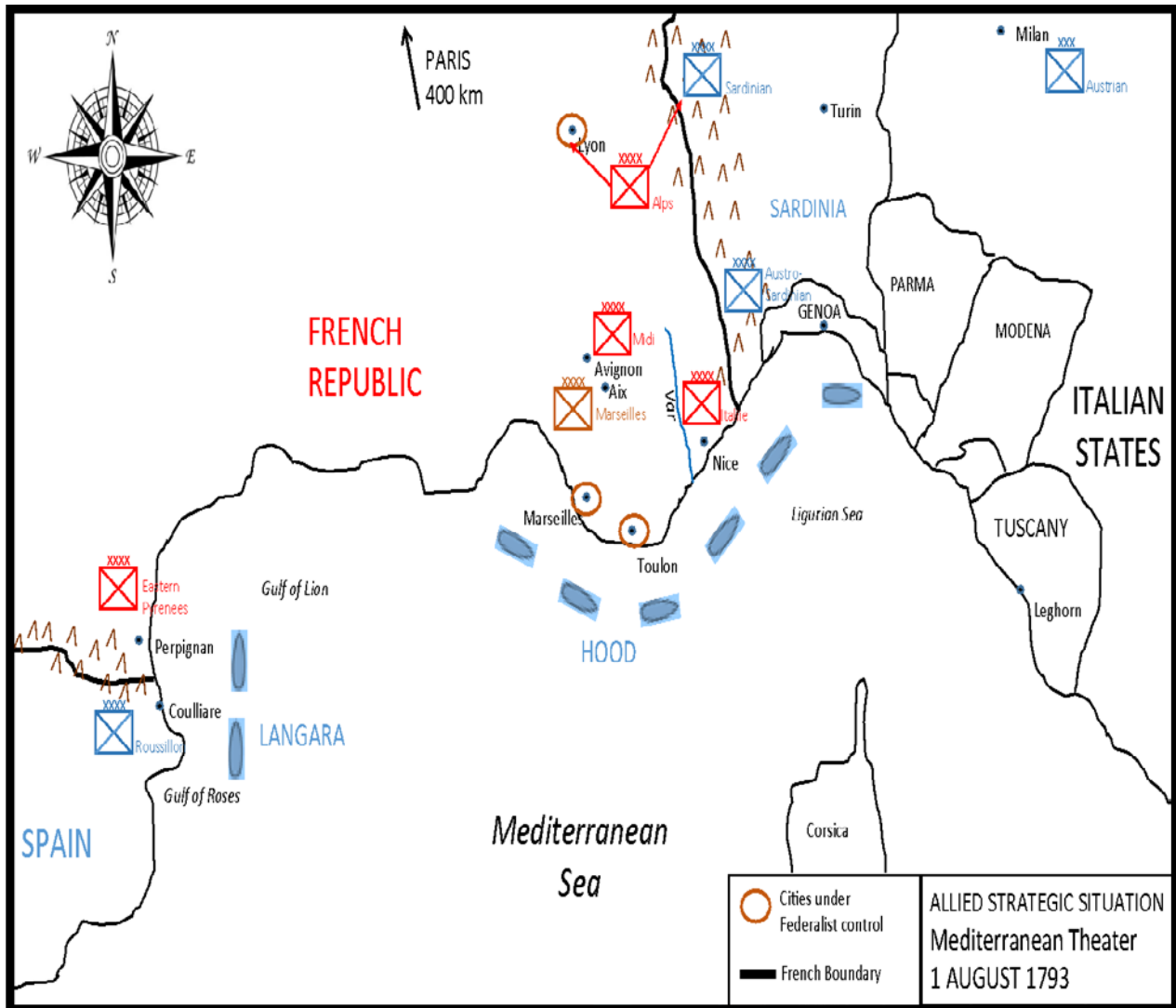
Caribbean.<sup>58</sup> Dundas authorized the purchase of Swiss and German mercenaries to augment this force with the hopes of creating an army of nearly 50,000 troops. Conceptualization of a scheme of this magnitude required major diplomatic and military efforts during the winter. Planning on this timeline bordered on the fanciful, requiring first a completion of a campaign in the West Indies and a consolidation of troops from across Europe in less than ten months. From the perspective of the Home Secretary, the first offensive in the Mediterranean remained on hold until a number of strategic movements could be made between campaign seasons.<sup>59</sup>

Throughout July and August, British strategy in the Mediterranean remained conservative. Aided by the counter-revolution, Allied troops secured both frontiers to protect the economic policies enforced by the navy. Due to continued ideological and political differences, the British Cabinet distanced itself from the Spanish while preparing to reestablish the Sardinian border with France. In the process of searching for agency in southern Europe, the Cabinet explored the possibilities of a summer offensive in Nice. After allied conditions proved unfavorable, the ministry adopted a patient stance toward the theater until troop strengths and Coalition conditions improved. Unfortunately for British policymakers, decisions made at Toulon at the end of August forced the Cabinet to reassess this position.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. Dundas expressed the same strategic thought in a similar letter to Pitt and the Cabinet on 24 August 1793, TNA, Home Office Division 50, Piece 455; Duffy, *Soldiers, Sugar, and Seapower*, 25.

<sup>59</sup> Rose, *Lord Hood and the Defense of Toulon*, 17; Jupp, *Lord Grenville*, 160-161.





Map 2. Strategic Situation, 1 August 1793

As the ministry contemplated strategic options during the summer, the Republican armies began to overwhelm the Federalists. On 24 July, the *Armée du Midi* recaptured Avignon. The Army of Marseilles, composed of counter-revolutionaries from that city, withdrew south under pressure from Carteaux's army.<sup>60</sup> The two forces clashed again near Aix-en-Provence on 11 August where a Republican victory unraveled the provincial army, sending it in a retreat south toward Marseilles. Carteaux followed the battle with popular trials and executions of condemned dissidents in Aix

<sup>60</sup> Phipps, *The Armies of the First French Republic*, 3:91-93.

before continuing the march of his army south.<sup>61</sup> With Lyon under siege from the Army of the Alps, Carteaux and Kellermann threatened to surround and extinguish the pockets of urban Federalist resistance.

British naval officers blockading the coastline observed the deteriorating conditions in the French port cities. Nelson, commander of the *Agamemnon*, a 74-gun warship stationed off of Toulon, appraised the situation in a letter to his wife:

Marseilles I am sure would almost be put into our hands if we acted against it. They generally wish for nothing more than our possessing it when they would get something to eat. They are now almost starving, only six days' of provisions in the place. Marseillois have been declared traitors by the Convention.<sup>62</sup>

Attempting to use the arsenal and the warships in port to bargain with Carteaux, the Federalists in Toulon threatened that if the Republican general “does not make peace with us [the British] before winter comes on they will set fire to the fleet.”<sup>63</sup> With news of Carteaux’s victory at Avignon, Hood and his senior officers expected the civilian leadership in the ports to either ask for British protection or request evacuation before the arrival of the Republicans.<sup>64</sup>

With the naval blockade in place and the Republicans marching south, the Federalists possessed only two viable choices: starvation or the guillotine. The cities lacked food, with resources squeezed from the sea and the interior of France. As the situation grew bleaker, commissioners from Marseilles conducted meetings to determine the safest course of action. After heated debates over the merits of

<sup>61</sup> Godechot, *The Counter-Revolution Doctrine and Action, 1789-1802*, 242-244; Schama, *Citizens*, 750; Pons, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la ville de Toulon en 1793*, 60-61.

<sup>62</sup> Nelson to Frances Nelson, 20 August 1793, in Horatio Nelson, *Nelson's Letters to his Wife and Other Documents, 1785-1831*, ed. George P. B. Naish (London: Navy Records Society, 1958), 88.

<sup>63</sup> Josiah Nesbit to Frances Nelson, 20 August 1793, *ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> Schama, *Citizens*, 752; Unaddressed letter from Hood, 31 July 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391.

negotiating with either Hood or Carteaux, the leaders of the revolt contacted the British admiral on 19 August for permission to receive grain convoys from Italy.<sup>65</sup> Desperation, not cooperation, forced the commissioners to appeal for British protection.

Hood's decision to negotiate with the desperate Federalists indicated a major shift in British policy. On 23 August, the admiral issued a draft declaration to both cities, welcoming representatives onto the HMS *Victory* for negotiations. Hood demanded the surrender of the two ports and a restoration of the French monarchy. In return, he offered protection from the armies of the National Convention and the easing of the blockade. The admiral also promised to protect the ships and arsenal for the rightful French government. Consequently, Hood offered to undo the political neutrality Grenville maintained for over two years and aligned the British government with the counter-revolution.<sup>66</sup>

The Federalists lacked the time or the space to negotiate with Hood. On 24 August, Federalist commander *Maréchal-de-Camp* Scipion-Joseph-Alexandre de Villeneuve arrived at Marseilles to inform the commissioners of the defeat of his departmental army just north of the city. The *Armée du Midi* now camped only one day's march away from Marseilles. That night, the Federalist leadership fled to the relative safety of Toulon, leaving the city to the vengeance of the representatives-on-mission and Carteaux's soldiers.<sup>67</sup> Reports reached Toulon the next day that the *Armée du Midi* completed the "sad work with the Marseillois."<sup>68</sup> Carteaux's army

<sup>65</sup> William Scott, *Terror and Repression in Revolutionary Marseilles* (London: MacMillan Press, 1973), 124-125. Crook, *Toulon in War and Revolution*, 139.

<sup>66</sup> Hood to the Commissioners of Toulon, 23 August 1793, TNA, Admiralty 1, Piece 391; *Naval Chronicle*, 2:25.

<sup>67</sup> Scott, *Terror and Repression in Revolutionary Marseilles*, 126.

<sup>68</sup> Horatio Nelson to his wife, Frances Nelson, 7 September 1793, in Nelson, *Nelson's Letters to his Wife and Other Documents, 1785-1831*, 89-90.

conducted “all manner of enormities” in renaming France’s biggest port “*La ville-sans-nom*.”<sup>69</sup> With the loss of Marseilles, the British navy became the only choice for the Federalists.

The impending danger from the Republicans overcame any resistance from the commissioners. On 25 August, the representatives returned to the *Victory* with their answer to Hood’s terms.<sup>70</sup> Toulon’s officials promised to accept British protection, couching their appeal in apocalyptic terms:

Bloody societies had by hands of executioners depopulated this once happy country which had found in you a rival, not an enemy...it is to Great Britain that we owe our resurrection. It is you my Lord who are going to drag us from our tombs in which we are already buried – Reanimate the ashes of the dead and protect that precious child who should receive from your hands the broken scepter of his unfortunate father.<sup>71</sup>

Federalist commissioners also promised popular support for the British admiral from all Frenchmen. Fear drove a willingness to accept Hood as their protector to avoid a similar disaster as the one that befell the population of Marseilles.<sup>72</sup>

Hood’s alliance with the counter-revolutionaries also delivered the French fleet into British hands. The Federalists moved quickly to ensure the cooperation of the sailors loitering in the dockyards. A group of city leaders appealed to the naval officers at Toulon to revolt against the National Convention. Admiral Jean-Honoré de Trogoff de Kerlessy decided to surrender the arsenal and the fleet, ending any fears of a formal resistance to a British occupation. Four hundred sailors refused and marched to Marseilles to join Carteaux. Nelson attributed the changing attitude among the sailors

<sup>69</sup> Hood to Stephens, 29 August 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391.

<sup>70</sup> Hood to Stephens, 25 August 1793, in Cottin, *Toulon et les Anglais en 1793*, 413.

<sup>71</sup> Commissioners of Toulon to Hood, 29 August 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391; Rose, *Lord Hood and the Defense of Toulon*, 27.

<sup>72</sup> *Naval Chronicle*, 2:26; Crook, *Toulon in War and Revolution*, 139.

to the starvation of the population, writing that “the old saying that hunger will tame a lion was never stronger exemplified.”<sup>73</sup> The French fleet, no longer a military force, now became a political tool for maintaining the alliance between the Federalists and the British.

With the conclusion of negotiations, Hood also transformed the strategic status of the French port. On 27 August, the commissioners of Toulon agreed to a declaration in support of Louis XVII in the form of a constitutional monarchy.<sup>74</sup> The next day, Hood submitted a revised declaration to the city’s officials. In the document, he emphasized the custody of Toulon not as British indemnity for the war, but in safekeeping for the government of Louis XVII. Both sides endorsed the treaty and Allied troops landed to secure the forts around the harbor.<sup>75</sup> In the plans of the British Cabinet that spring, Toulon held significance as a strategic military target. With Hood’s declaration, the city now held political and ideological value.

Hood’s aggressive action failed to account for the relative strength of forces in the region. The admiral expressed concerns during negotiations with the commissioners that he lacked the troops to defend the city.<sup>76</sup> Capturing Toulon complicated the manpower situation in the Mediterranean, already identified as a Coalition problem. Hood also considered Carteaux’s army on the verge of collapse, a gross misperception of the military situation. He wrote to the Admiralty during the

<sup>73</sup> Nelson to his wife, Frances Nelson, 7 September 1793, in Horatio Nelson, *Nelson’s Letters to his Wife and Other Documents, 1785-1831*, 89-90; Crook, *Toulon in War and Revolution*, 141.

<sup>74</sup> Langara to Hood, 26 August 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391; *London Gazette*, 14 September 1793.

<sup>75</sup> Hood to the Commissioners of Toulon, 28 August 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391; Nelson to Trevor, 31 August 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 67, Piece 12; *London Gazette*, 13 September 1793, in Kingdom of Great Britain, *A Collection of State Papers Relative to the War against France*, 491.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 28-29.

negotiations that “had I 5,000 or 6,000 troops with me, the war would be at an end.”<sup>77</sup>

Republican armies actually gained strength during August while Allied forces, including the counter-revolutionaries, remained divided. An invasion from the sea only intensified the need for more Coalition troops in the region.

To solve his manpower problem, Hood appealed to the Spanish for support. He wrote to Lángara stationed off of Rosas to send the squadron of Admiral Federico Carlos Gravina y Nápoli to assist with securing the port and the arsenal.<sup>78</sup> Ricardos, in siege positions around Perpignan, dispatched two Spanish infantry regiments overland to Rosas to embark on transports for Toulon.<sup>79</sup> Not content with only sending Gravina’s force, Lángara withdrew his entire fleet from its supporting role on the Spanish coastline to join the British, arriving in time to participate with Hood in the formal surrender of the city on 29 August.<sup>80</sup> The Spanish commitment quickly transformed Toulon into a Coalition operation.

The presence of Spanish troops at Toulon undermined British diplomatic efforts to minimize the influence of Godoy. Grenville and St. Helens attempted to repair relations with the Spanish during the summer while also keeping them at arms-length.<sup>81</sup> Government officials at Madrid considered British designs in the Mediterranean disingenuous. Seizing Toulon reinforced the belief among Spanish politicians that the British only wanted to claim another Gibraltar from the war. Godoy not only sent forces to Toulon to defend the port, but also to keep an eye on the British and intercept any

<sup>77</sup> Hood to Stephens, 25 August 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391.

<sup>78</sup> Langara to Hood, 26 August 1793, in Cottin, *Toulon et les Anglais en 1793*, 414; Muriel, *Historia de Carlos IV*, 161; Jean Pierre Edmond Jurien de La Gravière, *Sketches of the Last Naval War*, vol. 2 (London: Longman, Brown, and Green, 1848), 178-179.

<sup>79</sup> Anthony Merry, vice-consul in Madrid, to Grenville, 29 August 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 28.

<sup>80</sup> Langara to Hood, 30 August 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391; Rose, *Lord Hood and the Defense of Toulon*, 31.

<sup>81</sup> Jupp, *Lord Grenville*, 159;

plans for a permanent occupation of the Mediterranean. Lángara and Gravina arrived not only as allies, but also as informants for their government on British plans.<sup>82</sup> The union of British and Spanish forces at Toulon diverged from the work Grenville and his ambassador accomplished during the summer to create a working relationship with Madrid.

Anglo-Spanish cooperation also forced a compromise on war policy. After uniting, the two admirals asked for the surrender of all French armies in the region. Hood's belief that French forces hung on the verge of collapse echoed the pleas from the Spanish government earlier in the summer for an invasion of France.<sup>83</sup> The admirals dispatched a letter to Carteaux's army requesting that the Republican soldiers "behold in us your deliverers and protectors! Not as entertaining views of conquest and aggrandizement, but as to establish a regular government in France, to recall that happiness so long fled from your country and to restore Louis XVII upon the throne of his fathers."<sup>84</sup> Lángara and Hood offered a general amnesty for all Republican troops in Carteaux's army. They ordered all the armies fighting in Italy, Nice, Villafrance, and the southern part of France to swear immediate allegiance to Louis XVII. With these pronouncements, Hood became the mouthpiece not of his own Cabinet, but of Godoy and Carlos IV.<sup>85</sup>

Despite Hood and Lángara's optimism, the military situation around Toulon only continued to deteriorate. Finished with punishing the population of Marseilles, Carteaux

<sup>82</sup> Chastenet, *Godoy: Master of Spain, 1792-1808*, 63; Esdaile, *The Spanish Army in the Peninsular War*, 39-40.

<sup>83</sup> Hood to Stephens, 13 September 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391.

<sup>84</sup> Proclamation from Hood and Langara to the French army under General Carteaux, 4 September 1793, *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

wasted no time marching on Toulon. To strengthen his army, the French general formed three battalions and six separate companies of volunteers at Marseilles. Carteaux expressed his belief that the Allies had overextended themselves by capturing Toulon. "I hope in two or three days to have the pleasure to chastise the town of Toulon," he wrote, "as well as Lyon and to cut the inhabitants in pieces, as well as the English and Spanish scoundrels."<sup>86</sup> Far from being defeated, the Republican army prepared to lay siege to the port.

The demands of the city's defenses also began to warp the strategic purpose of the British fleet. On the night of 1 September, the vanguard of Carteaux's army, a force of almost 1,000 Republican troops, reached the outskirts of Toulon. Captain George Elphinstone, commander of the *Robust*, marched out with an amalgamated force of Allied soldiers and sailors to block the route. This first skirmish reinforced in Hood the belief that he could hold the city, despite the reports of thousands of Republican troops arriving from Marseilles and Nice. Stretched thin but confident, Hood and Lángara pulled 450 more sailors from the ships to reinforce the port's defenses. The British admiral incapacitated his fleet to man the fortifications.<sup>87</sup> Despite the responsibility of blockading France and enforcing the embargo system in the Mediterranean, a majority of his ships lay idle in Toulon while their crews defended ramparts and gun emplacements.

Coming on the heels of Toulon, the Sardinian offensive also complicated the manpower problem. Following the council of war in August, the Sardinian armies

<sup>86</sup> Carteaux to Moriet, commander of the vanguard of the *Armée du Midi*, Intercepted correspondence, 29 September 1793, TNA, Admiralty 1, Piece 391; Phipps, *Armies of the First French Republic*, 3:112-113.

<sup>87</sup> Hood to Stephens, 3 September 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391; Kevin McCranie, *Admiral Lord Keith and the Naval War against Napoleon* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2006), 35-36.



initiated skirmishes along the frontier and in the alpine passes above Piedmont. On 1 September, two Sardinian armies attacked over the mountains into Savoy. Six days later, the Austro-Sardinian army attacked alone into Nice to capitalize on the counter-revolution.<sup>88</sup> Less than three weeks earlier, Hood rejected an opportunity for coordinated action in Nice, citing his lack of troops to support a limited offensive. Now the British and Sardinians, fighting for different objectives, became competitors for the scant amount of reinforcements available.<sup>89</sup>

Toulon and the Sardinian offensives divided British officials in the region over the prioritization of the fronts. Trevor complained to Grenville that the capture of the French fleet resulted in only a tactical victory because the blockade already neutralized the naval threat. The British ambassador at Turin wanted Hood to return to the Var to support the Sardinians. He argued that Nice continued to be the main theater for the Allies.<sup>90</sup> Mulgrave offered a similar assessment, arguing that the *Armée d'Italie* still held forward positions near Saorgio and *la Tende*. If the Allies did not move quickly, the Republicans would use their interior lines to defeat the Coalition in detail.<sup>91</sup> With concern, British diplomats and military officers close to the situation questioned the shift of focus from Nice to Toulon.

A war initially fought for cooperative security now found a British admiral demanding troops from across the region. Hamilton learned of the surrender of the port on 5 September and anticipated requests for sending the Neapolitan army to Toulon. Acton ejected the French ambassador from Naples on 10 September and the

<sup>88</sup> Krebs et Moris, *Campagnes dans les Alpes pendant la Révolution*, 274-276; Carutti, *Storia della corte di Savoia*, 1:235.

<sup>89</sup> Boycott-Brown, *The Road to Rivoli*, 78.

<sup>90</sup> Trevor to Grenville, 1 September 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 67, Piece 12.

<sup>91</sup> Mulgrave to Dundas, 1 September 1793, *ibid*, Home Office Division 50, Piece 455.

Neapolitan fleet set sail two days later.<sup>92</sup> In one of his first letters after the fall of the French port, Hood wrote to Hamilton and Acton to request that Neapolitan forces be sent directly to Toulon instead of Turin. Nelson delivered the letter acting as a liaison between Hood and the court of Ferdinand IV.<sup>93</sup>

While the British admiral intended to reverse the relationship with the Italian allies to exploit the opportunity at Toulon, the military situation turned British policy toward Madrid. Although Grenville continuously reiterated the need to avoid a declaration on the French government, Hood readily accepted the Spanish and Federalist desires for a war on the Revolution. The ambassador to Spain expressed his frustration that Hood failed to coordinate his plans with the diplomatic service. Toulon accelerated the war faster than St. Helens or the Spanish government anticipated. If the capture of the port precipitated an end to the war, the British government still possessed no long-term agreement with Spain<sup>94</sup> The changing strategic stance towards France forced St. Helens to reverse course and reengage Godoy concerning the Anglo-Spanish partnership and a post-war alliance.

Hood's decision to enter Toulon highlighted his lack of knowledge concerning the strategic situation in the Mediterranean. A friend of members in the Cabinet and a personal favorite of George III, Hood wrote to the Admiralty after the fall of Toulon

<sup>92</sup> Hamilton to Grenville, 2 September 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 70, Piece 6. For the language of the treaty and the forces required by the British, see British Treaty of Alliance with the Kingdom of Naples, July 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 94, Piece 271; Hamilton to Grenville, 10 September 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 70, Piece 6; Colletta, *Histoire du royaume de Naples, depuis Charles VII jusqu'à Ferdinand IV, 1734 à 1825*, 1:316-317.

<sup>93</sup> Hood to Hamilton, 25 August 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391; Hamilton, *Memoirs of Emma, Lady Hamilton*, 145; Conforti, *Napoli dal 1789 al 1796*, 148-149.

<sup>94</sup> St. Helens to Grenville, 29 August 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 28.

stating that he acted in the “wishes of both the sovereign and the prime minister.”<sup>95</sup>

While Hood acted impulsively in capturing the fleet and the port, a share of the blame can be attributed to the Cabinet for mismanagement of the war. None of Hood’s orders discussed the changing situation in southern France. Pitt and the controlling ministers in London provided Hood with only a very narrow understanding of the larger diplomatic and political implications of the war.<sup>96</sup> The Cabinet and regional diplomats failed to provide the British admiral with the most current information on the Allies and the enemy. Capturing Toulon developed from a lack of communication between the policymakers, diplomats, and the regional military commander.

Arriving in London on 14 September, the official news of the capture of Toulon prompted celebrations in the Cabinet and Parliament. On the heels of the failure at Dunkirk, politicians looked forward to positive news from the war.<sup>97</sup> Capture of the port indicated the anticipated collapse of French resistance, reinforced by the optimism Hood displayed in his dispatches.<sup>98</sup> Pitt suggested to George III that while Toulon “was perhaps not in all respects as one wishes,” governments in the Mediterranean should

<sup>95</sup> Hood to Stephens, 29 August 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391; Colin Pengelly, *Sir Samuel Hood and the Battle of the Chesapeake* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009), 8-9; Michael Duffy, “Samuel Hood, First Viscount Hood”, *Precursors of Nelson: British Admirals of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Peter Le Fevre and Richard Harding (Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole, 2000), 249-266.

<sup>96</sup> Admiralty Orders, 1793, in Rose, *Admiral Hood and the Defense of Toulon*, 95-99.

<sup>97</sup> Gilbert Elliot, to his wife, 14 September 1793, in Countess of Minto, *Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot, First Earl of Minto* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1874), 2:161; Samuel Rice, *The Life of a Regimental officer during the Great War, 1793-1815*, ed. A. F. Mockler-Ferryman (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1913), 30. The Allies, under the command of the Duke of York, invested Dunkirk between 24 August and 8 September to satisfy British government demands for a bargaining chip in northern Europe and to support the other Continental powers. French forces relieved Dunkirk at Hondshoote between 6 and 8 September.

<sup>98</sup> Matheson, *The Life of Henry Dundas*, 187; Adams, *The Influence of Grenville on Pitt’s Foreign Policy*, 22; Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt: The Reluctant Transition*, 2:304.

resist attacks by the Convention to regain control of the arsenal and fleet.<sup>99</sup> Toulon validated the attrition strategy employed in the Mediterranean and policymakers considered it decisive to the war effort.

However, the timing of the surrender threw British war planning into chaos. When word arrived of the capture, Dundas remained preoccupied with his strategic vision of moving troops from the West Indies to the Mediterranean over the winter. The consolidation of troops during the lull in fighting raised expectations for a successful campaign in the 1794. He declared that “aid, stores, and money to the allies” remain the best way for the British government to force France to surrender.<sup>100</sup> The immediacy of Toulon forced Dundas to hunt for reinforcements from across Europe and accelerated his plans for the spring of 1794.

In terms of ideology, Hood forced the hand of the Cabinet on an official policy toward the French monarchy. Pitt issued a sharp rebuke of Hood for making a strategic decision without government input, stating that “the true ground of the war was to repel an unjust and unprovoked aggression against His Majesty, and his allies.”<sup>101</sup> However, the confidence Hood expressed in his letters over the capture of the city helped ease the Cabinet into the acceptance of regime change in France as policy. Grenville and Pitt gambled on Toulon, setting to work on declarations that intended to redefine British policy toward France more in line with Hood and the Spanish.<sup>102</sup> A military officer defined the political and ideological aspects of the war for his superiors, forcing the Cabinet to become reactionary to the events in the Mediterranean.

<sup>99</sup> William Pitt to King George III, 14 September 1793, George III, King of Great Britain, *The Later Correspondence of George III*, 2:91; Pitt to Grenville, 7 September 1793, *Dropmore Manuscripts*, 2:422.

<sup>100</sup> Dundas to Mulgrave, 10 September 1793, TNA, Home Office Division 50, Piece 455.

<sup>101</sup> Rose, *Pitt and the Great War*, 145.

<sup>102</sup> Mori, “The British Government and the Bourbon Restoration: The Occupation of Toulon, 1793,” 700.

Pitt's administration during the summer remained conservative, focused on economic warfare while supporting the allies on the frontiers. The Cabinet avoided any discussion of the counter-revolutionary movement or the *émigrés*. After the Federalist movement in southern France presented favorable conditions for an offensive, the British ministers explored the opportunity because it presented a reserved approach toward France, one not muddied by the political and diplomatic ramifications of support for the counter-revolution. Moreover, when conditions in the Sardinian army and the disorganized nature of the counter-revolutionaries foretold failure, the Cabinet retreated into their original war policy until the strategic situation became more favorable for an offensive.

Toulon marked a total policy reversal. Hood assumed not just an operational offensive against France, but a strategic one. The British admiral dictated strategy to the Cabinet, transforming the situation in the Mediterranean from containment to an anti-Republican invasion of French soil. Diplomatically, the occupation indicated a merger with Spanish interests that Grenville desperately avoided and lacked the manpower to support. For the rest of the 1793 campaign season, the Cabinet became desperate to merge policy with the changing military situation in the Mediterranean. With formal declarations in support of the Federalists, the tasks for the fall of 1793 included support to an amalgamated offensive while reassessing the political and diplomatic ramifications of Toulon.

## CHAPTER 6

### GRABBING THE TIGER BY THE TAIL: TOULON AND STRATEGIC PARALYSIS, SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER 1793

With the capture of Toulon, the direction of the war effort dramatically changed in the Mediterranean. Until August 1793, the Pitt administration maintained a conservative approach to the war against Revolutionary France. With Hood's capture of the port, transitioning to the offensive required political and diplomatic steps to realign policy with the changing military situation. Over the course of the four-month occupation, British forces diverged from supporting the Allied armies to becoming the main effort, drawing men and material from across the region to simply maintain control of Toulon. This demand on Britain's Mediterranean allies strained diplomacy and complicated the critical manpower shortages. A breakdown in communication between leadership in the region and the Cabinet undermined the near-perfect coordination required to overcome the numerical superiority of the French Republican armies. Therefore, Hood's strategic offensive taken during the summer paralyzed the British war effort and negatively impacted the region throughout the fall of 1793.

By September, the war in the Mediterranean devolved into disorganized individual struggles from the Alps to the Pyrenees. At Toulon, the British and Spanish held the city's defenses against Carreaux and the troops dispatched from the *Armée d'Italie* under the command of Major-General Jean François Cornu de La Poype.<sup>1</sup> In Nice, the Austro-Sardinian army under the joint command of *Feldmarschal-Leutnant* Michelangelo Alessandro Colli-Marchi and Piedmontese General St. André advanced slowly westward against strong Republican opposition. Sardinian armies in the Petit-St.

<sup>1</sup> Unnamed officer to St. Helens, 14 September 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 28.

Bernard Pass and Aosta attacked over the Alps to recapture Savoy.<sup>2</sup> Kellermann continued to besiege Lyon which, along with Toulon, represented the last vestiges of the Federalist movement.<sup>3</sup> Dispersed, uncoordinated forces lacking unity of command became the defining feature of the Allied war effort in the Mediterranean.

Initial hopes rested on the arrival of a relief force from northern Italy. While the Pitt administration already knew the weaknesses of the Sardinians, it persisted in the expectation that the Republican armies soon would collapse. Trevor emphasized to the Cabinet the importance of pressing the Alpine frontier to reconnect with resistance movements at Lyon and Toulon.<sup>4</sup> Success in the campaign required these geographically divergent points to hold the Republicans until the Sardinians broke through on the frontier.<sup>5</sup> Dundas and Grenville depended on pressure at the frontier to capitalize on Toulon.<sup>6</sup> Throughout September, the Cabinet waited patiently for news of a breakthrough anywhere in region to validate its strategy.<sup>7</sup>

At Toulon, the magnitude of defending an incomplete fortification system became evident to the British and Spanish officers. While the chain of forts and redoubts in theory protected the city, many remained unfinished. French military engineers left incomplete works on the Malbuesquet near the western edges of the city. Even worse, the forts did not mutually protect each other, making the loss of one redoubt a threat to the entire system.<sup>8</sup> Allied officers assessed many of the fortresses to be too small to garrison a significant force. Houses and trees obstructed fields of fire, making many of

<sup>2</sup> Bergadani, *Vittorio Amedeo III*, 241-242; Boycott-Brown, *The Road to Rivoli*, 78.

<sup>3</sup> Krebs et Moris, *Campagnes dans les Alpes Pendant la Revolution*, 357-359.

<sup>4</sup> Trevor to Grenville, 4 September 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 67, Piece 12, no. 64; Trevor to Grenville, 7 September 1793, *ibid*, Foreign Office 67, Piece 12, no 65.

<sup>5</sup> Andress, *the French Revolution and the People*, 223.

<sup>6</sup> Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt: The Reluctant Transition*, 2:307.

<sup>7</sup> Andress, *the French Revolution and the People*, 223.

<sup>8</sup> McCranie, *Lord Keith*, 36; Chuquet, *Dugommier, 1738-1794*, 49.

the gun emplacements worthless to the defenders.<sup>9</sup> Without significant reinforcements, the unfinished chain of earthworks and fortifications could not resist a determined attack on multiple points.

Furthermore, the ratio of attackers to defenders continued to increase in favor of the Republicans. Troops arrived from Marseilles and Nice daily, strengthening the lines outside the city. To oppose them, Hood counted on 7 September just over 1,000 British soldiers along with 3,000 Spanish troops. The overwhelming demands of the defensive system left only 700 allied sailors to man the 33 warships anchored in the harbor. With no immediate reinforcements scheduled to arrive, manpower became the critical factor in holding the port for any length of time.<sup>10</sup>

To increase the chances of successfully defending the port, the British admiral decided on a number of initiatives to help alleviate his shortage of troops. Naval officers organized local men who served in the French National Guard to submit to “British discipline and pay” in the name of Louis XVII.<sup>11</sup> Hood also planned to send the disgruntled Republican sailors back to France not through the line to Carteaux, but under guard to Brest. With the city being attacked every day, Hood could not afford to leave a danger loitering on the docks in his rear. In coordination with Trogoff, the embattled commander of the Toulon fleet, Hood sent the French sailors to Brest on four disarmed frigates under British escort on 13 September.<sup>12</sup> These efforts maximized

<sup>9</sup> Unnamed officer to St. Helens, 14 September 1793, TNA, Foreign Office Division 72, Piece 28; Rose, *Lord Hood and the Defense of Toulon*, 26-27; Ireland, *The Fall of Toulon*, 193-194.

<sup>10</sup> Hood to Stephens, 7 September 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391; Rose, *Lord Hood and the Defense of Toulon*, 31.

<sup>11</sup> Unnamed officer to St. Helens, 14 September 1793, TNA, Foreign Office Division 72, Piece 28.

<sup>12</sup> Hood to Stephens, 13 September 1793, *ibid.*



available resources while waiting for support from the British government and the regional allies.<sup>13</sup>

After mobilizing the French port for the British war effort, Hood stressed the primacy of Toulon to the Allies. A British officer arrived at Vin's headquarters on 14 September in the midst of the campaign in Nice. He pleaded with the Austrian and Sardinian commanders for reinforcements. In response, Victor Amadeus dispatched 800 troops from Nice to support the operation. Pre-war promises for coalition support in exchange for British currency now forced the Sardinians to divert resources from their offensive.<sup>14</sup> In return, Hood left only two ships and no troops to support Allied operations, deeming naval pressure on Genoa a more important priority.<sup>15</sup> The Anglo-Sardinian relationship, created with an emphasis on the security of the Alps, now began to sap strength from the offensives in Nice and Savoy.

Britain's allies in the Mediterranean initially responded favorably to Hood's calls for support. During the month of September, reinforcements arrived from across the region. The Neapolitan contingent sailed into the harbor with 2 ships of the line, 4 smaller warships, and 2,000 troops on 27 September. The British ships *Bedford* and *Leviathan* shuttled the 800 Sardinian troops between Oneglia and Toulon the same day.<sup>16</sup> By the end of September, Allied forces at Toulon totaled over 7,000 troops, symbolizing a complete reorganization of priorities in the region.<sup>17</sup>

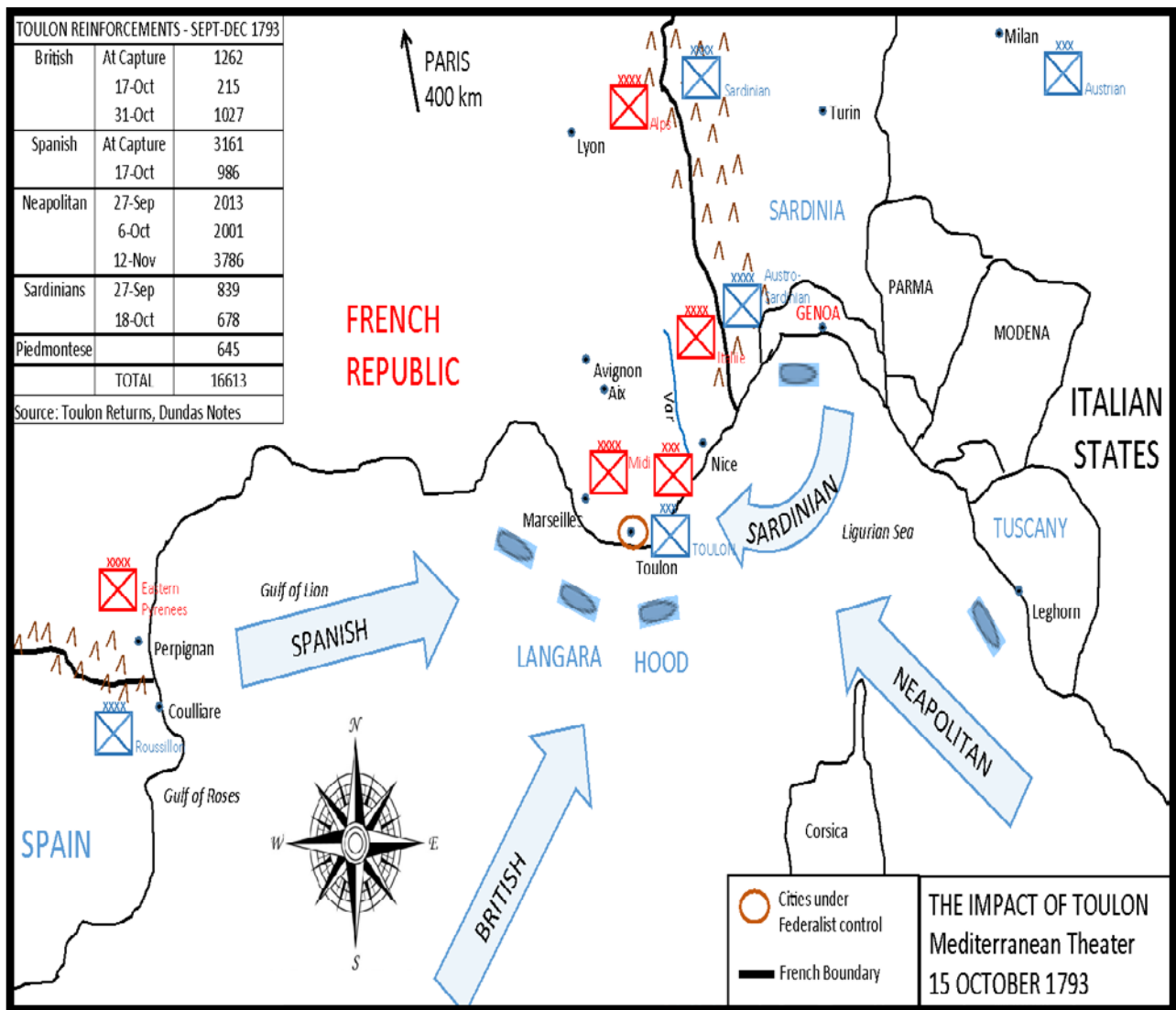
<sup>13</sup> Fortescue, *The History of the British Army*, 4:158.

<sup>14</sup> Rose, *Lord Hood and the Defense of Toulon*, 37.

<sup>15</sup> Hood to Gell, 27 September 1793, AGC/4/32 Gell Papers, National Maritime Museum (NMM), Greenwich, United Kingdom.

<sup>16</sup> Hood to Stephens, 27 September 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391; *Naval Chronicle*, 2:29; Edward Howard, *The Memoirs of Sir Sidney Smith* (London: Richard Bentley, 1836) 1:22-23.

<sup>17</sup> This number differs depending on the source. This personnel strength is taken by calculating the numbers reported to Henry Dundas on 30 September totaled 7275. Additional Manuscripts MS21198, BL.



Map 3. Strategic Situation, 15 October 1793

Despite a continued deficiency in manpower, Hood expanded the war effort in the Mediterranean.<sup>18</sup> Corsica offered a way to shorten British supply lines and extend a hand to anti-French patriots on the island. With assurances from Paoli of Corsican support, Hood dispatched Commodore Robert Linzee, his brother-in-law, on 21

<sup>18</sup> Fortescue, *The History of the British Army*, 4:158; Hood to Paoli, 29 September 1793, in Rose, *Lord Hood*, 139.

September to attack the French held fortifications at San Fiorenzo.<sup>19</sup> After a week of contrary winds, Linzee opened his attack at 3:00 on the morning of 31 September. Despite intelligence reports that portrayed the fortifications as susceptible to modern cannon fire and guarantees of a Corsican attack from the landward side, the commodore made little progress in reducing the defenses. After Paoli's attack failed to materialize, the British commander broke off his bombardment in disgust.<sup>20</sup> Linzee desired a continued blockade on Bastia and San Fiorenzo at the north end of the island but any continued naval presence off the coast of Corsica required the further extension of scant British resources.<sup>21</sup>

Attacking Corsica at this juncture of the campaign illuminated two strategic problems plaguing the British. First, Linzee lacked an amphibious capability due to the requirements at Toulon. A deficiency in British manpower eliminated any flexibility in Hood's fleet. Against a determined enemy, naval power without a land force could not achieve success. Second, the attack on Corsica continued to undermine Anglo-Spanish relations, as Godoy already mistrusted Grenville's intentions in the Mediterranean. In the wake of Toulon and the tension over the British war effort, an attack on Corsica indicated another example of the Royal Navy not acting in good faith toward its Spanish allies.<sup>22</sup> Instead, Hood continued to proceed unilaterally in the region irrespective of his lagging resources and unhappy allies.

The acceleration of operations in the Mediterranean combined with Hood's optimism prevented the British government from keeping pace. With news of Toulon,

<sup>19</sup> Francesco Maria Giamarchi, *Vita Politica di Pasquale Paoli* (Bastia: Tipografia Fabiani, 1858), 375-376.

<sup>20</sup> Linzee to Hood, 1 October 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391; *London Gazette*, 10 November 1793.

<sup>21</sup> Linzee to Hood, 7 October 1793, *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Langara to Hood, 20 November 1793, *The Naval Chronicle*, 2:193-194.

Pitt initially stressed the need to appeal to both the Austrians and the Spanish to maximize the opportunity created in the region.<sup>23</sup> However, Hood's dispatches confused British officials in London, creating a sense of overconfidence in the Cabinet while complicating strategic decisions:

Good news from Toulon. A small body of English, Spanish, and French have dispossessed Carreaux, the general of the *Sans Couloottes*, from a strong post which he had taken before Marseilles and Toulon, with great slaughter, and the loss of all his cannon. Lord Hood says he is not now afraid of twenty Carreauxs. This seems to make our footing at Toulon more secure.<sup>24</sup>

Confidence that Hood expressed in his letters in September added to the confusion on how to support the Mediterranean theater. After lacking military options, Pitt now had to contend with this dramatic change in strategy and quicker tempo.<sup>25</sup> If the Cabinet lacked a sense of urgency in reinforcing Toulon, Hood shares the blame for failing to recognize and communicate to his political superiors the desperate situation he faced in the Mediterranean.

Influenced by Hood's optimistic dispatches, the ministers recognized that the theater demanded reorganization. In September, the Cabinet developed its strategic vision for the Mediterranean based on a number of requirements. First, the current Allied force needed to hold the port until the end of October, a reasonable expectation considering the positive reports arriving from Hood and other officers.<sup>26</sup> Grenville also required increased pressure on the Spanish and Sardinian courts to weaken the

<sup>23</sup> William Pitt to Grenville, 7 September 1793, *Dropmore Manuscript*, 2:422; Pitt to George III, 14 September 1793, George III, King of Great Britain, *The Latter Correspondence of George III*, 2:91-92.

<sup>24</sup> Gilbert Elliot to his wife, 21 September 1793, in Countess of Minto, *Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot*, 2:164. Despite being a Whig, Elliot remained part of the inner circle in the government due to his service and as a compromise between the two parties during wartime.

<sup>25</sup> Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt: The Reluctant Transition*, 2:303; Grenville to Buckingham, 15 September 1793, in the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, *Memoirs of the Court and Cabinets of George III*, (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1853), 2:241-242.

<sup>26</sup> Matheson, *Life of Henry Dundas*, 186; Grenville to Dundas, 16 September 1793, *Dropmore Manuscripts*, 2:425.

defense of their own countries to support the common cause. Trevor and Eden also needed to find a way to induce the Austrians to commit troops to the theater.<sup>27</sup> The diplomatic capital associated with influencing these courts was tremendous given the difficulties of the previous spring in assembling a Coalition. Along with the movement of British troops into the theater, appeals to the Allies became the only way of ensuring the security of Toulon through the winter.

Yet the Cabinet's priorities on the distribution of British manpower changed dramatically after the capture of Toulon. Pitt issued orders in early September to withdraw 5,000 Hessian troops from Flanders along with two companies at Gibraltar for service in southern France.<sup>28</sup> On the eve of the West Indies campaign, Dundas promised troops to Hood that were destined for the Grey-Jervis expedition to the Caribbean.<sup>29</sup> Pitt calculated that 33,000 troops could be collected by the end of October, including 3,000 Spanish troops, 6,000 Neapolitans, 9,000 Sardinians, and 5,000 Austrians. Both officials estimated that the entire Allied force in Provence by the spring of 1794 totaled in excess of 60,000 troops. Given the difficulties with the Spanish and the dispersion of troops, the plan required perfect execution of both military and diplomatic initiatives in the Mediterranean to reach a force anywhere near the numbers dreamed by Whitehall.<sup>30</sup>

Paradoxically, the reports from Hood also influenced the Cabinet that the Mediterranean war neared completion. Successes in the naval war meant Hood

<sup>27</sup> Duffy, "British War Policy," 52-53.

<sup>28</sup> Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt: The Reluctant Transition*, 2:305-306.

<sup>29</sup> Furber, *Henry Dundas, First Viscount Melville*, 100.

<sup>30</sup> Rose, *Pitt and the Great War*, 151; Patrick Kelly, "Strategy and Counter-Revolution: The Journal of Sir Gilbert Elliot, 1-22 September 1793," *The English Historical Review* 98, no. 397 (April 1983): 340; Hague, *William Pitt the Younger*, 288.

possessed excess warships that could be used in other theaters. Dundas ordered the British admiral on 28 September to send Rear Admiral John Gell's division of six ships of the line to join Jervis on his way to the Caribbean. Gell's force intended for the West Indies included part of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiments already committed to the defenses at Toulon.<sup>31</sup> Despite his reports, Hood required every ship to maintain the blockade, influence the region, and defend the French port. A lack of clarity in the communications between Hood and the Cabinet initiated dramatic fluctuations in the strategic movement of troops and ships.

In a similar fashion, the differences between British policy and Hood's declaration for Louis XVII created a major rift in the Cabinet. Grenville held the opinion that the British government should not support a monarchy, despite the overtures from the Count of Provence and the Spanish. His position reflected a continuity of British foreign policy since the outbreak of the Revolution.<sup>32</sup> However, Pitt's desire to commit to the Federalists reflected the current military situation as well as a compromise with the Allies.<sup>33</sup> Throughout September and October, Pitt and Grenville modified military and political manifestos for approval by George III and Parliament with no unified answer on the question of a future government in France. Weeks passed without London issuing guidance to the diplomats and military commanders over the new goals of the British war effort.

Struggles in the ministry over British war policy continued to hamper relations with Spain. The presence of Lángara's troops at Toulon forced Grenville to seek

<sup>31</sup> Michael Duffy, *Soldiers, Sugar, and Seapower*, 49;

<sup>32</sup> Adams, *The Influence of Grenville on Pitt's Foreign Policy*, 19-21; Marquis of Buckingham to Grenville, 29 September 1793, *Dropmore Manuscripts*, 2:429.

<sup>33</sup> Pitt to Grenville, 5 October 1793, *Dropmore Manuscripts*, 2:438-439.

Godoy's approval of the new British stance towards the Revolution. On 4 October, he submitted his revised political declaration to St. Helens for review by the Spanish court. In his cover letter to St. Helens, Grenville succinctly placed the problem of Toulon within the context of the differing attitudes of London and Madrid over regime change:

Hood's declaration falls completely in line with how the Spanish wanted to fight the war. The King feels that reestablishing a monarchy in France entirely impracticable. If we are going to reestablish external and internal tranquility, we need to do it with the least amount of disruption. . . He [King George III] does not want to dictate a constitution.<sup>34</sup>

Fragmentation of British war policy made coordination with London's most valuable ally in the Mediterranean even more difficult.<sup>35</sup>

Hood's reports also forced Grenville to restart discussions with Godoy over a long-term agreement. Fear that the war might end without an Anglo-Spanish treaty regenerated energy towards reaching a solution. British merchants also pressured the foreign minister to sign a commercial treaty with the Spanish while they remained allies.<sup>36</sup> St. Helens complied with Grenville's wishes, applying pressure on Godoy to finalize an agreement concerning Nootka Sound and a permanent partnership. Yet St. Helens complained of the difficulties, calling the negotiations "a trial of strength between Godoy's procrastination and mine of patience and either the coalition came apart or the war ended."<sup>37</sup>

With many divergent political relationships in the Mediterranean, the Cabinet needed a representative at Toulon to ensure that any strategic decisions complied with

<sup>34</sup> Grenville to St. Helens, 4 October 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 28.

<sup>35</sup> Burke to Elliot, 22 September 1793, in Countess of Minto, *Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot*, 2:167-169.

<sup>36</sup> Committee of the Merchants of London to the Commissioners of the Committee of Trade in the Privy Council, 2 October 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 28.

<sup>37</sup> St. Helens to Grenville, 16 October 1793, *ibid*; Chastenet, *Godoy*, 63.

the intentions of the British government. Pitt and George III chose Gilbert Elliot, the Earl of Minto, to execute these important duties. The administration originally identified him as the political commissar for Dunkirk but after that operation failed, the ministers shifted his destination to southern France.<sup>38</sup> Despite his Whig political views, the ministers expected Elliot to provide an objective view of the war and allow Hood to focus on military matters. Dispatching Elliot to Toulon represented the need for the Cabinet to reassert political control over the theater amid the rising stakes in the region.

Lacking clear direction from London, Hood had turned to gunboat diplomacy to draw a clear line between friend and foe in the Mediterranean. The British admiral sought to exploit the success at Toulon to precipitate the surrender of French forces throughout the region. Linzee, back from the Corsican debacle, communicated the admiral's demands to the French ships anchored at Villefrance. In Hood's words, if any forces in the region refused to surrender, "starve them until they accept it."<sup>39</sup> He also dispatched Gell to seize French warships in Genoa's harbor to force the Doge to eject the representatives of the National Convention.<sup>40</sup> Hood pursued a similar approach to Ferdinand III of Tuscany, demanding the departure of the French ambassador and the denouncement of the Revolution.<sup>41</sup> In all these efforts, Hood employed the Toulon declaration-- a document still not approved in London--as a pretext for his aggressive

<sup>38</sup> Henry Dundas to King George III, 24 September 1793, in George III, King of Great Britain, *The Latter Correspondence of George III*, 2:102-103.

<sup>39</sup> Hood to Robert Linzee, 8 September 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391.

<sup>40</sup> Hood to Gell, 26 September 1793, AGC/4/32 Gell Papers, NMM; Greenwich; Hood to Gell, 26 September 1793, in J. Holland Rose, *Lord Hood and the Defense of Toulon*, 136-137. For an succinct understanding of the Republic of Genoa's difficulty in maintaining neutrality and the pressure placed on it by both the French and British diplomats, see Adolphus Lance, *The History of Italy from the Fall of Venice* (London: James Hagger, 1859), 2:17-18.

<sup>41</sup> Francis Plowden, *A Short History of the British Empire during the past twenty months* (Dublin: P. Byrne, 1794), 264; Hood to Hervey, 24 September 1793, Egerton Manuscripts MS2638, BL.



behavior. Hood continued to redefine British policy by forcing states to choose between Great Britain and Revolutionary France.

Meanwhile, the situation at Toulon turned more desperate. Republican troops seized the heights of St. Antoine from the Spanish on 30 September and emplaced a battery at the position to threaten the harbor.<sup>42</sup> Mulgrave, now in command of the city's defenses, cannibalized British, Neapolitan, and Sardinian troops from other positions to launch a counterattack. On 1 October, his amalgamated brigade seized the position in a nighttime attack, spiking the cannons before being forced to retire when threatened by a larger Republican force.<sup>43</sup> Three days after the attack on St. Antoine, Carteaux launched an attack on Fort Mulgrave and the redoubt at Cepet, a new position built by the Allies to reinforce the southwest corner of the defense line. Led by a French deserter and Spanish guides, a group of Sardinian troops and British Marines recaptured these two batteries.<sup>44</sup> Although Mulgrave expressed high praise for the "Army of Toulon," particularly the Allied troops fighting alongside the British regiments, they failed to change the situation at Toulon.<sup>45</sup> Despite efforts from coalition troops to retake these positions, the Republican armies dominated the terrain around the city by the beginning of October.<sup>46</sup>

In reporting the fierce fighting around Toulon, Hood expressed confidence in his briefs to the Cabinet and Admiralty on his ability to hold the fortifications against the Republicans. In reference to the fighting at St. Antoine on 30 September:

<sup>42</sup> Account from French Prisoners captured after the fighting on 1 October 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391.

<sup>43</sup> McCranie, *Admiral Lord Keith*, 36-37; *Naval Chronicle*, 2:29; Returns from the fighting, 1 October 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391.

<sup>44</sup> Captain Robert Brereton, Commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of Marines, to Lord Mulgrave, 9 October 1793, *ibid*.

<sup>45</sup> Mulgrave's report, 1 October 1793, *ibid*.

<sup>46</sup> Mulgrave to Hood, 3 October 1793, AGC/4/32 Gell Papers, NMM.

The action was short but hot. The enemy had upon the heights from 1800 to 2000 men, the flower of the Eastern army, not a fourth part of which, we are well informed, ever returned to H. Q. for what did not fall by bullet or bayonet broke their necks in tumbling headlong over the precipices in their flight.<sup>47</sup>

Regardless of lingering concerns over the security of the city, Hood's confidence raised expectations in the Cabinet that the port could be held through the winter.

Consequently, the ministry's vision of Toulon continued to be inhibited by Hood's positive reports and a lack of understanding of the military situation.<sup>48</sup>

Overall, Coalition positions in southern France deteriorated as Republican forces unraveled the disorganized Allied advances. Austro-Sardinian attacks achieved little success in driving off the *Armée d'Italie* entrenched around the city of Nice.<sup>49</sup> Lyon fell on 9 October after a two-month siege of the city. The next day, Kellermann dispatched troops eastward to oppose the Sardinian offensive in Savoy. Without coordination between the Allied armies, the Republicans gained the upper hand in the campaign by exterminating the Federalist threat that undermined their positions in the Alps.<sup>50</sup>

While Hood struggled to maintain control at Toulon, his efforts to eliminate neutrality in Italy proved successful. On 6 October, Gell's force attacked the *Modeste* along with several smaller ships in the harbor of Genoa. When the survivors of the attack swam ashore and hid in the dockyard, Gell's troops landed and stormed the warehouses, destroying merchandise intended for French ports. The incident brought the ire of both Hood and the Jacobin representatives, who accused the other of violating

<sup>47</sup> Hood to Stephens, 7 October 1793, in Rose, *Lord Hood and the Defense of Toulon*, 141.

<sup>48</sup> Marquis of Buckingham to Grenville, 4 October 1793, *Dropmore Manuscripts*, 2:436.

<sup>49</sup> Boycott-Brown, *The Road to Rivoli*, 80.

<sup>50</sup> Godechot, *Counter-Revolution*, 240; Ross, *Quest for Victory*, 73; Victor Bénigne Flour de Saint-Genis, *Histoire de Savoie* (Chambery: Bonne, Conte-Grand, et Co., 1869), 3:168-169; Bergadani, *Vittorio Amedeo III*, 237-238; Phipps, *Armies of the First French Republic*, 3:94-99. For the fall of Lyon and the executions of the counter-revolutionaries, see Palmer, *Twelve who Ruled*, 153-66.

Genoa's neutrality. Nevertheless, Gell's attack broke the resolve of the Doge to remain neutral as he immediately swore allegiance to the National Convention.<sup>51</sup>

Under similar pressure, the Tuscan government ended its neutrality and joined the coalition. After the incident at Genoa, Gell arrived at Leghorn to force Ferdinand to accede to British demands. Thugut already applied significant pressure to the grand duke to follow the lead of Francis II and side with the Mediterranean allies. On 8 October, the Tuscan government complied with British demands to throw out the French ambassador.<sup>52</sup> Faced with maritime pressure and stiff encouragement from Austria, Ferdinand III complied with Allied demands.

Back in London, the lack of clarity concerning the situation allowed the British government to accede to the economic pressure of restarting an economic relationship with France. On 9 October, the Privy Council passed a declaration establishing trade with Toulon in accordance with the Anglo-French commercial agreement of 1786. Under Allied control, the port received special protection from the British government, as the rest of France remained blockaded.<sup>53</sup> The Cabinet also directed privateers away from the port, allowing neutral shipping to enter Toulon unmolested. Although the Federalists lacked London's political support, in strictly economic terms the Pitt administration recognized them as non-belligerents and representatives of the true rulers of France.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>51</sup> The Kingdom of Great Britain, *A Collection of State Papers*, 1:385-388.

<sup>52</sup> Thugut to Colloredo, 1 September 1793, in Thugut, *Vertrauliche Briefe des Freiherrn von Thugut*, 36; Hearder, *Italy in the Age of the Risorgimento, 1790-1870*, 70-71, Hood to Gell, 19 October 1793, AGC/4/32 Gell Papers, NMM.

<sup>53</sup> Order in Council, 1 October 1793, TNA, Privy Council 2, Piece 139.

<sup>54</sup> Order in Council, 23 October 1793, *ibid.*

Pressure from merchants to restart economic relations with France represented a desire to reinvigorate Mediterranean trade. With the French fleet captured and Allied forces in control of the maritime routes, British merchants with interests in the Mediterranean lobbied Grenville in October for a return to unprotected trade in the region by 1 January 1794. With most of the Coalition's naval power concentrated at Toulon, this represented a dangerous proposition. Combined with the need to return to a peacetime economic situation in the region, the political intentions of the Cabinet became even more muddled under the weight of the systemic relationship between the government and the merchant class.<sup>55</sup>

For the defenders at Toulon, the lifting of the embargo came at an opportune time. A bloated population in the city placed tremendous strain on the food supply as Carteaux's soldiers dammed the water flowing into three of the seven mills that supported the city.<sup>56</sup> Hood now required maritime support to sustain the Allied troops as well as the population of Toulon. Feeding the soldiers in the defenses became an increasingly difficult task.<sup>57</sup> In addition, many of the British soldiers lacked clothing and uniform items for a winter campaign even in the mild conditions on the coast of Provence, a problem alleviated by increased merchant traffic in the port.<sup>58</sup> Pitt and his ministers had envisioned a war of logistics between the French and the Allies, but now Hood's force suffered similar hardships due to the Republican blockade of the city.

By mid-October, Hood lacked favorable military options. With the fall of Lyon, the allied force at Toulon depended on diplomatic negotiations and the strategic maneuvers

<sup>55</sup> Commissioners of the Merchants of London to Grenville, 5 October 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 28; Jupp, *Lord Grenville*, 159.

<sup>56</sup> Hood to Stephens, 7 October 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391.

<sup>57</sup> Hood to Stephens, 29 October 1793, *ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> Hood to Stephens, 11 October 1793, *ibid.*

of the British government to find more reinforcements. Offensives continued in the Alps and the Pyrenees, preventing a major diversion of troops to Toulon. Hood lacked soldiers and resources to hold his position, much less advance against the Republicans who now significantly outnumbered his force. A withdrawal from Toulon risked sacrificing the relationship with the French people and the Spanish government. Destroying the fleet or removing it from the harbor violated the treaty with the Federalists. Hood's only hope remained the arrival of vast reinforcements before the Republicans stormed the city.

On top of his debilitating situation, no policymaker in London fully understood his plight. Pitt and Dundas possessed scant information on any of Hood's military decisions. "With respect to Corsica, I do not see what instructions can be sent until we hear further," the British prime minister commented on 10 October concerning Linzee's attack on San Fiorenzo. "Lord Hood has only informed the Admiralty shortly of his having sent a squadron, in consequences of representations brought by Captain Masserin. But he mentions no particulars, and not a word of instructions given."<sup>59</sup> With little information on the progress of the theater, the Cabinet struggled to present clear directives to its diplomats or its forces.

Coordination between the military commander and the Mediterranean diplomats suffered a similar problem. St. Helens lost contact with Hood during the occupation, hindering negotiations with the Spanish government. Godoy intended to prevent his fleet from being surrounded by Republican troops at Toulon. He planned in October to unilaterally withdraw Lángara from the port with a portion of the captured French warships to sail for Barcelona or Carthagená on the Catalan coastline. St. Helens

<sup>59</sup> Pitt to Grenville, 10 October 1793, *Dropmore Manuscripts*, 2:441-442.

complained to Grenville about the lack of coordination over Toulon and the frustration at receiving all information through the Spanish ministry. With Godoy threatening to break up the defense of Toulon, Hood continued to exacerbate the strained diplomatic conditions with Madrid.<sup>60</sup>

Godoy's concerns masked a desire to wrestle control of Toulon away from the British. Lángara demanded a share of the command, citing the parity between British and Spanish forces.<sup>61</sup> Hood refused, arguing that the commissioners of the city surrendered only to the British. Reports of the command problem at Toulon reached both Allied capitals. Senior officers finally compromised by creating parallel command structures, requiring careful negotiations between them for any decision. Both Godoy and Pitt planned to send generals that outranked the present commanders to prevent the other state from gaining control of the port and the Toulon fleet.<sup>62</sup> The fate of the campaign and Toulon depended on which government gained control of the situation. Problems over seniority turned the "Army of Toulon" into an organization incapable of rapid decisions or action.

The Spanish also threatened to introduce the *émigrés* to the increasingly dysfunctional situation. Godoy and Carlos desired the Count of Provence to travel to Toulon to rally the counter-revolutionaries. Grenville and Pitt, while still trying to create policy toward the French government, cited the tenuous nature of Toulon and an unwillingness to side with the unpredictable and violent French aristocracy. After the

<sup>60</sup> St. Helens to Grenville, 9 October 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 28; Rose, *Pitt and the Great War*, 156-157.

<sup>61</sup> Gooch and Ward, *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, 241; Langara to Hood, undated, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 28, no. 1; Hood to Langara, 19 October 1793, *ibid*; Langara to Hood, 23 October 1793, *ibid*.

<sup>62</sup> Lynch, *Bourbon Spain*, 390; Ireland, *The Fall of Toulon*, 232-233.

Spanish formally requested the Count of Provence's presence at Toulon, Grenville alerted British diplomats in northern Italy on 22 October to intercept his party travelling from Verona to prevent a further radicalization of the political situation.<sup>63</sup> Thus, the relationship between the Spanish and the *émigrés* continued to significantly impact the strategic situation in the Mediterranean.

Meanwhile, the Allied campaign in southern Europe deteriorated. Despite early progress, the Austro-Sardinian advance stagnated due to inclement weather and French resistance. Kellermann, the overall commander in the Alps, marched troops from Lyon to join the defenders in Nice. Colli and St. André attacked the Republican division of Jacques François Dugommier at Gilette on 18 October, winning a small but indecisive victory. Three days later, Dugommier counterattacked at Utelle, regaining the ground he lost in the previous engagement.<sup>64</sup> Fighting continued as both sides made limited advances in the first snowstorms of the year, but Allied hopes of reclaiming Nice and relieving the siege of Toulon by an overland offensive faded.

At the end of October, the Cabinet finally recognized the influence of Toulon in redefining British war aims. George III's speech to Parliament on 29 October reflected a position that reconciled the situation created by Hood and the Spanish:

As His Majesty has hitherto been compelled to carry on war against the people of France collectively, to treat as enemies all those who suffer their property and blood to be lavished in support of an unjust aggression, His Majesty would see with infinite satisfaction the opportunity of making exceptions in favor of the well-disposed inhabitants of other parts of France, as he has already done with respect to those of Toulon. The King promises, on his part, the suspension of

<sup>63</sup> Godechot, *The Counter-Revolution Doctrine and Action, 1789-1804*, 245; Muriel, *Historia de Carlos IV*, 162-163; Godoy, *Memoirs of Manuel de Godoy*, 1:265-266; Grenville to St. Helens, 22 October 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 28, no. 27.

<sup>64</sup> Arthus Chuquet. *Dugommier, 1738-1794* (Paris: Albert Fontemoing, 1904), 42-43; Bianchi, *Storia della Monarchia Piemonte*, 2:136-138; Ferdinando Augusto Pinelli, *Storia Militare del Piemonte in Continuazione di quella del Saluzo cioe dalla pace d'Aquisgrana sino ai di nostri, 1748-1850*, (Torino: Presso T Degiorgis, 1854), 1:302-305.

hostilities, friendship, and...security and protection to all those who, by declaring for a monarchical government, shall shake off the yoke of a sanguinity anarchy.<sup>65</sup>

Grenville overcame his differences with Pitt by cleverly wording the government's 20 November declaration concerning Toulon. The official British position now recommended a monarchy as the best choice of government but stated that the decision ultimately rested with the French people. Language in the declaration satisfied the Allies and reconciled Hood's proclamation at Toulon. Grenville also saved the administration from the criticism of Parliamentary opposition.<sup>66</sup> With this manifesto, Great Britain awkwardly declared war on the French Revolution.

Unfortunately for Grenville and Dundas, the strategic situation no longer resembled British plans from the previous spring. Both envisioned the theater as a system of embargo and cooperative security in the Mediterranean to freeze French influence. Hood now requested logistical support and food from Italy and the Barbary regencies. Three-fourths of all troops at Toulon manned defenses with only a small reserve to control the city and port. "I have officers, servants, and musicians manning the ramparts," Hood finally admitted to the Admiralty.<sup>67</sup> Strategic plans to pressure resources and capitalize on overstretched French armies backfired with a large portion of Allied forces being trapped at Toulon.

The theater also experienced a resurgence of French naval power, an ominous omen for British economic interests. With a lack of British warships actively patrolling in the region, French frigates became more brazen in the fall of 1793. Republican

<sup>65</sup> Declaration by King George III, 29 October 1793, Cobbett, *Parliamentary History*, 30:1057-60; Weiner, ed. *Great Britain: Foreign Policy and the Span of Empire*, 154.

<sup>66</sup> Adams, *Influence of Grenville on Pitt's Foreign Policy, 1787-1798*, 23-24; Mori, "The British Government and the Bourbon Restoration: The Occupation of Toulon, 1793," 701, 707-709.

<sup>67</sup> Hood to Stephens, 26 October 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391.



captains found ways to move their warships unimpeded, particularly those arriving from the eastern Mediterranean and cruising off of North Africa and Italy. Nelson fought a group of four French frigates to a stalemate off the coast of Sardinia in October.<sup>68</sup> With the merchants in London, Birmingham, and Manchester requesting a return to unrestricted trade, increased French naval activity created friction between the government and the Admiralty over the security of British commercial interests in the region.<sup>69</sup>

The collapse of maritime security in the Mediterranean manifested in the duplicity of the North African courts. Without a British presence off their coastline, the Barbary States lacked the incentive to continue the embargo on French trade. Despite assurances in April from the Bey of Tunis to end commerce with Revolutionary France, he changed his mind in early September. Financial losses from the broken relationship with Marseilles placed tremendous pressure on the Bey to cool his animosity toward the Convention. He requested a pass from the British consul, Perkins Magra, to trade through the blockade with Marseilles.<sup>70</sup> In response, Hood dispatched Linzee and Nelson to Tunis to influence the Bey to honor his obligations.<sup>71</sup>

A vicious exchange between Linzee and the Bey of Tunis reflected how quickly British influence degraded due to its preoccupation with southern France. Linzee's squadron arrived at Tunis on 26 October to find a number of French ships trading in the

<sup>68</sup> Linzee to Hood, 24 October 1793, *ibid.*; Nelson to Hood, 22 October 1793, *ibid.*; HMS *Agamemnon* Logs, *ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> Hood to Stephens, 23 November 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391.

<sup>70</sup> Perkins Magra to Henry Dundas, 8 April 1793, *ibid.*; Magra to Hood, 9 September 1793, *ibid.* For an understanding of the relationship between Tunis and Revolutionary France, see Henri Cambon, *Histoire de la Régence de Tunis* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1948), 80-83.

<sup>71</sup> Linzee to Hood, 9 November 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391; Hood to Stephens, 8 October 1793, *ibid.*; Hood to Stephens, 4 November 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391; Anthony Deane, *Nelson's Favourite: HMS Agamemnon at War, 1781-1809* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1996), 96; David Walder, *Nelson* (New York: Dial Press, 1978), 131-32.

harbor. Noting sarcastically that even Parliament killed Charles I during the English Civil War, the Bey refused to recommit to the embargo of France. He also declared the ships in the harbor protected by his batteries in the port. Linzee returned to Toulon having lost an important ally in North Africa. The system of Mediterranean support for the Allied war effort, only guaranteed by British naval power, lagged due to the commitment at Toulon.<sup>72</sup>

British officials still held out hope that the Austrian army in northern Italy could salvage the situation. No longer acting as intermediaries for the Sardinians, Trevor and Eden requested assistance from Vienna directly. Both queried Thugut over sending troops to Toulon but the Austrian foreign minister persisted in his demand for compensation.<sup>73</sup> Ambivalence over southern France created an impossible situation for the British. After guaranteeing the recapture of Savoy and Nice, London could not give Sardinian territory to the Austrians. With Turin and Vienna unwilling to budge on territorial claims, the British diplomatic corps lacked the influence to bring the Austrians into the theater.<sup>74</sup> Despite the expansion of the war in the Mediterranean, the British failed to significantly alter Thugut's continued commitment to Germany.<sup>75</sup>

Yet this position appeared to change in October. British diplomats in northern Italy reported that Thugut finally ordered 5,000 troops from Milan to march to the coast for transport to Toulon.<sup>76</sup> Hood dispatched Cosby to Vado Bay off Genoa to await their

<sup>72</sup> Deane, *Nelson's Favorite*, 98; Magra to Hood, 10 November 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391; Horatio Nelson to Fanny Nelson, 1 December 1793, no. 60, in Horatio Nelson, *Nelson's Letters to His Wife*, 94-95.

<sup>73</sup> Morton Eden to Lord Auckland, 16 November 1793, in Auckland, *The Journal and Correspondence of William, Lord Auckland*, 3:144-145.

<sup>74</sup> Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt: The Reluctant Transition*, 2:307; Jupp, *Lord Grenville*, 160-161.

<sup>75</sup> Thugut to Colloredo, 6 September 1793, in Thugut, *Vertrauliche Briefe des Freiherrn von Thugut*, 37.

<sup>76</sup> Thugut to Colloredo, 7 November 1793, in Thugut, *Vertrauliche Briefe des Freiherrn von Thugut*, 52; Duffy, "British War Policy," 68-69.

arrival. After learning that political conditions in the Genoese Republic prevented an embarkation there, the British admiral sailed for Leghorn to receive the Austrian regiments at that location. Cosby waited idly until mid-November but no troops arrived at the Tuscan port.<sup>77</sup> Eden and Trevor clashed over the tardy Austrian troops, considering each other full of “pompous promises” on the perceived ability to convince Thugut of the importance of the theater.<sup>78</sup> Finally, both men admitted to Grenville and Hood to expect no Austrian support in the foreseeable future as neither held any influence at Vienna.

Meanwhile, increased snowfall and the lack of progress ended attempts by the Austro-Sardinian force to advance into Nice. Victor Amadeus III, campaigning with his troops in the county, returned to Turin on 14 November.<sup>79</sup> Under the cover of the first snows, the French commander in Nice, General Pierre Jadart Dumerbion, ordered the withdrawal of troops from the frontier in Nice to reinforce Dugommier, who replaced Carteaux due to a lack of success. General of Division Andre Masséna conducted a limited attack against the Allies in Nice on 28 November but his offensive bogged down in the deep snows. While both sides continued to skirmish around Nice, Colli’s army failed to generate any more forward movement toward Toulon.<sup>80</sup>

Bad weather raised hopes among British officials that the Allies would close the campaigns on the frontiers to shift troops to Toulon for the winter. Trevor expressed

<sup>77</sup> Trevor to Francis Drake, British consul in Genoa, 1 October 1793, Francis Drake Papers, Additional Manuscripts MS46823, BL; Hood to Stephens, 24 November 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391; Eden to Trevor, 24 September 1793, Gilbert Elliot Papers, ELL/100, NMM. Trevor to Gilbert, 31 October 1793, *ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> Morton Eden to Auckland, 16 November 1793, *The Journal and Correspondence of Lord Auckland*, 3:144-145.

<sup>79</sup> Boycott-Brown, *The Road to Rivoli*, 80; Bergadani, *Vittorio Amedeo III*, 243.

<sup>80</sup> Krebs and Morris, *Campagnes dans les Alpes Pendant la Revolution*, 337-338; Phipps, *Armies of the First French Republic*, 3:102.

confidence that the impassibility of the terrain in Nice freed Sardinian troops from their commitment on the frontier. However, the British ambassador scraped together only 600 Piedmontese chasseurs to send to Toulon, raising the total of Sardinian troops committed at the French port to 3,000.<sup>81</sup> St. Helens held similar expectations but the Spanish court refused to add more forces. Skirmishing on both frontiers continued into December, making a complete withdrawal on either front impossible.<sup>82</sup> While Republican commanders used their interior lines to shift forces between fronts, the situation tied down the Allies in the Alps and Pyrenees, making operational and strategic movements difficult.

The other hope for Toulon's defenders, British reinforcements, failed to materialize in any strength. Henry Dundas tasked Lieutenant-General Robert Boyd, the Governor of Gibraltar, to dispatch a portion of the garrison to Toulon in September.<sup>83</sup> Citing conflicting orders, the commander at Gibraltar sent a small force, but refused to dispatch a number of regiments to Toulon. He retained 1,500 troops critically needed at the port.<sup>84</sup> St. Helens expressed concerns throughout the fall that Hood never wrote to Boyd to formally request the reinforcements. Miscommunication between Dundas, Boyd, and Hood resulted in Gell's failure to arrive at Gibraltar until the beginning of December to embark the badly needed regiments and additional artillery.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>81</sup> *Naval chronicle*, 2: 31-32. Cosby to Hood, 28 November 1793, TNA, No. 144, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391; Trevor to Grenville, 6 November 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 67, Piece 13, no. 86; Bergadani, *Vittorio Amedeo III*, 244.

<sup>82</sup> St. Helens to Grenville, 3 December 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 72, Piece 28.

<sup>83</sup> Henry Dundas to David Dundas, 26 September 1793, Additional Manuscripts MS27594, BL.

<sup>84</sup> Chuquet, *Dugommier, 1738-1794*, 53; Jason Musteen, *Nelson's Refuge: Gibraltar in the Age of Napoleon* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2011), 14-15.

<sup>85</sup> Gell to Stephens, 9 December 1793, TNA, No. 145. Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391; George III to John Pitt, Earl of Chatham, 15 November 1793, in George III, *The Later Correspondence of George III*, 2:122.

Coordination between British officials over reinforcements greatly contributed to the paralysis in the Mediterranean.

The arrival of Elliot at Toulon on 16 November to take charge of political negotiations finally opened the eyes of the Cabinet to the compounding problems in the theater. He identified quickly the breakdown in communication between Hood and London. "I fear the worst is certain. All these crosses were unknown when I came away," wrote the British envoy on his arrival at Toulon. "Neither Lord Hood nor Lord Mulgrave seem to have given correct accounts." Seeing the problems first-hand, Elliot finally provided a realistic assessment of the desperate situation to the government.<sup>86</sup> These reports prompted Pitt to remark "reinforcements for Toulon are more pressingly necessary than we considered."<sup>87</sup> Only with the arrival of their political representative did Pitt and the ministers begin to understand the extensive problems in the Mediterranean.

Indeed, by December the relationship between policymakers and the generals directing the campaign collapsed through misinformation and lack of support. Dundas repeatedly asked for intelligence on the strength of the Allies at Toulon because he received "no return from a general officer in over two months."<sup>88</sup> The breakdown in communication between Toulon and London resulted in the Home Secretary lashing out at his subordinates. "Lord Hood says nothing of it [the difficulty in defending Toulon], and it never occurs to you that you only state a difficulty and say nothing of the means of removing it," he wrote to Major General David Dundas at Toulon. "Toulon came into

<sup>86</sup> Elliot to his wife, 24 November 1793, In Countess of Minto, *Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot*, 2:192.

<sup>87</sup> Pitt to Grenville, November 1793, *Dropmore Manuscripts*, 2:471. Gilbert Elliot's letters indicate the level of motivation of the commander-in-chief as well as the Cabinet's lack of information.

<sup>88</sup> Henry Dundas to Brigadier General Charles O'Hara, 20 December 1793, Additional Manuscripts MS21198, BL.

our hands when we were unprepared for any such event, and was held by a handful of British troops and seamen, and those Spanish whom it is now the tone to consider as good for nothing. The King does not want to hear of difficulties.”<sup>89</sup> Anger and frustration between Dundas and his subordinates in the Mediterranean did little to solve the inherent problems of the Allies.

The grim situation continued to worsen in the first days of December. Diplomatic efforts and the countermarching of regiments collected just under 17,000 allied soldiers in Toulon, with thousands sick and wounded from the constant fighting and conditions.<sup>90</sup> Hood finally admitted “we are soon to be attacked on all sides at once. From the numerous and important posts we have to occupy at very hard duty and without relief some way or other, we shall soon have more men in the hospital than are fit for service.”<sup>91</sup> Dugommier now possessed 40,000 troops with more reinforcements arriving daily from the Alpine frontier.<sup>92</sup>

Four months of self-inflicted paralysis finally doomed British hopes at Toulon. On the evening of 16 December, Dugommier simultaneously attacked Fort Pharon and Fort Mulgrave, overthrowing the defenses at both locations. British and Sardinian troops counterattacked but failed to retake the redoubts that dominated the harbor. With only 1,500 troops in reserve and thousands more incapacitated by illness and wounds, the defense of the harbor collapsed as hundreds of Allied troops streamed into the port.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Henry Dundas to Major General David Dundas, 20 December 1793, Additional Manuscripts MS21198, BL; Fortescue, *History of the British Army*, 4:174.

<sup>90</sup> Calculations by Henry Dundas of troops movements and the current strength at Toulon. Taken from his notes, 18 December 1793, Additional Manuscripts MS21198, BL.

<sup>91</sup> Hood to Henry Dundas, 13 December 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 95, Piece 4, Part 6.

<sup>92</sup> *Naval Chronicle* 2:33.

<sup>93</sup> Gilbert Elliot to Henry Dundas, 20 December 1793, in Countess of Minto, *Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot*, 2:202-205.

Cannons at the new Republican positions now threatened the city and the fleet, making Toulon untenable.

The fall of the forts on the night of 16 December forced Hood to accept the withdrawal from Toulon. The British admiral called a council of war on the HMS *Victory* in the early morning hours of 17 December that included Lángara, Gravina, General Dundas, and Elliot along with other prominent allied officers. The council unanimously refused to reinforce the forts on the heights of Pharon and Grasse. Hood issued orders for all Allied troops to fall back to the harbor and beaches. He also ordered the destruction of the arsenal and to sail out as many French warships as possible. Hood had waited until the last possible minute, allowing the enemy to dictate the outcome of the occupation.<sup>94</sup>

Even the withdrawal from the harbor resembled the haphazard, disorganized approach of the British war effort since August. In the early morning hours of 18 December, Sir Sydney Smith, one of the British officers commanding troops at Toulon, burned a few ships before Dugommier's army arrived at the gates of the city. British sailors torched the arsenal under the crossfire of Republican artillery positions on the neighboring hills and the Malbuesquet. Smith's troops held positions inside Toulon to assist women and children escaping in boats from the dockyards. "We did as much as our circumstances and means enabled us to do in a limited time," Smith reported to Hood.<sup>95</sup> After the British-led force finally withdrew from the harbor, the Allies left fifteen ships of line undamaged, enough for the Republicans to reconstitute the Toulon fleet

<sup>94</sup> Minutes of the Council of War on the HMS *Victory*, 17 December 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391; McCranie, *Admiral Lord Keith*, 38; *Naval Chronicle*, 2:34; Hood to Dundas, 20 December 1793, TNA, Foreign Office 95, Piece 4, Part 6; Cottin, *Toulon et les Anglais*, 313.

<sup>95</sup> Sidney Smith to Hood, 18 December 1793, TNA, Admiralty Division 1, Piece 391, no. 145a; Rose, *Pitt and the Great War*, 158; Cottin, *Toulon et les Anglais*, 331-336.

the following year.<sup>96</sup> The evacuation marked a tremendous failure to salvage a moderate victory out of the four-month siege, indicating how politics and ideology completely inhibited military decisions during the occupation.

Toulon also turned into a humanitarian crisis. The fall of the city forced the evacuation of thousands of people living there to avoid reprisals from the Republican armies and the representatives from the National Convention. Pressure to escape the enemy separated families and turned the wealthiest residents in the city to paupers in the span of a few hectic hours. Elliot negotiated with Tuscany and Naples to provide sanctuary for the Federalist sympathizers. A number of the refugees in December and January travelled to Leghorn while some remained with the British force when it occupied Corsica in March 1794.<sup>97</sup> Consequently, Hood's decision to join forces with the Federalists burdened British diplomatic activity with the need to find a home for thousands of French refugees.

Defeat in the 1793 campaign marked the collapse of coalition cooperation. The Neapolitan force departed for its capital prior to the evacuation by the Spanish, British, and Sardinians.<sup>98</sup> Langara's squadron sailed for Carthage and then returned to supporting Ricardos in the eastern Pyrenees. Toulon marked the last Anglo-Spanish operation of the First Coalition.<sup>99</sup> British warships disembarked Thaon di Revel and the Sardinian contingent at Ongelia to return to their winter quarters in Nice. Hood and Elliot began to assess the next step for British operations, including providing support to

<sup>96</sup> Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power on the French Revolution and Empire*, 1:105.

<sup>97</sup> Elliot to Henry Dundas, 20 December 1793, in Countess of Minto, *Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot*, 2:206-208.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid. 2:205-206; Ann Susan Horner, *A Century of Despotism in Naples and Sicily* (Edinburgh: Edward Constable, 1860), 20.

<sup>99</sup> Lynch, *Bourbon Spain*, 390.



Paoli on Corsica. With the loss of their political and military objective in southern France, the regional allies lacked any goal to keep them together as a coherent force.

British officials quickly blamed their allies for the disaster at Toulon and the failures in the theater. "With those who acted with us at Toulon," Elliot wrote after the evacuation, "everything was difficult, and every difficulty insurmountable."<sup>100</sup> The results of the campaign pointed to the unwillingness of the Sardinians and Austrians to provide enough support to Toulon. "Cowardly and ill-trained" troops from Spain and Naples received considerable derision from British officers and diplomats after Toulon fell. Mulgrave stated, "the Prussians and Dutch seem to be the Spaniards and Neapolitans of the North."<sup>101</sup> These excuses became a way for the Pitt administration to wish away the mistakes that resulted from the complete overhaul of the Mediterranean strategy during the summer and fall of 1793.

Undoubtedly, the capture of Toulon paralyzed the British war effort. Lacking troops to support his plans, Hood became overwhelmingly burdened with the defense of the port. He incapacitated his force and left himself dependent on his own government and the Allies for rescue. Diplomatic efforts for the British in the region stalled, caught between the antagonism of the Spanish and the reluctance of the Austrians. Without the ability to bargain with either government, Grenville and his agents became unable to dramatically influence the situation in the Mediterranean. Coordination between the managers of British strategy collapsed due to misinformation and optimism. Hood's overconfidence in September and October only reinforced the expectation of Pitt and his ministers that France could not sustain the war for any longer. When finally

<sup>100</sup> Elliot to Dundas, 20 December 1793, in Countess of Minto, *Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot*, 2:203.

<sup>101</sup> Mulgrave to Grenville, 24 October 1793, Additional Manuscripts MS58940, BL.

presented evidence to the contrary, it was already too late to reverse the mistakes of the summer. British inactivity during the fall of 1793 provided opportunities for the Republican armies to defeat the Allied forces in southern France in detail.

These problems in British strategy manifested across the Mediterranean. The demands of Toulon forced an end to the management of the economic embargo of France. Failure to maintain the embargo system in North Africa and in Italy forced Hood to turn to gunboat diplomacy to divide Mediterranean states between France and Great Britain. Toulon warped the war in the region, overextending Allied resources and applying pressure on the Coalition to submit to British wishes. Hood's aggressive posture further wrecked Anglo-Spanish diplomacy and failed to provide any incentive for the Austrians. While a defensive strategy maintained the Coalition, a British-led offensive only undermined the groundwork of Grenville and his diplomats during the previous spring to build cooperation for limited objective.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSIONS

The aftermath of Toulon left the British government struggling to determine the next step in the Mediterranean. Republican troops defeated the counter-revolutionary movement in southern France, resulting in the murder of thousands of Frenchmen and the evacuation of thousands more to Italian ports. Allied forces sustained almost 4,000 dead and wounded at Toulon. Casualty figures represented a quarter of the total strength that Hood accumulated in defense of the port. Despite the capture of the French fleet and limited advances at the frontiers, Republican armies reclaimed all ground lost during the summer. Political and diplomatic energy spent during the four months of the occupation garnered only Spanish anger and Austrian ambivalence. Toulon marked the first in a downward spiral of failures that ultimately crumbled Coalition resistance in southern Europe by 1796, forcing the Royal Navy to withdraw from the Mediterranean.

Along with the military failures in Northern Europe, Toulon initiated tremendous political debate in London over the conduct of the war. Pitt wrote major revisions to the narrative of the first campaign for public consumption. He counted cooperation among the Mediterranean allies and the “diversion at Toulon” as some of his self-proclaimed successes.<sup>1</sup> George III’s speech to Parliament in January 1794 provoked sharp criticism among the Whigs over Cabinet war aims and the political declarations made by Hood.<sup>2</sup> Chatham and the Duke of Richmond received censorship from the government for the failures of 1793, due in no small part to the inability to harness forces and

<sup>1</sup> Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt: The Reluctant Transition*, 2:327.

<sup>2</sup> Cobbett, *Parliamentary History*, 30:1066-1080.

artillery for Toulon. Richmond, the most outspoken critic of the Cabinet's strategy, became a particularly attractive choice for blame. Pitt and Dundas moved to effectively eliminate both from future military affairs, thus providing scapegoats for their political opposition.<sup>3</sup> Over the winter, the whitewashing of Toulon by British officials, combined with harsh criticism of the Allies, provided convenient excuses for historians who subsequently chronicled the affair.

Grenville pushed for Coalition action in the Mediterranean but accomplished little over the next two years. Austrian and Spanish relations continued to hamper the war effort. Vins and Colli transitioned to the defensive after French forces occupied parts of Genoa in April 1794, threatening to finally envelop the Saorgio line. Republican armies militarized the Genoese frontier, gravely concerning British diplomats in northern Italy. However, the foreign minister still struggled to motivate the Austrians, clashing with Thugut over military command, the size of forces, and Allied objectives.<sup>4</sup> Grenville attempted to rouse a Mediterranean offensive in early 1795 by combining Austrian, Sardinian, and Spanish troops to take pressure off of Holland and the Rhineland. By this time, the Spanish war effort entered its death throes. Godoy considered Grenville unwilling to help counteract the growing peace party at the Bourbon court. St. Helens shared his opinion of British aloofness toward the plight of the Spanish.<sup>5</sup> Systemic

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of political accountability following the 1793 campaign, see Michael Duffy, 'A Particular Service': The British Government and the Dunkirk Expedition of 1793," *The English Historical Review* 90, no. 360 (July 1976): 529-554. Duffy presents evidence to rehabilitate Richmond's reputation, citing systemic problems due to the Ordnance Department and Richmond's honest assessments of Britain's military limitations.

<sup>4</sup> Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt: The Reluctant Transition*, 2:343-344; Rose, *Pitt and the Great War*, 160-162; For Grenville's larger design of Anglo-Austrian cooperation, see Duffy "British War Policy", 79-88.

<sup>5</sup> Jupp, *Lord Grenville*, 176. For commentary on the peace movement in Spain, led by Aranda, who remained an integral advisor even after his removal as chief minister, see Godoy, *Memoirs of Don Manuel de Godoy, Prince of the Peace*, 1:270-283.

problems in Mediterranean diplomacy that emerged during the summer of 1793 perpetually undermined Coalition cooperation.

British forces still operating in the Mediterranean did little to help the faltering diplomatic situation. After the evacuation of Toulon, Elliot and Hood both desired a quick victory elsewhere in the region. With the modest buildup of ground forces under General David Dundas, British leadership decided unilaterally to provide support to Paoli's insurrection on Corsica.<sup>6</sup> San Fiorenzo, Linzee's nemesis, fell on 18 February followed by Bastia, Corsica's largest city, on 19 May.<sup>7</sup> By August, troops effectively controlled the island as Elliot established himself as the viceroy of Britannia's newest possession in the Mediterranean. The Anglo-Corsican Kingdom, its official title, became a difficult satrapy to manage under the weight of insurrection, Paoli's duplicity, and internal command problems. Elliot, Hood, and other British officers struggled for control of the Corsican affair, forcing two generals to resign from their commands and return to London in disgust. Officials spent the next two years fighting amongst themselves and Paoli as the war continued in Europe.

The capture of Corsica marked a rejection of the Allied framework established in 1793. In addition to Spanish protests that Elliot and Hood brushed aside when they attacked the island in February 1794, Corsica provided limited opportunities to help the Alpine frontier. British regiments, now augmented by European mercenaries, devoted two years to training Corsican troops and suppressing dissent on the island instead of fighting the French. Meanwhile, the Army of Roussillon in the Pyrenees faltered after Ricardos died of pneumonia in March 1794. His successors proved unable to stop the

<sup>6</sup> Fortescue, *History of the British Army*, 4:179-180.

<sup>7</sup> Gregory, *The Ungovernable Rock*, 68, 72-73.

French armies from recapturing Bellegarde and winning a major Republican victory at Black Mountain (17-20 November 1794).<sup>8</sup> Burdened by growing dissent in Spain and British flippancy, Godoy's diplomats negotiated a separate peace with Republican France at Basel on 22 July 1795.<sup>9</sup> In northern Italy, Napoleon Bonaparte precipitated the collapse of Sardinian resistance with the Montenotte offensive in April 1796, forcing Victor Amadeus III to accept an armistice at Cherasco.<sup>10</sup> Hood and his successors also failed to maintain maritime security for either frontier as executed so successfully in the summer of 1793. French warships based at Toulon reemerged as a threat in the Mediterranean in 1795, fighting two inconclusive naval battles against the British at Genoa and Hyères Bay. The disintegration of the Coalition left the Pitt administration and its forces on Corsica spectators to the reorganization of southern Europe.

British strategy in the Mediterranean relied on traditional concepts of warfare. Maintaining the European balance of power factored heavily in the diplomatic efforts. British goals remained conservative when compared to the aggressive policies of the National Convention. Preventing France from dominating Italy, a staple of foreign affairs earlier in the century, resurfaced in the Cabinet's policies. This design for Southern Europe provided the best opportunity to secure British trade, as revenues drove the war. Conditions in Europe favored a backwards-looking strategy that mimicked the containment of Louis XIV.

<sup>8</sup> Chuquet, *Dugommier, 1738-1794*, 399-430.

<sup>9</sup> Blanning, *The French Revolutionary Wars*, 135; Esdaile, *The Spanish Army in the Peninsular War*, 38-39.

<sup>10</sup> Gunther E. Rothenberg, *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Napoleon* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 40; For a concise study of the Montenotte Phase of the First Italian Campaign, see Boycott-Brown, *The Road to Rivoli*, 219-254.

British diplomats, however, could no longer recreate the conditions in Italy to rally Continental support as in the days of Marlborough and Stanhope. Aggrandizement by either Savoy or Austria had provided earlier administrations with an opportunity to gain support for British goals. The 1752 Treaty of Aranjuez and the outcome of previous European wars in the middle of the century eliminated any available territory to barter, providing no incentive for Thugut to join the defense of Italy. Austrian security depended not on events in the Alps, but in Central and Eastern Europe. Nothing Grenville could offer the Austrians influenced Thugut to commit forces to the region to help solve the operational problems plaguing the Allies.

Spain further complicated British designs for Southern Europe. Carlos IV and his court espoused anti-Revolutionary rhetoric since the weeks after the fall of the Bastille. Yet Spanish politicians still held economic and political grievances with Great Britain. Despite these inherent differences, Grenville and St. Helens pushed hard for an alliance with Madrid due to the need for overwhelming naval strength in the Mediterranean. An alliance with Madrid further guaranteed protection of British trade in Italy, the Levant, and North Africa. However, after Hood's fleet established itself off the coastline of France, this alliance became less attractive to Grenville because of the ideological and political costs. The reactionary policies of the Spanish court and the mistrust between the two states made the alliance increasingly unmanageable.

British officials expected European states to not only contain Republican armies, but to also close their ports to French commerce. With the frontiers secured, the British navy and its allies could focus on attacking subsistence and commodities traded in the Mediterranean. Grenville marked French supply lines in the region as a critical aspect

of their attrition strategy. The devastation of the French population, also reliant on imported food, was a consequence of British strategy well known from previous wars. Unfortunately for the British, Pitt and Grenville failed to verbalize the importance of maintaining a separation between their forces and the civilian population in France in order to preserve their neutrality toward a French form of government. An inability to navigate around the murky waters of the counter-revolution became a major shortfall in policy. In effect, the ministers knew the impact of starving France but failed to plan for the explosion of civil unrest in 1793 that they helped to create.

Efforts in the Foreign Office to pursue cooperative security in the Mediterranean achieved limited success. As French anti-monarchical rhetoric bred resistance in other states, so did oppressive British maritime policies. Schroeder's contention that Great Britain and France organized European states between themselves during the Revolution requires a small revision. The passive resistance by the Italian and Barbary states during 1793 indicated a requirement for equal pressure from French and British forces to subvert neutrality. In the Mediterranean, Sardinia, Spain, and Naples constituted the front line states against Revolutionary France. Under threat of invasion, these conservative regimes submitted with reservations to the oppressive trade restrictions in exchange for British support. Tuscany and Genoa, despite their size, resisted British action. Only when Continental powers applied equal pressure – France in Genoa, Austria in Tuscany – did these smaller states end their neutrality. Likewise, the Federalists behaved in a similar fashion, fighting their own war until forced to choose between starvation and the guillotine. In North Africa, Great Britain only exerted minimal pressure on the Muslim states, providing a way for those rulers to protect their



economies. Limitations on the projection of maritime power required support, positively or negatively, from the Continent to dissolve neutrality in the region.

The major problem with British war planning in the Mediterranean is that it abruptly ended in the summer of 1793. A collapse of French naval power and the speed at which the Coalition gained control of maritime security outpaced British strategic thought. By August, the Cabinet achieved all of its goals in the region, with trade secured, the Toulon fleet suppressed, and the Allies resisting on the frontiers. British strategy fractured during the summer with the rise of the Federalists. Without a continuation of war planning disseminated down the military and diplomatic channels, each part of the British war machine pursued goals it perceived to be consistent with the intentions of Pitt, Grenville, and Dundas.

Thus, the failure of the Cabinet was not in the conception of the war, as Fortescue and Glover argue, but in the maintenance and maturation of their strategic plans. For the controlling ministers, inexperienced in strategic decisions, the transitioning of the conflict into the hands of commanders and diplomats seemed a natural choice. However, the Coalition existed in its infancy and the political goals of the war remained nebulous, requiring further Cabinet input and supervision. Hopes of a quick war left the conflict open to interpretation by every British official in the Mediterranean, splintering any level of cohesiveness between operations and diplomacy.

The summer of 1793 provided the turning point of the theater. Federalist uprisings initiated havoc in the rear of the Republican armies, creating an opportunity for an offensive. Dundas and Grenville both deemed the Alpine frontier the natural location

for Allied cooperation. Unsatisfied with Sardinian preparations, Dundas decided to wait for more favorable conditions to allow other theaters to mature over the winter of 1793. A council of war conducted in the Genoese harbor in early August missed an opportunity to solidify cooperation on a regional level. Austrian, Sardinian, and British officials agreed on a limited offensive to recapture Nice and Savoy as the main effort for the summer. Only Hood balked at the plan, removing naval support deemed critical for success. In less than two weeks, the British admiral launched his own plan to compete with the Allies for limited resources and manpower.

In the absence of guidance from London, Hood chose the most radical and dangerous course of action. Seizing Toulon provided a beachhead into France and delivered the anchored fleet into the hands of the Allies. However, the decision generated massive strategic costs. Hood intertwined British and Spanish interests, a move deplored by Grenville and St. Helens. It brought together British troops and the Federalists, an ideological and political choice none of the Cabinet ministers anticipated or desired. Toulon marked a rejection of the Sardinians, despite overtures throughout the spring to protect their sovereignty and to reclaim lost territory. In the span of three days, Hood changed the entire direction of the conflict, making Britain the prime mover for Mediterranean operations.

Surprisingly, Anglo-Spanish relations reached their pinnacle with the capture of Toulon. Lángara and Hood joined forces at the port, pledging cooperation to support the counter-revolution and reinstall a Bourbon king on the throne of France. The honeymoon did not last long. Disagreements over the defensive plan, the struggle for control of the Allied forces mustered in the harbor, and the even larger conflict of

interests over the Mediterranean theater between London and Madrid manifested during the four-month occupation. Allied tactical success at Toulon could not overcome the deep-seated mistrust between the two rivals who already pursued post-war positioning in the Mediterranean.

In the fall of 1793, the British Cabinet slipped into a reactionary pattern, attempting to reconcile military and political decisions made by Hood at Toulon with their own concepts of the balance of power. Pitt and his ministers initially expressed elation over the victory but following up Toulon with even limited action quickly became problematic. Imperfect information and the optimistic dispatches from Hood clouded Cabinet decision-making, slowing strategic moves in September and October. Hood forced the British government to ask for support from allies already known to be incapable or unwilling. Sardinia and Spain complied as well as they could, withdrawing needed manpower from the Alps and Pyrenees to support the defense of Toulon. Dundas, anticipating strategic movements for British troops through the summer of 1794, found it necessary to execute all of them immediately. Rapidly changing events in the region placed the Cabinet at a disadvantage in almost every aspect of strategy, from the mustering of reinforcements to negotiations with Austria. Despite their efforts, high politics and diplomacy could not solve the problems created by decisions at Toulon.

Hood and Grenville suffered from a similar ailment in the fall of 1793: stagnation. The situation at Toulon became increasingly desperate but decisive military action now accrued a large political and diplomatic cost. Hood became entirely dependent on his own government and the Allies to make his spontaneous offensive into France

successful. Grenville likewise found himself caught between the Spanish and Austrians, neither willing to surrender their own strategic goals to subordinate themselves to the British. He needed both of them to transform a tactical victory into strategic success. Hood's decision paralyzed the entire Allied war effort, making the Coalition in Southern Europe vulnerable to the reinvigorated Republican armies.

The errors of the British high command in the Mediterranean war are well known problems in the military affairs of modern states. Mistakes included a failure to plan for the post-war political landscape, a lack of communication between elements of the wartime government, and sparse guidance to military commanders and diplomats. These problems upset Allied cooperation as British officials failed to speak with the same voice to their counterparts. Pitt and his ministers also willingly subordinated themselves to the decisions of military commanders who contradicted national capabilities and politics. Mistakes in the Cabinet came not from their vision of the war but the growth and dissemination of that vision.

Hood's mistakes were just as grave as those of his superiors. As an admiral, he embodied not only a tactical commander, but also a representative of the government. He acted without knowledge of the political or military situation inside France. Furthermore, his overconfidence in the capture of Toulon impeded the mechanisms in the British government designed to help him. He decided on actions against the wishes of his superiors in London and without the coordination of his own diplomats. In capturing the port, he created a situation unsolvable by the available British and Allied forces.

The Mediterranean campaign of 1793 represented the difficulties in managing warfare on a global scale. Despite the bureaucratic systems in place to balance diplomacy, military affairs, and the political infrastructure, all three required cooperation and coordination. These threads of national power needed to work seamlessly at the theater level in order to be effective. Inside diverse European alliances, it became even more important to maintain continuity between all three spheres. In the first year of the war, the inability for the Cabinet and its officials in the Mediterranean to do so significantly hindered British and Coalition strategy.

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