Governor Mendinueta's Proposals for the Defense of New Mexico, 1772–1778

Alfred B. Thomas

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GOVERNOR MENDINUETA'S PROPOSALS FOR THE
DEFENSE OF NEW MEXICO, 1772-1778

Edited by ALFRED B. THOMAS

The following papers of Don Pedro Fermin de Mendi­nueta, one of the more capable governors of New Mex­ico, suggest some of the problems in the history of Spanish-Indian relations in the Southwest. Of these, Comanche and Apache attacks upon the province presented the chief diffi­culty. At the moment the former were the aggressors, har­rying Spaniards, Pueblos and Apaches alike, a three cor­nered frontier situation that arose with the opening of the eighteenth century. Since that time the Spaniards had vainly sought a solution, alternately declaring war upon and making treaties with both Indian invaders. As the century moved forward the New Mexicans concentrated upon the greater menace of the Comanche. Captain Serna in 1716, Governor Valverde in 1719, Governor Bustamante in 1730, Governor Cachupin in 1752, all marched against these Indians. Mendinueta himself refers in his accom­panying service sheet to two Comanche campaigns in 1767 and 1768. His reward for his successes was the promotion suggested by Viceroy Bucareli, in the letter translated here­in, to the rank of Brigadier in the royal armies. Possibly the treaty concluded with them in 1771 was a result of these actions. Accordingly the contribution Mendinueta made in this department of his government to the solution of this vital problem is evident. On the one hand his two cam­paigns and treaty are to be associated with the earlier his-

1. The present documents, introductory in nature, present an aspect of the writer's study of the rule of Governor Juan Bautista de Anza, based principally upon documents from the Archivo General de Indias, Seville. This collection was made possible by a subsidy from the Guggenheim Foundation.
2. Bancroft, Arizona and New Mexico, passim.
3. Ibid., p. 259.
tory of Spanish-Comanche relations, and on the other with the triumphs of his successor, Governor Ansa, who crushingly defeated these Indians in 1779, won their affection, and subsequently bound them to Spanish interests by the treaty of alliance against the Apaches in 1786.

The two reports submitted by Mendinueta, translated herein, in 1772 and 1779, represent a further contribution to the history of New Mexico. Therein setting forth his theories for defense against Comanches and Apaches he touches the heart of Spanish difficulties. Moreover, his recommendations are particularly interesting in that they reveal conditions impelling the Spaniards to adopt the historical Pueblo defense against Plains enemies, a striking confirmation of the theories advanced to explain the peculiar type of Pueblo construction.

Of these two reports, the 1772 document made at the request of Bucareli has a direct relation to the alterations being put into force by Spain after the Rubi inspection. The second, dated in 1777 adding further pertinent details, bears a similar relation to the work of Don Teodoro de Croix, the first Commander-General of the Provincias Internas, then establishing this new government. In this connection Mendinueta’s statement was but one of a number required by Croix in search of a remedy against general attack on the northern frontier of New Spain. Locally considered both resumes give a bird’s-eye view of New Mexican affairs and set out the principal problems which faced his successor, Governor Ansa, about to take office. In short, the following documents throw light upon the rule of Mendinueta, indicate clearly the condition of that Province at the moment of his resignation and Ansa’s assumption, and finally in regard to the Comanches intimate Mendinueta’s work in preparing the way for the remarkable achievements of Governor Juan Bautista de Ansa.

University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.
GOVERNOR MENDINUETA'S PROPOSALS

Documents

VICEROY BUCARELI TO JULIAN DE ARRIAGA.¹

The viceroy of New Spain enclosing the record of services of the Governor of New Mexico, Don Pedro Fermin de Mendinueta, reports as he was directed, setting forth that he considers him deserving of the grade of Brigadier. With its antecedent.²

Most Excellent Señor. My dear Sir: By order of the king your Excellency advised me in a letter of July 8, last, that his Majesty was informed of the events that had occurred in the Interior Provinces, particularly that of New Mexico. Because of the attacks of the barbarians and of the vigilance with which the zealous conduct and valor of the governor, Don Pedro Fermin de Mendinueta, contributed to its defense, his Majesty has resolved that in view of his distinguished merit, considering him deserving of the royal mercies, I propose on this point what appears to me suitable.

In consequence, well informed of the careful attention and activity with which Don Pedro Fermin de Mendinueta proceeds in the discharge of his government, of his worthy conduct and vigilance in attending promptly to defense from hostilities which the enemies commit in that Province, I must remind your Excellency that I conceive this deserving officer worthy that the mercy of the king grant him the rank of Brigadier in remuneration for his good services, performed throughout thirty years in the Navy and in the employments of Corregidor of this Capital and the government which he now occupies, having held the grade of colonel since 1773, as testifies the record which I enclose your Excellency in order that on giving an ac-

¹ Bucareli to Arriaga, No. 2083, Mexico, December 27, 1775, Guadalajara 515 (A. G. I., Seville, old Signatura. 104-6-17). The new reorganization of legajos in the Seville Archive has altered the numbering; both old and new are given here for reasons of clarity.
² This is simply a note made in the Council of the Indies for filing purposes.
count to his Majesty he may be pleased to extend to him that grace which may be more to his royal pleasure.

May God guard your Excellency many years. Mexico, December 27, 1775. Most Excellent Señor, your most humble and trusted servant kisses the hand of your Excellency. Bailio Fray Don Antonio Bucareli y Ursua. Most Excellent Señor, Bailio Fray Don Julian de Arriaga.

**SERVICE RECORD OF GOVERNOR MENDINUETA**

Colonel Don Pedro Fermin de Mendinueta of the Order of Santiago, Governor and Captain-General of the Kingdom of New Mexico. His age, 49 years; his country, Navarre; his health, good; his rank, nobleman; his services: those which are set forth and justified by the documents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employments</th>
<th>Time on which he began to serve in the professions</th>
<th>Time in which he has served</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Navy Guard</td>
<td>26 June 1741</td>
<td>Of Navy Guard 4, 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain with rank of Lieu-</td>
<td>25 May 1746</td>
<td>Of Captain with rank of Lieut-Colonel</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>tenant-Colonel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Corregimiento</em> of Mexico</td>
<td>25 Nov. 1755</td>
<td>Of <em>Corregimiento</em> of Mexico</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank of Colonel</td>
<td>6 June 1763</td>
<td>Of rank of Colonel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor of New Mexico</td>
<td>10 March 1767</td>
<td>Of Governor of New Mexico</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total up to the end of December, 1774: 33

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1. This Service Record accompanies Bucareli's letter to Arriaga above. Mendinueta took possession of the government of New Mexico on March 1, 1767. Mendinueta to Arriaga, Santa Fe, March 17, 1767. Guadalajara 300 (A. G. I., Id Signatura, 108-5-19). He was relieved of office on May 15, 1778, Valdés and Mesía to José de Galvez, Mexico, October 28, 1778. Guadalajara 800, (A. G. I.)
GOVERNOR MENDINUETA’S PROPOSALS

REGIMENTS AND ARMIES WHERE HE HAS SERVED IN THE
REGIMENT OF MURCIA

Capacity
Valor
Application
Conduct

**Actions in which he took part and vindicated himself**

With the Navy Guard he was in the battle which the fleet under the command of the Chief of the Fleet, Don Juan Jose Navarro, had with the English navy on February 22, 1744, on board the warship San Fernando. Detailed to the custody of the flag by his captain, Conde Vega Florida, he fulfilled his duty constantly according to the certification of both chiefs. Being Corregidor of Mexico, in 1762, because of war with the British nation, he was, by express order of the Most Excellent Señor Viceroy, Marques de Cruillas, in charge of the formation of six hundred mounted dragoons (which the body of merchants of Mexico paid for) attending to its equipment, arms, funds and the rest of the matters connected with it until despatching it to the Plaza of Vera Cruz. Likewise he had under his charge the inspection of the Militias, Cavalry and the Infantry of the Archbishopric of Mexico, and Diocese of Michoacan, executing it in the same manner as is set forth with regard to the troop of the dragoons, and respectively in other affairs which he had conferred upon him, giving full satisfaction for the confidence justified by the documents of the above mentioned Most Excellent Señor Viceroy. As Governor, he has made two campaigns against the heathen Comanche, one in the year of 1767 and the other in that of 1768. Santa Fe, December 31, 1774.

PEDRO FERMIN DE MENDINUETA.

(Rúbric).
REPORT OF GOVERNOR MENDINUETA TO VICEROY BUCARELI, MARCH 26, 1772

Most Excellent Señor: My Dear Sir: On the 17th of February of the current year, I received two letters from your Excellency, one dated September 28th, and the other October 19th of the last past year. In the first your Excellency was pleased to approve the means which I have taken with the Comanche, constrained by necessity. For this approval I am sending to your Excellency repeated thanks. Although you ordered me in the first to report the state of this province and what I shall judge appropriate for its tranquility, to which I am attentive, in the second your Excellency reiterated the same order. Having prepared an exact account of the present state of this province, the people with arms which it has for its defense, and the duties to which they must attend, the manner by which improvement of those inhabitants can be secured, and the correction and punishment of lawless ones who cause much damage, I am giving to both letters the most exact and due compliance.

The interior extent of this government from the settlement of the Spaniards which they commonly call Tomé on the south as far as the pueblo of San Geronimo de Indios Taos, on the north includes fifty-five leagues; and from the pueblo of Nuestra Señora de los Angeles de Indios Pecos on the east as far as Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de Indios Zuñi on the west, seventy leagues. In this considerable district live the inhabitants of this kingdom; both Spaniards and Gente de Razon, as well as Christian Indians, but with this difference that the pueblos of Indians are all grouped

1. Croix to Galvez, No. 217, Chihuahua, June 29, 1778, enclosing Report of Mendinueta to Bucareli, March 26, 1772. (A. G. I., Guadalajara 276) (A. G. I., old signatura 103-4-18) The date on this report should be March 26; the date given is May 26, doubtless a copyist's error. In the following report to Croix, Mendinueta states he wrote this document on March 26; further, the document could by no means have reached Bucareli by June 1 from New Mexico (if written on May 26) the date the latter referred the paper to the Auditor as is indicated below.
together, and for this reason more defensible, while of the Spaniards there is no united settlement, so that to the dispersion of their houses the name of ranches or houses of the field is properly given and not that of Villas and villages. Their being indefensible has caused some of the advantageous frontiers to be abandoned, although I did considerable to maintain them. In some I provided a squad of soldiers destined for their defense, and in others furnished firearms and munitions and have taken many other measures. But the fear which has possessed their dwellers made all these measures useless, upon the latter realizing their unsupportable position and seeing the numerous warriors of the enemy who attack them.

No settlement of Spaniards nor Indians can be considered or called the center, but frontiers, because they are very remote from one another. This distance, filled in by high sierras and rocky hills, make easy the entrance of enemies into any of the areas. Incessant care is necessary, which is kept up by reconnoitering the land (an activity which rarely produces the end desired) to see in time if enemies are approaching.

The Comanche nation invades and attacks these settlements by all routes; the Apache, from the west and south. Although on the northwest the Utes and Navajos live, these two nations are not ever peaceful, and while they may be, the Comanches, because of this, do not refrain from attacking along the routes from the Ute dwellings. From this account your Excellency will understand that the interior of this kingdom is surrounded by enemies in such a manner that in all its regions there is no safe place in which to keep horse nor cattle herds and everywhere robberies are suffered.

From what has been set forth, your Excellency will come to understand that with the eighty soldiers which this presidio has, it is not possible to guard so many and such
distant settlements, nor either aid them in time, because the news of the attack or robbery arrives after the event has occurred, not a delay of hours but of days mostly. Moreover, these enemies, as soon as they finished their raid, whether favorable or adverse, take flight precipitately, making any aid useless. To pursue them is essential. To these soldiers are added settlers and these having their few beasts of burden hobbled out spend precious time looking for them, and thus it rarely happens that they are able to overtake them.

The men who have offensive and defensive arms, Spaniards and Gente de Razon (with the exception of the presidials) and supplied with beasts of burden, hardly amount to two hundred and fifty. But it is impracticable for these to go out on a campaign because they cannot leave the settlements without defense and exposed to total ruin, nor either help the invaded settlement because of the celerity with which the enemy, who boast a large number of horses, make their precipitate retreats, and the distances do not permit it. It is to be noted that to set out on a campaign or to follow the enemy, it is necessary that each man have at least three or four horses. As these barbarians have no fixed domicile, they wander wherever they wish, finding opportunity to do so in very extensive lands. To locate them, it is necessary to rove over different routes in which much time and supplies, which must be carried, are consumed. An equal number of Christian Indians, whose arms are arrows, although some few have firearms, can aid in these affairs. While the pueblos of Zuñi, Acoma and Laguna are numerous (these allies) cannot be drawn out of their pueblos both because they are at a great distance and because they have to make little effort to defend themselves from the Apaches.

The occupations which the settlers, Spaniards and Indians, have besides the care of the few possessions of fields and sown lands are: To assist in aiding an invaded settle-
ment or the protection of it when there is indication that enemies are approaching; to follow those who rob when there is hope of overtaking them, with attention to the number of thieves and to what can be brought together quickly in order to follow them; equipment of the beasts of burden, and campaigning, when the governor holds it necessary, without any stipend, all of which is required in order to enlarge the body of troops, provided by law, which attend to these matters.

It appears to me, Sir, that considering what has been related your Excellency will understand the condition and state of this Province, the weak military power for its defense and the matters to which this power attends. Because, while it abounds with men apt, scarcity of arms makes them useless; much more so the lack of horses, for war in this land cannot be made afoot.

One of the opportune means which can be taken is to compel settlers of each region who live, as I have said, dispersed, to join and form their pueblos in plazas or streets so that a few men could be able to defend themselves. From this it will follow that they would unite more promptly for their own defense, or give aid to another village. The pueblos placed in this close relationship would be respected by the enemy.

The achievement of this means is impractical to a governor. With regard to the churlish types of settlers accustomed to live apart from each other, as neither fathers nor sons associate with each other, if he wished to force them to congregate, he would make an enemy against himself in each individual and populate the road of this Court with complaints (as they customarily do). It is not foolhardy opinion which persuaded me to the above statement, but experience acquired from cases of less importance, which have happened to my predecessors and to myself. Force not intervening, persuasion does not serve for them.
Only a superior and rigid mandate from your Excellency will be adequate to facilitate the consolidation of these settlers.

The formation of pueblos which I held above I consider most useful for defense, but advances little that of offense to intimidate the enemy. It may oblige them to be less overbearing and to struggle more. To achieve this offense, it would be convenient to erect a presidio in the valley of Taos, whose situation, because it is so advanced, distant more than twenty-five leagues of bad road to the north, and has a pueblo of warlike Indians and some settlers (and many others who would be restored to their houses and fields abandoned at present for fear of the Comanches) would assure that frontier. Likewise, it would protect the pueblos of Abiquiú, Santa Clara, San Yldefonso and Picuries and all the districts of Spaniards belonging to the jurisdiction of Santa Cruz de la Cañada. It would be very difficult for the Comanches who attack or rob in the said pueblos and districts, to return to their land without that presidio, with its auxiliaries, cutting off their retreat.

These above mentioned frontiers being assured by that presidio, this one (Santa Fe) would be free from the concern to look after the custody of the rest of the frontiers, and to make war on the Apaches. There would always be sufficient people to go out on a campaign against any nation which might attack.

The prudent and superior intelligence of your Excellency will correct the errors which I may make in complying with what was commanded in your two cited and valuable letters, holding for certain everything which is set forth so far as the poverty of my intellect allows, and that my true wish always desires to anticipate, serve and to please your Excellency, whose life may God our Lord make happy many long years.
Santa Fe, New Mexico, May 26, 1772. Most Excellent Señor, your most reverent and humble servant kisses the hands of your Excellency. Pedro Fermin de Mendinueta. Most Excellent Señor, Don Antonio de Bucareli y Ursua.

Mexico, June 1, 1772. To the Señor Auditor. Bucareli. Most Excellent Señor: Your Excellency being pleased can command that this report be sent to the Señor Fiscal in order that in its view he may pray for that which he considers appropriate concerning the particulars to which it is directed. Mexico, June 17, 1772. Don Domingo Varcarrel.

Mexico, June 23, 1772. To the Señor Fiscal. Bucareli. Most Excellent Señor: In this report the governor of New Mexico is answering the letters of September 28th and October 19th of the last year of your Excellency. He gives in the report a general explanation of the district of his government and the nations which attack it, which are principally the Apache and Comanche Indians; at times, this, also, the Utes and Navajos are accustomed to do who are not always at peace. He refers to the state of the settlement with regard to the Christian Indians and the little regularity which the Spaniards observe in their settlements, and other inhabitants, proposing the means of arranging the settlements to free their haciendas and ranches from enemy invasion. He also speaks of the manner and difficulty which there is in making defensive and offensive war on the enemies and that it is not possible for this reason to take measures which are needed for this war.

Among the means which he proposes for defense is the establishment or formation of pueblos of the Spaniards and Gente de Razon respectively who live on ranches greatly separated from one another, and that in order that it be done thus, it is necessary that your Excellency decree it by a fixed order. For the purpose of making offensive war (may your Excellency decree) the establishing of a new
presidio in the valley of Taos, whose situation, because it is so advanced and distant from the capital, twenty-five leagues of bad road to the north, and has a pueblo of warlike Indians, some settlers, and many others who would be restored to their houses and fields abandoned for the present for fear of the Comanches, would safeguard that frontier. Likewise it would cover the defense of the pueblos of Abiquiú, Santa Clara, San Ildefonso, Pecuries, and other ranches of Spaniards belonging to the Jurisdiction of Santa Cruz de la Cañada.

All this is in substance what this reply contains about what the Fiscal is going to speak. It reduces itself to two parts: the formation of settlements and the establishment of the new presidio which the governor of New Mexico proposes.

With regard to the first part, then, it is just and your Excellency ought to command strictly and with all vigor what Don Pedro Fermin de Mendinueta proposes so that its observance will cause the enemy to avoid the invasions which it is accustomed to make in those lands exposed along their respective frontiers.

New Mexico recognizes two nations as its principal enemies: The Comanche which makes war from all sides, and the Apache on the west and south. Sometimes it suffers from the Utes and Navajos on the northwest. The governor says that these nations would be constrained a great deal if on their frontiers people, distributed in ranches, were settled. In resolving so, the laws may be fulfilled, the best principles of public law looked after and the advantages of those who live there.

The settlements formed with skill and tact, their forces would be united, each one of the settlers aided by others would defend his possessions, drive back the enemy and punish his audacity. This determination, accordingly, as stated, is very advantageous and ought to be commanded
fulfilled under a grave penalty and within a short time because of the important ends which it has, without admitting any recourse which may be thrown in its road to interrupt it.

It is very possible that many, or the most, who live dispersed in those ranches or villages may be intrusive owners of their lands or voluntary holdings. Thus little or no injury is done to them in obliging them to organize settlements at a distance consistent with the fields of their haciendas, for which titles could be sent them as to new settlers. For this purpose it would also be necessary to refuse them the use of those which might be either without the indicated limits of each settlement or very indefensible from the attacks of the enemy.

Thus the pueblos fortified and a barrier formed at proportionate distances on the borders or respective frontiers, the center would then go on growing and would assume strength and hardiness to drive back the enemy, reduce it to peace and tranquility in its lands, or perhaps dislodge it and force it to look for others which we may not have occupied.

The conditions, locations, and the rest of the particulars which these pueblos will have to maintain after forming the barrier are sufficiently clear in our municipal laws, and the advantage quite patent which those inhabitants will enjoy by this measure, directed to encompass their spiritual and temporal benefits. Besides it could be arranged that for the time being the royal treasury would not have to undertake new expenses for the presidio which the governor proposes, the second point about which it remains to speak.

The establishment of the presidio, in case it is conceived necessary, ought to be resolved upon by a council of war and treasury, but the Fiscal did not ask for it, beholding the treasury under excessive charges and calls which incessantly weigh and oppress it, and on the other hand, presum-
ing that, with the above mentioned measures, the lands of that government of New Mexico will be established. These things resolved upon and approved of by your Excellency can be communicated to its governor charging him to observe in their execution all the skill which his zeal has well shown for the royal service, and that your Excellency has confidence in the success of his conduct in seeing the frontiers protected wherever possible from the enemies by the new settlements and the union of the settlers. In this undertaking he will exercise proper mildness, without ceasing the work until its completion by all means of suavity and kindness which his knowledge and prudence dictates to him, assuring him that whatever appeal is made against it, will be looked upon in the rigorous terms of justice, rejecting the useless or impertinent ones.

This new founding of settlements on the frontiers of the Comanches, Apaches, Navajos, and Utes requires some time for their success and thus it will be convenient that this governor be advised to report frequently or as many times as he may be able of its progress or advances.

Unless perhaps your Excellency does not hold it preferable these points so important may be considered also in a council, where your Excellency could expect confidently to hear whatever may be necessary to achieve the desired idea, holding in view the line of presidios which is agreed upon by another held in the time of the most Excellent Señor, Marqués de Croix. Mexico, August 3, 1772. Areche.

Mexico, August 12, 1772. Remembering that which the Señor Fiscal has set forth in his opinion, let this report be discussed concerning the points which it contains, in the first council of war and treasury to decide that which may be considered useful and convenient to the service of the king and the security of this province. Bucareli.

It is a copy of its original, I certify. Chihuahua, June 29, 1778. Antonio Bonilla. (Rubric).
My dear Sir: In a letter of February 18, last, your Lordship was pleased to command me that I make a report clear and well circumstanced of the evils which this province suffers from and of the remedies which may be proper to contribute to its relief. In its required compliance I shall set forth to your Lordship both with clarity and reflection whatever knowledge I have acquired in this country may permit me.

I have supposed that your Lordship has seen that which I represented to the Most Excellent Señor Viceroy, dated March 26 of the past year of 72, in which I stated the extent of territory which this province occupies; the dispersion of its settlers; the number of barbarous nations which surround and harry it with incessant robberies, attacks and murders; and the impracticability with which this single company can go to defend the invaded frontiers, sometimes because of distance or because, even while the news is arriving, the enemies have succeeded in causing a number of deaths among the settlers and Indians dispersed in their fields, even though the pueblo invaded is not very far. Having captured women and children, destroyed herds, they flee rapidly with all they can steal. Although the troop and militia who can assemble may set out with the greatest promptness, it is almost always fruitless because of the marked advantage which the Indians obtain. Thus it happens many times that our people march, in less than three days, seventy and eighty leagues without overtaking them.

The circumstances not having improved, which I before set forth with regard to the evils from which it suffers, I must add that at present the province is reduced to the most deplorable state and greatest poverty as much because of the

sterility of the years which have intervened as because of the greater vigor of hostile attacks from which it has suffered.

In order to provide it with some relief, I propose then the erection of a new presidio in the valley of San Geronimo de Taos, twenty-five leagues to the north of this capital. This, with a competent number of settlers (which would be without doubt added to its shelter because of the fertility and commodiousness of the region) would protect from the Comanche nation all the Indian pueblos and districts of Spaniards of the jurisdiction of La Cañada, serving likewise as a great check upon the numerous Ute nation, against which, although it is peaceful, it is necessary to maintain a continuous guard because of the natural inconstancy of the gentiles, and to overlook some injuries.

This because of its advanced situation on the north I consider the most useful against the cited Comanche nation since it would be easy to cut off any retreat whatever which this enemy made from the interior pueblos and free the present presidio from this attention, so that the latter can dedicate itself to aiding the pueblos of the Queres and Spaniards of the jurisdiction of Albuquerque, driving back the Comanches and Apaches which may enter from the southeast.

The old pueblo of Socorro, which is on the banks of the del Norte, abounding with lands of worked fields, pastures, woods and forests, is distant from this capital about fifty-five leagues and from El Sabinal, the last settlement of this province, twelve leagues to the south. It offers, because of its fertility, convenience for establishing two hundred families. In the intermediate distance of twelve leagues, another three settlements could be set along the bank of the same river, each one of three hundred families, with sufficient lands for cultivation, pastures, and the rest of the necessary things.
To the west of the cited pueblo between those of Acoma, Laguna and Zuñi, (which are as if separated from the body of this government, because of a distance of forty leagues, the last to the west of the Villa of Albuquerque, and of fifteen to twenty the first two), an open door remains. Through it the Apaches enter continuously to rob and kill as far as the center of this province. Through it also they have a clear and pernicious communication with the Navajo nation with whom the Apache nation made a close alliance in the last war it had with us. This nation, although small, possesses a very rugged land to the west of this government in a recess which the three pueblos referred to, Acoma, Laguna, and Zuñi, form. The latter establish their frontier against the Gilas but leave open highways for Gila incursions and communications. For this reason each day sees the Navajo nation becoming more suspicious of ourselves and I consider them (not without reason) as a hidden enemy.

To the southeast of the above-mentioned old pueblo of Socorro at a distance of forty leagues, is the Sierra Blanca settled throughout with Apaches, who likewise attack this province, as much by way of the east as of the west of the same pueblo. There are various spots in which Apaches live some times of the year, and which serve as a stopping place to those who come both from the Sierra Blanca and from the Gila.

If in this pueblo a presidio of fifty men is established with the addition of one hundred families of settlers who can be accommodated fully in its shelter, I consider it would be of the greatest importance. For, as much from the east as from the west it will be necessary to dislodge by incessant harrying the enemy, who are accustomed to live on both sides. They would dare less to enter, as at present, to rob as far as the center of this province, and in case of their doing so, that presidio having prompt advice will be invalu-
able in cutting them off and punishing them on their retreat because of its advanced situation. It would prevent, in part, the communication of the Gilas with the Navajos and facilitate the foundation of the three indicated settlements in order to join hands with the rest of this government, an undertaking which coincides with what was provided for in the new royal regulation of his Majesty in article twenty-five of the Instruction.

The point of uniting the settlers in formal settlements, I consider each day more indispensable, both for their defense and temporal advantage as well as for their spiritual welfare. As for their defense, thus they will be more respected by the enemy. United they will be able to drive back the enemy more easily. They will leave their families safe when they go out to their work and if they engage in helping another settlement, it will be with entire promptness and with a competent number to do so with the most security, and not as it happens now that upon coming to aid by ones and twos, according to their scattered situation, they are customarily victims of the enemy who are coming to attack. As for their temporal advantage, thus they will live more socially, assisting each other mutually with human companionship. Their rough spirits will be softened by contact. As for spiritual welfare, thus the justices will be able to administer justice with ease, avoid scandals and public evils, discover robberies, which they are now accustomed to hide, and make each one fulfill his respective obligations. It will be more easy for the clergy to administer to them and educate them in the most important mysteries of our Holy Faith. Of this I consider the greatest part very ignorant, since they hardly hear the ceremony of mass any day of the year, and only will come together on the days of the festivals to implore divine aid.

The two presidios established on the north and south of this province, as referred to above, three settlements es-
tablished in the neighborhood of the last, for which the people of this kingdom can supply everything, and the people having been assembled in pueblos, the enemies without any doubt, would see themselves in a few years expelled, the haciendas increased, the fields more cultivated. These forces could be useful to the two provinces of Sonora and New Vizcaya in their further operations during campaigns toward the center of Gila, Seven Rivers and the rest of the places inhabited by the enemies.

This is as much in such an important matter as has occurred to my inconsiderable understanding to inform your Lordship in compliance with my obligation, in order that you may determine that which may be for your superior pleasure, which will be the best.

Santa Fe, November 3, 1777. Your most attentive and obedient servant kisses the hands of your Lordship. Pedro Fermin de Mendinueta. Señor Cavallero de Croix.

It is a copy of its original which I certify. Chihuahua, June 29, 1778. Antonio Bonilla. (Rúbric).