The Making of Spanish Indian Policy on the Northwest Coast

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During the second half of the eighteenth century, the Spanish empire in North America underwent a most remarkable period of expansion. While frontier colonizing and missionizing projects had not ceased even in the doldrums of the seventeenth century, limitations of manpower and financial resources prevented incorporation of continental expanses which had attracted the earlier explorers. Spain had developed a unique settlement system, the mission-presidio, which served to draw Indians into a sedentary life and to prepare them for conversion to Christianity. Although this system was not always successful with the warlike and nomadic plains Indians, the experience of the Jesuits and the Franciscans in the Californias tended to confirm accepted theories. In an effort to secure the northern approaches to New Spain, it was quite natural that the mission-presidio should be a model for any new advanced bases. Franciscan friars experienced in the Californias would look after the Indians while naval and army forces provided defense and maintained Spanish sovereignty.

While these factors were predominant, the imperial government saw an opportunity to demonstrate the national commitment to scientific curiosity and to standards worthy of the best Enlightenment themes. Conducted under international scrutiny, Spanish policy was designed to eliminate the traditional misrepresentations by some Europeans that Spain invariably destroyed Indian societies. There was to be no Black Legend on the Northwest Coast. To prevent bloodshed, even sentiments of self-preservation and revenge were to be suppressed. Spaniards would have to respect
the customs and property of the Indians and, if necessary, tolerate robbery, poor faith, insults, and other provocations.¹

From the first voyage of exploration to the Northwest Coast under Juan Pérez in 1774, relations with the Indians were considered to be almost as important as the primary object, which was to verify the extent of Russian encroachment. Pérez's instructions stressed the need to expose the Indians to the light of the gospel and to embark upon a spiritual conquest. Good relations were absolutely essential so that later missionaries and settlers would be well received.² Indeed, when Pérez expressed his own preference for additional hardened soldiers to garrison his ship, Viceroy Antonio María Bucareli chided him, pointing out that the purpose was to carry out a mission of exploration into the unknown and not to fight Indians. Instead of more soldiers, Bucareli attached a Franciscan friar named Pablo Mugártegui to the complement.³ Pérez received supplies of trinkets and orders to learn as much as he could about Indian customs, lifestyle, religion, political relationships, government, and population.

Unfortunately, the expedition did not touch land and while some information was obtained from Indians who visited the ship, the final results fell far short of expectations.⁴ Reports filed by officers and chaplains described the clothing and appearance of the Indians, but the language gap frustrated efforts to learn about their society. Some trading took place aboard ship and Second Pilot Esteban José Martínez noted that a blanket he obtained was "most elegant for having been made by a people without culture."⁵ All of the Indians demonstrated a passionate interest in knives or any metal suitable for cutting edges, but they received little more than trifles and old clothing. Few of the Spaniards generated enthusiasm for the rich furs or for the gloomy fog-shrouded North Pacific coast. Martínez alone saw resources worthy of exploitation. In his opinion:

It is certain that if with time this land is conquered and populated and some ports are discovered in it, our Catholic Monarch will be able to say, 'I have another new world of Spaniards and of land as
rich and luxuriant as Spain since thousands of ships and perhaps even more could be constructed.16

In the following year, Bucareli dispatched a new expedition to complete the work begun by Pérez. By this time, he had several young naval officers who would not be timorous when confronted by bad weather or other hardship. Two vessels under the command of Lieutenants Bruno de Hezeta and Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra sailed north and put into port at present day Grenville Harbor on the Washington coast. The Indians came out to trade for knives, mirrors, and other items—making signs of friendship and even inviting the Spaniards to visit their village. At 9:00 that night, eight large canoes surrounded Bodega’s vessel which was isolated from Hezeta. The Indians shouted and howled for a while, raising concern that an attack was imminent, before they decided to exchange food and water for gifts. The following day, July 14, 1775, peaceful commerce continued; one Indian requested the linchpin and other iron from the ship’s rudder, but departed without complaint when told that they were not for sale. Later in the day, Bodega sent a boat ashore with six heavily armed men to obtain water, firewood and a mast. As they struggled to the beach through a heavy surf, some three hundred Indians fell upon them and slaughtered them; although their horrified comrades fired swivel guns and muskets, none of the shot reached the beach. Bodega tried unsuccessfully to signal Hezeta to convey the bad news. By this point, however, the flush of victory emboldened the Indians. Nine canoes, each with more than thirty warriors, attacked the ship which had very few able-bodied men left to fight. Firepower prevailed, however; when the first Indians attempted to climb aboard, Bodega opened fire with two swivel guns and three muskets. Six attackers were hit and the canoe flotilla withdrew. This was a costly lesson about Northwest Coast Indian societies. Quite clearly, the Spaniards had violated the Indian concept of sovereignty or some other factor had provoked their wrath. From this point forward, no Spaniard could doubt their warlike potential.
A junta convened to discuss retaliation. Bodega and his pilot pressed for revenge. Hezeta was shocked that the Indians could have been aboard the ships in the morning—bringing their women and accepting gifts—then have attacked without warning in the afternoon. Yet neither he nor most of the other officers wished for more bloodshed. The junta noted that article 23 of Hezeta's instructions forbade violence against the Indians except to defend the crews and ships. It was now too late for this sort of action. Besides, ignorance of the terrain gave advantage to the Indians; if more men suffered injuries, the expedition would have to turn back. Since scurvy and other diseases had depleted manpower, nothing was done to avenge the dead seamen. Shortly afterward, Hezeta returned to California while Bodega extended the voyage into Alaskan waters.

There were renewed conflicts in 1779 during the third voyage to the north. The commanders, Lieutenants Bodega y Quadra and Ignacio de Arteaga with the frigates Favorita and Princesa carried orders to conduct themselves as ethnologists rather than conquerors, recording everything they could without disturbing Indian society. In fact, many officers and several chaplains kept detailed journals of this expedition. At Bucareli Sound, the Indians opened relations by singing of peace—plucking the white down from a dead sea bird and scattering it into the air. Before even a week had passed, however, familiarity had turned to contempt. A passion for metals caused the Indians to steal any object which came within their grasp—chisels, barrel hoops, latches, nails, spoons and caldrons, and even the iron strapping from the sides of the ships. On June 10, 1779, in order to obtain the nails they tore down a large cross put up by the friars. Arteaga restrained his men from punishing the Indians, and he succeeded until some of the seamen's clothing vanished. Completely frustrated, the Captain ordered the capture of one Indian. To serve as an example of Spanish administration of justice, the poor victim received ten lashes in plain sight of his comrades. This chastisement had some impact; a few items of clothing were returned and a canoe was left in payment for the remaining garments.
The Sultil and the Mexicana visit Maquinna's village. Drawing by José Cardero, 1792, courtesy of the Museo de America, Madrid.
Although Arteaga periodically fired blanks and even cannon balls over the heads of the Indians in further attempts to keep order, the impact was negligible. The Indians concluded that Spanish weapons were frightening but relatively harmless. Warriors scoffed at muskets and pointed out that noise was no match against their daggers. To dispel wrong impressions and for the sake of humanity, the Spaniards finally fired a cannon ball into an empty canoe and, when war canoes began to hinder launches sent to map the sound, they unleashed a fusillade of musketry which splintered a wooden tub.

These lessons did serve to increase respect for firearms, but did not end thefts and other hostile acts. When two sailors were foolish enough to accompany some Indians to their village, where they later were imprisoned, there was real trouble. Arteaga decided to fire a number of terror inspiring cannon broadsides which might permit the capture of some hostages for exchange. Both vessels opened fire with cannon and light arms. Although the weapons were not supposed to be aimed at human targets, the report did swamp several canoes. Nineteen prisoners were taken. One Indian drowned, and one was killed by an errant musket ball. Immediately, four armed launches were sent to shore, but they were confronted by a multitude of warriors dressed in hide armor and ready for war. Unimpressed by firepower or the loss of hostages, they brandished spears and shot volleys of arrows toward the launches. In a two-hour standoff, the Spaniards restrained themselves and did not return fire. Finally, the sailors were exchanged for the Indian hostages.12

After two months' contact, the Spaniards were able to form some fairly clear impressions about Northwest Coast societies. They had more than sufficient knowledge about Indian weaponry and proclivities toward war. Artisan work—carved boxes, figures, woven mats, masks, jewelry, and other objects—impressed all observers. The language barrier still prevented the Spaniards from making anything but superficial statements about religion and politics. Arteaga described Indian speech as "confusing and gutteral" and the labret worn by the women made all words unclear. To over-
come these difficulties, a few children were purchased who in time would be able to serve as translators and informants. Since the Indians were willing to go to almost any lengths to obtain metal, there was no difficulty finding candidates. As far as Arteaga was concerned, moreover, the children would be much better off with the Spaniards than with their own people, since most of those offered for sale were sickly, uncomely, or hostages taken in inter-tribal warfare. By the time Arteaga weighed anchor, he reported seven youngsters aboard, ranging, he estimated, from three to ten years of age.13

The Spaniards did not return to Bucareli Sound for nine years. It was not until 1788 that Esteban José Martínez and Gonzalo López de Haro led another expedition northward. They opened contacts with Russian posts, and Martínez came across one potentially workable Indian policy. At Prince William Sound, the Indians presented receipts demonstrating that they had paid their annual tribute tax to the Russians. Martínez managed to obtain a few of the chits, and he submitted them with his official reports. The Russians enjoyed generally peaceful relations in 1788, and Indians paid a tax of ten per cent on furs as well as the annual capitation tax of three rubles.14

Martínez reported intelligence of much more immediate importance, however. Several Russians mentioned their plans to move southward in 1789 to establish a base at Nootka Sound. In response to these intentions, Viceroy Manuel Flórez dispatched Martínez northward once again in the spring of 1789 to plant the first Spanish settlement on the Northwest Coast. Once again, the opening of satisfactory Indian relationships was of primary concern. Three articles in Martínez’s instructions from Flórez established a framework for a future Indian policy. Great care was to be taken to exercise “prudence, judgment, and tact” in any relationship with the Indians. Gifts and commerce would help in the beginning, but four Franciscan missionaries from the Colegio de San Fernando in Mexico City were sent to approach the Indians “in a gentle way so as not to exasperate them.”15

Upon arrival off Nootka Sound on May 3, 1789, Martínez and
his men became more concerned about Europeans than Indians. There were at least three foreign merchant vessels in the sound,\textsuperscript{16} and the Indians greeting Martínez wore copper and brass jewelry and exhibited English daggers.\textsuperscript{17} These foreigners were not anticipated since the Spaniards were totally unaware of new developments of the sea otter trade. They established themselves at the still unoccupied summer village site of Yucuat or Friendly Cove, the best harbor in the region and a central focus in the culture of the Nootka Indians. The heavy squared timber frames of Indian dwellings formed the basis for the first Spanish buildings. Martínez's first aim, after his settlement was well established, was to prove the Spanish claims to sovereignty. According to his journal, Chief Maquinna, the dominant leader over all Indians of Nootka Sound, recalled the Pérez visit of 1774.\textsuperscript{18}

The Franciscan missionaries found themselves totally isolated from the indigenous population. Martínez feared an attack and maintained constant vigilance.\textsuperscript{19} No one was permitted to stray beyond the range of protection by the cannon of the ships and the new fort. Although the Indians did bring fish and other items for sale in exchange for machetes, bits of iron, copper, and other trifles, the friars had little opportunity to study Nootkan religion and customs. Clearly the Franciscans would have to find some means of approaching the Indians in their own villages or of attracting them to settle at Yucuat before the conversion process could begin. Instead of carrying the gospel to the Indians, however, the friars like other members of the garrison studied published sources and reports given by fur traders. Having read the French edition of Captain Cook's \textit{A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean}, secular and religious personnel alike were aware that Indians of Nootka Sound had attempted to sell the British mariners a severed hand.\textsuperscript{20} Almost no one among them seriously questioned Cook's supposition that the indigenous people were cannibals. American and British traders passed on similar stories until few accounts were complete without the ubiquitous severed hand. Indians themselves helped to propagate the most horrible tales by heaping abuse upon their
nearby enemies, but no Indian ever confessed to having been a cannibal himself.\textsuperscript{21}

Martínez received some of his information about the Indians from Americans in the area, notably Joseph Ingraham, a trader. Ingraham discussed religion, morality, marriage and burial customs, and confirmed and extended Cook’s suggestions about cannibalism.\textsuperscript{22} Another informant, New England Captain John Kendrick of the \textit{Columbia}, told about cannibal feasts, incessant intertribal warfare in which children were taken as prisoners, and related stories of purchasing such children for “a piece of copper, bits of iron, or some other bauble.”\textsuperscript{23} Kendrick told Martínez that such children had originally been intended for cannibal sacrifice, and he spun gruesome tales of rites he had personally attended. Of course, both Ingraham and Kendrick had a large stake in keeping the fur trade open, so exaggeration undoubtedly originated in economic interests. Nevertheless, Martínez believed the claims, and like Arteaga he purchased children from their captors in order to save them from their awful fate. Apparently the Indians had corresponding suspicions about Spanish intentions. On some occasions when he sought to buy children, Martínez was asked if he intended to devour them.\textsuperscript{24} Actually children who were purchased were turned over to the Franciscans, who baptized them and thus claimed some of their only successes in spreading the Holy Faith in the Northwest.\textsuperscript{25}

Like Martínez; the Franciscan missionaries had to learn about the Indians second-hand, since the priests were not accepted as intimates. But unlike Martínez, not all the priests believed the stories spread by their informants. Fray Severo Patera, head of the religious mission, professed admiration for their politeness and good manners even though they were “miserable idolators.”\textsuperscript{26} Nevertheless, Patera had no illusions about the possibilities of spreading the gospel on the Northwest Coast. Trained for quite different conditions, he was unable to adjust enough to lead his friars to a spiritual conquest. The mountainous and rocky terrain baffled the Franciscans who could not even find a place suitable
to “sow half a *fanega* of grain.” It was equally useless for stock-raising “even if one wanted to keep only half a dozen of one species.” More important, however, the friars saw no way to penetrate Indian society or to make themselves useful by introducing new or better crops and domestic animals. As Patero complained, in most pagan countries of the Americas—especially where the Spaniards had been active—the natives fed themselves from various grains. Each region produced certain products which their ancestors and the climate imposed. On the Northwest Coast, however . . . “these Indians neither have nor know any seed but the fish which they follow to its havens and establish themselves with such ease that even the richest amongst them must say ‘Omnia mecum porto’ (All I have I carry with me).” As proof of this, he pointed out that in just over two months one group had inhabited three places each rather distant from the other. 27

Not surprisingly in light of the earlier experience, the plan to establish a traditional mission-presidio was abandoned. Martínez withdrew the garrison from Nootka Sound in October, 1789. But the new viceroy of Mexico, the Conde de Revillagigedo, wished to re-establish the northern post in 1790. When the Spaniards returned to Nootka Sound, their entourage lacked a strong missionary component. While the base was still excellent for ethnographic research, comparatively little was done to spread the gospel. The chaplains turned their attention to the needs of the garrison, seeking wherever possible to purchase children to save them from imagined cannibal feasts. In reviewing their record during 1792, the scientist José Mariano Moziño condemned the narrow thinking which had deterred Patero. He saw no reason why missions needed arable land and went on to ask rhetorically, “. . . could not a doctrine that was taught by fishermen in the first place be communicated to those who out of necessity, ignorance, and a lack of resources followed this profession?” 28

The viceroy’s secret instructions given to Francisco de Eliza, designated commander of the expedition, placed emphasis upon ethnological questions which were of interest to the viceroy, and paid scant attention to missionary work. Eliza was to cultivate
Indian friendship and make full reports on their spirit, character, temperament, numbers, and relationships with foreigners. The treasury underwrote the costs of several cases of baubles and old clothing which were to be used as gifts. Moreover, Spain desired to join the other nations in the sea otter trade. The royal exchequer shipped ten cases of copper sheets to exchange for sea otter pelts. Since copper, abalone shells, and muskets were the only major items in demand, Eliza was to concentrate on the first two. Finally, Revillagigedo wanted accurate accounts kept on every aspect of this trade.

Eliza arrived to find Yucuat empty of both foreign vessels and the Nootka summer village. There was a large wooden palisade attached to the beach for fish trapping, but no human habitation. The Indians whom they did contact were cautious and manifested great fear of firearms. They seldom boarded the ships and according to their own admission, they moved their village site to avoid Martínez. Chief Maquinna, not satisfied with these steps, had moved to Clayoquot Sound where he had taken up residence with Chief Wickananish. Ensign Manuel Quimper of Eliza’s party visited both chiefs on his way to explore Juan de Fuca Strait. He informed Maquinna that Martínez was no longer commandant and that the chief would be welcomed at Yucuat. Maquinna doublechecked this information with members of Quimper’s crew and then asked for a sail for his canoe so that he could visit Eliza.

Eliza had devoted relatively little time at first to the Indians or to collecting information on their culture. He was more concerned with dispatching voyages of exploration, setting up cannon in the small fort, and overseeing the preparation of housing, kitchens, ovens, and storage facilities before winter struck. Heavy rainfall slowed progress and caused unexpectedly high levels of illness in the garrison. When Eliza’s dispatches to Revillagigedo reflected this sort of concern rather than an active interest in Indians, the viceroy grew impatient. He wanted to know whether the indigenous population was friendly or unfriendly, if gifts had been offered to attract them and to instill love for Spain, and if the atmosphere was ripe for spreading the gospel.
Maquinna was wise to let matters settle at Nootka Sound before returning. Minor disputes with the Spaniards and some nasty incidents continued to exacerbate friendly relations and to keep nerves on edge. On one occasion, for example, several Indians, who had gone to Yucuat to earn presents by ferrying Spaniards back and forth from their ships to land, decided to kidnap a soldier who had become overconfident about docile appearances. Lengthy negotiations and finally Clayoquot Indian intercession were needed before his release could be obtained.34 In a more serious incident, Indians from Hesquiat Harbor, never friendly toward the Spaniards, attempted to steal some water casks to obtain the iron hoops. The soldiers and mariners opened fire, killing five and wounding an undetermined number.35

The Indians, especially Maquinna’s tribe, feared the long-term consequences of the Spanish occupation of Nootka Sound, since the intrusive settlement at Yucuat occupied the site of one of their most important villages. Although Maquinna’s people moved as many as five times per year, Yucuat was certainly the best summer location on the sound. Besides providing good facilities for housing and canoe launching, staying at Yucuat permitted several different activities, including whaling in the open ocean, fishing, hunting, and food gathering in and around the sheltered bays. Even more important, Yucuat harbor was fine for fish traps, for raking herring and small fish, and for finding enormous schools of spawning sardines.36 Naturally, one of Maquinna’s major concerns was to regain control over this strategic and important site. Eliza and other commandants soon discovered that the Indians were preoccupied with learning when the Spaniards planned to depart.37 In June, 1791, for example, Maquinna complained to Lieutenant Ramón Saavedra that while his present village location was the best after Yucuat, it was rather unhealthful and a poor place for fishing and food gathering. He pointed to his body and stated that this was the reason for his being so thin. Saavedra thought he saw an opening for spreading the gospel and invited the Indians to move near the Spanish garrison. Maquinna refused to do so, citing his fear that the soldiers would violate his women—
although he did point out that he had no complaint against the officers.  
Fortunately, Eliza was more positive about Indian culture than some of his subordinates. While he subscribed to the general belief in cannibalism and purchased children who were offered for sale, he introduced a freer relationship designed to end mutual misunderstandings. He did threaten the Indians with great violence if they practiced human sacrifice, but then did everything possible to attract them to the settlement. He gave gifts, often the copper sheets intended for the fur trade, and invited the chiefs to dine and even to stay at his house. They soon began to accept his offer with uncomfortable frequency. Unlike Caamaño and the friars, Eliza was therefore confident that the conversion process was possible. On several occasions, he reported that it would be relatively simple to reduce the Nootka Indians to law and religion. In 1792 he wrote, "... if the establishment lasts for two years, few will remain who have not converted to our religion."  
These more liberal attitudes did much to improve relations. Tlupananul, the victim of earlier foraging expeditions, was quite willing to exchange lumber for copper sheets. Seeing the potential of the market, he offered planks at the rate of forty for two heavy copper sheets. Under this agreement, the post rapidly took on a more permanent appearance and Eliza built a fairly large two-story residence for the commandant. On occasions, the Spaniards began to visit Indian villages to purchase whale oil and red ochre needed to paint the gun carriages and sides of the ship. Not to be left out, Maquinna sold large numbers of children and began to serve as a mediator in cases of petty theft of knives and other objects. His real opportunity to ingratiate himself came in October, 1790, when a boat carrying the English fur trader Captain Thomas Hudson and six men wrecked off Estevan Point with the loss of all lives. Eliza gave Maquinna five sheets of copper for investigating the wreck and recovering correspondence or other objects.  
Although generosity with copper sheets served to gain the affections of the Indians, Viceroy Revillagigedo was not at all pleased. Reading through the correspondence from Nootka Sound,
he was disturbed by the numerous occasions in which copper belonging to the exchequer was being wasted on gifts or purchases of children rather than being used in the fur trade. The northern expeditions and the Nootka base were expensive enough without squandering copper. The viceroy wanted some profits to offset expenditures. Instead of using government copper for gifts, he ordered Eliza to utilize the old iron, trinkets, and baubles. In reality, such criticisms reflected a good deal of naivete about the situation on the Northwest Coast. Not only had the foreign fur traders established certain standards of exchange, but also the growing frequency of visits from Spanish and British ships exploring or seeking to settle the Nootka affair led the Indians to expect increasingly better gifts. As early as 1790, Quimper had reported from Clayoquot that as soon as he arrived in port, the Indians surrounded his vessel and demanded gifts. When none came, they yelled pizac! at the Spaniards, meaning something akin to "bad." Quimper gave in to their demands and cut up two copper sheets, distributing small pieces which satisfied the Indians. Whenever the Spaniards offered poor quality gifts, they were told that the British, Americans, and others gave items of better quality. Cooperation could not be expected without gifts of copper, abalone shells, and blue cloth. At the Nootka establishment, essential food supplies, planks, and thatching materials were unavailable without catering to Indian desires. Fortunately, Bodega y Quadra who commanded northern operations understood the situation better than Revillagigedo. He defended the commandants at Nootka Sound and pointed out that cheap trinkets were not at all valued by the Indians.

Even the demand for copper and abalone shells was rather short-lived. Before long, the Indians asked for muskets and received them from British and American traders. Even as early as 1789, American trader Joseph Ingraham reported that Callicum, Wickananish, and several other chiefs possessed sufficient firearms to give them military predominance over other tribes. Although none but the chiefs was expert at marksmanship, they were eager to obtain muskets and constantly in need of powder. Maquinna
had twenty muskets which he obtained from American traders. Fortunately for the Spaniards as well as for other tribes, these weapons were employed more for intimidation than for actual use in warfare. As Caamaño reported, "... it is very rare to find one who is bold enough to fire them and he who does so turns his face to one side and closes his eyes." This situation was changing as more Indians were given the opportunity to purchase and familiarize themselves with firearms. By 1792, Caamaño found that even the Indians of Bucareli Sound had a number of muskets and two rather good bronze cannon. Closer to the Nootka establishment, the Indians of the Queen Charlotte Islands possessed muskets and at nearby Clayoquot Sound, Wickananish was able to purchase two light artillery pieces with ten cartridges and a quantity of balls. Most of the weapons traded for furs were of low quality. By 1794, for example, the barrels of almost all of the muskets sold to Maquinna in 1791 had blown out.

Luckily for both sides, Maquinna, Wickananish, and most other chiefs found peace with the Europeans to be distinctly more advantageous to their own interests than war. Between 1791 and 1793 particularly, most foreigners were anxious to ply the Indians with gifts either to gain support in the Spanish-British diplomatic controversy over Nootka Sound or to obtain sea otter pelts. Maquinna became adept at extracting every possible advantage and in the process he became a consummate diplomat in his own right—often outfoxing Spaniards, British, and Americans. The arrival of the Malaspina Expedition in 1791, the visits of the ethnologist José Mariano Mozoño, and the other exploratory and supply missions kept him busy collecting gifts and entertaining visitors. With arrival of the Vancouver Expedition and other foreign visitors to Nootka Sound, he was much better off using diplomacy rather than violence. During the lengthy negotiations over sovereignty between Bodega y Quadra and Vancouver, the Spaniards did everything possible to make Maquinna a celebrity and to welcome him into their establishment. Bodega, during his tenure at Nootka Sound in 1792, extended Eliza’s open door policy, giving attractive gifts such as a suit of tinplate armor to Maquinna and inviting
Chief Maquinna and his wife. Drawing by Cardero, courtesy of the Museo de America.
the chiefs to his table. Although Bodega described this treatment as "a system of humanity innate to my nature," he naturally was very anxious to have Indian support in the Spanish case for sovereignty.

Regardless of motivations, there were two important results of Spanish policy. First, by 1792 there was sufficient information and depth of knowledge on the part of the experienced Nootka hands such as Eliza, Saavedra, and Caamaño to help the scientists arrive at more perceptive results from their examinations of Indian culture. Moreover, the language barrier was falling as Spaniards learned the Indian language and some Indians became conversant in Spanish. Without these foundations, the Malaspina visit and even more the work of José Mariano Moziño would not have been possible. Secondly, through the active cooperation of Maquinna, the Spaniards amazed foreign visitors with a show of reciprocal friendship with the Indians. Vancouver remarked,

I could not help observing with a mixture of surprise and pleasure, how much the Spaniards had succeeded in gaining the good opinion and confidence of these people; together with the very orderly behavior, so conspicuously evident in their conduct towards the Spaniards on all occasions.54

Even Ingraham was amazed at the apparent transformation of the chiefs from treacherous barbarians into the most polite and civilized of gentlemen. He commented, "I verily believe that if the Spaniards had the tuition of these individuals but for a few years longer they would be quite civilized."55

For Maquinna, there was more to diplomacy than mere gifts or access to the commandant's table. His own purpose was to maintain his superiority within Nootka Sound and if possible to play a middleman's role in trade with neighboring tribes. Even in 1790, he attempted to prevent Quimper from sailing into Juan de Fuca Strait, arguing that the Indians there were evil and had killed two foreign captains. Supported by Wickananish, he proposed that Quimper return to his own country to bring back cargoes of copper and abalone shells for trade at Nootka and Clayoquot Sounds.56
Often, Maquinna displayed his special relationship with the Spaniards. On one occasion, two visiting chiefs were taken to the Spanish post where they were given a glass of brandy. When the commandant, Lieutenant Ramón Saavedra, was about to give each man ten abalone shells, Maquinna and Tlupananul whispered that two would be quite enough. Saavedra was certain that Maquinna did not want to damage his own commercial predominance. He knew that the two chiefs had come to trade sea otter furs for copper and shells. During the entertainment, Maquinna made a great show of his affections—often saying "te quiero" and making other expressions of familiarity and friendship. This pleased Saavedra who played along with Maquinna's political ploys.  

Despite improved relations, violence was always close to the surface. Perhaps the worst atrocity committed by the Spaniards occurred at Puerto de Núñez Gaona (Neah Bay) in Juan de Fuca Strait. There, in May 1792, Salvador Fidalgo began to establish a second Spanish post—one which could have become important if Vancouver accepted an English-Spanish boundary at the strait. Fidalgo's pilot, Antonio Serantes, breaking orders to stay within musket range of the post, accompanied an Indian on a hunting foray. Serantes was murdered and, in a rage, Fidalgo ordered his artillerymen to open fire on the first two canoes that happened to come within range. The cannister shot had a devastating effect, killing all of the Indians except for two children. Bodega condemned this action which he called a "cruel and regrettable incident." Pained though he was by the news of Serantes's murder, he stated: "When the assassin was unknown, it does not seem to me to have been necessary to take vengeance upon those who perhaps were innocent." He ordered Fidalgo to avoid further bloodshed. News of this incident reached the imperial cabinet where both the Conde de Aranda and the Duque de Alcudia condemned Fidalgo's behavior. Aranda believed that Bodega should have taken more vigorous action to punish Fidalgo. Well aware of the potential propaganda dangers of such incidents, even
King Charles IV reviewed the matter and supported the findings of his ministers. Following the settlement of the Nootka Sound Controversy with the English, the Spanish presence at Yucuat was temporary until the final exchange and withdrawal could be accomplished. During 1794 and part of 1795, the excitement of ships arriving and of scientists observing Indian society came to an end. There were still numerous reports of violence between fur traders and Indians up and down the coast, but the Spaniards lacked any effective police power. Ramón Saavedra, commandant during much of the period from 1793 to 1795, spent most of his time looking after minor matters connected with the garrison. The winter of 1793-1794 was exceptionally harsh and some of the Indian villages ran out of food. Tlupananul’s village was reduced to eating roots and Saavedra ordered that they be provided with a kettle of cooked beans daily. Maquinna’s village was not as badly off, but reports from Estevan Point indicated that eighty men and women there had perished from starvation. Fortunately for Tlupananul, a whale washed ashore just when things appeared bleakest. Saavedra recorded that this took place after the chief had come to ask Padre Luera to say a Mass to bring fish as soon as possible.

The long-hoped-for move of Maquinna to Yucuat finally took place in March of 1794. At first he simply requested permission to erect his house until good weather permitted him to move elsewhere. Saavedra offered no objections, making sure that the Indians located their temporary dwellings to one side of the establishment within range of the cannon. The Spaniards were surprised when Maquinna’s brother Quatlazapé and other subordinate chiefs joined the settlement. Later, Saavedra learned that the reason was a rumor that Wickananish was preparing an attack to kill Maquinna. Apparently the dispute originated with a daughter of Wickananish who was to marry into Maquinna’s tribe. Concerned about his powerful adversary, Maquinna asked whether Spain would seek revenge should he be
killed. Saavedra replied in the affirmative, noting that the Spanish sovereign and all Spain loved him. Finally, Wickananish sent an envoy with six sea otter skins as a sign of friendship. The trouble, it turned out, originated with rumors spread by the Hesquiat Indians. Almost immediately, Maquinna and his people moved away from the protection of the Spanish garrison. After one more difficult winter during which even the Indians confessed that they had never seen such storms, the Spaniards prepared for their final departure. Kept at maximum vigilance even during the long winter months and forbidden permission to stray beyond the harbor mouth, life for the soldados was deadly boring as well as miserable. Finally, on March 15, 1795, the warship Activo anchored with Brigadier José Manuel de Alava, who would serve as Spain's representative, and Lieutenant Thomas Pearce, the British commissioner, both concerned with the restitution of lands supposed to have once belonged to the English trader John Meares. As soon as Alava landed, the process of embarking the artillery, destroying the fortifications, and tearing down the buildings got underway. While historians always have credited the Indians for razing the buildings, it was actually the Spaniards who totally demolished their own settlement. Pearce attempted to halt the destruction, but to no avail. Finally at 9:00 a.m. on March 27, 1795, Alava, Pearce, and the Spanish officers and chaplains went to the little bay where early fur trader John Meares claimed to own land. The declaration and counter-declaration were read and the British flag was raised in recognition of possession. After a short while, the British flag was struck and Alava ordered the pole torn down. Having completed the ceremony, both Alava and Pearce went to pay final respects to the three principal chiefs of Nootka Sound. Gifts of copper and cloth were given and Alava presented each chief with a silver medal which had been dedicated to the King's service by the Consulado of Mexico. Since Pearce brought no gifts, Alava graciously permitted him to present some of the copper and cloth. Even before the Spanish vessels left Yucuat Harbor, Maquinna's people had set to work to raise their own summer village.
While the Spaniards failed to maintain their position on the Northwest Coast, they had not created a new Black Legend either. Perhaps by failing to create a mission to spread the gospel, they saved themselves a great deal of trouble when they were forced to back down before Britain on the diplomatic front. It is difficult to say what might have occurred if Spain has planted a vigorous mission-presidio with numerous neophytes to defend against the Protestant incursion. As it was, the Spanish withdrawal was relatively painless. Generally speaking, the Spaniards had kept the spirit of humanity and scientific achievement in full view and they shared little of the blame for the devastating violence committed by the nationals of other fur trading nations against the Indians. Unlike their sixteenth century predecessors, the late eighteenth century Spaniards were witnesses to events, but seldom the prime movers of them.

NOTES

3. Bucareli to Pérez, December 24, 1773, AGN, Hist. 61.
5. Diario de la navegación y exploración del Piloto Segundo Don Esteban José Martínez, December 27, 1774, AGN, Hist. 61.
6. Diario de la navegación.
8. Diario de navegación por el Teniente de Navío Don Bruno de Hezeta, 1775, AGN, Hist. 324.
9. See AGN, Hist. 64.
10. Diario de la navegación que con el favor de Dios y de la Virgen de Regla espera hacer el Teniente de Navío D. Ignacio de Arteaga, 1770, AGN, Hist. 63.
11. Tercera exploración hecha el año 1770 con las fragatas del Rey la Princesa mandada por el Teniente de Navío Don Ignacio Arteaga y la Favorita por el de la misma clase, Don Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra, Museo Naval, Madrid (hereinafter cited as MN), 575-bis.
12. Diario de Ignacio de Arteaga, 1779, AGN, Hist. 63.
15. Orden instructiva comunicada al Alférez graduado de Navío D. Esteban José Martínez, para su gobierno y puntual observancia en la ocupación del puerto de San Lorenzo de Nutka, 1789, AHN, Estado 4289.
21. Robert Haswell of the Columbia did claim to have witnessed the Indians eating human flesh, but there is no real evidence. It is possible that he witnessed some sort of simulated cannibalism by a medicine man. See Robert Haswell’s Log of the First Voyage of the “Columbia,” in F. W. Howay (ed.), Voyages of the “Columbia” to the Northwest Coast 1787-1790 and 1790-1793 (New York, 1941), p. 66.
22. Joseph Ingraham to Martínez, Description of Nootka Inhabitants, 1789, AGN, Hist. 65.
23. Informe que yo Don José Tobar y Tamariz, primer piloto de la Real Armada doy al Exmo. Sr. Virrey de Nueva España en obediencia de su superior orden, comunicada con fecha de 29 de Agosto de 1789, AGN, Hist. 65.
27. Patero to Flórez.
29. Instrucciones secretas para el Teniente de Navío Don Francisco Eliza, Comandante de la Fragata Concepción, San Blas, January 28, 1790, AGN, Hist. 68.
30. Salvador Fidalgo to Bodega y Quadra, Tepic, December 1, 1790, AGN, Hist. 68.
31. Manuel Quimper to Bodega y Quadra, Tepic, December 3, 1790, AGN, Hist. 68; Diario de navegación que con el favor de Dios va ejecutar el Alférez de Navío D. Manuel Quimper . . . al descubrimiento del Estrecho de Juan de Fuca, 1790, AGN, Hist. 68.
32. Diario de las cosas particulares que ha notado en el tiempo que he estado en Noka, 1790-1791, by Jacinto Caamaño, AGN, Hist. 69; El Comandante de la Expedición da parte al Sr. Comandante del Departamento de San Blas de todo lo ocurrido en su navegación y entrada en este puerto, Nootka, July 5, 1790, AGN, Hist. 68.
33. Revillagigedo to Eliza, November 17, 1790, AGN, Hist. 68.
34. Quimper to Bodega, Tepic, December 3, 1790, AGN, Hist. 68.
35. Martínez to Bodega, Tepic, December 2, 1790, AGN, Hist. 68.
36. Costumbres de los Naturales del Puerto de San Lorenzo de Nuca, proporciones para su conquista, y utilidades que comprendo puede este producir . . . , by Francisco Eliza, Nootka Sound, April 20, 1791, AGN, Hist. 69.
37. Saavedra to Revillagigedo, Nootka Sound, May 26, 1791, AGN, Hist. 69.
38. Saavedra to Bodega y Quadra, August 27, 1791, AHN, Estado 4289.
39. Eliza to Revillagigedo, Monterrey, July 7, 1792, AGN, Hist. 69; Costumbres de los Naturales, April 20, 1791, AGN, Hist. 69.
40. Saavedra to Bodega y Quadra, August 27, 1791, AGN, Hist. 69.
41. Eliza to Bodega y Quadra, March 9, 1791, AGN, Hist. 69.
42. Revillagigedo to Bodega y Quadra, May 25, 1791, AGN, Hist. 69.
43. Diario de navegación . . . al Estrecho de Juan de Fuca, 1790, AGN, Hist. 68.
44. Fidalgo to Revillagigedo, Nootka Sound, November 26, 1792, AGN, Hist. 70.
45. Bodega to Revillagigedo, Tepic, June 11, 1791, AGN, Hist. 69.
46. Eliza to Revillagigedo, Nootka Sound, April 20, 1791, AGN, Hist. 69.
47. Ingraham to Martínez, Description of Nootka Inhabitants, 1789, AGN, Hist. 65.
48. Saavedra to Bodega y Quadra, August 27, 1791, AHN, Estado 4289.
49. Caracter, vida, y costumbres de los Indios de Noka, Jacinto Caamaño, AGN, Hist. 69.
50. Extracto del diario de las navegaciones, exploraciones, y descubrimientos, hechos en la América Septentrional por D. Jacinto Caamaño . . . desde el puerto de San Blas de donde salió en 20 de Marzo del año de 1792, MN, 2193.
52. Despite these problems, there were reports that the Indians had begun to abandon their traditional weapons for pistols and muskets which they knew how to fire with accuracy. See José Porrua Turanzas (ed.), Relación del viaje hecho por las goletas Sutil y Mexicana en el año de 1792 para reconocer el Estrecho de Fuca (Madrid, 1958), p. 128.
53. Viaje a la Costa N. O. de la America Septentrional por Don Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra, 1792, Ms. British Columbia Provincial Archives, Victoria, B.C.
56. Diario de navegación . . . al Estrecho de Juan Fuca, 1790, AGN, Hist. 68.
57. Saavedra to Revillagigedo, Nootka Sound, June 15, 1794, AHN, Estado 4290.
58. Fidalgo to Bodega y Quadra, Núñez Gaona, July 4, 1792, and September 30, 1792, AGN, Hist. 69.
59. Bodega y Quadra to Fidalgo, Nootka Sound, August 5, 1792, AGN, Hist. 67.
60. Duque de Alcudia to Revillagigedo, February 23, 1793, AGN, Hist. 67; Note of the Conde de Aranda, n.d., 1793, AHN, Estado 4288.
61. Saavedra to Revillagigedo, June, 1794, AHN, Estado 4290.
62. Saavedra to Revillagigedo.
63. Informe reservado que en calidad de extrajudicial pasa al Exmo. Sr. Marqués de Branciforte . . . el Brigadier Don José Manuel de Alava . . ., 1795, AHN, Estado 4290.