Diplomats as Spymasters: A Case Study of the Peninsular War, 1809–1813[1]

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Abstract

During the Peninsular War, General Lord Wellington orchestrated and utilised one of the most sophisticated intelligence collection apparatuses of the nineteenth century. Not only was the intelligence collected by his own personnel made available to him, but so too was that collected by a group of civilian agents recruited and controlled by the British diplomats in Portugal and Spain, Charles Stuart and Henry Wellesley. This article analyses the organisation and evolution of these intelligence networks during the critical years of the Peninsular War. It then explains the impact of this intelligence on Wellington's military planning, specifically focusing on the opening campaigns of 1812. It then locates the historical importance of the intelligence networks developed in the Iberian Peninsula, by comparing them with later examples during the Crimean War (1853–56), and preceding the outbreak of the First World War (1914–18).

British diplomatic services have a long ancestry linked to intelligence collection.[2] Prior to the twentieth century, and the era of radio communication, much of this intelligence was strategic in nature and aided the British government in

1. The author would like to thank Dr Martin Thomas of the University of Exeter for his insightful comments on an earlier draft of this article.

2. See J. Haswell, *Spies and Spymasters* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977); and K. Neilson and B. J. C. McKercher, eds., *Go Spy the Land: Military Intelligence in History* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1992).

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the formulation of foreign and, in the extreme, war policy. In times of war, this intelligence was rarely used at the military-strategic or operational level, usually because the military were able to acquire their own operational and, more commonly, tactical intelligence, to make timely and effective decisions. Diplomats were only rarely able to supply information and intelligence in a timely fashion. With regard to British operations on the European continent in the Napoleonic Wars, this was particularly true. Most amphibious operations were launched on hostile coastlines, frequently in the absence of any intelligence on the nature of the terrain or the strength of the enemy. An exception to this was the Peninsular War, Britain's only sustained engagement on the European mainland. In it, General Lord Wellington, commanding the Anglo-Portuguese Army, relied on intelligence from local British diplomats to develop a strategic plan. The British diplomats assigned to Portugal and Spain, Charles Stuart and Henry Wellesley, established extensive civilian intelligence-gathering networks, which facilitated military planning.

I. Introduction: Continuities and Changes

The evolution of intelligence-collection organisation during the war in the Iberian Peninsula highlights the continuities and changes between the unsophisticated intelligence-gathering techniques of the eighteenth century, and the more complex developments of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is important to note that the Peninsular War did not mark the origins of modern intelligence collection, but constituted something of a turning-point in the development of the institutionalisation of intelligence-gathering. Until that point, intelligence collection had always been considered important, and much effort had been expended by European governments fixated with the need to know what their enemies and potential enemies were doing. Issues of time and space, reliability and communicability, perennially prevented most forms of intelligence, especially covert human intelligence, from decisively affecting the conduct of war. For that reason, perhaps, little attempt was made to organise and institutionalise an intelligence collection service, with a specific set of guidelines to establish uniformity. Not until the sixteenth century was any known organisation applied by England to intelligence-gathering on the continent. Even then, agents and correspondents were employed on an ad-hoc basis by Francis Walsingham, chief secretary to Elizabeth I. Daniel Defoe, a figure famous not only because of his literary talent but also for his later work as an agent of the British government,[3] described Walsingham as "the greatest master of intelligence in the age."[4]

Until this point, those in England who orchestrated intelligence-collection and analysis did not differentiate domestic or "security" intelligence from foreign

3. See P. R. Backscheider, "Daniel Defoe and Early Modern Intelligence," *Intelligence and National Security* 11 (1996): 1–21; and S. Peterson, "Defoe and Westminster, 1696–1706," *Eighteenth Century Studies* 12 (1979): 306–38.

4. J. Haswell, *British Military Intelligence* (Birkenhead, U.K.: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), 15.

intelligence. Within the former category fell any attempts to uncover plots against the Monarchy, or similar national, but internal, threats. Walsingham, by playing a vital role in producing the evidence used to charge Mary, Queen of Scots, with espionage and treason, established a forerunner of domestic security intelligence.[5] It is important to differentiate domestic intelligence from foreign intelligence-collection and organisation. The former continued to develop throughout the English Civil War, when it became customary for members of the clergy to deal in matters of intelligence. Reverend John Wallis deciphered encoded Royalist dispatches on behalf of the Parliamentarians, and his grandson, William Blencowe, became the first official "Decypherer."[6] In 1657, the Post Office was established in Britain, and the Secret and Private Offices attached to it became responsible for the interception, opening, copying, decryption and translation of foreign diplomatic mail.[7]

Domestic intelligence procurement continued throughout the eighteenth century and was augmented, in 1793, with the creation of the Alien Office, responsible for what in modern terms would be referred to as immigration surveillance. Elizabeth Sparrow identifies this as the origins of the Security Service.[8] Like its modern day successor, the Alien Office dealt with domestic security issues, such as the London Corresponding Society, which, Sparrow asserts, the Alien Office infiltrated in the 1790s to avert a revolution in Britain. Agents of the Office also engaged in espionage on the continent that was similarly directly relevant to domestic security concerns.[9] Although it was disbanded in 1868, the Secret and Private Offices dealt only with internal intelligence matters, by performing discreet analysis of foreign diplomatic mail, and interrogating suspected foreign spies.[10] Whilst this was, undoubtedly, a prolific source of information on Britain's enemies and allies alike, its value was outmatched in times of war by foreign intelligence-collection. In the nineteenth century, the British government used diplomats to acquire intelligence on potential enemy intentions during periods of peace.[11]

The use of diplomats to acquire information on enemies and potential

5. Ibid., 18.

6. L. Paine, *Britain's Intelligence Service* (London: Hale, 1979), 42.

7. K. Ellis, *The Post Office in the Eighteenth Century: A Study in Administrative History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958).

8. E. Sparrow, *Secret Service: British Agents in France, 1792–1815* (Woodbridge, U.K.: Boydell Press, 1999), 19.

9. See E. Sparrow, "The Alien Office, 1792–1806," *Historical Journal* 33 (1990): 361–84.

10. See Inquiries by Lord Palmerston concerning expense of Secret Service fund: Bode Establishment also known as the Secret Office of GPO, HD 3/8, The National Archives (hereafter TNA), London; and HD 3/35, Correspondence with various members of the Bode family on pensions; memorandum on closure of the Secret Office; correspondence on applications for increased pension; memorandum on history of the Secret Office.

11. A. Cobban, "British Secret Service in France, 1784–1792," *English Historical Review* 69 (1954): 226–61.

enemies began with the emergence of the resident embassy in the northern Italian city states during the fifteenth century. These permanent residents were explicitly used to gather information, whilst special missions were sent to deliver messages and conduct negotiations.[12] Suspicious of the intentions of permanent residencies, the northern European states took the course of three centuries to accept that the efficiency of having permanent embassies and ambassadors outweighed the potential negative impacts. Nevertheless, the initial primary role of the permanent ambassador was the negotiation and maintenance of military alliances, and only gradually was a secondary role of information gathering permitted.[13] As nation-states emerged, and the divisions between them grew, the priority on the acquisition of information became more significant.

By the eighteenth century, the use of ambassadors and emissaries to procure intelligence was universally accepted, and Britain was by no means the only nation to engage in such activities. During the eighteenth century, the British government expended much effort on obtaining information on the state of the French and Spanish navies. British envoys were commonly used to gather military intelligence in France, whilst consuls reported on naval activity in the Atlantic ports of Spain.[14] The development of the "Family Embassy" was crucial to successful information gathering. Permanent embassies were expected to operate essentially as an extended family. Once appointed, the ambassador was paid a set salary, out of which he was expected to maintain the staff of his embassy, many of whom were critical to the acquisition of intelligence on potential enemies. Help in achieving this aim was provided in official and unofficial capacities. Official help was provided by a confidential secretary, who ensured that the embassy became a source of social entertainment, in which gossip and intrigue could easily be recorded. This required the employment of trusted staff to perform sometimes menial tasks, and became an extremely expensive pursuit. Unofficially, but equally expensive, information was collected by engaging and persuading disgruntled court secretaries to divulge state secrets. Regular contact was also kept with local merchants and bankers, a good source of economic intelligence. Finally, at the sub-honourable level of embassy work came espionage—the organisation of agent and spy networks.[15]

With the development of centralised foreign policy organisation in the form of foreign ministries, continental intelligence organisation also became a key concern of the central government. In London, the Foreign Office assumed responsibility for collation and analysis of information, whilst residents were required to provide intelligence on the activities of potential enemy states. The strategic relationship of this intelligence to policy-making was controlled in London, particularly when

12. G. Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1955), 39–40.

13. K. Hamilton and R. Langhorne, *The Practice of Diplomacy: Its Evolution, Theory and Administration* (London: Routledge, 1995), 29–40.

14. J. Black, "British Intelligence and the Mid-Eighteenth-Century Crisis," *Intelligence and National Security* 2 (1987): 218.

15. Hamilton and Langhorne, *Practice of Diplomacy*, 61.

military action was involved. Once war broke out between Britain and France in 1793, it became necessary to obtain more specific information on enemy intentions and plans. Greater emphasis was placed on the networks of informants, agents and spies which ambassadors had maintained throughout their residencies. Much information was gleaned from foreign intelligence sources communicating either directly with the government or with British ministers based in various cities on the continent.[16] Indeed, the extent of documents intercepted, of military forces observed, and of government intentions analysed, provided an amount of information far exceeding that gained from covert analysis of diplomatic mail in peacetime.

The organisation of intelligence networks in the Iberian Peninsula from 1808 onwards reflected this theme. Although their primary function was the negotiation and formalisation of a military and political alliance, British diplomats were also instructed by the Foreign Secretary to establish networks of correspondents and agents in order to collect strategic intelligence on the strength and disposition of enemy forces in Spain and Portugal. This intelligence was to be collated and, as usual, forwarded to London, where it formed a marginal consideration in strategic decision-making, out-dated as the month-long journey across the Bay of Biscay had made it. Attempts had been made to establish a means of analysing and interpreting strategic information at the governmental level. The Depot of Military Knowledge, formed in 1803, had several departments, the first of which, the "Plans Branch," was charged with "the direction of the confidential correspondence … for the purpose of collection of Military Knowledge."[17] With its few resources being redirected to the renewed war effort in the same year as its inception, the Depot remained an organ of government in name only.

What made the crucial difference in 1808, and subsequently highlighted the importance of intelligence to military operations, was the deployment of a significant percentage of the British Army, under the command of Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Wellesley, later Lord Wellington, to Portugal. This would be the only sustained deployment of British troops to the continent during the Napoleonic Wars. By 1810, when Charles Stuart, and Wellesley's brother Henry, had arrived in Lisbon and Cádiz respectively, the ad-hoc network of civilian agents and correspondents in Spain and Portugal was producing intelligence which was proving militarily useful. Many of the devices used by Stuart and Wellesley in the Peninsula reflected the intelligence structure of the Family Embassy, but, as the war developed, and the crucial nature of strategic intelligence to military operations became clear, the organisation of the intelligence networks became

16. See Correspondence between the British minister to Portugal and the Foreign Office, 1810–13, FO 63/89-95, 106–14, 127–36, 151–57, TNA; Correspondence for the British minister to Spain, FO 72/94–99, 109–15, 129–32, 143–46; and Correspondence from the Governor of Jersey transmitting intelligence from France, to the Foreign Office, FO 27/82 and 92. See also Add MSS 37286-98 (Wellesley Papers), Add MS 38237-54 (Liverpool Papers), and Loan 57/4–7 (Bathurst Papers), British Library (hereafter BL), London.

17. Brownrigg to Duke of York, Horse Guards, 26 June 1803, WO 43/292, TNA.

more sophisticated. The organisation of civilian intelligence networks in the Peninsular War was characterised by the gradual decentralisation of control of the networks from central to local administration. With troops committed to the continent, ministers in London could no longer function as ad-hoc spymasters, and maintenance of civilian networks had to be relinquished to local control, where direction, analysis and decisions could be made in a more timely fashion. The Peninsular War represented a realisation that some form of institutionalised covert civilian intelligence network, controlled and administered locally, would improve efficiency at the operational level of warfare.

Despite this realisation, one of the most obvious continuities between eighteenth and nineteenth century intelligence collection was a complete lack of institutionalised organisation. The "Family Embassy" style of information collection remained in place for another twenty-five years. As a result, the lessons of the Peninsula were not learned as well as they might have been, but the failure to institutionalise intelligence collection also meant that there was no rigid framework to compromise intuition. Thus, in the Crimean War (1853–6), although Lord Raglan, Wellington's former military secretary in the Peninsula, recalled the intelligence networks used by his mentor, he was still allowed to develop—with the help of his civilian intelligence specialist, Charles Cattley, himself a former diplomat—a specialised intelligence network, better suited to the nature of the war in the Crimea. Thus, the lack of institutionalisation allowed for greater flexibility.

This article seeks to highlight these continuities and changes, by focussing on the theatre-level organisation of civilian intelligence networks in the Peninsular War, and comparing them with those used in the Crimean War and in the early twentieth century. To facilitate understanding of the complex intelligence networks and how the information they provided interacted with military operations, a brief outline of the events of the Peninsular War is necessary.

Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington, as seen by his peers [Herbert Maxwell, *The Life of Wellington*, vol. 1 (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1899), frontispiece.]

British troops landed in Mondego Bay, on the West coast of Portugal, in the summer of 1808. Under the command of Lieutenant General Arthur Wellesley, they fought and won two actions against the French at Roliça, on 17 August, and Vimeiro, on 21 August. Wellesley was prevented from taking advantage of these victories by the arrival of his immediate superior, General Sir Harry Burrard. Subsequently, Sir Hew Dalrymple arrived from Gibraltar to take overall command of the army. The French, under General Jean-Andoche Junot, asked for an armistice, and, under the articles of the Convention of Cintra, were evacuated to France, with all of their weaponry, and, much to the annoyance of the Portuguese, their loot. Back in London, the government were horrified at the convention, and Dalrymple, Burrard, and Wellesley were ordered home to account for their actions. This left Lieutenant-General Sir John Moore in command of the British Army. Over the course of the autumn of 1808, Moore began an attempt to liberate Spain, and had advanced, by December, as far east as Burgos. There he discovered he was in danger of being encircled by the more numerous French forces, under Napoleon's command for the only time during the war. Moore began a precipitate retreat to Coruña, where, as the British Army was embarked aboard a hastily arranged evacuation flotilla, Moore fought a successful delaying action against French Marshal Nicolas Jean-de-Dieu Soult.

As Moore was killed at Coruña, the government, not without some hesitation, reappointed Wellesley to the command of the army. Their confidence was not misplaced, as he quickly transformed the bedraggled Portuguese Army into a viable fighting force, and pursued a highly successful defensive strategy. Within weeks of his arrival in the Peninsula in April 1809, Wellesley had liberated Oporto and pursued the retreating French Army into Spain. On the 27 July, allied with

Wellington as seen by Francisco de Goya [W. H. Fitchett, *The Great Duke*, vol. 1 (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1911), frontispiece.]

Spanish forces under General Gregorio García de la Cuesta, he fought a stunningly successful action at Talavera, to the south of Madrid, for which he was rewarded with the title of Lord Wellington. Due to supply difficulties exacerbated by poor relations with Cuesta, and the growing threat of encirclement by a larger French force, Wellington retired to the Portuguese frontier. There, in expectation of a renewed French invasion, Wellington set about constructing the Lines of Torres Vedras. These consisted of three parallel lines of defensive fortifications, impenetrable, Wellington argued, by a force smaller than 100,000 in strength. In the autumn of 1810, the anticipated French invasion of Portugal began, under the command of Marshal André Masséna. After retiring through Portugal, performing a "scorched-earth" policy, and fighting a highly successful delaying action at Buçaco on 27 September, Wellington fell behind the Lines on 14 October. With a force of only 67,000, Masséna had no hope of overrunning the Lines, and began a fruitless siege which continued throughout the winter.

With losses of up to 20,000 troops due to disease and starvation, Masséna retreated into Spain in March 1811. It was during the Torres Vedras campaign that civilian intelligence began to play a crucial role in Wellington's operational planning. The campaign of 1811 was largely characterised by stalemate. Wellington failed to take the fortresses of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, considered the "keys to Spain," and two battles at Fuentes d'Onoro between 3 and 5 May, and Albuera on 16 May, were bloody and attritional in nature. Only in the New Year, when strategic intelligence indicated the French were being withdrawn for an imminent war with Russia, did Wellington succeed in taking Ciudad Rodrigo, in a lightning strike on 19 January, and Badajoz, on 6 April 1812. The subsequent campaign, based largely on operational intelligence, saw the French, under Gen. Auguste de Marmont, defeated at Salamanca on 22 July, and Madrid liberated on 12 August. The campaign turned to failure, however, in the autumn. Wellington's operational plan to push the French behind the river Ebro and into north-eastern Spain, failed when the French successfully held the fortress of Burgos. The British once more retreated to the Portuguese border.

In 1813, with the French even weaker because of the disintegrating situation in Russia and Central Europe, Wellington's operational plan to liberate Spain,

finally reached fruition. With intelligence from civilian sources providing significant and reliable data on French forces, Wellington pushed the French into north-east Spain, as he had intended the previous year. At Vitoria on 21 June 1813, Wellington comprehensively defeated Soult and Napoleon's brother, Joseph. Following this defeat, the French retreated head-long across the Pyrenees. As Wellington fought battles in these mountains and began the invasion of France in the summer and autumn of 1813, the war in the Iberian Peninsular came to an end. The organisation of a civilian intelligence network had proven fundamental to success.

II. Intelligence Organisation in the Iberian Peninsula

Charles Stuart succeeded John Charles Villiers in the post of His Majesty's minister-plenipotentiary and envoy-extraordinary to Portugal in February 1810. Henry Wellesley succeeded his older brother, Richard, in the same position in Spain a month later, but became Ambassador in 1811, a post that he held for ten years. Both men brought valuable experience and authority to their new posts. Stuart had spent the previous two years running an intelligence-gathering mission in patriot Spain. Whilst in Madrid, he had been instrumental in providing General Sir John Moore, the British commander in the Peninsula in the autumn of 1808, with intelligence from correspondences established by himself and John Hookham Frere, the then British minister to Spain.[18] Prior to this posting, Stuart had been secretary of legation in Vienna and secretary of embassy at St Petersburg.[19] At Vienna, he had received and dealt with intelligence from correspondents in the employ of his brother, General John Stuart, then in command of the garrison in Sicily. Arguably, it was whilst in this posting that he became familiar with some of the methods used to collect and disseminate intelligence.[20] Knowledge such as this was to stand him in good stead, as he would later be required to orchestrate a network that required the secret transmission of intelligence across the Peninsula.

Henry Wellesley's arrival in Cádiz allowed his family to control the most influential aspects of policy-making in the Peninsula, with Richard, Marquess Wellesley, having assumed the seals of the Foreign Office, and Wellington commanding the Anglo-Portuguese Army.[21] Stuart appears to have inherited

18. For example, see Stuart to Moore, December 1808, MSS 21261, National Library of Scotland (hereafter NLS), Edinburgh, Scotland.

19. For a detailed biography of Stuart's life, see R. Franklin, *Lord Stuart de Rothesay* (Upton-upon-Severn, U.K.: Images, 1993).

20. John Stuart to Charles Stuart, Naples, 21 August 1802, Dk.6.25, University of Edinburgh Library (hereafter UEL), Edinburgh, Scotland.

21. A more detailed discussion of Henry Wellesley's role in Spain, and his relationship with his older brothers can be found in J. K. Severn, *A Wellesley Affair: Richard, Marquess Wellesley and the Conduct of Spanish Diplomacy, 1809–1812* (Tallahassee: University Press of Florida, 1981); and *Architects of Empire: The Duke of Wellington and his Brothers* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007).

the role of information gathering in the north of the Peninsula, whilst Henry received information from the southern and eastern parts. They corresponded with each other and were fully apprised of each other's latest intelligence.[22] The major problem faced by Stuart and Wellesley in the development of their intelligence network was the restriction inherent in communicating information across long distances. Stuart received intelligence from as far away as the French border;[23] Wellesley, from military agents based with the Spanish Armies on the eastern coasts of Spain.[24] The latter sources required couriers to carry the dispatches along the entire breadth of the Peninsula, and, in an age where horse-back communication was the swiftest means of transmission, this could take up to one month. Nevertheless, a single courier could travel faster than a division and information of reinforcements was received in Lisbon and Cádiz early enough to classify it exploitable information, rather than out-of-date news.

The inefficient and problematic nature of nineteenth century intelligence-collection meant that the systems that were established had an improvised organisation, with operatives having no official title. Thus the correspondence of the day is filled with titles such as "correspondents" and "confidential persons," "agents" and "spies."[25] No contemporary distinction was made between these roles, and a propensity to mix and match the various titles is evident—an agent can be referred to as a confidential person, a correspondent and a spy in one report. Contemporary labelling, such as this, gives the reader no firmer explanation of the specific role of the individual concerned other than the fact he was an intelligence-gatherer. However, varying roles can be discerned within the groups of intelligence-gatherers.

The most common, but not entirely reliable, source was the correspondent, or confidential person. In modern parlance, these individuals could be described as "informants." Either specifically recruited by government agents or officers of the British army, or themselves patriotic volunteers, these individuals were untrained civilians, and could only report raw information. Inexperienced ones did not differentiate between enemy regiments, and sometimes between arms. Thus the intelligence they provided was very basic and not always useful. They remained in their town of residence and reported the movements of the enemy from there. They did not follow the enemy, and presented sometimes very detailed but mundane information about local events. As they were paid when they supplied intelligence,

22. See Correspondence between Benjamin d'Urban and Charles Stuart, 1/14/6/199/14 & 1/14/6/202/10, Arquivo Histórico Militar (hereafter AHM), Lisbon, Portugal; and Correspondence between Wellington and Henry Wellesley, Wellington Papers (hereafter WP) 12/1/1 & 12/2/1–3, University of Southampton Library, Southampton, United Kingdom.

23. For an example of intelligence from Bayonne, see Charles Stuart to Marquess Wellesley, Lisbon, 18 May 1811, FO 63/110, TNA.

24. Henry Wellesley to Marquess Wellesley, Cadiz, 23 April 1810, FO 72/94, TNA, contains an example of forwarded correspondence from Alicante, in eastern Spain.

25. M. Herman, *Intelligence Power in Peace and War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), chap. 1.

they were the cheapest way to obtain information. On the other hand, this made them easily open to compromise. Nevertheless, the correspondence of both Charles Stuart and Henry Wellesley reveals there was a vast number of individuals willing to volunteer for such a dangerous duty. Information on enemy movements poured in from every strategically important city in Spain. "Every commander of a detached division or brigade made it a duty to 'establish a correspondence,' that is to seek out what they called 'confidential persons' who would be prepared, usually for a consideration, to furnish information either through the outposts or by a direct correspondence with the divisional or brigade headquarters. From there it would be transmitted to Wellington."[26] Stuart communicated personally with such correspondents, whilst Henry Wellesley communicated through other channels.

These other channels were known mainly as agents. Far more reliable, the agent was the very epitome of active intelligence-collection, being a specifically employed person sent to an area or town to gather information, and report back on his findings in person or in writing. An agent was expected to monitor the movements of the enemy closely. Evidence suggests he was paid a set allowance per month by the minister and was therefore expected to do as the minister wished, moving from place to place in order to obtain as much intelligence as possible. Those agents that communicated with Henry Wellesley also established their own network of correspondents across south-west Spain. Thus, correspondents communicated with agents who forwarded intelligence to the British minister. The main difference between the two intelligence-gatherers was the stationary nature of a correspondent, compared with the more diverse characteristics of an agent.

Furthermore, intelligence-gathering was not the only activity in which an agent may have been engaged. Elizabeth Sparrow identifies several agents who were active in the Peninsula and engaged in espionage rather than intelligence-collection.[27] These agents were sometimes expected to attempt to influence events in favour of the war effort, either by manipulating peasant uprisings, and guerrilla activities, or by influencing Spanish actions to coincide with the strategy of the British government, but their influence appears to have been extremely limited.

Whilst in the Peninsula, Stuart and Wellesley acquired three types of information. First, details were received of the strengths and movements of enemy reinforcements from civilian agents positioned in strategic locations across the Peninsula. Secondly, correspondents based in most major cities throughout both Portugal and Spain communicated regularly on events in those cities.[28] Their correspondence, usually in the form of diaries, was, for the most part, mundane, but important information was received occasionally about a battalion or regiment

26. S. G. P. Ward, *Wellington's Headquarters: A Study of the Administrative Problems in the Peninsula, 1809–1814* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), 114.

27. See Sparrow, *Secret Service*, 353–55.

28. For example, see Henry Wellesley to Marquess Wellesley, Cadiz, 22 February 1812, enclosing intelligence from Madrid, 24 January 1812, FO 72/129, TNA. This intelligence report includes information on events in and just outside the city, as well as information from correspondents in Pamplona, Avila and Granada.

of enemy troops passing through the city, or a town close by. As Ward notes, "news did not travel far in Spain and Portugal, but within narrow limits it travelled with astonishing speed and accuracy." The purpose of such correspondences was to ensure that all rumours, whether true or not, became known to the British; then at least experienced analysts might be able to unearth the truth.[29] Finally, specifically military intelligence was received from British military agents positioned by the government at the outbreak of the conflict with the Spanish armies in the north and east of Spain. Wellington viewed this intelligence as extremely important, not least because a Spanish military defeat in one of these areas, could have serious implications on the course of events in his own theatre. Indeed, the British general wrote to his younger brother soon after the latter's arrival in Cádiz, that, as "it is very desirable that I should be constantly informed of what is passing in other parts of Spain, … I wish you would let me have all the intelligence received by the government."[30]

Stuart incorporated some of the civilian correspondences he established whilst in central Spain between 1808 and 1810 into his own intelligence network when he arrived in Lisbon. Furthermore, both he and Wellesley benefited from the advice they received and contacts they inherited from their predecessors. Stuart received information on potential sources of intelligence from Villiers.[31] Richard Wellesley, John Hookham Frere, and his younger brother Bartholomew, supplied Henry with intelligence contacts. The Frere brothers had established a civilian intelligence network in Spain, as the elder Frere had forwarded intelligence on a regular basis to Charles Stuart, when the latter was based in the country between 1808 and 1809.[32] On 20 January 1810, having instructed his brother to assume his old position in Spain, Richard Wellesley forwarded detailed information on "the character of certain individuals who have been employed by the British ministers in that country, their present situation and their respective claims to Your attention" from the former consul general at Madrid, John Hunter.[33] Hunter, with his colleague in Cádiz, James Duff, had been a prolific intelligence-gatherer for the past decade, supplying accurate accounts of ships of war fitting out at Cádiz to Nelson in late 1803.[34] Stuart also communicated with consuls in Spain,

29. Ward, *Wellington's Headquarters*, 114.

30. Wellington to Henry Wellesley, Viseu, 21 March 1810, WP 12/1/1.

31. See Villiers to Wellesley, Lisbon, 11 February 1810, and Villiers to Wellesley, Portsmouth, 26 February 1810, Add MS 37291, BL.

32. See Stuart to Moore, December 1808, MS 21261, NLS. See also Correspondence from Foreign Office to Henry Wellesley, December 1809–1810, FO 72/81 & 93, TNA; Correspondence from Wellington to Henry Wellesley, 21 March to 23 August 1810, WP 12/1/1.

33. Marquess Wellesley to Henry Wellesley, Foreign Office, 20 January 1810, FO 185/18, TNA.

34. C. White, "Commerce, Consuls and Clergymen: New Light on Nelson's Intelligence Sources in the Mediterranean 1803–5" (An unpublished paper for the British Maritime History Seminars presented at the Institute of Historical Studies on 24 February 2004, kindly provided by the author), pp. 4–5.

notably Consul George White, who provided intelligence on the movements of the Spanish rebels and the French detachments sent to suppress them in the Asturias and Galicia, as well as intelligence from Astorga, León, Benavente, Zamora and from as far afield as Bayonne.[35] White also sent many intelligence reports of enemy strengths and movements to Marquess Wellesley's under-secretaries, George Hammond and William Hamilton, in London.[36]

Information from Hunter, Duff and other British consuls in Spain therefore provided one basis for intelligence on the strengths and movements of the enemy. The networks which had already been established by the Spanish and, to a lesser extent, Portuguese governments, provided a second, and much larger native basis for civilian intelligence-gathering. Both Stuart and Wellington forwarded regularly all information on enemy movements in their possession to Manuel Forjaz, the Portuguese Minister for War; Forjaz, in return, could send only information gathered within Portugal itself, as efforts to establish a network of intelligence-gatherers in Spain had met with little reward. It seems the main contribution of the Portuguese government in this respect was the provision of intercepted dispatches, usually just to Wellington, although there is evidence that Wellington's subordinate, Lieutenant General Sir Rowland Hill, was using correspondences established by the Portuguese government later in the war.[37] On the other hand, the Spanish government were far more prolific intelligence suppliers, as Stuart had found between 1808 and 1810. Spain had an extremely pro-active intelligence network, not dissimilar to that of Britain.

The Spanish proved extremely adept at finding reliable individuals to gather information, and at organising them into a clandestine network of agents and correspondents. Henry Wellesley, being in regular communication with the Spanish minister of war, Eusebio de Bardaji,[38] was in the best position to receive useful information on the strengths and movements of the French in the vicinity of Cádiz.[39] Spain had proven similarly willing to share intelligence whilst Richard Wellesley had been ambassador to the country in 1809, then residing in Seville.

35. White to Hamilton, Coruña, 7 September 1810, FO 72/99, TNA.

36. Correspondence with commissary agents etc, 1810, FO 72/99, TNA. Specifically, White to Hammond, Coruña, 4 January 1810; 8 February 1810; 29 May 1810; White to Hamilton, Coruña, 26 July 1810; and 7 September 1810. See also Correspondence with commissary agents, 1811, FO 72/116, TNA. Specifically, White to Hamilton, Coruña, 17 April 1811; 29 April 1811; 10 May 1811; 5 June 1811; 29 June 1811; 3 July 1811; 9 August 1811; and 24 August 1811.

37. Intercepted dispatch from Masséna, Viseu, 22 September 1810, AHM 1/14/6/10/37; Intercepted dispatch detailing movements of the enemy in Portugal, Leiria, 3 October 1810, AHM 1/14/6/39/1; and Correspondence between Forjaz and Beresford, 1810–12, AHM 1/14/6/39–45.

38. Bardaji is generally credited with the creation of a very extensive espionage network. As Minister of Grace and Justice, he had access to an established network of informers—local magistrates, court officials, police officers, etc.

39. There is numerous evidence of a regular correspondence between Bardaji and Henry Wellesley in the latter's correspondence with the Foreign Office found in FO 72/94–99; 109–15; 129–32; 143–46.

Martín de Garay, the general secretary of the provisional Spanish government formed in 1808, had regularly forwarded intelligence to the elder Wellesley for the information of the British government.[40]

At the time of Henry's arrival, Cádiz lay besieged by the French forces immediately under Marshal Claude Victor, who remained responsible to Marshal Soult residing in Seville. It became a priority for Wellesley to procure intelligence on the movements of the French in front of Cádiz, giving early warning of any concentration of force against the city. Furthermore, the opposite possibility—of a reduction of French strength, indicating a concentration of power elsewhere—had to be considered. Having placed an agent, named Manuel Sobral, in Puerto de Santa Maríia, on the opposite side of the bay from Cádiz, in French-held territory, Bardaji gave Wellesley access to the intelligence procured by this individual. On 28 December 1810, "the confidential agent employed by the Spanish government at Puerto de Santa María came over here…, and M. de Bardaji had an interview with him," in which it was discovered that on this occasion the French reduced their force in front of Cádiz to 11,000 troops, "7000 of which are at Chiclana and Puerto Real and the rest at Puerto de Santa Maria, Rota, Jeres, Medina."[41]

On 13 January 1811, Wellesley became aware of the degree of organisation Sobral had adopted:

> I have established a correspondence with Seville, San Lucar, [and] Jeres. My correspondent in Seville will communicate to me the news of Carmona and other neighbouring places, and likewise, the Condado and Extremadura. The conductor ought to set out every fifteen days. He goes upon a mule which is old, but which is equal to the task; he carries passports for bringing provisions. On his return he will collect the news of Jeres and th[at] correspondent is charged to inform me of the news of Lebrija, Utrera, and other towns on the road. From Jeres he will pass to San Lucar, where a correspondent will communicate whatever has occurred in Chipiona and Rota; from San Lucar he ought to pass to Puerto, where a correspondent will tell him what has happened… The correspondent in Medina communicates what has happened there, in Alcala, Paterna, Arcoa and Bornos… With regard to Chiclana … there will be another person, who every eight days will go to Medina and descend to Chiclana.[42]

Spanish intelligence was clearly well organised, and not entirely dissimilar to that of Britain. One agent communicated with a network of correspondents in the region to give a clear and accurate image of the intelligence situation at any one time. Wellesley adopted Sobral almost as his own intelligence source, so much so that he became his most prolific and valuable informant on the French armies in the

40. Garay to Marquess Wellesley, Seville, 18 August 1809, Add MS 37287, BL.

41. Henry Wellesley to Wellington, Isla de Leon, 29 December 1810, WP 1/320.

42. Translated Intelligence, Sobral to Bardaji, Puerto de Santa Maria, forwarded to Wellington by Henry Wellesley, Isla de Leon, 13th January 1811, WP 1/321.

south-west of Spain. By April 1811, the range of contacts Sobral had established extended much further than the south-western coast. Informants in Badajoz proffered information on events within the French-held fortress. Individuals on the French frontier were able to forward evidence of the discontent within France at the state of affairs in the Peninsula, particularly regarding Masséna's failed invasion of Portugal, as well as at the above-average level of conscription in France in 1810 and 1811.[43]

Stuart's network of intelligence-gathering was not as well arranged, with a greater degree of personal involvement from the minister himself, but it proved of great use to Wellington and the Anglo-Portuguese army. The combination of Stuart's understanding of the importance of intelligence, with his appointment at the base of operations of the Anglo-Portuguese army, allowed the intelligence gathered on French forces in Spain by civilian agents and correspondents in communication with him from behind enemy lines, to be utilised by the commanders of the British army in a manner never seen before.

Prior to the arrival of the ministers in Lisbon and Cádiz, the network established by their predecessors had proven of little use to the British. When Charles Stuart arrived, he began to orchestrate a system that was of great value, both to the British Government and Wellington.[44] It is possible to deduce how Stuart built his network. First, having liaised with the provincial Juntas during the early years of the French occupation of Spain, Stuart acquired a network of correspondents across the Peninsula that he maintained after his arrival in Lisbon.[45] Secondly, Stuart retained employment of the correspondents and agents who had communicated with his predecessor, John Charles Villiers.[46] Thirdly, having communicated with the consuls in Iberia, he adopted and built upon the networks of informers they had themselves established. Particularly notable in this case is the example of Consul George White, with whom the guerrilla leader General Francisco Longa maintained a correspondence, and through him, several individuals were sent to Bayonne.[47] Finally, Stuart set about employing

43. Henry Wellesley to Wellington, Cadiz, 6 April 1811, WP 1/327.

44. B. A. H. Parritt, *The Intelligencers: The Story of British Military Intelligence up to 1914* (Ashford, U.K.: Intelligence Corps Association, 1983); P. Gudgin, *Military Intelligence: The British Story* (London: Arms and Armour, 1989); Haswell, *British Military Intelligence*; and the more recent M. Urban, *The Man Who Broke Napoleon's Codes: The Story of George Scovell* (London: Faber and Faber, 2001) refer merely to the well-established means the military possessed of obtaining intelligence on the enemy, with little, if any mention of government intelligence. See M. Romans, "Eyes in the Hills: Intelligence During the Operations at Alcantara, May 1809," in *Wellington Studies I*, ed. C. M. Woolgar (Southampton, U.K.: Hartley Institute, University of Southampton, 1996), 164–81, for a specific example of military use of intelligence in the 1809 campaign.

45. See Correspondence between Stuart and Moore, October–December 1808, MS 21261, NLS. See also Correspondence of Charles Stuart, July 1808 to February 1809, FO 72/57–59.

46. See Correspondence of John Charles Villiers with Foreign Office, December 1808 to February 1810, FO 63/75–78, TNA.

47. White to Hamilton, Coruña, 7 September 1810, FO 72/99, TNA.

his own impressive experience in establishing civilian correspondents and agents in the Peninsula to gather intelligence, with considerable success. Realising the importance of intelligence from Bayonne, he also sent agents of his own to the French border, to monitor the movements of French reinforcements into Spain.

In his *History of the War in the Peninsula*, Napier alludes to the identity of one of these agents:

> Mr. Stuart, under cover of vessels licensed to fetch corn from France kept "Chass-Marees" constantly plying along the Biscay coast by which he not only acquired direct information, but facilitated the transmission of information and intelligence from land spies. Amongst these, the most remarkable was a cobbler living in a hutch at the end of the bridge of Irun, where always plying his trade, he continued for years without being suspected, to count every French soldier passing in and out of Spain, by that bridge, and transmitted their number, by Chass-Marees to Madrid.[48]

As shall be seen, this is something of an over-simplification of the organisation of the network. Analysis of Stuart's correspondence reveals evidence of more than one agent in Bayonne and Irun, but the description does provide an understanding of the type of person employed to spy on the French.

It is strange that the British minister to Portugal was responsible for organising a complex intelligence network in Spain and France. This would naturally have been the responsibility of Wellesley, rather than Stuart. There were several practical reasons for Stuart's involvement in the development of an intelligence-collection organisation in the neighbouring country to the one he had been assigned. First and foremost was proximity. Stuart was closer to Wellington, and closer to several important strategic locations in Spain, such as Salamanca and Valladolid. Furthermore, it was easier for agents to bring intelligence to Lisbon than to Cádiz. From Bayonne, there was no alternative but to pass through enemy territory, and thereby risk capture, if one had to travel to Cádiz. This could be avoided by travelling along the north and then west coast to Lisbon. On the rare occasion, intelligence might even be conveyed aboard a naval vessel from Coruña to Lisbon, thus facilitating rapid dissemination.

As it became apparent that the intelligence from Bayonne was of vital importance to both the government and Wellington, Stuart forwarded any information he received from his agents as soon as it could be translated, and invariably it was the first item to be mentioned in his dispatches of the day.[49] Intelligence received from civilian agents in Bayonne was most useful because, as Charles Esdaile notes, Bayonne was a far better depot than Perpignan and

48. W. F. P. Napier, *History of the War in the Peninsula and in the South of France, from 1807 to 1814*, 6 vols. (London, 1828–40), 4:220–22.

49. See Charles Stuart's correspondence with the Foreign Office for numerous examples demonstrating the high importance attached to intelligence from Bayonne, FO 63/89–95, 106–14, 127–36, 151–57, TNA.

it was through the former town that most reinforcements passed on their way to Spain.[50] Agents in Bayonne were, at the heights of the campaigns, in weekly communication with Stuart, and, depending upon the character and motivation of the individual concerned, sent sometimes vague, sometimes detailed reports, of the numbers of troops arriving and departing from the city. Generally an agent would record troop movements over a three month period, and then personally deliver the report to Stuart. This ensured the safe and speedy transmission of intelligence. However, if a significant reinforcement entered the Peninsula then a report was sent immediately, usually by courier. Any intelligence obtained in Bayonne was then confirmed by specifically monitoring the troops as they crossed the border at Irun; a difficult duty, not without danger, as Napier's comments suggested.[51]

The quality of the intelligence depended on the agents themselves. León Roblado, one of Stuart's most prolific agents, was most likely a product of the White-Longa correspondence, and regularly communicated his findings to Stuart. He sent tri-monthly reports of reinforcements crossing the Franco-Spanish border starting in May 1810 until the summer of 1811.[52] Some of these reports were delivered personally, others by a courier, probably selected from Longa's guerrilla unit. Roblado's disappearance in June 1811 (he was probably captured whilst monitoring troop movements in Bayonne) caused some consternation in the allied camp, but more seriously it left a hole in the intelligence network on the French border through which up to 17,000 reinforcements were allowed to slip unnoticed.[53] Communication problems were the greatest hindrance to the successful employment of government intelligence, as it was rarely timely. Indeed, it is worth noting that the developments in the organisational structures of both Stuart and Wellesley's intelligence systems were ahead of their time, and constricted only because of the primitive nature of contemporary technological capabilities.

Roblado was by no means the only individual who visited Bayonne and communicated his findings to Stuart, nor was he the only individual sent by General Longa for that purpose. Following Roblado's disappearance, it seems Longa sent another of his men to the French frontier to observe and record the number of reinforcements entering the Peninsula. On 10 August, Longa transmitted the first of several sporadic letters containing intelligence. On this occasion, no reinforcements had entered the Peninsula before 19 July, but:

50. C. J. Esdaile, *Fighting Napoleon: Guerrillas, Bandits and Adventurers in Spain, 1808–1814* (London: Yale University Press, 2004), 29.

51. No records exist of the number of agents who were captured by the French, but given their proximity to the French forces as they crossed into Spain, the risk of capture in this area would have been very high. This reason may explain Stuart's repeated failure to orchestrate a more methodological and systematic intelligence-gathering operation in the vicinity of Bayonne.

52. See Charles Stuart's correspondence for 1810 and 1811 for Roblado's communications, FO 63/89–95, 106–114, TNA.

53. Stuart to Wellesley, Lisbon, 5 October 1811, FO 63/113, TNA.

> according to the correspondence which he has intercepted, 16 or 18,000 conscripts were expected to pass through Bayonne towards the end of the month of July. These troops are destined to relieve the garrisons in the provinces near the frontier which are under orders to march to Valladolid and Castile whenever they arrive.[54]

Given the irregularity of the correspondence from Longa, it would be easy to conclude that Roblado's disappearance reduced the overall effectiveness of Stuart's intelligence system, but such an assumption would be flawed. Roblado was the only agent to identify himself in his correspondence; whoever replaced him might have kept his identity secret in an effort to avoid the suspicion of the French authorities if his dispatches had been intercepted, a sensible precaution given the unhappy fate which his predecessor probably faced.

Furthermore, Stuart was not solely reliant on Longa for intelligence from the French frontier, and, by mid-April 1810, had managed to establish his own correspondences with Bayonne. Indeed, it seems he organised a rota of two, or possibly three civilian agents, travelling to Bayonne and staying there for a month at a time, before being relieved and delivering their reports personally. On 29 April, Stuart reported to Marquess Wellesley that:

> a confidential person I sent to the French Frontier returned very lately. He left Bayonne the 6th of April and Valladolid on the 10th. It appears that at the end of last month, 6500 Conscripts marched through Irun of whom 4000 took the road to Santander and the Asturias, and 2500 were stationed on different parts of the coast of Biscay. About 2500 men entered Navarre at the same time by different routes, forming on the whole a reinforcement of 9000 Infantry, during the month of May 15,000 conscripts are expected.[55]

This agent was replaced on 16 April by another who remained in Bayonne and reported in a detailed daily diary that revealed 13,100 infantry and 1,800 cavalry had entered Spain before 19 May.[56] In turn, he was relieved by a further agent who collected information until 18 June, between which dates 6,700 infantry and 1,210 cavalry with 21 battering guns had entered the Peninsula.[57] On the 19th, a final agent arrived in the French city, collecting information on reinforcements until 10 August, when 7,440 troops crossed the frontier.[58] Although none of the agents identify themselves, it is possible to speculate that there were in fact only two, one travelling between Bayonne and Lisbon, whilst the other gathered information. Given the length of time taken to travel between the two cities, it is possible that a third individual was involved, but it is unlikely that there were any more as the expense of employing so many civilians for so onerous a duty would have been exceptionally high.

54. Stuart to Wellesley, Lisbon, 10 August 1811, FO 63/113, TNA.
55. Stuart to Wellesley, Lisbon, 29 April 1810, FO 63/90, TNA.
56. Stuart to Wellesley, Lisbon, 6 June 1810, FO 63/91, TNA.
57. Stuart to Wellesley, Lisbon, 28 July 1810, FO 63/91, TNA.
58. Stuart to Wellesley, Lisbon, 1 September 1810, FO 63/92, TNA.

Stuart's budget for secret service expense seems to have been somewhat limited. Although evidence of complete accounts cannot be found, it appears he spent, on average £300 per month on intelligence-collection at the French frontier, whilst a courier for a dispatch from Madrid could cost up to £160.[59] Based on these prices, the expense of obtaining intelligence from three agents working in shifts, and delivering their findings through dangerous enemy territory would have been extremely high, and impossible to sustain permanently. As it was, Stuart was able to pay just two or three individuals for five months of unbroken intelligence on French movements on the Franco-Spanish border. Such a system benefited from good organisation on Stuart's part, and, although it only lasted for a total of five months in 1810, it managed to assess accurately the numbers of troops entering the Peninsula for the crucial period during which Masséna was planning his invasion of Portugal.

No attempt was made to organise a similar system for the remainder of the war. Although this may initially be attributed to the possibility that intelligence-gathering in Bayonne had proven unsuccessful, it is more likely that further expenditure on such a highly organised system was unnecessary, given that the threat of an imminent and overwhelming French invasion was considerably reduced after the devastating success of the Torres Vedras campaign. In addition, Stuart became increasingly unlikely to present Wellington with timely information from Bayonne, as the Anglo-Portuguese army advanced further from Lisbon. The information gathered by civilian agents corresponding from Bayonne, on what appears to be nothing more than an ad-hoc and therefore relatively inexpensive basis, consequently remained the only source of intelligence on French forces entering the Peninsula. Any further expense would be a waste particularly if only out-of-date intelligence was produced.

Stuart remained in Lisbon for the duration of the conflict, allowing him to control the development of the network for an unbroken period of five years. Within two, he had recruited additional agents and correspondents and cultivated their skills, allowing them to provide more prolific intelligence. In 1812, for example, a correspondent based in Madrid sent pages of information on a regular basis.[60] Most of this information proved useless militarily, although the occasional informative dispatch was received.[61] There was, however, an important and regular provision of political intelligence on the actions of Joseph Bonaparte's court, as well as the degree of discontent that existed amongst the senior military staff of the French armies in the Peninsula. This indicated to Wellington that his

59. "Account of extraordinary expenses incurred by Charles Stuart esq, HM Envoy-Extraordinary & Minister Plenipotentiary in Portugal during the months of June 1811," FO 342/20, TNA. This example refers specifically to expenses on intelligence-collection in June. Of a total expense of £891 21s 3d, "Charges attending a Dispatch from Madrid" varied from £80 4s to £160, whilst "Charges attending the gaining of intelligence from the French Frontier" came to £352 48s.

60. Stuart to Castlereagh, Lisbon, 8 April 1812, FO 63/128, TNA.

61. For example, see Stuart to Wellesley, Lisbon, 22 December 1810, FO 63/95, TNA.

enemy could not function to its optimum ability, whilst making Whitehall aware of possible weaknesses in the French ministry.[62] Henry Wellesley also received similar intelligence from correspondents based in the Spanish capital between 1811 and 1813.[63] Nevertheless, during the operations in 1812 and the subsequent temporary liberation of Madrid, Wellesley's correspondents in the south of Spain provided key intelligence on Marshal Soult's movements to Hill, who was commanding a detachment in Extremadura.[64] Having been forced to evacuate Andalusia in August and September 1812, Soult moved to unite his force with Joseph's in Valencia. Civilian correspondents and military agents in the vicinity of this build-up communicated intelligence of it to Wellesley, who was able to forward the news to Hill.

It is clear that Henry Wellesley and Charles Stuart were the "spymasters" of the Peninsular War, and were ultimately responsible, in lieu of more immediate instructions from London, for the maintenance of the network, and for forwarding all confirmed intelligence to both Wellington and London. Having considerable diplomatic experience, both were also able to orchestrate a number of civilian correspondents and agents quickly and easily, using a mixture of their own abilities, advice from their predecessors, the intelligence networks of regional consuls and those of the native government itself, in order to procure as much information as possible on enemy armies and armaments.

III. The Impact of Strategic Intelligence: Planning the 1812 Campaign

Strategic intelligence alone had a limited impact on the conduct of military operations in the Peninsula. On its own, it could only reassure Wellington of the size of his opponents' forces at any one point in time. However, Wellington also had an intelligence organisation of his own, operated by his subordinates and skilled intelligence personnel. The intelligence gathered by the military was operational in nature and did not have the strategic range available to the civilians under Stuart and Wellesley. When integrated, the two forms of intelligence combined to have a synergistic effect, producing an operational conceptualisation of all the forces in the Peninsula.

The success of the Torres Vedras Campaign had only resulted in stalemate on the Portuguese frontier. Strategic intelligence kept Wellington informed that the French were too strong for him to advance. By the end of 1811, having faced the combined French armies of Marmont and Soult, and of Marmont and Gen. Marie-François Auguste de Cafarelli, Wellington understood that the French centre of gravity was their ability to concentrate their forces. If he could keep their

62. See Stuart to Wellesley, Lisbon, 8 September 1810, FO 63/93, TNA, forwarding nine enclosures from a "confidential person" sent recently to Madrid.

63. See Henry Wellesley to Marquess Wellesley, 8 May 1811, FO 72/110, TNA.

64. See Military correspondence of General Sir Rowland Hill 1812–1813, Add MS 35060, BL, for specific examples of Henry Wellesley forwarding civilian intelligence to Hill whilst the latter campaigned in Extremadura prior to Wellington's advance in May and June of 1812.

various forces divided and unable to support one another, then the Allies would be able to advance decisively against one French army, and defeat it in detail. Strategic intelligence would prove invaluable in assessing when and against whom to strike.

From the outset of 1812, Wellington demonstrated acute strategic and operational vision. He understood that the main reasons for his repeated failures in 1811 had been the continued ability of the French to concentrate enough force against him. He was able to withstand one French army, but when two combined, the resultant force, although not overwhelming, was enough to compel him to abandon his plans. If he was to take Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz in 1812, the two border fortresses commonly regarded as the "keys to Spain," he needed to keep Marmont and Soult separated long enough to make a lightning storm of the fortresses. This required unshakeable operational foresight, and strategic and operational intelligence were the major components in establishing such a plan. However, relieving the French of their command of two border fortresses would not compel them to abandon the Peninsula. A significant operational advance was required, and for this to be successful, the same factors applied: Wellington needed to keep Marmont and Soult separated. Integration of strategic and operational intelligence, as well as deft understanding of the topographical and seasonal environment between January and June 1812, would allow him to formulate such a plan.

Throughout the first half of 1812, strategic intelligence proved useful in two interrelated decision-making processes. First, as usual, information provided by civilian agents and correspondents led to a degree of certainty regarding the overall strength of French forces in the Peninsula, enabling Wellington to make an operational decision on what was the weakest enemy target for the greatest advantage. Secondly, intelligence received from an agent in Madrid indicated the extreme nature of French supply difficulties,[65] which, when integrated with topographical intelligence on the locations of the most productive harvests, would allow Wellington to predict the likely locations of the enemy armies at any point in the season. On several occasions, this type of integration indicated when a particular army was incapacitated because of its need to forage. Wellington integrated this knowledge with his own operational intelligence to reach a decision on whether to advance into Andalusia against Soult, or into Castile against Marmont. It is impossible to achieve a complete understanding of how this decision was reached without a full consideration of Wellington's use of intelligence in this campaign.

Following a reinforcement of 40,000 troops received by Marmont prior to the engagement at El Bodón in September 1811, civilian intelligence indicated that the French were receiving only minor reinforcements. Between August and December 1811, the French forces in the Peninsula had received just 12,000 reinforcements. Of these 8000 arrived in early August and were directed through Aragón to the

65. Diary of Madrid Correspondent, 16 May 1812, FO 63/130, TNA.

army under the command of Marshal Louis Gabriel Suchet,[66] whilst 4000 were expected in early October.[67] These did not arrive until 20 November. Half were directed to Aragón, with the rest reinforcing Marmont in Castile.[68] Besides the fact that few troops had passed from France into Spain in the autumn of 1811, the issuing of counter-orders for further reinforcements to the Peninsula indicated that Napoleon's attention was being distracted by events elsewhere.[69] The French armies in Spain continued to be deprived of reinforcements throughout December, whilst during January and February, the only troops to enter Spain were officer escorts.[70] Following Marmont's reorganisation of the Army of Portugal, skeleton regiments had been sent back to France for reconstitution. The intention had been for these to return in the spring of 1812, but, by April, it became clear that these troops were not returning, further indicating that French land forces were being distributed elsewhere in Europe.[71] On 23 May, an agent in Madrid reported in his weekly diary that only 2656 troops of all arms had entered Spain in March and April.[72] In eight months fewer than 15,000 reinforcements had entered the Peninsula.

Nevertheless, despite so few troops arriving, the French marshals might have been able to manage to defend against an allied advance. The real blow was in the number of men being withdrawn. The failure to send reinforcements, to reconstitute the skeleton regiments, and countermarching any reinforcements that had been sent to Spain, was the result of increasingly tense relations, and ultimately the outbreak of war, between France and Russia. Napoleon was forced to withdraw troops from Spain to prepare his massive invasion force. The first, and most important, withdrawal was of the Imperial Guard. At the end of 1811, it was becoming apparent to civilian intelligence-gatherers in the north of Spain that the Imperial Guard had begun to move in the direction of France, marching from Valladolid to Burgos on 27 December.[73] On 4 April, intelligence was received from Burgos indicating that the entire Guard were now marching toward the French frontier, along with the general staff of the Northern Army.[74] This was just the beginning. Contingents of Polish cavalry were withdrawn in May, whilst agents in Madrid also reported the numbers of troops leaving the Peninsula. In March and April alone, 34,749 officers and troops of all arms left Spain.[75]

66. Stuart to Wellesley, Lisbon, 31 August 1811, FO 63/113, TNA.

67. Stuart to Wellesley, Lisbon, 9 November 1811, FO 63/114, TNA.

68. Stuart to Wellesley, Lisbon, 4 January 1812, FO 63/127, TNA.

69. Stuart to Wellesley, Lisbon, 9 November 1811, FO 63/114, TNA.

70. Stuart to Wellesley, Lisbon, 12 February 1812, FO 63/127, TNA. See also Stuart to Castlereagh, Lisbon, 28 March 1812, FO 63/128.

71. Stuart to Castlereagh, Lisbon, 4 April 1812, FO 63/128, TNA.

72. Stuart to Castlereagh, Lisbon, 23 May 1812, enclosing Diary of Madrid Correspondent, FO 63/130, TNA.

73. Stuart to Wellesley, Lisbon, 18 January 1812, FO 63/127, TNA.

74. Stuart to Wellesley, Lisbon, 4 April 1812, FO 63/128, TNA.

75. Stuart to Castlereagh, Lisbon, 23 May 1812, enclosing Diary of Madrid Correspondent, FO 63/130, TNA.

With Napoleon still attempting to direct the war in Spain remotely,[76] the French Marshals suffered considerable command and control difficulties, exacerbated by poor inter-force relations at the operational level. The departure of ever-increasing numbers of troops for France and eventually eastern Europe only consolidated these issues, depriving the French of strength in depth, and increasing communications difficulties between the Peninsula and France. The garrisons in the north and east of Spain became extremely stretched, and guerrillas increased their activities, capturing large numbers of couriers and their valuable dispatches. Nevertheless, Napoleon insisted on maintaining the offensive in Spain. Wellington was therefore well apprised not only of the dire condition of the French armies, of their increasing weakness, but also of the methods used to try and maintain the ground which the French occupied: Marmont's force was withdrawn from the Portuguese frontier. Civilian intelligence, particularly from the agent in Madrid, kept both Wellington and Stuart fully apprised of Marmont's position.

The French marshal began to consolidate his forces away from the Portuguese border as early as October 1811:

> The whole of the French force with the exception of 8000 men have marched from Salamanca to Valladolid. The headquarters of Marshal Marmont are at Plasencia. Concurrent accounts from Extremadura state distinctly that a great part of his force has marched by the road of Malpartida to Baragona. This given out by the officers that they are to be cantoned in the neighbourhood of Madrid, and that the headquarters are to be established at Toledo. Everything, however, confirms the statement that they are moving towards the interior.[77]

Further to this, 12,000 troops, comprising the first and third divisions of the Army of Portugal, were ordered to reinforce the army under the command of Suchet. The movement of the enemy some distance from the Portuguese border, coupled with a significant detachment to Valencia, enabled Wellington to begin, and complete, the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo. This operation compelled Marmont to countermand the orders of the first and third divisions:

> The first and third divisions of the Central Army had actually received orders to march towards Valencia when the intelligence received at Marshal Marmont's Headquarters both from Castile and from that City induced him to suspend their departure. A sudden order was transmitted to the whole of the French Baggage etc to move in the direction of Castile and Marshal Marmont actually left Talavera for Valladolid on 4 January.[78]

76. Stuart to Castlereagh, Lisbon, 18 April 1812, enclosing Diary of Madrid Correspondent, FO 63/129, TNA. See also J. R. Elting, *Swords Around a Throne: Napoleon's Grand Armée* (New York: Da Capo, 1997).

77. Stuart to Wellesley, Lisbon, 19 October 1811, FO 63/114, TNA.

78. Stuart to Wellesley, Lisbon, 18 January 1812, FO 63/127, TNA.

From this point onwards Marmont withdrew the garrisons of the northeastern provinces to maintain his strength in Wellington's front, concentrating his force on the line of the River Douro.[79] Wellington integrated this intelligence with the operational intelligence he had received to make several assumptions:

> The 6th Division had moved from Talavera though the Puerto del Pico on 8 and 9 [March], and the 4th division from Toledo on the same days, through the Guadarrama, and the 1st division only remained on the Tagus, near Talavera. The march of these divisions was directed, as I understand, upon Valladolid; and I conclude either that the reports are founded which have been in circulation, that the Guards had been withdrawn from Spain, or that the enemy intend to endeavour to divert my attention from the attack of Badajoz, by making some movement upon Galicia, or upon the north of Portugal.[80]

All of these assumptions proved accurate, to some degree, and were all derived from the integration of strategic with operational intelligence. Despite having a considerable force in his front once again, Wellington perceived that the abilities of this force were constricted by the availability of forage and supplies at any one point. The diary of the correspondent in Madrid continually referred to the "exhausted state of the enemy's resources in the Interior."[81] Wellington was therefore aware that the French could not make a substantial defence, nor could they consolidate their forces in overwhelming strength against him until they had acquired the harvests in Castile and Andalusia. His strategy for his advance in 1812 was based primarily on this estimation. Wellington demonstrated acute operational skill in making these plans, reinforced, as they were, by regular and reliable intelligence sources.

Wellington's original intention had been to launch an offensive into Andalusia immediately following the fall of Badajoz, "but the Spanish authorities having omitted to take the necessary steps to provision Ciudad Rodrigo, it is absolutely necessary that I should return to the frontiers of Castile within a short period of time."[82] The basis for invading Andalusia immediately following the fall of Badajoz was simple:

> Even if Soult and Marmont had collected their armies, either to impede our operations at the siege of Badajoz or to stop our further progress, the want of subsistence at that season of the year would have obliged them to separate, which want, we, with our superior

79. Stuart to Wellesley, Lisbon, 29 February 1812, FO 63/128, TNA.

80. *The Dispatches of Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington, K.G. During His Various Campaigns in India, Denmark, Portugal, Spain, the Low Countries and France, from 1799 to 1818*, ed. Gurwood (London: J. Murray, 1836) (hereafter *WD*), 9:7, Wellington to Liverpool, Camp before Badajoz, 20 March 1812.

81. Stuart to Castlereagh, 8 April 1812, FO 63/128, TNA.

82. *WD*, 9:47, Wellington to Liverpool, Badajoz, 7 April 1812. See also 9:57, Wellington to Henry Wellesley, Badajoz, 11 April 1812.

> means and better arrangements, should not have felt. It appeared to me also that nothing which Marmont could undertake at that season of the year could prevent me from carrying my plan into execution. He could not attack Ciudad Rodrigo … because we had taken … the heavy artillery belonging to the French army, which could not be replaced in time. He could not … make a serious invasion of Portugal … nor could he … invade Galicia… In either of these operations he would have felt a want of provisions equal to, if not greater, than that which he would have experienced, if he and Soult had joined to impede our progress south of the Tagus.[83]

Although the magazines of Ciudad Rodrigo had, by the end of May, been fully replenished, intelligence indicated that the French were bringing forward replacement siege artillery from Bayonne.[84] Marmont would soon have the ability to lay siege to, and take back within a short time, Ciudad Rodrigo, and, if Wellington moved south, probably Almeida as well. Furthermore, the season being as advanced as it was, "the reasoning in reference to the expedition into Andalusia, which would have rendered that plan advisable in April or in the beginning of May, is not now applicable." Basically, the harvest in Andalusia and Extremadura could be reaped from early June onwards, ideal conditions for a French army dependent on foraging for its means of supply:

> Wherever they find ripe corn on the ground, they can collect any number of men they please, and can keep them collected during the time which may be necessary to perform any operation. If then I were to choose this period for my expedition into Andalusia, Marmont would follow me march for march, and on my arrival in Andalusia I should find an army much superior to mine.[85]

Furthermore, Marmont had the larger disposable force. Civilian intelligence had indicated that he had 22,295 men at Salamanca, in addition to a further 20,000 dispersed on foraging expeditions throughout Castile and Galicia.[86] With no ground to hold, and nothing to lose, if Wellington moved south, Marmont could concentrate his entire force and follow him, straight into fertile land where the Army of Portugal would be infinitely better off than in Castile. By contrast Soult, although he had in the region of 56,000 effectives, did not have such a large disposable force:

> Soult must maintain the blockade of Cadiz as long as he remains in Andalusia, and in effecting that object he must keep garrisons in Seville, Granada, Malaga, and some other points; and if he is to be absent from the province for any length of time, he must

83. *WD*, 9:173, Wellington to Liverpool, Fuente Guinaldo, 26 May 1812.

84. Stuart to Castlereagh, Lisbon, 23 May 1812, enclosing Diary of Madrid Correspondent, FO 63/130, TNA.

85. *WD*, 9:174, Wellington to Liverpool, Fuente Guinaldo, 26 May 1812.

86. Stuart to Castlereagh, Lisbon, 25 April 1812, enclosing Diary of Madrid Correspondent, FO 63/129, TNA.

> leave a body of men to observe Ballesteros, who would otherwise be able to effect some operation attended by permanent injury to his objects in Andalusia… Marmont's then being, what may be called of the two, the operating army, the movement which I should now make into Andalusia … would enable the enemy to bring the largest body of men to act together on one point, would be a false movement, and this must by all means be avoided.[87]

By staying in the North, Wellington was forcing Marmont to maintain his army in an area which did not permit a harvest until much later than in Andalusia. As a result, the allies would retain their "advantages for a longer period of time in [Castile] than [they] should do to the southward; and [they would] have time to strike some important blows, which, if successful, may have the effect of relieving … Andalusia, as effectually as a direct movement upon those provinces."[88] Wellington therefore proposed to advance to bring Marmont to a general action.

The logic which drew Wellington to this conclusion demonstrates the skill of a commander who had a clear and precise operational awareness. Using a combination of civilian strategic and military operational intelligence, integrated with precise topographical knowledge of Spain, Wellington was able to establish the tipping point—the point at which he could strike the enemy and force his entire army, overwhelming as it would have been if combined, to retreat.

IV. Continuities and Changes: The Crimean War and the Turn of the Century

Stuart's and Wellesley's intelligence networks remained useful, to varying degrees until June 1813, when Wellington defeated the majority of the French Armies of Spain at Vitoria, in the north-east of the Peninsula. Following this battle, the French retreated in confusion to the Franco-Spanish border. As the allied army approached the French frontier, those agents in Bayonne and in the foothills of the Pyrenees became relatively less useful. Gone was their monopoly on strategic intelligence-collection. Wellington could now obtain that type of intelligence for himself, by using his own highly-trained officers. A characteristic of the entire campaign was that, following the victory at Vitoria, the allied army relied less on civilian intelligence, and much more on their own sources. Consequently, the effect of civilian intelligence on the Peninsula campaign became less notable.

Whilst Wellesley remained in the Peninsula, Stuart was moved to Paris, where he achieved considerable success establishing intelligence networks. These resembled much more the informal organisations of the "Family Embassy." Such a system was to remain in place for twenty-five years, with the important lessons of intelligence organisation in the Peninsula apparently being forgotten. By 1840, the increasing professionalism of the British diplomatic service coincided with the decline of the Family Embassy.[89] No longer was the ambassador required to

87. *WD*, 9:175, Wellington to Liverpool, Fuente Guinaldo, 26 May 1812.
88. *WD*, 9:176, Wellington to Liverpool, Fuente Guinaldo, 26 May 1812.
89. Hamilton and Langhorne, *Practice of Diplomacy*, 107.

recruit and maintain his staff, and ensure the collection of strategic information. An attaché was assigned to the resident embassy, and in the case of the eastern-European powers, where French, the traditional language of diplomacy, was not widely spoken, these attachés often doubled as interpreters.

By the mid-nineteenth century, permanent embassies were acquiring much more sophisticated levels of internal organisation, reflecting a standardisation within the British Foreign Office. Specific roles were to be executed by specific employees, rather than the ad-hoc informal organisation of the Family Embassy. With much less to distract them, attachés could devote considerable effort to the organisation and maintenance of intelligence networks, and, unsurprisingly, the networks they created mirrored those of Stuart and Wellesley. It was not until the Crimean War, however, that these networks could be put to the test. They formed a significant aspect of Lord Raglan's intelligence apparatus.

Raglan had had experience of the usefulness of civilian intelligence, first, whilst he was military secretary to Wellington in the Peninsula, and then as chargé d'affaires in Paris in 1816.[90] When he was appointed to the command of the British Army in the Crimea, Raglan's experience in the Peninsula and Paris was to serve him in good stead, as he became reliant on his own civilian attaché, Charles Cattley, for the collection and analysis of intelligence on the enemy Russian forces. Cattley had been an attaché in St Petersburg, was fluent in Russian and had considerable knowledge both of the Russian forces being deployed to the Crimea, and the Crimean Peninsula itself.[91] He began operating with the Crimean Army in early 1854, and demonstrated his appreciation of the importance of intelligence, when Lieutenant-Colonel Nigel Kingscote, Raglan's military secretary, noted his attendance on a regular reconnaissance patrol.[92] This reflected Cattley's hands-on approach to intelligence collection, and his appreciation of the importance that strategic and operational intelligence held for one another.

The organisation which Cattley adopted reflected the spirit of the Iberian networks half a century earlier, but in the Crimea, specific tailoring was required. Notably, as the war was being fought on several fronts, intelligence was required from the Balkans. Echoing the increased professionalism of the British diplomatic service, Cattley, via Raglan, received regular intelligence reports from across Europe, including Athens, Belgrade, Bucharest, and Vienna.[93] However, this resulted from an explicit instruction from the Foreign Secretary to each of the attachés in eastern Europe, rather than any impetus by Cattley to gather this level of strategic intelligence.

90. Wellington to Somerset, 16 December 1816, D3135/1.52 (Raglan Papers), Gwent Record Office (hereafter GRO), Newport, South Wales, United Kingdom.

91. Cattley to Raglan, 22 October 1853, MSS 6807/291, National Army Museum (hereafter NAM), Chelsea, London, United Kingdom.

92. Kingscote to Katherine Somerset, Varna, 29 August 1854, D3135/1.211, GRO.

93. See for example British Consul at Athens to Lord Raglan, Athens, 27 March 1854, MSS 6807/300, NAM; also Report sent to Stratford de Radcliffe, Belgrade, 25 April 1854; and Colquhoun (Agent General) to Raglan, Bucharest.

Cattley's involvement was much more noticeable at the operational level of intelligence gathering. He recruited Tartar spies to infiltrate the Russian lines and interrogated Polish and Russian prisoners and deserters. He also established connections with agents and correspondents in Russia and, more locally, within Sevastopol, and neighbouring locations.[94] Translation of these sources of intelligence was serviced by attachés who had specifically requested they be seconded to the British Army to offer their services as interpreters. Such individuals were in high demand, as trustworthy native interpreters were hard to find. On 8 May 1854, the Secretary to the Duke of Newcastle pointed out that the government had:

> No means of judging what employment will be available for civilians with the Army, but that …Gentlemen who can act as interpreters and be free from the suspicions generally attaching to those who can be obtained in such capacity would be found of essential service.[95]

Such commentary reflects governmental appreciation of the growing importance of intelligence as the nineteenth century progressed, and marks a definite change in the way intelligence organisation was thought of. Such comments were rare during the Napoleonic Wars, despite a persistent need for reliable interpreters.

Cattley's organisation in the Crimea also reflected a precise need for accuracy and detail. Several agents in the same locations were recruited, and their reports subsequently compared to eliminate factual inconsistencies:

> By further information obtained from the Polish Officers who deserted a few days ago, and from other sources, I am enabled to fix the number of the forces now opposed to us in Sevastopol and in the environs at about 120,500 men of all arms.[96]

In this respect, Cattley and Stuart are similar, both organising multiple agent networks to ensure accuracy and reliability. Such an acceptance marks a clear shift from earlier eighteenth century strategic and operational intelligence networks which represented a distinctly linear system of intelligence organisation.

With Cattley in charge of the collation of his strategic and operational intelligence, Raglan could concentrate on maintaining a tactical awareness of the local conditions. His daughter reported to friends that Raglan "works all day and half the night, and rides about a great deal, sometimes even in that cold weather is on Horseback six hours at a time."[97] Raglan clearly paralleled Wellington in this respect, who took every opportunity to reconnoitre personally the ground he was operating on.

94. See Intelligence Reports, 25 January 1854 to 23 June 1854, MSS 6807/291, NAM.

95. Secretary to the Duke of Newcastle to E. Hammond, Secretary to the Earl of Clarendon, Downing Street, 8 May 1854, MSS 6807/300, NAM.

96. Cattley to Raglan, 10 March 1855, MSS 6807/291, NAM.

97. Charlotte Somerset to Mary Octavia Farquhar, wife of Sir Walter Rockliffe Farquhar, 10 February 1855, D3135/1.231, GRO.

The parallels with the Iberian intelligence networks are evident. All three levels of warfare were well catered for with timely and accurate intelligence, provided by sophisticated networks, combined with traditional reconnaissance of the land. Both marked a shift from linear to parallel intelligence networks, reflecting an increased understanding of the importance of accuracy and reliability. Besides Raglan's presence in both wars, there are no other explicit links, so one can but assume that the similarities between the two mark an intriguing, but coincidental evolution of the most appropriate organisational system. Crucially, the lessons forgotten in the Peninsula were remembered after the Crimea, although it took another half century to institutionalise formally the collection of foreign strategic and operational intelligence, a system which was identified in the fighting of the Boer War (1899–1902), although this was at a purely military level.[98]

It was not until 1903, when a significant threat from a militarised and unified Germany began to emerge, that a network for the civilian collection of intelligence was institutionalised in Britain. Undoubtedly the motivation behind the actual institutionalisation of government intelligence organisation was the British experience in the Boer War,[99] but similar organisational patterns are clearly identifiable within the early nineteenth century intelligence services. Already, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, intelligence-collection had been divided into the three distinct services which exist today. Domestic intelligence was acquired through the Secret and Private Offices of the General Post Office, and the end of the Napoleonic War did little to change this. Arguably, in these offices, and in the short-lived Alien Office, can be found the origins of modern domestic intelligence-collection, that is the Security Service or MI5. Foreign intelligence-collection was orchestrated mainly by the Foreign Office. As with domestic intelligence-collection, this remained substantially unaffected by the end of the long war with France. Finally, specifically military operational intelligence-collection remained the remit of the military, as it does today. There is no evidence of institutionalisation, but foundations for such were laid by the British experience of intelligence-collection in the Napoleonic Wars.

Parallels between the early twentieth century intelligence-collection agencies and the nineteenth century intelligence apparatus are clearly evident, although there is little evidence of a direct connection. Realising the need for some form of institutionalised intelligence-collection structure, in 1905 Brevet-Colonel F. J. Davies, head of I.3, MO3 and MO5, the immediate precursors of MI6,[100] made a series of suggestions for the organisation of intelligence-collection in the event of a European War. In these suggestions, he made reference to "observers," "carriers," "collectors" and "forwarders." Observers were "spies, pure and simple," and were stationed in enemy territory. They "may be either (i) resident, i.e. stationed at

98. T. G. Fergusson, *British Military Intelligence, 1870–1914: The Development of a Modern Intelligence Organisation* (London: Arms and Armour, 1984), 15.

99. P. H. J. Davies, *MI6 and the Machinery of Spying* (London: Frank Cass, 2004), 27.

100. Davies, *MI6*, 30.

the places where information is obtained (called the observing station); or (ii) travelling, i.e. periodically visiting places."[101] The similarities with civilian intelligence organisation during the Peninsular and Crimean Wars are striking. A "resident observer" was the early twentieth century version of the nineteenth century correspondent, whilst the "travelling observer" was an agent.

Reflecting the limited communications technology, which still inhibited intelligence use in the early twentieth century, it was likely that "carriers" would be required to transmit information from observer to collector. Although one carrier could visit a number of observers, thus cutting expenses, "generally speaking such an arrangement [was] undesirable, as the Carrier will be in possession of too much information concerning the espionage service, for the less each employee knows of his fellow workers the better." Furthermore:

> The selection of carriers will be as difficult as the selection of observers. Commercial travellers, persons whose business takes them constantly into hostile territory, employees of neutral railways who often accompany through trains far across the frontier, gipsies, smugglers, pedlars, and suchlike, are the classes from which carriers would be most easily obtained. Women may also be employed on this duty. It is clear that the carrier and the observer hold each other's lives in their hands; this being so, it would probably be best to look upon the observer and his carrier or carriers as one unit, and to let each observer select and be responsible for his own carriers.[102]

Again, the similarities with Charles Stuart's intelligence network are striking. Although no direct linkage between the two systems can be identified, it is clear that the experience of gathering civilian intelligence throughout the nineteenth century influenced the writing of this memorandum. Stuart's role was itself divided into two separate positions: the "collector" and "forwarder." The collectors were to "have complete control over all arrangements connected with the group of observing stations for which they are responsible, and full discretion to engage or dismiss the observers and carriers working under them." In addition, collectors were responsible for initial intelligence analysis, as Charles Stuart, and, indeed, many other British ministers, envoys and ambassadors, were. Collectors were "to sift the information received, discarding what is valueless, and condensing and editing what is useful; and to forward the result to the Operations Division of the War Office." As collectors occupied the most sensitive positions:

> They must possess not only tact, patience, and an intimate acquaintance with the language, military organisation, and characteristics of the enemy with whom they have to deal, but also a knowledge of war and a previous military training which will enable them to sift information and to accurately judge of the military situation [sic]. Civilian, especially gentlemen of the Diplomatic

101. "Secret Service in the event of a European war," 17 October 1905, HD 3/124, TNA.
102. Ibid.

> or Consular Services, may often prove valuable assistants, but the responsible person at each collecting station must be an officer.[103]

Choosing a trained military professional to analyse the information provided by often inexperienced observers was a wise decision, and one which reflected the use of military agents to provide secondary analysis during the Peninsular War.

The final position in the proposed new intelligence network was the "forwarder," who was responsible for transmitting the collector's enciphered message to London. "He would be the nearest Ambassador, Minister or salaried Consul." The decision to divide what had previously been undertaken by one person in the diplomatic service, into two positions underlined the growing importance of intelligence at the beginning of the twentieth century, and provided a single person dedicated to analysis of military information.

V. Conclusion

It is important not to overstate the importance to the development of modern intelligence services of the intelligence networks established during the Peninsular War. This article has not sought to argue that the origins of MI6 or MI5 can be traced to 1810. On the contrary, this article has merely identified one of many pieces in the immensely complex jigsaw that is the origins of Britain's intelligence services. The Peninsular War, therefore, did not see the beginning of the development of modern intelligence services, but represented a turning point in its evolution. There is no direct evidence linking intelligence organisation in the Peninsular War with that of the early twentieth century. However, the parallels are clear, and a comparison of the similarity of the respective situations highlights some interesting conclusions. Effective human intelligence always depends on good agent networks, rapid communications, and the ability of field commands to analyse and exploit information quickly. This is a constant, no matter what technological advantages one may possess. What makes the period of the Iberian and Crimean Peninsular Wars and the period leading to the outbreak of the First World War so distinctive and similar to one another is the matching strategic situations.

Both the Iberian and Crimean Peninsular Wars involved the deployment of British troops in a war-fighting situation in which the commander of the army had sole decision-making capacity. Only the highest level strategic decisions could be referred to London, and only then, if a quick response was not required. Both situations involved deployment to terrain about which little was known. The strategic situation in the early twentieth century presented similar issues. A large military power, with aspirations for imperial and continental expansion, threatened the balance of power on the continent. In the early-nineteenth century, it was France; in the mid-nineteenth century, Russia; and in the early-twentieth century, the threat came from a unified Germany. Resistance to this threat most likely would require the deployment of troops to the continent. Without a permanent British military presence on the continent, the only identifiable means

103. Ibid.

of obtaining intelligence on the terrain and the military power of the potential enemy was to establish networks of civilian agents, locally administered, whose main objective was to provide strategic information to the government in London, and, in the event of military deployment, to supply similar information to military commanders. Thus, strategic and operational decision-making and planning would be facilitated. With similar strategic contexts identified, the parallels between the establishment of civilian intelligence networks, administered by local British diplomats, become more apparent. As the early-twentieth century provided a similar strategic context to the Iberian Peninsular War, whether by default or design, a similar network of civilian intelligence gatherers was established.

The Peninsular War marked a turning point in the ongoing creation of an institutionalised network of intelligence collectors. First, it established the importance of intelligence to military planning. Secondly, the conflict, as part of the wider war against France, identified the necessity for some form of institutionalised collection and analytical framework, to increase efficiency. Thirdly, prior to the invention of wireless forms of communication, the war established the necessity for this framework to be controlled locally, by a British diplomat operating on friendly soil, and running a series of correspondents and agents, or observers and carriers, within enemy territory. There are many other pieces of the jigsaw that require further analysis; among them, the significant issue of the introduction of General Staffs, the industrialisation of warfare, and the role played by intelligence in Britain's imperial expansion. The events of the nineteenth century, which constitute these pieces of the puzzle, were to alter significantly the role of intelligence in warfare, and in governmental, policy-making. But the framework that was to be used in 1903, was established and proved useful in the Peninsular War.