

Tactical Journal

Military, Economic and Political Considerations for Spain.

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At the start of the game, Spain has a potentially powerful position if the opportunities can be realised. In Europe, the Spanish economy and population is on a par with other nations. As with all the nations, the starting army is relatively small and needs prudent expanding. Economically, the factor to point out is that Spain has one ore mine, much like most of her neighbours.

In India, Spain's holdings are small and the main nation with influence is Great Britain.

In the Caribbean, Spain has the major holdings with the best opportunity for expansion and exploitation.

So, on turn one and probably for the first year at least, Spain should be regarded as a bit of a sleeping giant. Spain needs time to build its European economy and army, make a grab for land in India and expand vigorously in the Caribbean.

How can the above strategy be put into practice?

It is best to look at the economy first. Spain will need economic power to make it a powerful European nation. In Europe, growth will be steady. Building of the ore mine and associated factories will take money and this needs to be realised by trading. This is a major advantage for Spain, as you start with three trading cities in the Caribbean. You will note that Spain will grow much like France in Europe. In India, you should attempt to take Haiphong, a trade city that starts the game neutral. To do this, you need to load a brigade with Kt's from your start position in India. You will see that the brigades selected will have to "exchange" battalions because each start battalion weighs too much to be able to be loaded on to the available shipping. This loading must be done on turn one as there will be a race with the Confederation of the Rhine to see who can take Haiphong. Its importance lies in that it gives you a trade city in India, early on, when making money is vitally important. On turn two you move and land in Haiphong and try and take the city on turn three. If you are lucky enough to secure Haiphong, note that it is not a barracks and one will need to be built on the location. The ownership of Haiphong is also a launch pad into the surrounding area which starts neutral and has an abundance of strategic mines which should be taken if at all possible.

In the Caribbean Spain should exploit as follows. The Isthmus should be controlled by Spain so that the major holdings are not split in two. To do this will require a brigade, with a general in the same co-ordinate, to move unfederated to the Isthmus. Again, "exchanging" battalions to obtain an all cavalry brigade is desirable because it will move faster. It is paramount that as many mines as possible are taken by Spanish forces.

Militarily, Spain starts no stronger than others, except maybe in the Caribbean. The fleet, at the start of the game, is the second largest. GB has the largest fleet. The French fleet is as nearly as big as the Spanish.

Your ability to expand your armed forces faster than your European neighbours will be largely dependent on how your economy generates money and economic points. If gold

becomes plentiful, as it should, the supply should be used to feed mints in mainland Europe in order to generate extra money.

Your initial consideration will be to decide how many new Kt European troops should be built and sent to the colonies. The Caribbean should be the emphasis, you want to be a superpower in the Caribbean and be able to influence other nations. A powerful Caribbean will eventually lead to significant amounts of money becoming available for use in building forces in Europe.

All of the options that Spain can consider are underpinned by the political situation. Spain starts the campaign militarily weak and would prefer no conflicts, certainly in Europe, for the first year and a half. Spain needs this time to build an army that should help dissuade other European nations seeing Spain as easy pickings.

It appears obvious that Spain would like to start with agreements, if not alliances, with Spain and Portugal. The benefits are obvious. If Portugal wishes to expand at the expense of Spain, then Portugal will normally attack in the first year, any later and Spain's economy should have resulted in the Spanish army having superiority over their Portuguese neighbours.

An agreement with France is quite often forthcoming, as it allows France to look eastward with a secure western flank. France can be often persuaded to look at the Confederation of the Rhine as somewhere to expand as there is little threat to France's colonial holdings. Quite often, Holland will join in such an adventure. Italy is also a typical target of France. This can help you as you are in the best position to exploit the colonial possessions of Italy.

The one nation you most definitely do not want to irritate is GB. A lot will obviously depend on the alliances that other nations will make, but you must invest time in political dialogue. You should also be wary of open alliances with countries too early, especially GB, as such an alliance is immensely powerful in the colonies and may persuade the other smaller nations to all act together. Divide and rule!

By now, if Spain has survived, we should be into the early part of 1809. The situation for Spain should be something like a good economy in Europe, an expansion and consolidation in the Caribbean and some limited growth in India.

Now is the time for reflection. Starting in the Caribbean, Spain should have a factory as soon as possible. One may already have been built. The reason is twofold. Economic points will allow the building of colonial troops without affecting the European economy. Secondly, if a stock can be obtained it will potentially generate a lot of money through trading. This is why the initial three trade cities are so important. Spain should be, by far, the main strategic power in the Caribbean.

In Europe, the economy should have at least four factories. The extra ore required should be being supplied from the colonies or, if the ore is being used in the colonies, zinc should be in enough supply to keep economic points production at a maximum. I would also expect to be feeding enough gold to maintain two mints at maximum money production.

Now may be the time to look at European expansion. If no obvious route is visible, the annexing of Portugal should be considered. The reasons are obvious and include the fact that the country is small and so a campaign should potentially be short in time. Another reason is that the conquest of Portugal would only leave one European border that needed defending.

If Portugal is a major ally, then the expansion route is not obvious but the game may be all the more interesting for it.

Trying to give advice after this time horizon is difficult because the permutations are too numerous. Needless to say, diplomacy will have the greatest affect in colouring the picture that you will encounter. Always remember that a tenacious defender or ruthless attacker will always prey on the perceived weak willed or apparent inactive nations. Even if you don't do a lot, make a lot of noise in not doing it!