OFFICE OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE. WAR NOTES NO. VII. INFORMATION FROM ABROAD. THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR. A COLLECTION OF DOCUMENTS RELATIVE TO THE SQUADRON OPERATIONS IN THE WEST INDIES. ARRANGED BY REAR-ADMIRAL PASCUAL CERVERA Y TOPETE

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SQUADRON OPERATIONS IN THE WEST INDIES.

ARRANGED BY

REAR-ADMIRAL PASCUAL CERVERA Y TOPETE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH.

OFFICE OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE.

WASHINGTON:
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1899.

INTRODUCTORY.

In the Cortes at Madrid, on the 30th day of October, 1899, the minister of war was requested by the Count de las Almenas and Senators González and Dávila to transmit to the senate chamber as early as possible the proceedings held in the supreme council of war and navy, from August 1, 1899, to date, relative to the wars in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines.

The minister of war, replying, said in part:

> I do not know whether the Count de las Almenas and the worthy companions whom he represents have sufficiently considered the grave step of bringing into a political chamber and submitting to parliamentary discussion adjudged causes of the extreme gravity of those referred to. I repeat that, while I greatly respect such right, I believe that there may be serious objections to a debate of this nature, because perhaps the high tribunal of the army and navy, which has adjudged these causes in accordance with law and its own conscience, and to whose functions and importance great respect is due, might suffer, though only apparently, in its prestige. For that reason I consider it neither expedient nor prudent to transmit to the chamber the documents asked for.

It is not, therefore, probable that the proceedings of the courts in the cases of Admirals Cervera and Montojo will be made public.

Admiral Cervera, having in view the vindication of himself, had obtained from the Queen in August permission to publish certain documents, given in this number of the War Notes, which make a most interesting and connected history of the naval operations of Spain during the war, and show without need of argument the causes of her weakness.

RICHARDSON CLOVER,
Commander, U. S. N., Chief Intelligence Officer.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *December 6, 1899.*

Approved:
A. S. CROWNINSHIELD,
Chief of Bureau of Navigation.

TO THE READER.

Being in possession of the documents herein collected, I have thought it my duty to publish them in order to enlighten the public, and that they may serve as a lesson for the future and as data for history.

I had thought first of having a short statement of facts precede them, but considering that the events are so very recent, and have affected our unhappy country so much, that any criticism might easily degenerate into passion, I have thought it best to give simply the documents and let them explain for themselves everything that has happened.

I should have liked to do this earlier, but put it off until the termination of the cause in which I was made a defendant, and since then it has taken some time for me to obtain permission to publish these papers, owing to my position as a naval officer and the nature of the documents, most of which either came from the ministry of marine or were addressed to it.

To that end I applied to Her Majesty in a petition, a copy of which follows, and secured a royal order, a copy of which also follows.

The collection is printed in two kinds of type. The smaller type refers to documents printed in a certain work where errors and omissions have crept in, and the larger type refers to documents furnished by myself, the originals of most of which are in my possession, and to others taken from various publications and even from the journals of the sessions of the Chambers.

If this publication should help us to mend our mistakes in the future, my wishes are granted, for all I ask is that I may be useful to my country.

PASCUAL CERVERA.

MADRID, *August 30, 1899.*

PETITION.

MADAM: Pascual Cervera y Topete, rear admiral of the navy, sets forth to Your Royal Majesty, with the most profound respect as follows:

It is well known that owing to the destruction of the squadron under my command in the battle of July 3, 1898, a cause was instituted in which the decree of the supreme council of war and navy has absolved your petitioner and others. But such decree, in which only a majority concurred, is not sufficient to satisfy the opinion which, misled at the time of the events and for a long time afterwards, has been manifested in a fierce campaign against the honor of your petitioner, that of the squadron which he commanded, and of the entire navy.

Upon noticing these symptoms the writer attempted to give the country a full explanation, and to that end he solicited and obtained the election as senator for the province of Albacete, but did not even have a chance of discussing the proceedings of his election.

When your petitioner had been made a defendant in the proceedings above referred to, he deemed it his duty not to speak until the court had pronounced its sentence.

The writer has in his possession many original documents and authentic copies of others, and among them there are not a few that have been published with errors, and others that have been printed without authorization, but have come to the knowledge of many people, and these likewise contained many errors which are bound to mislead public opinion.

These documents, many of which were at the time of a confidential nature, need no longer be kept secret, since peace has been reestablished and the publication of the same would correct many of these errors and serve as a lesson for the future. For all these reasons your petitioner humbly prays that Your Majesty will permit him to publish, at his expense, the documents referred to in order to enlighten the Spanish people.

Dated August 18, 1899.

ROYAL ORDER.

His Majesty having been informed of the petition forwarded by your excellency on the 18th instant, asking for permission to publish, at your expense, certain documents in your possession relative to the squadron under your command in the naval battle of Santiago de Cuba, on the 3d day of July, 1898, His Majesty the King (whom God guard), and in his name the Queen Regent of the Kingdom, in conformity with the opinion furnished by the counselor-general of this ministry, has been pleased to authorize your excellency to publish all orders issued by the ministry of marine relative to the squadron destroyed at Santiago de Cuba. The above having been communicated to me by royal order, through the minister of marine, I notify your excellency accordingly for your cognizance, and as the result of your petition referred to.

Madrid, August 22, 1899.

MANUEL J. MOZO, *Assistant Secretary.*

Rear-Admiral PASCUAL CERVERA Y TOPETE.