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Review of Views From the Apache Frontier: Report on the Northern Provinces of New Spain

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Cortés, an intelligent and keen observer, relied on personal observations and archival research to describe the Apaches and other Indian groups of the trans-Mississippi West.

Divided into three parts, the report places the northern provinces and its peoples in a broad strategic global context. Aware of England's "limitless" commercial ambitions and the increasing population and expanding borders of the United States, Cortés correctly assessed the danger these two powers posed to Spain's Interior Provinces.

Cortés's informed and well organized discussion of Apache culture makes for interesting reading. Although the young lieutenant was a Spanish patriot who attacked the Black Legend of Spanish cruelty and injustice, one of the major themes of foreign writers, he was impressed by the admirable qualities of these Indians. He also claimed that if the Apaches "had a defender who could represent their rights on the basis of natural law, an impartial judge could soon see that every charge we might make against them would be offset by as many crimes committed by our side" (p. 30).

On the other hand, he recommended that given the long experience the Spaniards had had with the Indians of the Texas coast and adjacent islands, these tribes should either be settled in missions in the interior or exterminated, "sparing no one but the innocent young" (p. 89).

The translation of the complete Cortés report reads well and is extensively footnoted. A preface and introduction analyze the circumstances of the creation of the report and its strengths and weaknesses. An epilogue discusses Cortés's assignments in Mexico City and Spain after leaving the northern frontier and relates his tragic accident and subsequent death and the history of the various copies of the report.

This attractive book will please anyone interested in Apaches and the Indian groups located in Louisiana, Texas, and California in the late eighteenth century. While the Cortés report summarizes data by other observers (such as Fathers Domínguez and Escalante and An-

Views From the Apache Frontier: Report on the Northern Provinces of New Spain. By José Cortés. Edited by Elizabeth A. H. John. Translated by John Wheat. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989. Maps, illustrations, epilogue, notes, bibliography, index. xx + 163 pp. \$21.95.

This report on the northern provinces of New Spain was written in 1799 by José María Cortés, a lieutenant in the Royal Corps of Engineers.

tonio Cordero), it contains much useful information that the editor places in the context of modern knowledge. The maps and the attractive illustrations enhance the book's value.

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