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National Cipher Challenge Challenge 2 part A, 10/1/08 10:07

Lieut. General the Hon. Sir A. Wellesley, K.B., to Commissary General Murray.

My Dear Sir,

I have received your letter concerning the establishment of the Guides, and Scovell is to be congratulated on his most excellent training regime. Once provisioned, the Guides are to join our main force at Badajoz.

It is clear to me that Soult's intention will be to cut off our line of retreat and it is therefore necessary that we prepare a defensive line to the rear at Torres Vedras. To this end Colonel Fletcher will build a series of ditches, forts and other emplacements to slow any attack upon that line. These works must be duly provisioned by your measures to procure money for bills upon England.

To better our odds of success, Scovell's Guides are to organise a campaign of guerilla action, harrying the French forces at every turn, and he is instructed to expand his network of spies. In this he will work with the Portuguese Brigades commanded by Beresford and Hardinge.

The attached communication was forwarded to me from the Spanish guerillas, who found it in the possession of a most unfortunate monk, presumably an afrancasado. The message remains closed to me, and I would be grateful if you would convey its meaning as a matter of the highest priority. This may properly be another task for Scovell, whose work in this field is not unnoticed among the general staff.

Believe me, etc. Arthur Wellesley.

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National Cipher Challenge Challenge 2 part B, 10/1/08 10:07

To General Soult from the hand of King Joseph

I read with great pleasure of the sweeping move of our army towards a most desirable meeting with General Wellesley and his forces. I most strongly urge you to engage with him at the earliest opportunity and to bring to a timely end this dreadful British incursion into Portugal.

The afrancesados tell me that the British are encamped at Badajoz. The defenses to their rear are weak, and you should make all possible haste to Torres Vedras in order to cut off any retreat. From that point their defeat will surely be only a matter of time, as our superior forces, under the command of Marshal Massena, bear down on the British from the North, South and East.

With their retreat blocked, the British will certainly fight on and attempt to break out into Spain. It is of utmost import that we take and hold the forts at Badajoz, Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo. General Nye's forces will be placed at your disposal and together you will have command of more than thirty thousand men. Given that Wellesley can muster only eighteen thousand, victory must be assured.

Vive la France

King Joseph