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## **British geographic intelligence during the Second World War: A case study of the Canary Islands**

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# **British geographic intelligence during the Second World War:**

## **A case study of the Canary Islands**

### **Abstract**

The Second World War led to significant developments in operational intelligence activities as the belligerent powers dedicated resources to collecting the geographic, military, and socio-economic information that was an essential basis for planning military operations. In the case of Great Britain, parts of its strategic agencies were dedicated to geographic intelligence through divisions, sections, and departments that analysed the terrain over which potential military movements could occur. This article provides an analysis of British reports on the Canary Islands as a case study of wartime geographic intelligence. It shows how the information collected supported the design and updating of British invasion plans on the islands between 1940 and 1943.

### **Introduction**

Intelligence in the military realm is knowledge obtained from the collection, processing, dissemination, and exploitation of information for decision-making in matters of national security. The information collected ranges across several types; the socio-economic, political, diplomatic, military, and geographical. However, in the context of war intelligence acquires even greater urgency, with a particular emphasis on the necessity of operational information for military movements. Hence, during times of war, governments and military organisations not only collect information about the enemy's strategy – military intelligence and counterintelligence – but also topographic and geographic information that facilitates the planning of military interventions – operational

and geographic intelligence.

Military operations implemented on war fronts are always conditioned by spatial and geographical factors such as infrastructure, resources, terrain, climate, and seas. Although space and strategy have always been prominent elements in conflicts, the potential of topography and geography – physical and human – as instruments of warfare was re-evaluated during the international conflicts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During the Second World War operational intelligence fulfilled the most practical and utilitarian function, being understood as a preparatory instrument that facilitated the planning of military movements (attack or counterattack campaigns, invasion operations, assaults, etc.) through the collection of strategic information and maps.<sup>1</sup>

Operational and geographic intelligence was a prominent component of Great Britain's military planning. Military operations were preceded by the collection of geographical information which was prepared by several services and military divisions: the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), the Special Operations Executive (SOE), the Directorates of Intelligence and Military Operations, the Ministry of Economic Warfare (MEW), the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee (JIC), and the Naval Intelligence Division (NID).<sup>2</sup> The Inter-Service Topographical Department (ISTD), for instance, was a joint Army and Navy organisation that was responsible for supplying intelligence information to the combined operations agencies through the preparation of large information documents known as *ISIS Reports*.<sup>3</sup>

The re-evaluation of war strategic information favoured the progressive institutionalisation of geographic and operational intelligence which, after the Second World War, was fully integrated into the British national security system. The founding of the Joint Intelligence Bureau (JIB) in 1946 and the Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS) in 1964 facilitated the systematic gathering of economic, topographic, scientific, and nuclear

intelligence on an inter-service basis.<sup>4</sup> However, while the progressive implementation of geographic and topographic intelligence during the Cold War has received special attention in intelligence historiography, researchers have paid less attention to its immediate antecedents.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, the main objective of this article is to analyse the components and dimensions of British geographic intelligence during the Second World War. It includes a description of the role played by operational intelligence in wartime and a study of Britain's geographic services prior to the founding of the post-war Joint Intelligence Bureau. The main focus of the article is an analysis of British reports on the Canary Islands as a case study of wartime geographic intelligence, as developments in naval warfare and increased Spanish belligerence led the British to re-evaluate the strategic potential of the Islands. Particularly between 1941 and 1943, the archipelago was the target of a succession of occupation plans devised by Great Britain that aimed to use the islands as an alternative base in the event of a loss of Gibraltar.<sup>6</sup> Although the plans were never implemented, Great Britain devoted significant efforts to preparing its operations from strategic, intelligence, and propaganda perspectives. Under the control of the War Office and the Committee of Chiefs of Staff, British operational sections and departments collected information, topographic data, and cartographic and photographic material about the islands that justified military operations, supported the design of viable tactical movements, and adapted theoretical planning to a scenario closer to reality. The *ISIS report on the Canary Islands* became the most extensive and detailed operational document on the archipelago ever compiled, and its pages reveal the role played by geographic intelligence during the Second World War.



## **Wartime geographic intelligence before the Second World War**

For many academics and geographers, such as Friedrich Ratzel, Yves Lacoste, Gerard Toal, and Eduardo Mendieta, war is the main field of geographical experimentation. Geographical spaces, climatic conditions, coastal access, internal communications, and available resources become conditioning factors for military movements, both in offensive and defensive operations. The intrinsic relationship between war and space explains the attention given by states and armies to geographic intelligence as an instrument of warfare. Toal defines geographic intelligence as the collection and analysis of “thin technocratic spatial knowledge and thick geographic knowledge” composed of battlefield and spatial cartography, and area descriptions.<sup>7</sup> The Napoleonic Wars changed the way war was made through much more dynamic and plural battles that required new war concepts such as spatial analysis.<sup>8</sup> The unifying and liberal processes of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as well as the emergence of European imperialism, facilitated a new conception of physical and human space which reinforced the role of geography as a requisite discipline for maintaining the power of modern states. This helps to explain the growing importance attached to the study of Geography as an academic subject and its increased prominence in universities and via prestigious geographical societies during this period.<sup>9</sup>

As Christopher Andrew has demonstrated, the relationship between geography and military intelligence is a prominent component of British history. From its origins, intelligence activities were intrinsically related to British foreign exploration and mapping.<sup>10</sup> Britain’s first known intelligence agency, the Depot of Military Knowledge, was established by the Quartermaster General’s Department of the War Office in the context of Napoleonic expansionism. British imperialism also mobilised the activities of military intelligence by combining geography, topography, knowledge, and exploration through organisations such as the Royal Geographical Society (RGS). However, British

geographical intelligence already showed significant signs of weakness, which explained Britain's military deficiencies in the Crimean War. In 1857, the British pushed for a reorganisation of military geography, merging the Topographical Department with the vestiges of the Military Depot to form a Topographical and Statistical Department (T&S) under the supervision of the British Ordnance Survey (OS). After 1870, the British organisation experienced further reforms that culminated in the establishment of the Intelligence Branch (IB), which devoted special attention to the collection of topographic information and cartographic material. However, operational intelligence still lacked efficiency, as demonstrated by the performance of the British Army during the First Boer War. The drive to establish an effective military intelligence agency culminated in the creation of the Naval Intelligence Department in 1887, which emerged from the Hydrographic Department and the Foreign Intelligence Committee. In 1912, the department evolved into a division of the Admiralty War Staff, and it became a permanent part of the Admiralty Naval Staff in 1917.<sup>11</sup>

The First World War was a total conflict which mobilised new weapons, extended the fronts, multiplied the number of protagonists involved in the conflict, and completely integrated science, technology, and public opinion. Knowledge became a powerful instrument of war, and governments mobilised scientific campaigns directed towards production and innovation. However, science and information also strengthened their ties in a conflict in which it was just as important to know the terrain in order to effectively mobilise the armies. French geographers and the *Service Géographique Français* devoted careful and detailed attention to gathering topographical and operational material that could be used by the French army. The United States put the American Geographical Society (AGS) at the service of war through work on cartography, geography, and military intelligence.<sup>12</sup>

Between 1914–1918, the British collected a significant volume of encyclopaedic information, mainly compiled by geographers and academics.<sup>13</sup> Britain's intelligence service was reorganised into the six new intelligence sections of the War Office that covered the strategic aspects of military operations in Europe, the Ottoman Empire, America, and Russia, as well as espionage and counterintelligence activities in the UK and foreign countries. Section MO4, commonly known as the Geographical Section of the General Staff or GSGS, inherited the functions of previous intelligence agencies and directed its efforts towards the collection of topographic material for military purposes. Although many of the geographic societies that emerged in the late 19th century disappeared at the beginning of the war, the RGS collected new strategic information and issued cartographic material under the direction of the GSGS.<sup>14</sup> The Naval Intelligence Division (NID), which focused on collecting naval information of a strategic nature (decryption of telegrams, industrial espionage, information on landings and other coastal operations, etc.), was expanded under the direction of Admiral Sir William Reginald Hall. The division incorporated small geographical sections, such as NID 16 and NID 32 which, by the end of the conflict, were responsible for the production of a total of 27 books compiled by country.<sup>15</sup> Despite the great informative impact of these publications after the war, their contents were organised in a highly encyclopaedic format that, on many occasions, hindered their operational utility.<sup>16</sup>

### **British operational intelligence, 1939-1945**

During the Second World War, Great Britain's intelligence services underwent large-scale multiplication and specialisation. On the one hand, Great Britain established special or clandestine departments responsible for espionage, political intelligence, subversion, and sabotage, such as the Special Operations Executive (SOE) and the Political Warfare Executive (PWE), and dramatically expanded the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS).<sup>17</sup> On

the other hand, the United Kingdom developed important military organisations dedicated to the collection of operational information under the aegis of the War Office, the Admiralty, and the Air Ministry.<sup>18</sup> British operational intelligence was especially promoted in April 1940, when Germany invaded Norway, and the British had difficulties accessing the relevant strategic information quickly and effectively. From then on, the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee (JIC), which was the coordinating body for all operational intelligence divisions – both special and military – reinforced its involvement in the war and was responsible for delivering intelligence evaluations and updated reports to planners and the Chief of Staff (COS).<sup>19</sup>

The War Office coordinated the efforts of the Directorates of Military Intelligence and Military operations, which were responsible for collecting strategic information that could be used in war operations. In addition, the Military Survey Directorate integrated a large part of the GSGS' activities and contributed operational material to the British Armed Forces. The Army and the Air Force offered a significant volume of geographic information and photographic material through units such as the Central Interpretation Unit (CIU), RAF photo surveys, and Royal Engineers Survey Units.<sup>20</sup> The Royal Navy's Admiralty controlled the Naval Intelligence Division (NID), which was supervised by John Henry Godfrey and Edmund Rushbrooke, with the aim of collecting strategic information related to port environments, landing areas, coastal sites, and British naval intervention operations. It was comprised of multiple sections that considerably expanded their areas and scope of action throughout the conflict.<sup>21</sup>

### ***Geographical and topographic divisions at the service of war***

However, at the outbreak of the Second World War, the British Armed Forces still did not include specialized geographical sections, and the material produced during the First World War was inadequate. In short, Great Britain did not have updated, prepared,

and classified geographic information that could be quickly used in military operations. The first person to reveal the inadequacy of British operational intelligence, as early as the autumn of 1939, was the director of NID, John Godfrey, who discussed the importance of establishing an independent geographical section with Professor Kenneth Mason and Dr. James M. Wordie, geographers based at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. In January 1940, he asked the Admiralty's directors of operational divisions to give him as much notice as possible of their needs. Godfrey advised that intelligence planning must come before operational planning, a point that, as Donald McLachlan argues, took a short time to become evident: "sure enough the moment came, within a few weeks, when the Vice-Chief of Naval Staff rebuked the DNI for not being able to provide immediately some information he wanted about Petsamo".<sup>22</sup> This failure of British military planning prompted Godfrey to contact Professor Mason again, with the aim of organising an improvised team of geographers, geologists, and academics who could produce intelligence reports under the coordination of the naval officer, A. Frederick Wells.<sup>23</sup>

The German invasion of Norway and the lack of geographic information available accelerated the expansion of the Admiralty's geographic intelligence.<sup>24</sup> As of April 1940, the emerging department included new figures such as Colonel Sam Bassett of the Royal Marines and, after the summer of that year, all of its personnel were transferred to the School of Geography at the University of Oxford. In the first phase, the incipient section collected operational information on the Rhine-Main-Danube Canal, the Canary Islands and Azores, some strategic areas in Italy, bridges in Iceland, and oil facilities in Huelva and Lisbon, among other locations. However, these first movements were not officially regulated until the end of 1940, when the Admiralty accepted the creation of two

subdivisions: the geographical section (NID 5) and the inter-service topographical department (ISTD-NID 6) of the Admiralty.<sup>25</sup>

As noted earlier, NID 5 was responsible for the compilation of the *Geographical Handbook Series*, a collection of large manuscripts with geographic content that was classified by country and compiled on an encyclopaedic basis. The purpose of the books was primarily naval. They were designed, firstly, for the use of commanding officers, to provide information in a comprehensive and convenient form about strategic areas of the world, and secondly, to maintain a high standard of education in the Navy by supplying officers with material for lectures to naval personnel ashore and afloat. Its activities were carried out through two editorial teams, one led by Professor Mason from the Oxford School of Geography and the other by James M. Wordie from the Scott Polar Research Institute, at the University of Cambridge.

The teams compiled a total of thirty-one titles that included data, images, and plans provided by geologists, botanists, archaeologists, and anthropologists, among academics from other disciplines.<sup>26</sup> The organisation also drew on information provided by other institutions such as the Royal Geographical Society, Chatham House, the War Office, the Foreign Office, and the London headquarters of the United States Office of Strategic Services (OSS).<sup>27</sup> For their part, Mason's team compiled and published 17 titles in a total of 28 volumes on areas such as Albania and Algeria (2 volumes) French West Africa (2 volumes), Italy (4 volumes), Morocco (2 volumes), Norway (2 volumes), and Spain and Portugal (4 volumes). For its part, the Cambridge team published a total of 14 titles spread over 30 volumes on areas such as Belgium, Denmark, and Germany (4 volumes), Greece (3 volumes), and Yugoslavia (3 volumes). The handbooks proved a very useful operational source and some of their information was also transferred to the

OSS and the ISTD. After the war, the volumes became a unique collection that was widely valued by military departments, ministerial divisions, and diplomatic entities.<sup>28</sup>

The Inter-Service Topographical Department (ISTD-NID 6) was a joint army and navy organisation directed by the NID, the objective of which was to collect and prepare strategic information and cartographic material that could be used by the planners of military operations. The official headquarters of the unit was located at the Oxford University School of Geography, although its teams also occupied rooms elsewhere in Oxford, at Manchester College and the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology. The department was headed by Colonel Sam Bassett, but its activities were overseen by the retired hydrographer Captain Law and the academic A. Frederick Wells. Although the department was the responsibility of the Admiralty, its policy was also directed by the JIC through a team made up of directors and officers of different intelligence divisions.<sup>29</sup> The ISTD was expanded progressively to form a department made up of several different sections, including engineering, resources, and geological, among others. The department was comprised of officers from all army services, technicians, geographers, and geologists, who collaborated in the writing of the reports and the preparation of cartographic material, complementing the work done by the Geographical Section of the General Staff (GSGS).<sup>30</sup> In addition, the agency established a contact register that included the names of academics, explorers, travellers, geographers, businessmen, diplomats, and refugees who were employed as intelligence sources.<sup>31</sup>

The ISTD was responsible for supplying intelligence information to the combined operations agencies. It did this through the preparation of large information reports organised by geographic area and including photographs and maps. In addition to compiling unpublished material, the department also controlled the information, photographs, plans, and maps that had been stored or collected by other agencies and

divisions, such as the air intelligence sections, the GSGS, the Admiralty Photographic Library, the Ministry of Economic Warfare (MEW), and the Central Interpretation Unit (CIU). NID 6 benefited from the photographic collection campaign promoted by the BBC in 1941, the objective of which was to collect private snapshots sent by thousands of listeners to illustrate different scenarios in Europe.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, the section also made use of literary novels and tourist guides to locate new information and images.

In addition to the handbooks and special reports on hundreds of territories around the world, the agency was responsible for compiling the *Inter-Service Information Series* (ISIS reports), which were large information files organised by geographic areas that were delivered to the planners of military movements.<sup>33</sup> In order to facilitate any military intervention, and unlike the NID 5 Geographical Handbooks, the material devoted special attention to the description of the terrain, beaches, ports, and transport networks of strategic locations. In addition to topographic information, plans, maps, and photographs, the reports also provided historical, geographical, and climatic data, along with social, political, and economic information.<sup>34</sup>

The directors of military plans and operations influenced the content of the ISIS reports by providing instructions on the areas that were becoming of potential strategic importance. Thus, for example, areas such as Spain, Tangier, and Morocco were added to the priority list in October 1940, when the Spanish government's position turned more towards one of camouflaged belligerence. The organisation was responsible for an edition of numerous volumes that covered the design of military operations like Torch. For example, the ISTD compiled detailed reports on French North Africa and Spanish Morocco between June 1941 and October 1942. Facilitating planning for Operation Overlord, the invasion of Normandy, involved the creation of new operational reports and maps that provided descriptions of coast lines, landing zones, and German defences.<sup>35</sup> In



addition, the agency published ISIS reports on a wide range of other geographic areas, including Burma and Siam, South America, France, Italy, Finland, the Greek Islands, the Netherlands and Belgium, Norway, Sicily, and Sumatra, among others.<sup>36</sup> Spanish territory also received the attention of the ISTD, which, for example, issued general reports on the southern part of the country.<sup>37</sup> The agency also published special studies on the Balearic Islands in an attempt to highlight the most strategically important areas of Spain.<sup>38</sup> However, it was the Canary Islands that featured in a detailed ISIS report through a separate volume that was also integrated into the monograph dedicated to the Atlantic Islands.<sup>39</sup>

### **Geographic reports on the Canary Islands: a case study of British operational intelligence**

The possibility of Spain entering the Second World War posed a threat to Gibraltar, which had become an essential naval base for the British military campaign. As an alternative, in the event of the loss of the Rock, Great Britain turned its sights toward the Canary Islands, which were considered an excellent naval base. Between 1940 and 1943 the Canary archipelago was the focus of a succession of occupation and sabotage plans that were prepared in detail, although they remained unexecuted. The intelligence and planning agencies compiled detailed operational reports of geographic, topographic, socio-economic, military, and political content, which not only revealed the strategic importance of the islands but also the dimensions of British operational intelligence during the Second World War. Reports and volumes such as the *ISIS report on the Canary Islands* and the *Geographical Handbook on the Atlantic Islands* represented a re-evaluation of the potential of geographic information as a prominent phenomenon within wartime intelligence, prior to the founding of the post-war British *Joint Intelligence Bureau*.

### ***British strategy in the Canary Islands (1939-1945)***

Although Spain declared itself neutral at the outbreak of war in 1939, its collaboration and ideological affinity with Nazi Germany made the Franco government a de facto ally of the Axis forces. Although it did not finally join the conflict, the Spanish government adopted an attitude of relative belligerence which constituted a risk that was especially evident in two different phases. The first of these came after the fall of France in June 1940, when Spain adopted a position of 'non-belligerence' – a stance also adopted by Mussolini at the beginning of the conflict – that, in practice, reinforced the country's inclination toward war. Between the summer of 1940 and February 1941, Europe witnessed the "critical moment" of the Spanish-German negotiations, a phase of belligerent temptation on the part of Franco. The Spanish dictator considered entering the war in exchange for territorial concessions that could fulfil an imperial dream. However, his participation in the war was initially rejected by the Third Reich, which instead prioritised the limited collaboration of Spain in a potential attack on Gibraltar – Operation Felix.<sup>40</sup> The second of these came when Spain's belligerent temptation was reactivated between May 1941 and June 1942, with the German advance on the Soviet Union and the revitalization of Spanish anti-communism – manifested, for example, with the dispatch of the Blue Division.<sup>41</sup> However, the Allied victories of 1943 and the pressure of the United Nations determined Spain's slow return to official neutrality.<sup>42</sup>

In this context, Spain's strategic location and its position throughout the conflict constituted a risk, particularly with regard to Gibraltar. To maintain the neutrality of the Franco regime, Great Britain resorted to a wide variety of strategies such as diplomatic cordiality, economic pressure, bribery, and strategic planning.<sup>43</sup> The Canary Islands became a focus of allied military planning, not only as an alternative to Gibraltar, but also in terms of a preventative strategy in the face of a hypothetical German occupation.<sup>44</sup> In the spring of 1940, Great Britain began to consider the occupation of Puerto de la Luz,

although the option was provisionally ruled out during the summer of that same year in favour of the Azores and Cape Verde. Between March 1941 and autumn 1943, the archipelago was considered as the most effective solution to a possible loss of Gibraltar, reflected in the way in which the islands featured prominently in a succession of plans.

These plans prioritised the occupation of Gran Canaria and its port, although the British did not rule out later control of other islands such as Tenerife.<sup>45</sup> In September 1941, the planning committee considered an air-naval bombardment of Gran Canaria's capital. In addition, the short-lived *Operation Breezy* also stipulated the surrender of the Spanish garrison through an intimidation carried out by a large naval air force, which did not rule out the bombardment of the city of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.<sup>46</sup> However, the anticipated repercussions of such operations led to their abandonment and the British instead prioritised a coastal landing distanced from the capital that would contribute to a subsequent amphibious assault on the port. The planned operations, which followed one another over time, with code names such as *Operation Chutney*, *Puma*, *Pilgrim*, *Adroit*, and *Tonic*, stipulated a first landing on the east coast of Gran Canaria that would facilitate a final assault on the port of La Luz.<sup>47</sup> The islands were also targets of British sabotage operation planning. For instance, *Operation Warden* planned to blow up Axis ships located in the port of Gran Canaria, which were used to supply fuel to Nazi submarines.<sup>48</sup> Operational planning continued until the surrender of Italy, which markedly reduced the Allied fear of Spanish belligerence. Consequently, the invasion plans were finally cancelled in the fall of 1943.<sup>49</sup>

### ***Operational reports on the Canary Islands (1940-1945)***

Despite the continuous postponement of the occupation plans, Great Britain devoted considerable effort to preparing military operations and gathering strategic information that could guide military planning. A large number of officials, experts, and academics in

the branches of geography and topography collected strategic data on the archipelago from previous studies, scientific consultations, military surveys, encyclopaedic publications, tourist guides, and novels. British consulates based on the islands collected and transmitted their information through an informant network that was both official and improvised. Representatives of the SIS, figures associated with the Naval Intelligence Division, and SOE agents devoted special attention to the design and implementation of intelligence and counterintelligence activities. The Miller family – a British lineage of strong influence that stood out for its commercial, port and diplomatic activities in Gran Canaria – offered significant information about the islands, providing useful material in the event of an occupation and tip offs about German activities in the archipelago.<sup>50</sup>

The intelligence and planning agencies classified, grouped, and recorded all the information through notes, reports, memoirs, and large information files. On the one hand, the information supported the case for any military intervention in the islands through their topographic, geographical, defensive, logistical, and sociocultural components: the latter included, for example, the local feeling of the Canarian population, the predominance of Anglophilia, and the desire for independence. On the other hand, it acted as a preparatory instrument for the operations themselves, providing data of strategic utility – on landing areas, exploitation structures, logistics, collaborating agents – and facilitating the design of intervention and settlement tactics. Despite some inaccuracies and exaggerations, the reports offered a very useful description of the archipelago between 1941-1943.<sup>51</sup>

One of the first intelligence reports available on the islands was produced in July 1941. Its contents were probably written by Basil Miller, the second son of Gerald Miller, director of the British shipping company Miller and Co. Although Basil Miller was in Las Palmas when the war broke out, he left the island in May 1941 to join the British navy as

a reserve volunteer, under the direction of John Godfrey.<sup>52</sup> The report included a self-interested British perception of Canarian society in 1941 that helped build the case for an allied intervention in the islands through its presentation of the characteristics of its inhabitants. The *Canarios* were described as old-fashioned, conservative, laid-back, honest, and ignorant citizens removed from modernity and chaos. Its pages also highlighted the existence of an Anglophile population, far from the national government, and directly linked to Britain:

“The population of the Canary Islands is certainly Spanish, but 90% of the people are Canarios and must never be regarded in the same way as the Spaniard from the Península [...] They are very old-fashioned, conservative, and profoundly honest. The common people are astonishingly ignorant, and their insularity obscures any sense of distance in relation to the size of the world [...] The Canarios have known and trusted the British for a long period; it seems that the Canarios regard Great Britain as one of our own colonies would see us [...]”.<sup>53</sup>

This type of conception favoured the idealization of a potential war scenario; an excessively positive perception in which the arrival of British troops would be very welcome. However, although the population was not predominantly Falangist, there was no real or active anti-fascist militancy. And, although the Canarian population was characterized by a predominant Anglophilia, an Allied intervention in the island would arouse a range of reactions.<sup>54</sup>

Over time, the British increased the amount of information available to them on the islands through intelligence reports that were progressively updated in accordance with operational requirements. Between the summer and autumn of 1941, the ISTD drew up the first draft study on the Spanish archipelago, known as the *ISIS report on the Canary*

*Islands* [CB-4096 M].<sup>55</sup> Its contents served as a reference in the preparation of later reports, such as the one compiled by the JIC on 10 February 1942.<sup>56</sup> This document complemented the studies that were being carried out in preparation for *Operation Pilgrim*, so its data focused on Gran Canaria and described elements as varied as German activities on the islands, the attitude of the local press, the economic situation, the existing hydrographic network, the topography, the transport possibilities, the maritime traffic, and the oil supply. The report included extensive studies of geographical and topographical components, defensive structures, and military forces that offered a detailed approximation of the island scenario; however, it was not free of inaccuracies. The Spanish military potential was considerably overestimated, and the military forces deployed in Gran Canaria were increased by more than 50 percent.<sup>57</sup> The JIC report also included detailed descriptions of the Canarian population, the German influence, and the insular coast, which not only supported the case for a possible invasion, but also facilitated the design of operations. For example, it reported that:

“The canaries are venal, extremely lazy, and uncleanly in their mode of life. Recollections of prosperity under British influence and a violent dislike, not only of the present regime but particularly of German influence, have caused a widespread and open expression of the wish for German invasion of Spain and a consequent British occupation of the islands. Sentiments which are not shared by the Island Civil and Military Officials who are largely drawn from the Peninsula [...] Shortly after the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, the German colony, which up to that time had been insignificant, began to swell, since when Germany has succeeded in obtaining a very considerable influence in most walks of life. There is a flourishing branch of the Nazi Party which holds regular meetings in the German School [...] Ravines are not steep in the coastal plan, but often become almost

perpendicular to a depth of 100 ft. or more in the interior of the island. In the coastal plain their sides do not present any obstacles to tanks or track vehicles [...]”.<sup>58</sup>

The most valued and updated document was the second edition of the *ISIS Report on the Canary Islands* [CB-4096 M (Y)], which was published by the ISTD (NID 6) in December 1942.<sup>59</sup> Its length and contents made it the most detailed and practical operational monograph, serving as a basis for subsequent reports and acting as a preparatory instrument for any military intervention in the archipelago. It was a large volume of 298 pages and six sub-volumes, which was also incorporated as an indispensable part of the *ISIS Report on the Atlantic Islands*.<sup>60</sup> The authors collaborated with the War Office, the Air Ministry, the Foreign Office Research Department, and the Ministry of Economic Warfare. In addition, some of the information was extracted from contemporary bibliographic references, such as Samler Brown's tourist guide from 1932 *Madeira, Canary Islands, and Azores*; Findlay Muirhead's book *Southern Spain and Portugal* (1929), and Karl Baedeker's publication *Madeira, Canary Islands, Azores & Western Morocco: Handbook for Travellers* (1939).<sup>61</sup>

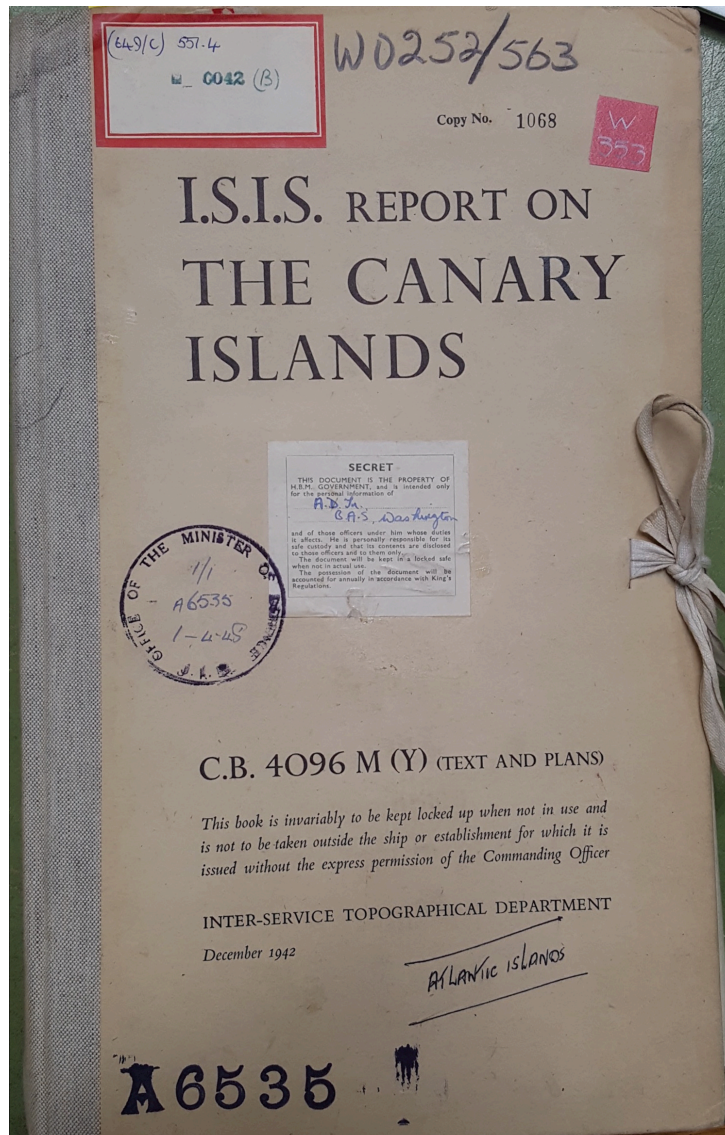


Figure 1- Cover of the ISIS Report on the Canary Islands (TNA WO 252/545)

The first volume [C.B- 4096 M (Y) 7 (I)] was written in September 1942 and presented a detailed analysis of the islands of Gran Canaria and Tenerife. Its contents were grouped into six parts: history, geography (including geomorphology, climatology, and geology), resources (commerce, agriculture, industries, coal and oil deposits, water and electricity supply), communications (roads, lanes, tunnels, and bridges), beaches (geographical description and military potential), and ports (characteristics, dimensions, and strategic components). The report described the topography of the capital islands, highlighting the presence of large mountains and volcanic ravines (*barrancos*). The



coastal strip of Tenerife was described in terms of its greater inaccessibility, although sandy beaches such as El Médano were appreciated for operational purposes. The authors emphasised the viability of military intervention operations along the eastern coast of Gran Canaria, while they highlighted the value of the Port of La Luz and described the existence of air bases such as Gando:

“Gran Canaria is roughly circular; the surface of the dome is further modified by protruding volcanic crags and craters [...] Only in the north-west, north, and particularly in the east of the island is there any extensive plain area, and that is mostly cultivated. The Charco of Maspalomas, at the extreme south of the island, which includes a marshy tract with sand-dunes, is unique. In the north-east sand-dunes occur, and a narrow spit of sand, the isthmus of Guanarteme, joins La Isleta, a small mass of volcanic hills, to the main island. On this isthmus stands Puerto de La Luz [...] Movement is comparatively easy [...] along the east coast. South of Jinamar Point there is an extensive plain, about 20 miles long and 2 miles wide, in which ravines are not steep and present no obstacles to tanks or tracked vehicles. This plain narrows in the south-east but broadens again into the Maspalomas Peninsula, in which are some marshes [...] Gran Canaria affords more facilities for landing-grounds than any other of the Atlantic islands. There is an established aerodrome on the east coast at Gando, and there are emergency landing-grounds on the plains at Arguineguin, Arinaga, Juan Grande, and Maspalomas [...]”.

The second volume [C.B- 4096 M (Y) 7 (d)] presented British estimates of the defensive structures of the capital islands, describing coastal artillery batteries, military searchlights, and anti-aircraft defences. The authors highlighted the coastal defences of the capital of Gran Canaria, as well as the defensive protection of La Luz. The previous estimations of the defensive potential were corrected and updated, although part of the figures continued to overestimate Spanish fortifications and military potential. The third

and fourth volumes [CB- 4096 M (Y) 8 and CB- 4096 M (Y) 8 (I)] presented a photographic record of Tenerife and Gran Canaria and included 168 photographs of the beaches and coastal areas of the islands, the rural surroundings, the ports, piers and main roads, the most prominent cities and towns, and the most vulnerable points.

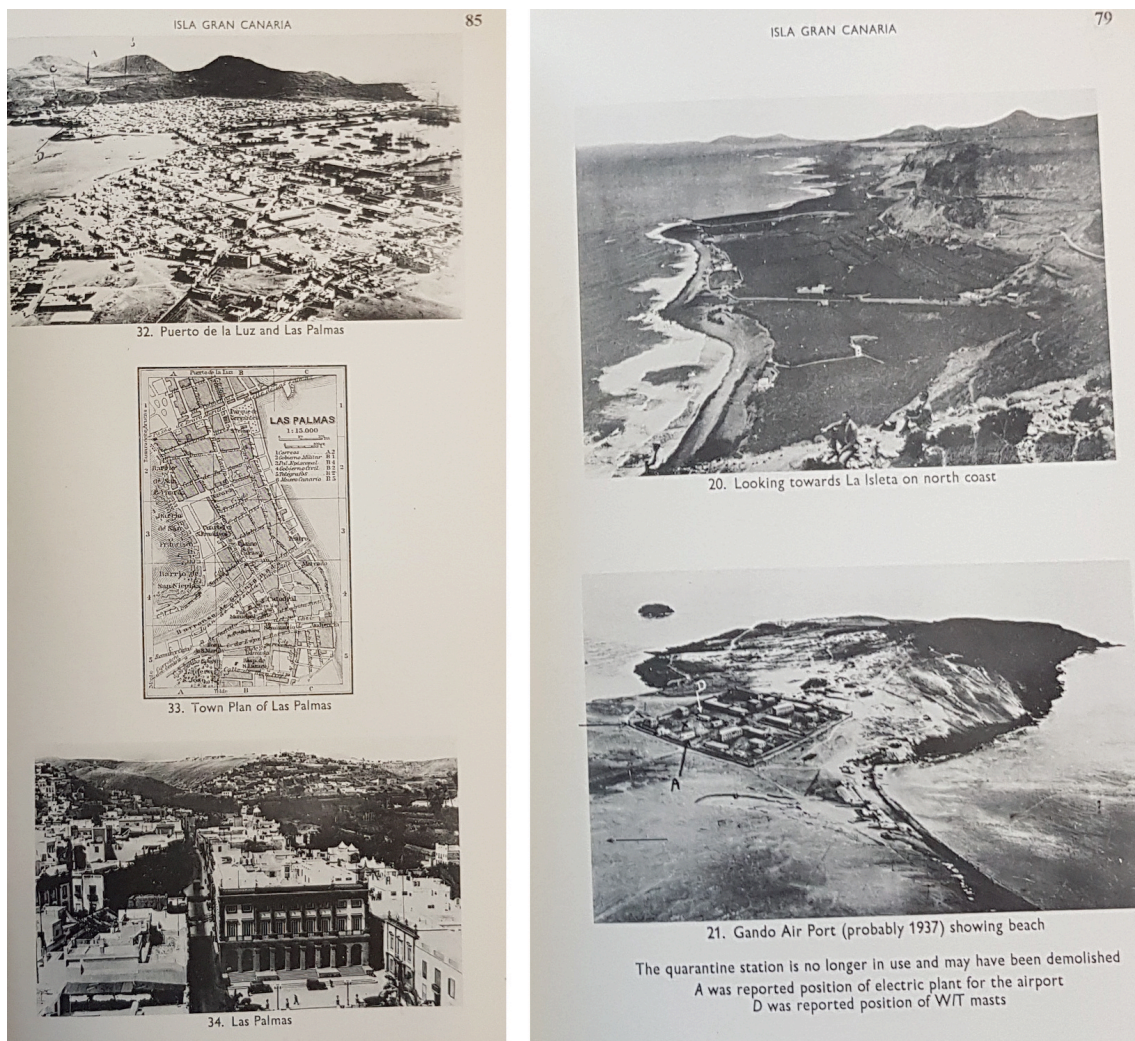


Figure 2- Examples of photographs of Gran Canaria from ISIS Report (TNA WO 252/545)

The fifth volume [C.B- 4096 M (Y) 9] described the islands of Fuerteventura, Lanzarote, La Palma, La Gomera, and El Hierro in greater detail. The descriptions presented an unfavourable image for military operations, supporting the fact that Gran Canaria and Tenerife were the main targets. Finally, the sixth volume [CB- 4096 M (Y) Plans] included a total of 16 maps and plans, which presented the relief and strategic points of



all the islands together with cartographic illustrations of cities, ports, and defensive structures.

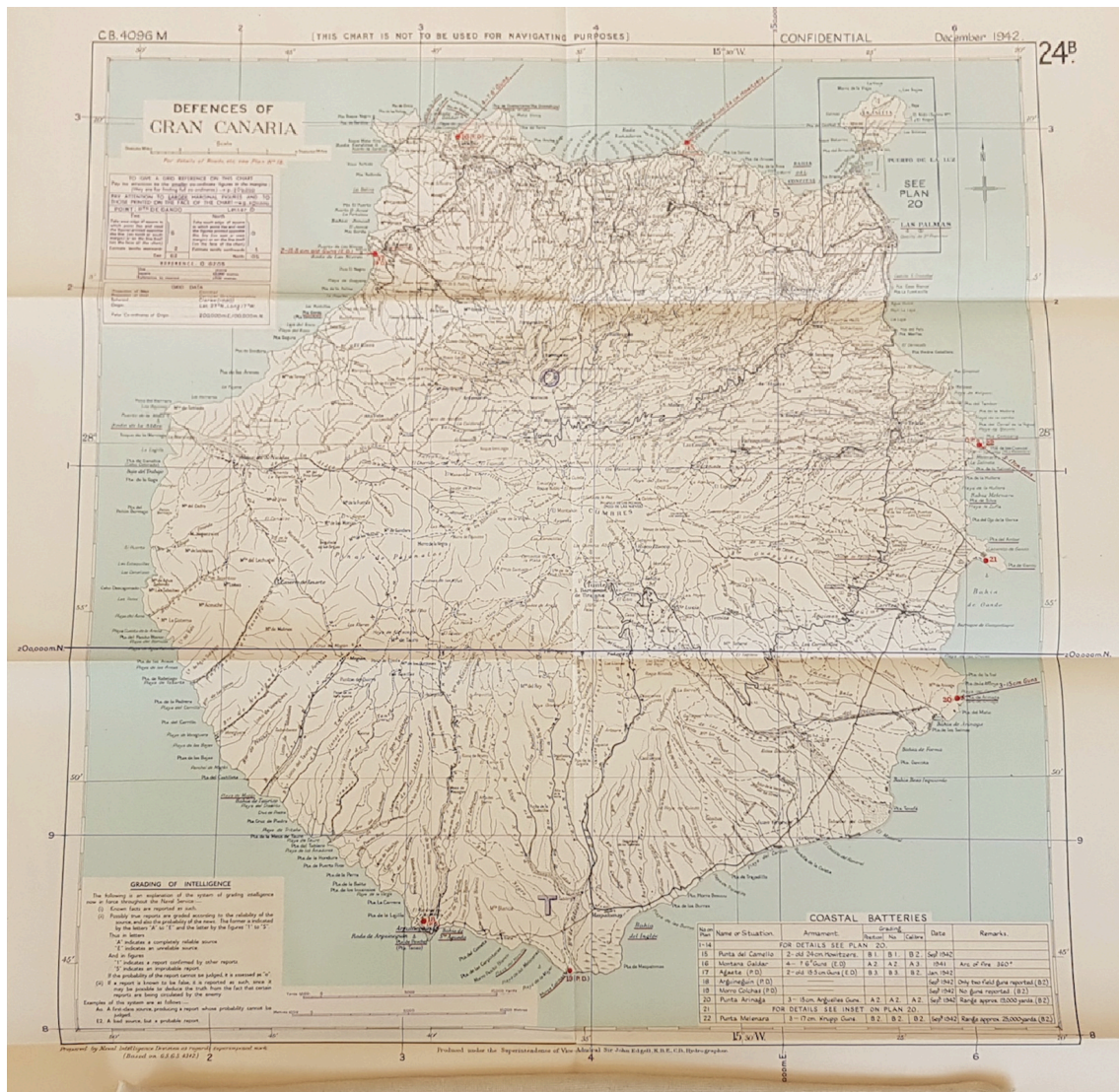


Figure 3- Topographical and geographical map of Gran Canaria from ISIS Report (TNA WO 252/545)

The ISTD issued hundreds of copies of the report on the Canary Islands that were sent to other government departments and allied embassies, such as the United States.<sup>62</sup> However, the intelligence services of the US Navy also compiled their own intelligence reports and volumes. For example, the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI 73) compiled the first operational monograph on the Canary Islands in August 1941.<sup>63</sup>

In December 1942, Britain also issued a new intelligence summary that included an updated review of the Gran Canaria defensive scenario. The British brought their estimates closer to reality, although the islands' military strength had already increased.<sup>64</sup> The report covered *Operation Tonic*, which was being prepared by the Canadian Planning Staff, together with British Naval Intelligence agents, such as Basil Miller.<sup>65</sup> However, the Allied landings in the Mediterranean and the fall of Italy in September 1943 reduced the likelihood of Spanish belligerence and, consequently, the Canary Islands lost their emerging prominence. British invasion operations were cancelled and intelligence reports were shelved. However, NID 5 also published its own informational volume on the islands before the war ended. The *Geographical Handbook Series on Spain and Portugal* consisted of four separate volumes, including one dedicated to the Atlantic Islands (Vol. IV), published in January 1945.<sup>66</sup> The copy was produced by the Oxford team and was mainly written by geographers R.P. Beckinsale, Sheila De Sa, and E.W. Gilbert. The volume shared much in common with the ISIS Report, but its pages also included unpublished content, photographic repertoires, and cartographic material. Although it was created mainly for naval purposes, the handbook was conceived as a training and educational tool for use within military circles. Reflecting the expertise of the division that created it, the handbook analysed the islands from a much more geographical and encyclopaedic perspective (physical geography, climate, flora, fauna, history, administration, and public health).

## **Conclusions**

Space and the physical environment have been an indisputable part of war strategy throughout history. However, the potential of topography and geography as instruments of warfare was consciously re-evaluated during the international conflicts of the 20th century. The First World War reinforced the role of geography as a scientific and military

discipline, evidencing the intrinsic relationship between war and operational intelligence – understood as the collection of strategic information for the development and adaptation of military operations. During the Second World War, the belligerent powers re-evaluated the use of geographic information as a weapon of war in a conflict in which it was extremely important to develop detailed knowledge of strategic territories, and so conscientiously prepare any military operation.

Operational and geographic intelligence was a prominent component of Great Britain's military planning, being understood as a preparatory instrument of British war strategies. Military operations were preceded by the collection of geographical information which was prepared by several services and military divisions, such as the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee (JIC) and the Inter-Service Topographical Department (ISTD). Geographical intelligence provided an important amount of information on battlegrounds' physical spaces, collecting geological, topographic, social, and tactical data on strategic locations. Before designing and deploying military campaigns, it was important to know the terrain of potential war fronts, such as the Canary Islands. The Axis threat to Gibraltar and the increased Spanish belligerence led the British to re-evaluate the strategic potential of the Canary Islands. Particularly between 1941 and 1943, the archipelago was the target of a succession of occupation plans devised by Great Britain that aimed to use the islands as an alternative base in the event of a loss of Gibraltar. As this article shows, although the plans were never implemented, Great Britain devoted significant efforts to preparing its operations from a tactical, informational, and geographical point of view.

British intelligence reports and volumes included information, photographs, and maps of strategic utility, which offered the main justifications, strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats of a British military intervention on the islands. The *ISIS Report*

*on the Canary Islands* became the most prominent volume of operational intelligence and its contents served as the basis for subsequent strategic and tactical documents promoted by divisions such as the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee and the Canadian Planning Committee. Moreover, the military and diplomatic agents based on the islands also helped British planners learn more about the archipelago through reports, notes, and correspondence that detailed operational elements. Although the information collected by the British was not free of inaccuracies and overestimations, the intelligence services were able to organise detailed reports that were progressively corrected and improved, especially concerning the defensive structures of the archipelago.

The information collected by the intelligence agencies fulfilled a double mission. On the one hand, it helped build the case for a military intervention in the islands – invasive or sabotage – through the assessment of the strategic importance of the archipelago, analysis of enemy influence in Canarian territory, description of the British presence, and appreciation of local Anglophilia. On the other hand, the information offered strategists planning suggestions for improving the viability of operations. The geographic characteristics of the islands (climatology, orography, and topography) reinforced the strategic priority of Gran Canaria, which already stood out for its port in La Luz and its air base in Gando. The information showed the most important strengths of an invasion, such as the collaborating agents, the most suitable topographic areas, the availability of food and logistical resources, the location of hospitals, the number of sites for the accommodation of troops, and adequate road systems, as well as the communication network, the electricity supply, and the support of the Canarian population. At the same time, the reports emphasised possible risks and threats – the effects of topography and climate, potential resistant groups, and the position of the Spanish army and government, as well as the local defences, the attitude of the press, and

the importance of foreign activities – with the aim of taking these into account when planning an intervention.

The information collected was delimited and favoured the design of well-defined military operations, such as *Chutney*, *Puma*, *Pilgrim*, and *Tonic*. Therefore, it is not surprising that, after the compilation of the reports, the planners prioritised the occupation of Gran Canaria through coastal landings at a distance from the capital, which would later allow an amphibious assault on Gando and La Luz. Britain also considered an air-naval intimidation or bombardment of the port and the capital of Gran Canaria, but the fear of a Spanish air response, the powerful British naval tradition, and the physical characteristics of Gran Canaria led the planners to prioritise amphibious movements and coastal landings from the eastern and southern parts of the island. The description of roads, defensive structures, resources, hospitals, and accommodation possibilities justified the plans, by highlighting the infeasibility of direct operations in the capital and guaranteeing the settlement and internal advance of the attacking forces. However, with the allied landings in the Mediterranean and the fall of Italy in September 1943 the invasion and sabotage operations were cancelled, and the intelligence reports that facilitated their preparation were shelved. With the passage of time, they became a useful source of information which highlighted the international dimension of the archipelago and the revaluation of geographic and operational intelligence during the war. The Canary Islands should be understood as a case study that can be applicable to other geographic areas by considering not only the contribution of operational intelligence to wartime agents and military planners, but also the impact of geography on the study of postwar intelligence.

Geographic intelligence brought wartime British planners closer to a potential war scenario on which to design strategic interventions. The information, photographs, and

maps facilitated the elaboration and revision of military plans to update and adjust them to a real physical space, at least approximately. First, the reports made it possible to justify military interventions by highlighting the importance and strategic value of territories, both for war and the post-war period, and by analysing the viability of operations – describing the possibilities of success, the climatic influence, the topographic and geographical environment, and the foreseeable local reaction. Second, geographic information facilitated the orientation and updating of military plans. The reports provided suggestions and instructions on intervention strategies and tactics (assault, mobility, settlement, and survival), the priority objectives of the operations, the strengths and opportunities that should be exploited (geographical areas, socio-political support, resources, transport, etc.), and the threats that had to be avoided (inaccessible areas, obstacles, enemies, defences, logistical weakness, etc.). Third, operational intelligence facilitated the preparation of contingency plans, aimed at informing military reactions to different situations and possibilities (failure of the assault, national and international reaction, geographical and climatic obstacles, shortages, and isolation, among others). Fourth, the information, drawings, images, and maps served as formative material for troops and military units, by offering a historical, political, and social description of the population, the government, and the economy of territories, as well as a visual and cartographic identification or recognition of the existing terrain, roads, strategic objectives, and enemies.

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<sup>1</sup> For definitions about operational intelligence, see: Buel, “Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield”, 25-26; and Handel, *Intelligence and Military Operations*, 1–5.

<sup>2</sup> On British intelligence during the Second World War, see: Hinsley and Howard, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*; Boyd, *British Naval Intelligence*; Smith, *The Spying*



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*Game*; Andrew, *Secret Service*; Bailey, *Forgotten Voices*; and McLachlan, *Room 39: A Study in Naval Intelligence*.

<sup>3</sup> On the role played by the ISTD, see: McLachlan, *Room 39: A Study in Naval Intelligence*, 301–28; West, *Historical Dictionary of Naval Intelligence*; Gosme, “The Naval Intelligence Geographical Handbook Series”; Goodman, Aldrich, and Cormac, *Spying on the World*, 75–76; Boyd, *British Naval Intelligence*, 164; and Balchin, “United Kingdom Geographers in the Second World War,” 164–65.

<sup>4</sup> Dylan, “The Joint Intelligence Bureau”, 24-25; and Dylan, “The Joint Intelligence Bureau: (Not so) Secret Intelligence”, 27-45.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example: Cloud, “American cartographic transformations during the Cold War”, 261–282; Aldrich, *British Intelligence, Strategy and the Cold War*; Andrew, *Secret Service: The Making*; Barnes and Farish, “Between regions”; Dylan, “The Joint Intelligence Bureau”; and Dylan, “The Joint Intelligence Bureau: (Not so) Secret Intelligence”, among others.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example: Díaz Benítez, “Los proyectos británicos”; Díaz Benítez, *Canarias Indefensa*; Díaz Benítez, “Pilgrim y La Defensa”; and Díaz Benítez, *Anglofilia y Autarquía*, among others.

<sup>7</sup> Toal, “Battlefield”, 217.

<sup>8</sup> Godlewska, “Napoleon's geographers (1797-1815)”, 31-53; and Toal, “Battlefield”, 218-219;

<sup>9</sup> Sandner and Rossler, “Geography and empire in Germany, 1871-1945”, 115-129; Heffernan, “The science of empire: The French geographical movement”, 92–114. See also: Toal, “Battlefield”, 218-219;

<sup>10</sup> Andrew, *Secret Service*, 6-8; Richards, *The imperial archive: knowledge and the fantasy of Empire*; and Heffernan, “Geography, cartography and military intelligence”, 505.

<sup>11</sup> Heffernan, “Geography, cartography and military intelligence”, 505-6; Andrew, *Secret Service*, 7-12; 14-15, and 28-31; and Dylan, “The Joint Intelligence Bureau”, 25-26.

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- <sup>12</sup> Heffernan, “The spoils of war: the Societé de Géographie”, 221-64; Heffernan, “Geography, cartography and military intelligence”, 520; Toal, “Battlefield”, 221; and Barnes and Farish, “Between regions”, 807-826.
- <sup>13</sup> Clout and Gosme, “The Naval Intelligence Handbooks” 154–55. On the relation between war and geography, see: Freeman, *A History of Modern British Geography*, 103; Steel, *British Geography 1918-1945*; and Heffernan, “Geography, Cartography and Military Intelligence”, among others. See also: Toal, “Battlefield”, 221.
- <sup>14</sup> Heffernan, “Geography, cartography and military intelligence”, 507-510.
- <sup>15</sup> Clout and Gosme, “The Naval Intelligence Handbooks”, 154–55; and Boyd, *British Naval Intelligence through the Twentieth Century*; and Andrew, *Secret Service*, 91.
- <sup>16</sup> Clout and Gosme, “The Naval Intelligence Handbooks”, 154–55; and Boyd, *British Naval Intelligence through the Twentieth Century*; and Andrew, *Secret Service*, 91.
- <sup>17</sup> West, *MI6, British Secret Intelligence*; Bailey, *Forgotten Voices*; Seaman, *Special Operations Executive*; Jeffery, *The Secret History of MI6*; and Warkentin, *The Political Warfare Executive*; and Garnett, *The Secret History of PWE*, among others.
- <sup>18</sup> On the military intelligence services, see: Goodman, *The Official History of the Joint Intelligence Committee*; Goodman, Aldrich, and Cormac, *Spying on the World*; Boyd, *British Naval Intelligence*; and McLachlan, *Room 39: A Study in Naval Intelligence*, among others.
- <sup>19</sup> Goodman, *The Official History of the Joint Intelligence Committee*, 61–66. Also, see: Hinsley and Howard, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, 153–55; MacDonald, *Supplying the British Army*, 176–99.
- <sup>20</sup> Balchin, “United Kingdom Geographers,” 162-164.
- <sup>21</sup> The Naval Intelligence Division progressively evolved into a vast network of specialized subdivisions. NID 1: responsible for collecting information on Germany, Scandinavia, Poland, and the Low Countries; NID 2: responsible for studying the fleets of North and South America; NID 3: dedicated to the Mediterranean, the Balkans, and Africa; NID 4: responsible for collecting intelligence on Far East, Pacific, Australasia, India, and the Indian Ocean; NID 5 (also known as the Geographical Section): responsible for the compilation of the *Geographical*

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*Handbooks Series*; NID 6 (also known as the Inter-Service Topographical Department- ISTD): responsible for supplying topographical data to the military operations departments; NID 7: responsible for the supervision of engineering and technical aspects; NID 8 (also known as Operational Intelligence Center): responsible for tracking the enemy submarines; NID 9: communications section; NID 10: security section, responsible for compiling and distributing ciphers; NID 11: responsible for liaison with the Combined Services Interrogation Centre. Later in the conflict, it acted as the Admiralty Photographic Library; NID 12: responsible for supervising signals intelligence; NID 14: secretariat of the Director of Naval Intelligence; NID 15: dedicated to aerial and photographic intelligence interpretation; NID 16: responsible for Russia; NID 17: responsible for liaison with the JIC, the Joint Planning Staff (JPS), and the Political Warfare Executive; NID 18: responsible for developing activities of the Combined Operations Intelligence; NID 19: responsible for collecting strategic information and distributing the *Weekly Intelligence Review*; NID 20: responsible for collecting information on Unoccupied France, North and West Africa, Spain, and Portugal (staffed by the British naval attaché in Madrid, Captain Alan Hillgarth, among others). For more about NID, see: McLachlan, *Room 39: A Study in Naval Intelligence*, 301–28; West, *Historical Dictionary of Naval Intelligence*, 206-217; and Boyd, *British Naval Intelligence through the Twentieth Century*, 327-342.

<sup>22</sup> Darby, H.C., *The Theory And Practice Of Geography*, 15; and McLachlan, *Room 39: A Study in Naval Intelligence*, 297-298.

<sup>23</sup> Beesly, *Very Special Admiral*, 212; Hinsley and Howard, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, 161; and Clout and Gosme, “The Naval Intelligence Handbooks” 156. To learn more about Kenneth Mason, see: Goudie, “Kennet J. Mason, 1887-1976”; and Steel, *British Geography*, 61.

<sup>24</sup> West, *Historical Dictionary of Naval Intelligence*, 213-214; Clout and Gosme, “The Naval Intelligence Handbooks” 156; and McLachlan, *Room 39: A Study in Naval Intelligence*, 300.

<sup>25</sup> McLachlan, *Room 39: A Study in Naval Intelligence*, 300-301; and Hinsley, *British intelligence in the Second World War*, 90.

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- <sup>26</sup> Balchin, “United Kingdom Geographers”, 169–71; and Clout and Gosme, “The Naval Intelligence Handbooks”, 156–57. The team led by Wordie also had the collaboration of Henry Clifford Darby (1909–92), as Editor-in-Chief. About Darby, see: Williams, “Henry Clifford Darby 1909–1992.”; Darby, *The Relations of History*; and Clout, “Henry Clifford Darby 1909-1992.”
- <sup>27</sup> Rössler, “Geographers and Social Scientists”, and Clout and Gosme, “The Naval Intelligence Handbooks,” 157.
- <sup>28</sup> Clout and Gosme, “The Naval Intelligence Handbooks” 157; and 167-68.
- <sup>29</sup> Goodman, Aldrich, and Cormac, *Spying on the World*, 75–76; Boyd, *British Naval Intelligence, 160-189*; McLachlan, *Room 39: A Study in Naval Intelligence*, 299–309; and West, *Historical Dictionary of Naval Intelligence*, 126; 214.
- <sup>30</sup> Rose and Clatworthy, “Specialist maps of the geological section,” 14-15.
- <sup>31</sup> Balchin, “United Kingdom Geographers”, 164–65.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 169–71; and Goodman, Aldrich, and Cormac, *Spying on the World*, 75.
- <sup>33</sup> Goodman, Aldrich, and Cormac, *Spying on the World*, 75–76; and McLachlan, *Room 39: A Study in Naval Intelligence*, 309. To consult special reports and handbooks, see: TNA, from WO 252/1 to WO 252/511, and from WO 252/765 to WO 252/781, among others.
- <sup>34</sup> Rose and Clatworthy, “Specialist maps of the geological section,” 17-23.
- <sup>35</sup> Goodman, Aldrich, and Cormac, *Spying on the World*, 75-76; Boyd, *British Naval Intelligence through the Twentieth Century*, 2020 y McLachlan, *Room 39: A Study in Naval Intelligence*, 308-309.
- <sup>36</sup> To consult copies of the *ISIS reports*, see: TNA, from WO 252/534 to WO 252/667, among others.
- <sup>37</sup> See, for instance: TNA, WO 252/629, General reports: Southern Spain, 1941.
- <sup>38</sup> See TNA, from WO 252/392 to WO 152/393; from WO 252/1029 to WO 252/1030, and WO 252/1037, among others.
- <sup>39</sup> TNA, WO 252/563, *ISIS Report on the Canary Islands*, December 1942; and WO 252/545, *Report on the Atlantic Islands*, October 1942.

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- <sup>40</sup> On Operation Felix, see: Burdick, *Germany's Military Strategy*; Detwiler, *Franco und Gibraltar*; and Garcia, *Operation Felix: Hitler's Plan to Capture Gibraltar*.
- <sup>41</sup> The Spanish Volunteer Division, popularly known as the Blue Division, was a unit of Spanish volunteers that formed an infantry division within the army of Nazi Germany to fight against the Soviet Union. It was active from the summer of 1941 to October 1943 and recruited more than 45,000 Spanish soldiers. See: Moreno Juliá, *La División Azul*; and Kleinfeld and Tambs, *Hitler's Spanish Legion*.
- <sup>42</sup> Ros Agudo, *La Guerra Secreta de Franco*, 28–34; Morales Lezcano, *Historia de La No Beligerancia Española*, 270–71; Goda, *Tomorrow the World*, 113-135; Tusell Gómez, “La Trayectoria Española,” 158–59; Ros Agudo, *La Gran Tentación*, 226-268.
- <sup>43</sup> Marquina Barrio, “The Spanish Neutrality,” 173–75; Viñas, *Sobornos*, 29–39. See also: Smyth, *Diplomacy and Strategy*, 3-14.
- <sup>44</sup> Smyth, *Diplomacy and strategy*, 124; Wigg, *Churchill and Spain*, 16, and Díaz Benítez, “Los proyectos británicos”, 2-20.
- <sup>45</sup> Díaz Benítez, “Los proyectos británicos”, 1-28; Díaz Benítez, *Canarias Indefensa*, 2008; Díaz Benítez, “Pilgrim y La Defensa”; Díaz Benítez, *Anglofilia y Autarquía*; and Díaz Benítez, *La Armada Española*.
- <sup>46</sup> Díaz Benítez, “La Importancia Estratégica”, 1153.
- <sup>47</sup> Díaz Benítez, “Los Proyectos,” 11-17, Díaz Benítez, “La Importancia Estratégica”, 1147-1157; Díaz Benítez, *Canarias Indefensa*, 281–322; 345–5.
- <sup>48</sup> García Cabrera, «Operation Warden», 1-17; Ros Agudo, *La Guerra Secreta*, 98; Díaz Benítez, “Colaboración Naval” 993; Díaz Benítez, “The Etappe Kanaren” 477–82; Díaz-Benítez, “German Supply Ships”, 327-329.
- <sup>49</sup> Díaz Benítez, “Los Proyectos Británicos,” 22.
- <sup>50</sup> García Cabrera, «Operation Warden», 1-17; and García Cabrera and Díaz Benítez, “Organización y Contenidos de La Propaganda”.
- <sup>51</sup> For instance, the Spanish military potential in the Canary Islands was overestimated by more than fifty percent. The perception of Gran Canaria as a well-defended island favoured the

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postponement of the British occupation plans. And, in addition, the overestimation of the defensive structures located in the capital of the island, moved away the projected landing areas to other coastal sectors. The separatist and anti-fascist sentiment of the Canarian population, their differentiation from the peninsular citizens, and the weight of Anglophilia were also overvalued. This conception favoured the idealization of a potential war scenario; an excessively positive perception in which British troops would be welcomed without resistance.

<sup>52</sup> On Basil Miller, see: Miller, *Canary Saga: Miller Family*; and García Cabrera, «Operation Warden», 6. See, also: TNA, ADM 223/480, Information supplied by MR. T. Basil Miller, 10 July 1941; HS 6/912, Notes on Canaries, 29 May 1941; and HS 6/912, Report from H.A. to H., 28 May 1941.

<sup>53</sup> TNA, AIR 20/3971, Report «Canary Islands», July 1941.

<sup>54</sup> TNA, AIR 20/3971, Report «Canary Islands», July 1941. See also: Díaz Benítez, *Anglofilia y Autarquía*, 144–45.

<sup>55</sup> This first draft of the ISIS report is not available in the archives as its contents were destroyed when being replaced by a second edition. The volume is mentioned, for example, in TNA, WO 252/563, October 1942.

<sup>56</sup> TNA, ADM 116/4476, JIC report on the Canary Islands, February 1942. Also, see: Díaz Benítez, *Anglofilia y Autarquía*, 224.

<sup>57</sup> TNA, ADM 116/4476, JIC report on the Canary Islands, February 1942, and WO 10612/954, JP report 591, 3 julio 1942. Also, see: Díaz Benítez, “Canarias y La II Guerra Mundial”, 369.

<sup>58</sup> TNA, ADM 116/4476, JIC report on the Canary Islands, February 1942.

<sup>59</sup> TNA, WO 252/563, ISIS Report on the Canary Islands, December 1942.

<sup>60</sup> For original copies of the *ISIS report on the Canary Islands*, see: TNA, WO 252/563, ISIS Report on the Canary Islands, December 1942; and NARA, RG 319/NM382A/324, Naval Report on the Canary Islands, December 1942. For original copies of the *ISIS report on the Atlantic Islands*, see: TNA WO 252/545, Report on the Atlantic Islands, October 1942, and

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The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Washington, RG 319/NM382A/323, naval report on the Atlantic Islands, December 1942.

<sup>61</sup> In addition, the experts took more specialised publications as references, such as Pégot-Ogier, *The Fortunate Isles*; Stone, *Tenerife and Its Six Satellites*; Proust and Pitard, *Les Iles Canaries: Description de l'archipel*; Bannerman, *The Canary Islands. Their History, Natural History and Scenery*.

<sup>62</sup> The US naval attaché in London forwarded the reports to the offices of the American Intelligence Division of Naval Operations, making the British operational material readily available in Washington. See: NARA, RG 38/98A/1087, Certificates of reception issued by the Intelligence Division of Navy Department, October 1941 and November 1942.

<sup>63</sup> NARA, RG 38/98A/1088, Field monograph of Canary Islands, 25 August 1941.

<sup>64</sup> TNA, WO 106/2952, Summary of intelligence under Operation Tonic, 24 December 1942. Also, see: Díaz Benítez, "Tonic y La Defensa", 95–96.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Naval Intelligence Division, *Geographical Handbook Series- Spain & Portugal (IV Volumes)*. For the original copies, see: TNA, ADM 234/75, *Spain and Portugal: volume I – peninsula*, 1941; ADM 234/76, *Spain and Portugal: volume 2 – Portugal*, 1942; ADM 234/77, *Spain and Portugal: volume 3 – Spain*, 1944; and ADM 234/77, *Spain and Portugal: volume 4 - Atlantic islands*, 1945.

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