

American Indians for Saint-Domingue?

Exile, Violence, and Imperial Geopolitics after the French and Haitian Revolutions

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ABSTRACT The article examines plans for a military reconquest of Haiti and uses them as a lens to explore broader connections between exile, diplomacy, violence, and geopolitics in the wake of Haiti's independence. It retraces the networks and core elements shaping a plan involving Louis Marie Turreau de Garambouville, infamous veteran of the War in the Vendée and then French ambassador to the United States, as well as refugees from Saint-Domingue and Native Americans. On the one hand, the plan attests to the interconnections of the French and Haitian Revolutions with regard to the circulation of concepts of irregular warfare. On the other hand, the links between a veteran of the Revolutionary Wars, "counterrevolutionary" exiles, and Native Americans serve as a window onto the complex and messy realities of diplomacy in the rapidly shifting and uncertain geopolitical setting of the Americas in the midst of the Age of Revolutions.

KEYWORDS Haitian Revolution, Louis Marie Turreau de Garambouville, War in the Vendée, violence, Native Americans

Louis Marie Turreau de Garambouville is not a famous figure in diplomatic history. When he set foot on American soil as the new French ambassador to the United States on November 15, 1804, he was known as a military commander, a veteran of the French Revolutionary Wars, and the inventor of the infamous "infernal columns" (*colonnes infernales*) deployed in suppressing the 1793–94 Vendée uprising.¹ Turreau's military career would also overshadow the more than six years he spent in America. In Washington he came to be remembered as an impolite and inept representative with a particular penchant for physical violence.² Historians seem to share this judgment. Although no other

1. On his arrival in the United States, see La Courneuve, Archives des Affaires Etrangères (hereafter AAE), Correspondance Politique (hereafter CP), Etats-Unis, vol. 57, fols. 387r–388r, Turreau au ministre des relations extérieures, 28 Brumaire XIII [Nov. 18, 1804]. See also AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, vol. 57, fols. 400r–406v, Pichon au ministre des relations extérieures, 30 Brumaire XIII [Nov. 20, 1804].

2. Tolles, "What Instrument Did the French Minister's Secretary Play?"

French ambassador to the United States before the mid-nineteenth century served longer than he did, Turreau does not play a prominent role in the historiography of France's international relations. He has been described as a silent observer by some and as a rather cautious and discreet diplomat by others.³

Turreau's tenure (1804–11) was nevertheless a tumultuous time in French diplomacy in the Western Hemisphere. These years saw the fallout from France's failed attempt to end the slave revolution in Saint-Domingue by military force (the so-called Leclerc expedition of 1802–3), Haitian independence in 1804, and the ongoing conflict with the United States about American trade with what France considered a rogue state. They also saw the escalating conflict between Spain and the United States in the Louisiana-Florida borderlands prompted by the Louisiana Purchase (1803–4) under Thomas Jefferson, as well as Francisco de Miranda's failed filibustering expedition against Venezuela in 1806 and increasing pressure on Spanish imperial power in the mainland colonies. And they saw the amorous imbroglio of Jérôme Bonaparte, the French emperor's youngest brother, in Maryland.⁴

Turreau did not appear to be well prepared for a complex diplomatic mission. Before his appointment he had shown no particular interest or expertise in the United States, the French Antilles, or the Western Hemisphere as a whole. Nevertheless, Turreau soon began to pursue ambitions that went far beyond the instructions and powers officials in Paris had vested in him. Reclaiming French sovereignty over Haiti quickly became one of his major concerns. Slightly over a year after his arrival in Washington—and fully aware that he was acting without official authorization—Turreau wrote a wide-ranging memorandum on how to subdue Haiti.⁵ This memorandum—largely unknown—presented one of the most ambitious interventions for such a policy after 1804. With thirty thousand regular troops plus thousands of auxiliary fighters, the expeditionary force Turreau envisioned was even larger than the failed Leclerc expedition, which with twenty thousand men had involved two-thirds of France's navy and ranked

3. See, e.g., Whitcomb, *Napoleon's Diplomatic Service*, 53; Egan, *Neither Peace nor War*; Henri-Robert, *Dictionnaire des diplomates*, 332–33; Lentz, *Napoléon diplomate*, 233–60; Monaghan, *French Travellers*, xv; and Bénét, *La démenée coloniale*, 122, 152.

4. For overviews, see Logan, *Diplomatic Relations*, 152–87; Lentz, *Napoléon diplomate*, 233–60; and Hill, *Napoleon's Troublesome Americans*.

5. Kingston, National Library of Jamaica (hereafter NLJ), Manuscript Division, Ms161, and Vincennes, Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre (hereafter SHAT), B7/1: *Plan pour la conquête de Saint Domingue*, 1806, by Turreau de Garambouvill. Quotations are from the NLJ copy. The manuscript refers to Jean-Jacques Dessalines as Haiti's ruler, so it must have been written before Dessalines's assassination in October 1806. For the (sparse) evidence of official instructions to Turreau and their limitations, see AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, Supplément, vol. 32, fols. 10r–11r, *Ministre de la marine et des colonies à Thureau*, 8 Thermidor XII [July 27, 1804]; and AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, vol. 58, fols. 229r–230v, *Turreau au ministre des relations extérieures*, 16 Thermidor XIII [Aug. 3, 1805].

among “the largest overseas military efforts any European power had undertaken in this age.”⁶ Moreover, Turreau planned that the French detachment would be reinforced by one of the largest deployments of Native Americans ever seen. With the authority of a former military commander, Turreau detailed the organization of the troops, uniforms, hospitals, prisons, and the different steps that would lead to victory over the Haitian forces.

If we follow classic accounts of French colonialism, Turreau’s 1806 memorandum appears to be from a different time. It muddles the well-established division of France’s imperial history into neat eras separated by a deep rupture: an America-centered and slavery-based mercantilist early modern empire, on the one hand, followed by a republican empire, on the other, that would increasingly turn its overseas interests away from the Americas to Africa and Asia.⁷ Within these classic accounts, Napoléon’s attempt to reconquer Saint-Domingue and his plan to re-create French colonies in continental America between 1801 and 1803 appear as the last throes of an old colonial system that would irrevocably collapse with Haitian independence and the sale of French Louisiana to the United States.⁸

Yet in recent years, the idea of a revolutionary rupture in French imperial history has come under increased scrutiny. Scholars both of the Haitian Revolution and of French imperial thinking have shown that the revolutionary period, including Napoléon’s “counterrevolutionary” turnaround, were marked not just by innovation and change but also by considerable continuities.⁹ Projects for imperial renewal and reform had been swirling around since the near-total colonial breakdown in the Americas in the wake of the Seven Years’ War (1754–63). In a similar vein, David Todd has argued that the post-Napoleonic (largely informal) French Empire entered a transformative period of nearly six decades in which policies and plans were in flux.¹⁰ Still, most accounts of Franco-Haitian relations after 1804 proceed in two big leaps of a decade each: from 1804 to the Bourbon restoration in 1814–15, when for a few months French ministries mulled over an expedition against Haiti, and followed by the frantic negotiations and unfair deals leading to French recognition of Haitian independence in 1825.¹¹

6. Mikaberidze, *Napoleonic Wars*, 134 (quote); Popkin, *Haitian Revolution*, 119. The number of soldiers sent to the colony grew during the expedition to about thirty thousand men.

7. See, e.g., Bénôt, *La Révolution française*; Gainot, *L’empire colonial français*, 177–82; and Dorigny and Gainot, *La colonisation nouvelle*.

8. Bénôt, *La démente coloniale*; Lentz and Branda, *Napoléon, l’esclavage et les colonies*.

9. Ghachem, *Old Regime*; Covo, “Why Did France Want Louisiana Back?”; Røge, *Economistes and the Reinvention of Empire*; Covo and Maruschke, “The French Revolution as an Imperial Revolution,” esp. 381–84.

10. Todd, “French Imperial Meridian”; Todd, *Velvet Empire*.

11. Stein, “From Saint-Domingue to Haiti”; Bénôt, *La démente coloniale*, 183–210; Jennings, *French Anti-slavery*, 3–4; Pierce, “Discourses of the Dispossessed”; Brière, *Haïti et la France*, 13–76; Pestel, “Impossible Ancien Régime Colonial.” On Haitian responses, see Daut, *Baron de Vastey*; Stieber, *Haiti’s Paper War*.

True, if we focus on the French governments' action or inaction, Turreau's memorandum does not challenge the picture of a clear division in 1804. Turreau never followed through on his plan. His expedition would have required a major engagement by the French government, which it seems remained largely unaware of Turreau's ideas and activities. In retrospect, one may thus dismiss them as "fantastic" or irrelevant, as the works of a "period of dreams," because they did not change the actual course of events.¹² Yet looking at high-level politics and government action alone misses the relevance of a memorandum like Turreau's as a historical document. Turreau's text joined a near-constant stream of (mostly) unsolicited *mémoires* and military plans that had flowed since the 1790s suggesting ways to end revolutionary turmoil and independence in Saint-Domingue. While this flow of plans peaked in the years before the Leclerc expedition, it did not stop with French evacuation and Haitian independence. On almost the same day that Turreau arrived at his diplomatic position, a former member of the Leclerc expedition commented on the "mass of contradictory reports [that] torment public opinion and fill the spirits with hope and fear, equally exaggerated, about the current state and the future destiny" of Saint-Domingue, as a prelude to offering his own ideas of what should be done with it.¹³ Dozens of such *mémoires* and reports reached the French Ministry of the Navy; others were printed by French or American publishers.¹⁴ These plans, deposited in government archives, were only the tip of the iceberg of a much larger outpouring of projects about Saint-Domingue/Haiti that never registered with ministerial offices. And these were part of an even larger production of texts outlining France's imperial comeback after the imperial breakdown of the Seven Years' War.¹⁵

The genre of memoranda, notes, and plans suggests that the history of France's post-Haitian imperial transformation was more muddled and complex than the classic accounts would have it. This is a history adequately described not in terms of caesuras and clean breaks but as ebbs and flows. While the ideas these texts expressed were translated into government action only sometimes,

12. Quotes from Logan, *Diplomatic Relations*, 185n65, and Bénot, *La démence coloniale*, 117, referring to different plans and ideas.

13. Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, Archives Nationales (hereafter AN), AF/IV/1213, François Kersebau, Observations politiques et militaires sur la colonie de St. Domingue et sur les moyens les plus analogues aux circonstances de venir à son secours, 30 Brumaire XIII [Nov. 21, 1804].

14. Samples of such plans are collected in AN, AF/IV/1211–15; and Aix-en-Provence, Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer (hereafter ANOM), COL CC9A/47–54. For publications, see Lheureux-Prévot, "La politique coloniale."

15. Røge, *Economistes and the Reinvention of Empire*; Thomson, "Colonialism, Race, and Slavery"; Haudreuil, *Les français dans l'océan indien*, chaps. 21–26; Ruggiu, "India and the Reshaping of French Colonial Policy"; Donath, "Persuasion's Empire"; Covo and Maruschke, "The French Revolution as an Imperial Revolution," 380–81.

partly, or indirectly, such “fantastic” plans bring us closer to the horizon of the historical actors. During the years following Haitian independence, many observers believed it more likely than not that France would return as a formal colonial power. Turreau, too, was convinced that the independent Black state would not last long and that he would play a part in preparing the ground for the restoration of the plantation economy.¹⁶ Hence, at the very moment the French state seemed to abandon its American ambitions, a multitude of individuals and groups remained determined to bring about France’s return to America. With Turreau, France’s most prominent official in the Western Hemisphere joined them. For him, the plan seemed a realistic path to personal “glory.”¹⁷

What made Turreau’s memorandum stand out in the stream of colonial revanchism was that he joined it as a total novice. In contrast to almost every other author, he had no personal experience in the Americas, nor was he in any way wedded to France’s Atlantic community.¹⁸ Instead, he came to it through his new diplomatic career. This made him arguably the highest-ranking representative of the Napoleonic state to engage with ideas of reconquest after 1804. While the authors of most other such plans insisted on receiving individual credit, Turreau did not keep quiet about the collaborations from which his intervention grew. On closer inspection, the plan turns out to be a result of Turreau’s on-the-ground interactions with exiles from Saint-Domingue, some of whom had previously exhibited royalist sympathies or entertained alliances with Great Britain. That these refugees with vested interests in the former colony acted as interlocutors in such an endeavor may come as no surprise. Another group that came to play a major role in the project is perhaps less expected: American Indians would be an essential part of the expedition forces. The process through which a veteran of the French Revolutionary Army became the author of an ambitious plan to undo the Haitian Revolution thus reveals a broader milieu of actors and their ideas on how to shape international and interimperial relations in this crucial period.

Turreau’s eccentric position within this milieu thus provides a unique window onto the complex realities of the low-level politics of French imperialism after the alleged rupture of 1804. First, his case encourages us to broaden the geographic scope of revisionist politics in the wake of the Haitian Revolution. In contrast to scholarship on the émigrés of the French Revolution, exile has been sparsely explored as a relevant place of politics relating to Saint-Domingue.¹⁹

16. See, e.g., NLJ, Ms161, *Plan pour la conquête de Saint Domingue*, 1–3, 54–55.

17. NLJ, Ms161, *Plan pour la conquête de Saint Domingue*, 2–3, 47, 55.

18. On France’s Atlantic community, see Meadows, “Engineering Exile”; and Palmer, *Intimate Bonds*.

19. On émigré exile politics, see Pestel, *Kosmopoliten wider Willen*.

The alliance of some planter circles with Great Britain during the British intervention in Saint-Domingue (1793–98) marks one notable exception.²⁰ When it comes to revisionism after Haitian independence, metropolitan France is often regarded as the sole arena.²¹ This contrasts with the well-established fact that most Saint-Domingue refugees permanently settled in territories that were not under French sovereignty: Cuba, the British West Indies, and the United States—in particular, post-1804 Louisiana.²² While Turreau clearly relied on their ideas, his outsider position also led him to bring in other actors and contexts, which accounts for some of the most distinctive elements of his plan.

Second, the memorandum offers a fresh look at the interconnections of the French and Haitian Revolutions—with regard to the circulation not of emancipatory ideas but of concepts of “irregular” warfare and violence. The War in the Vendée and the Leclerc expedition have come under particular scrutiny as the most violent phases of the two revolutions; in each case, historians have asked about the extent to which the conflict can be seen as an instance of extreme, “total,” or even “genocidal” warfare.²³ These debates have remained largely disconnected, despite historian Malick W. Ghachem’s lucid discussion of the importance of the Vendée analogy in French revolutionary discourses about Saint-Domingue.²⁴ Although Turreau is prominent in the literature on the War in the Vendée, as the architect of the bloodiest phase of repression, his post-Vendée career has largely remained unstudied. The memorandum sheds light on the lasting importance of his Vendée experience and his attempts to transfer it to the Americas. Constituting one of the strongest intersections between European and colonial arenas of violence during the revolutionary and Napoleonic era known so far, the memorandum offers insight into a question that has been fiercely debated for later periods of French—and European—colonialism.²⁵

Third, Turreau’s memorandum also helps make a compelling case for looking beyond the Franco-Haitian tête-à-tête that still dominates large parts of

20. Colin, “La ‘trahison’ des colons aristocrates”; Frostin, “L’intervention britanniques”; Geggus, *Slavery, War, and Revolution*, esp. 46–78; Griffiths, *Le centre perdu*, 197–227; Wagner, *England*, 230–50; Pestel, *Kosmopoliten wider Willen*, 255–98.

21. Pierce, “Discourses of the Dispossessed,” 393–467; Brière, *Haïti et la France*.

22. On different migration waves and places of refuge, see Childs, *French Refugee Life*; Debien and Wright, “Les colons de Saint-Domingue”; Yacou, “L’émigration à Cuba”; Brasseaux and Conrad, *Road to Louisiana*; Dessens, *From Saint-Domingue to New Orleans*; White, *Encountering Revolution*; and Renault, *D’une île rebelle à une île fidèle*.

23. Martin, *Violence et révolution*; Bell, *First Total War*, 154–85; Girard, “Caribbean Genocide”; Girard, “French Atrocities.”

24. Ghachem, “Colonial Vendée.”

25. There has been a large and inconclusive debate on the interconnections between violence in Europe and in its colonies. See, for the French case, Le Cour Grandmaison, *Coloniser, exterminer*; Meynier and Vidal-Naquet, “Coloniser, exterminer”; Joly, “Les généraux d’Afrique”; and Rink, “Kleiner Krieg.” For the broader debate, see Gerwarth and Malinowski, “Hannah Arendt’s Ghosts”; and Walter, *Colonial Violence*.

the scholarship on the Haitian Revolution. Involving groups that seem completely unconnected to Saint-Domingue, Turreau's plan shows that debates about Haiti were enmeshed in broader geopolitical contexts, linking together Atlantic and continental dimensions of American history.²⁶ It was not a document of traditional diplomacy as discussed by cabinets; it was part of an array of intrigues and conspiracies on the ground, involving a variety of freelancing, often dubious, actors—exiles, adventurers, privateers, impostors, mercenaries—with a broad range of interests.²⁷ Contested borderlands—such as the Mississippi Valley, the Louisiana-Florida region, or the Texas-Mexico borderlands—and their inhabitants played a central role in these intrigues.

Exile and Imperial Renewal

When in December 1803 Napoléon appointed Turreau ambassador to the United States, French imperial plans for the Americas lay in tatters.²⁸ In mid-November French expedition forces had suffered a major defeat against Haiti's rebel army under Jean-Jacques Dessalines, and were evacuating what had been the heart of French imperial planning for nearly half a century. A few weeks later, on January 1, 1804, Dessalines would declare Haiti's independence, capping a brutal conflict that had ravaged large parts of the country. Alongside its military collapse in Saint-Domingue, France had negotiated the sale of the Louisiana Territory to the United States and was busy preparing for the official transfer of sovereignty in New Orleans on December 20, 1803. The appointment of a new ambassador to the United States, the highest-ranking French official in the Western Hemisphere, thus formed a part of France's hasty readjustment—or abandonment—of its position and ambitions in the Americas.

How final was France's withdrawal from the Americas, and how definite Haiti's independence at the moment Turreau arrived at his diplomatic post some ten months after Dessalines's declaration? Despite its military defeat, the French government continued to claim sovereignty over Haiti and orchestrated a campaign to isolate the new state.²⁹ In light of the disastrous Leclerc expedition, high-ranking officials in France never publicly embraced the idea of reconquest. Instead, the French military turned its efforts sharply to building a "substitute for overseas empire" in continental Europe.³⁰ On the ground, however,

26. Furstenberg, "The Significance of the Trans-Appalachian Frontier."

27. Blaufarb, "Western Question"; Blaufarb, *Bonapartists in the Borderlands*, 61–116; Narrett, "Geopolitics and Intrigue"; Jansen, "Flucht und Exil," 519–23.

28. AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, vol. 56, fol. 236r, Arrêté par le Premier Consul, 16 Frimaire XII [Dec. 6, 1803].

29. Gaffield, *Haitian Connections*, 17–60; Bénot, *La démence coloniale*, 117–24; Lentz and Branda, *Napoléon, l'esclavage et les colonies*, 201–2.

30. Røge, *Economists and the Reinvention of Empire*, 250.

things looked much less certain. Although hit hard by Haitian independence, French ports and merchants continued to participate in Atlantic trade.³¹ With French privateers raiding merchant ships trading with Haiti and Haitian privateers hitting back against French and Spanish vessels, Haiti and France were still waging a de facto war against each other. On the French side, a string of official or semiofficial agents spread across the Caribbean and the American continent pushed the ongoing confrontation. Santo Domingo, the French-held eastern part of Hispaniola, and Cuba, a refuge for many troops and others displaced from Saint-Domingue, were their central bases.³² Marie-Louis Ferrand, the French commander in Santo Domingo, regularly declared the military reoccupation of Haiti within reach, provided the metropole sent enough reinforcements.³³ On the Haitian side, the threat of a new French invasion was a central preoccupation during Dessalines's short-lived rule (1804–6). During the first months after independence, Dessalines orchestrated the massacre of most of the remaining white French population and set out on an international diplomatic campaign.³⁴ The construction of a chain of defensive fortifications tied up a large part of the Haitian state's resources and bolstered its militarization.

In this simmering conflict, both sides aggressively tried to recruit from one particular group. In the wake of the revolution, some twenty thousand to thirty thousand people had fled the colony, forming a socially, racially, and politically diverse diaspora across the Caribbean, the American continent, and western Europe.³⁵ While there was steady migration to metropolitan France, most refugees retreated to places closer to Saint-Domingue: the United States (ports cities such as Charleston, New Orleans, and Philadelphia, in particular), the British West Indies (Jamaica and Trinidad, in particular), and Spanish colonies (Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela). Both Dessalines and Ferrand sought to enroll parts of this diaspora in their efforts. The Haitian leader courted returning Black or mixed-race refugees from the United States and the British West Indies.³⁶ Ferrand, in turn, sought to attract white refugees as settlers and soldiers in his ongoing military activities against Haiti.³⁷

31. Marzagalli, "Le négoce maritime," 192–94.

32. Nessler, *Islandwide Struggle*; Ferrer, *Freedom's Mirror*, 192–206.

33. AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, Supplément, vol. 38, fols. 251r–252r, Ferrand, Aux militaires et colons, Jan. 28, 1806.

34. Gaffield, *Haitian Connections*; Dubois, *Haiti*, 41–46.

35. Debien, "Réfugiés de Saint-Domingue," 1–6; Dessens, *From Saint-Domingue to New Orleans*, 15–20.

36. NLJ, Ms. 72, Nugent Papers, Box 2, 718N and 851N, Jean-Jacques Dessalines to George Nugent, Nov. 6, 1803; Nugent to Dessalines, Nov. 27, 1803; Box 3, 501N and 613N, Edward Corbet to Dessalines, Feb. 10, 1804; Nugent to Robert Hobart, June 10, 1804.

37. AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, Supplément, vol. 38, fol. 240r, Ferrand, Aux habitants blancs de l'île de Saint-Domingue, réfugiés dans les colonies voisines, 26 Ventôse XII [Mar. 17, 1804].

Dessalines and Ferrand thus highlighted a group of actors that had played a crucial role in shaping France's and other imperial powers' response to the slave uprising since the early 1790s. True, many refugees were first and foremost preoccupied with navigating the shifting political and legal boundaries of the revolutionary Atlantic and making a living in exile.³⁸ Others, however, actively engaged in the political confrontations of the era. While some mixed-race and white refugees joined revolutionary causes, in particular in Spanish America, most of their white peers were united in a vigorous opposition against French emancipation policy: the equality of free people of color and, above all, the abolition of slavery in Saint-Domingue and throughout the French Empire in 1793–94.³⁹ They entered the fierce struggles over colonial policy in France and lobbied the French state and public for a return to slavery. The constant stream of their petitions and accounts of victimhood has been identified as one driving force behind Napoléon's decision to subdue the colony by force in 1801.⁴⁰ Years before it was seriously considered in French ministries, military reconquest had become a topic of coffeehouse talk among Saint-Domingue refugees in Paris.⁴¹ Well beyond the disastrous Leclerc expedition, Saint-Domingue refugees worked to establish narratives and references—in particular a nostalgic vision of Old Regime plantation prosperity—that would resonate in French society and politics well into the late nineteenth century.⁴²

But Saint-Domingue refugees also established alliances outside France. They turned themselves into actors on the international scene. To be sure, Saint-Domingue refugees never gained the same access to government officials or diplomats whom well-connected émigrés from metropolitan France were able to lobby in European courts or in elite circles in Philadelphia during the 1790s.⁴³ Yet they navigated the shifting international alliances during the revolutionary wars and jockeyed for influence among European powers that became involved in the Haitian Revolution, in particular Great Britain and Spain.⁴⁴ The United States presented fruitful terrain for such multilevel exile politics. It was the only important refuge where domestically and internationally oriented activism

38. Scott and Hébrard, *Freedom Papers*; Scott, "Paper Thin."

39. On revolutionaries among Saint-Domingue refugees, see Mongey, *Rogue Revolutionaries*.

40. Pierce, "Discourses of the Dispossessed"; Meadows, "Planters of Saint-Domingue," 263–319. For a broader analysis of witness accounts, see Popkin, *Facing Racial Revolution*. On the different lobbies pushing for or against an expedition, see Bénot, *La démenche coloniale*, 46–56.

41. "Rapport du bureau central de Police, 29 Ventôse V [Mar. 19, 1797]," in Aulard, *Paris pendant la réaction thermidorienne et sous le Directoire*, 4:13.

42. Todd, "Remembering and Restoring the Economic Ancien Régime"; Lewis, "Legacies of French Slave-Ownership."

43. Furstenberg, *When the United States Spoke French*, 23–210; Kennedy, *Orders from France*; Wagner, *England*; Harsanyi, *Lessons from America*; Pestel, *Kosmopoliten wider Willen*, pt. 2.

44. Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, 171–78.

intersected. With the US government maintaining a controversial course of neutrality during the wars between France and Great Britain, representatives and envoys of all major powers were present. The exiles came in contact with representatives of the French state while at the same time interacting freely with France's enemies. Whereas some prominent figures preferred to keep a low profile during their US exile, many others showed little restraint or refused to stick to a course of "neutrality."⁴⁵ Rather, they actively used the free press and association laws to present their agenda to the US public. By the time Turreau arrived in the United States, Philadelphia and Washington were well-established hubs of official and informal networking, lobbying, and plotting in relation to Saint-Domingue, now Haiti.

It was thus no accident that, about half a year in office, Turreau was already on familiar terms with various "former colonists [and] military men formerly employed in Saint-Domingue" who offered him their services.⁴⁶ Turreau continued a complex relationship that had developed between refugees and US-based French diplomats. These interactions were shaped by major tensions and mistrust, especially during Edmond-Charles Genet's controversial tenure as ambassador in 1793. Genet believed that he was surrounded by "aristocratic" counterrevolutionaries in contact with British diplomats.⁴⁷ The issue remained unresolved after his dismissal as French diplomats and officials debated whether to view exiles in the United States as traitors, as they did French émigrés in Europe, or as unfortunate refugees.⁴⁸ At the same time, collaboration between refugees and diplomats was frequent, not only through the assistance granted by French consuls but also through personal connections and spying activities. Even Claude-Corentin Tanguy de la Boissière, one of the most outspoken critics of French emancipation policy in the United States, was employed as the provider of intelligence about American land policy and trade.⁴⁹ In the years preceding Turreau's

45. On the idea of neutrality, see Potofsky, "Non-aligned Status." On activism, and the avoidance of it, see Marino, "French Refugee Newspapers"; Potofsky, "Political Economy"; Pierce, "Discourses of the Dispossessed," 140–210; Dun, *Dangerous Neighbors*, 87–120; and Geggus, "Caradeux and Colonial Memory."

46. AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, vol. 58, fols. 229r–230v, Turreau au ministre des relations extérieures, 16 Thermidor XIII [Aug. 3, 1805].

47. Childs, *French Refugee Life*, 161–85; White, *Encountering Revolution*, 87–123.

48. E.g., AAE, Mémoires et Documents (hereafter MD), Amérique, vol. 14, fols. 366r–367r, Ministre de la marine et des colonies au ministre des relations extérieures, 24 Floréal V [May 13, 1797].

49. Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes (hereafter CADN), Archives de la Légation et du Consulat général aux Etats-Unis, Philadelphie, 518PO/1/22, Consul général au ministre des relations extérieures, 6 Germinal V [Mar. 6, 1797]; CADN, 518PO/1/35, Ministre plénipotentiaire au consul général, 3 Floréal IV [Apr. 22, 1796]; AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, vol. 45, fols. 82r–83v, Adet au ministre des relations extérieures, 7 Nivôse IV [Dec. 28, 1795]; fols. 259r–260v, Adet au ministre des relations extérieures, 30 Ventôse IV [Mar. 20, 1796]; vol. 46, fols. 345r–346r, Adet au ministre des relations extérieures, 7 Brumaire V [Oct. 28, 1796]; AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, Supplément, vol. 27, fols. 203r–207v, Tanguy de la Boissière, "Observations sur la manière dont se font en France les ventes des terres des Etats-unis de l'Amérique," n.d. [1796?]; ANOM, Collection

arrival, the relationship turned sour again. Saint-Domingue refugees accused Turreau's predecessor, Louis-André Pichon, of being too conciliatory toward the United States in the conflict about trade with the Black revolutionaries and not supportive enough toward the Leclerc expedition.⁵⁰

With Turreau, a dark horse in international diplomacy entered the stage. Turreau had no previous connections to the United States—"this country where everything is new to me"—but he seemed inclined toward a more confrontational approach to the country. He himself acknowledged the large extent to which he depended on connections and expertise available on the spot.⁵¹ Turreau immediately became the focus of Saint-Domingue refugee politicking across the Americas. From the Danish colony of Saint Thomas, a former member of the Leclerc expedition reached out to him with the intention to establish a regular correspondence, insisting on the importance "of conserving this fragile core of former colonists whose experience can still make the most beautiful of all known colonies flourish."⁵² From eastern Cuba, Turreau was contacted by official and self-appointed spokespeople of the exile community in Santiago and Baracoa and quickly came to believe in their essential role in broader French imperial schemes.⁵³

Closer to his base, the new ambassador was also quickly embraced by the refugee community in Philadelphia. A petition signed by sixty-one exiles addressed him as "general" and celebrated him as "distinguished both by his virtues and his talents." Echoing the letters from other parts of the diaspora, they emphasized "how invaluable they will be to France, for the re-establishment of Saint-Domingue, which is so essential to the prosperity of France's commerce." They also reaffirmed the firmly established article of faith among white Saint-Domingue refugees that revolutionary efforts "to convert a land of slavery into a land of liberty" were to blame for Saint-Domingue's destruction. And to

Moreau de Saint-Méry, F3/156, fols. 55r–182v; Washington, DC, Library of Congress (hereafter LC), MSS22079, Edmond Charles Genet Papers, Box 12, Genet, "Rapport sur les projets des colons et de Galbaud," Oct. 5, 1793; Tanguy [sic] de la Boissière, *Mémoire*.

50. See, e.g., AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, Supplément, vol. 38, fols. 65r–77r, Pichon à Leclerc, 9 Vendémiaire XI [Sept. 30, 1802]; and AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, vol. 57, fols. 166r–167v, Pichon au ministre des relations extérieures, 20 Messidor XII [July 8, 1804]. Pichon had openly criticized the brutality of French military forces. See AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, vol. 56, fols. 13r–18r, Pichon au ministre des relations extérieures, 20 Messidor XI [July 8, 1803]; and fols. 289r–294r, Pichon au ministre des relations extérieures, 26 Nivôse XII [Jan. 12, 1804].

51. AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, vol. 58, fols. 11r–12r, Turreau au ministre des relations extérieures, 27 Nivôse I de l'Empire [Jan. 16, 1805]; quote from fol. 11r.

52. AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, Supplément, vol. 38, fols. 133r–134r, Commissaire de marine de Première Classe, agent de Saint-Domingue aux isles danoises, Somon, au Général Thurreau, 7 Messidor XII [June 25, 1804].

53. AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, vol. 59, fols. 46r–50v, Louis de Bellegard à Turreau, Jan. 1, 1806; vol. 60, fols. 111r–123r, Turreau au ministre des relations extérieures, May 20, 1807.

familiarize the neophyte with their ordeal, they drew comparisons from modern French history: the Huguenots (Saint-Domingue refugees represented, in their view, an even larger loss for France), the émigrés (whose ordeal was now over), and—certainly of greatest interest for Turreau—the War in the Vendée, compared to which “the awful war of Saint-Domingue” seemed even “a thousand times more horrible.”⁵⁴

Among the refugees Turreau engaged with, prominent representatives of the Saint-Domingue diaspora cropped up. The signatories of the welcoming petition included de la Boissière.⁵⁵ Turreau also heavily relied on the network of the Rouvray family, a prominent royalist military and planter family from Saint-Domingue’s northern plains.⁵⁶ Many of them participants in the political battles of the emancipation period, this milieu sought to enroll Turreau in their struggle, despite the clear shift in French priorities away from the Americas. Vis-à-vis his superiors in Paris, Turreau remained largely silent about his engagement with these refugee groups. While he mentioned, after half a year in office, their overtures toward him and their preoccupation with a return to the colony, he made sure to demonstrate his distance from them. The plans for military reconquest they submitted, he argued, relied more on “their zeal than their forces” and were not “well enough digested” to share them with the government. With regard to offers to provide him with detailed intelligence on territory, local forces, and “points of division” within the Haitian camp, he stressed that he was fully aware that his official instructions did not include such spying schemes and that he would not participate in sending a secret mission to Haiti without the government’s consent.⁵⁷ Likewise, his 1806 memorandum began with a reference to the scattered community of colonists on the “American continent and archipelago” and “their regrets, their fears, their hopes, and, unfortunately, their passions.” He criticized those in the United States for accepting money from foreign agents and ridiculed the refugee’s general disunity: “If fifty refugees from Saint-Domingue meet by chance, you will not even find four who agree on

54. AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, Supplément, vol. 38, fols. 179r–192r, Les colons de Saint-Domingue à son Excellence le général Turreau, grand officier de la légion d’honneur et ministre plénipotentiaire de S.M. l’empereur des Français près les Etats-Unis d’Amérique, n.d.; quotes from fols. 180v, 179r, 181v, 188v. The petition paralleled efforts by refugee leaders in France to woo Napoléon; see ANOM, Dépôt des Papiers Publics des Colonies, Indemnités de Saint-Domingue, 8SUPSDOM 393, Comité des colons notables à Napoléon, Dec. 7, 1804.

55. De la Boissière was said to have left Philadelphia and died in France in 1800. The signature was probably either from a family member left in the Americas or from a follower signing in his name. See *Oraison funèbre*, 23–25.

56. On the Rouvray family, see McIntosh and Weber, “Une correspondance familiale”; Geggus, *Slavery, War, and Revolution*, 270, 274; and Gómez, *Le spectre de la révolution noire*, 63–65.

57. AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, vol. 58, fols. 229r–230v, Turreau au ministre des relations extérieures, 16 Thermidor XIII [Aug. 3, 1805].

the—political or military—measures one has to use for its conquest.” And he warned against granting returning planters the same degree of political authority as they had exercised at the time of the revolution.⁵⁸ Even more important, Turreau did not allude to his memorandum in his regular diplomatic correspondence with his ministry, although he did apparently send a copy of it to the Ministry of War.⁵⁹

Under the radar of his own ministry, Turreau continued to collect and assess intelligence he obtained from refugees. He exhibited a particular inclination toward individuals sharing a certain military pedigree—individuals like Edouard Rouvray, from the US-based branch of the royalist military-planter family, who reemerged in Turreau’s orbit and knew of the ambassador’s “wish to assemble intelligence about this colony.”⁶⁰ Turreau’s memorandum incorporated significantly more expertise from these refugee agents than his laconic and dismissive remarks about the exile community would suggest. One example would be the central strategic role his plan attributed to Tortuga (Ile de la Tortue), a small island off Haiti’s northwestern coast. This island, where the first colonists allied with France settled in the first half of the seventeenth century, was a nearby refuge for royalist colonists during the revolutionary struggles.⁶¹ In Turreau’s plan, Tortuga would serve as the headquarters of military operations and as the destination for the displacement of Black rebels, a core element of his military strategy. In considering Tortuga key to military reconquest, Turreau followed and modified a plan he had received through the agency of Rouvray. Its author was most probably Jean Marie de Bordes, a Philadelphia-based former planter from Jérémie who had already lobbied against France’s emancipation policy in the 1790s. For de Bordes, the control of Tortuga was paramount to the success of a military expedition, and he provided Turreau with lengthy descriptions of the island’s history, geography, and strategic importance.⁶²

While relying on the expertise provided by refugees, Turreau used it in a sweeping perspective that transcended the plans from the Saint-Domingue diaspora. For him, reconquering the former colony was not about restoring lost property or a certain way of life but solely about “glory.”⁶³ He squarely placed

58. NLJ, Ms161, *Plan pour la conquête de Saint Domingue*, 1–2 (quotes), 8–9.

59. SHAT, B7/1.

60. AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, Supplément, vol. 38, fol. 193r–v, Rouvray à Turreau, 4 Floréal XIII [Apr. 13, 1805].

61. See AAE, MD, Amérique, vol. 20, fol. 181r–v, Notes relatives à l’expédition de SD, n.d.

62. AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, Supplément, vol. 38, fols. 194r–205r, De Bordes, Idée générale d’un plan de campagne à St Domingue [including a map]; fols. 206r–227r, De Bordes, Considérations sur l’isle de la Tortue; fols. 228r–v, De Bordes à Turreau, May 5, 1805. These documents do not mention the author’s first name, but the only person of the name de Bordes in the *Philadelphia Directory of 1806* is listed as John M. de Bordes, certainly the same as Bordes, *Défense des colons de Saint-Domingue*.

63. NLJ, Ms161, *Plan pour la conquête de Saint Domingue*, 2–3, 47, 55.

his project in a much larger perspective of French imperial renewal, which had occupied French officials, scholars, merchants, and colonists since the Seven Years' War. The reoccupation of Saint-Domingue was but one element in a much larger array of plots and geopolitical schemes Turreau became interested in while working on his Saint-Domingue memorandum: from an uprising of Francophone Canada to French inroads into Spanish American territories and France's second return to Louisiana.⁶⁴ At the same time, Turreau also infused the plan with his very own experience from Europe.

"A More or Less Similar War": Irregular Warfare from the Vendée to Haiti

It was not by mistake or ignorance that Turreau became embroiled in Saint-Domingue refugees' anti-Haitian scheming. The Philadelphia-based refugees—who had already played a central role in shaping French discourses about the "colonial Vendée"—perfectly understood whom they addressed when they referenced the defining experience of his career as a military commander.⁶⁵ Turreau's role in the atrocious repression of the Vendean insurgents was what had eventually brought him to the United States, and it was what almost irresistibly drew him to Haiti.

Napoléon's decision to dispatch Turreau to the United States may have been an elegant way of rewarding a loyal yet controversial figure and placing him out of sight. It also reflected a general preference for military officers in the Napoleonic diplomatic service.⁶⁶ But Turreau was not just any general—he was the face of the French Revolution's most brutal reprisal against its domestic opponents. Appointed commander of the republican army in the West at the moment of the Vendean counterrevolutionaries' military defeat in late 1793, Turreau set in motion his own plan to "pacify" the region. Between January and April 1794, twelve mobile columns of two thousand to three thousand men each plowed through the region with the explicit order to devastate and terrorize it, turning what had already been a bloody civil war into outright slaughter. While the War in the Vendée fell within a long tradition of "irregular" warfare, Turreau's "infernal columns" stood out as an extreme case of violence against a

64. AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, vol. 59, fols. 273r–279r, Turreau to Talleyrand, Nov. 3, 1806; vol. 60, fols. 7r–12v, Turreau au ministre des relations extérieures, Jan. 12, 1807; fols. 111r–123r, Turreau au ministre des relations extérieures, May 20, 1807.

65. AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, Supplément, vol. 38, fol. 188v, Les colons de Saint-Domingue à son Excellence. On their role in making the Vendée a prism for Saint-Domingue, see Ghachem, "Colonial Vendée," 166.

66. Whitcomb, *Napoleon's Diplomatic Service*, 32, 49–50.

largely defenseless civilian population.⁶⁷ After the downfall of his allies in Paris in late March 1794, Turreau was recalled and put on trial for acts of cruelty and massacres under his command. On his full acquittal in December 1795, Turreau demanded compensation for the “long injustice” against him and aggressively asserted his right to command “an active division, and, if possible, in the most active army” (*une division active . . . dans l’armée la plus agissante*).⁶⁸ Turreau consistently posed as an unabashed man of action, and he saw his expertise in crushing resistance of ferocious and fanatic “brigands” as vindicated. The place where he initially sought to put his expertise into practice was “in the colonies”—in all likelihood, in the Antilles, the world’s center of imperial warfare in the mid-1790s.⁶⁹ The minister of the colonies turned down Turreau’s request in early 1796, and when the government chose a general with experience in the Vendée to restore French control over Toussaint Louverture and Saint-Domingue in mid-1797, they instead selected Gabriel-Marie-Théodore-Joseph, Comte d’Hédouville. Hédouville, who served in the Vendée from late 1795 on, stood for a more conciliatory approach after the bloodshed inflicted on the region by Turreau’s columns; choosing Hédouville over Turreau reflected the French government’s desire in 1797–98 to find a diplomatic and political solution for Saint-Domingue.⁷⁰

Did Napoléon’s decision to put French diplomatic service in the Americas under Turreau’s command, conversely, reflect a preference for a more belligerent, if not military, approach in 1804? The scant surviving official instructions do not allow any definite conclusions about the emperor’s intentions. In any event, Turreau’s boldness and his autonomous decision-making during the Vendée campaign made a belligerent and assertive turn in France’s American diplomacy likely. His appointment brought him near the colonies (or by now ex-colonies)—the terrain he had initially preferred for his comeback as a military commander after the trial. And early on Turreau made clear that even in his new diplomatic function he would continue to think and speak as a military officer. In one of his early letters as ambassador to his diplomatic staff, he emphasized that he wanted to restore “the appropriate attitude” among the French agents

67. Martin, *La Vendée et la France*, 206–46; Bell, *First Total War*, 154–85. On continuities and discontinuities in the longer history of warfare, see also Rink, “From Small Wars to Imperial War”; Armitage, *Civil Wars*, 121–58; and Langewiesche, *Der gewaltsame Lehrer*, 177–200.

68. SHAT, 7Yd/100, Turreau au ministre de la Guerre, 11 Ventôse IV [Mar. 1, 1796]; Turreau au ministre de la Guerre, 21 Brumaire VII [Nov. 11, 1798]. See also SHAT, 7Yd/100, Turreau au ministre de la Guerre, 22 Vendémiaire IV [Sept. 24, 1795]; and Turreau au Directoire exécutif, 16 Messidor V [July 4, 1797].

69. SHAT, 7Yd/100, Ministre de la Guerre au ministre de la Marine et des Colonies, 30 Nivôse IV [Jan. 20, 1796]; Ministre de la Marine et des Colonies au ministre de la Guerre, 13 Pluviôse IV [Feb. 2, 1796]; Rapport présenté au ministre de la Guerre, 29 Pluviôse IV [Feb. 18, 1796].

70. Ghachem, “Colonial Vendée,” 169.

in his quest to reclaim “in America the degree of consideration and influence that we owe everywhere else to the power of the French People and to the immense glory of its leader.” As one of “the issues that arouse my attention upon my arrival in America” and that demanded immediate remedy, he identified a lack of respect and “calumnies” against French military personnel sent to the colonies, “warriors recommendable by their service and their talents.”⁷¹ In his correspondence he showed a strong affinity to military men among Saint-Domingue refugees, who in turn always took care to address him as “general.”⁷²

The fact that Turreau swiftly engaged in reflections on a military expedition against Haiti was in line with how he understood his role in the Americas and where he saw his own crucial expertise. True, Turreau did not tire of insisting that the conditions of warfare in Haiti, due to its climate, landscape, and population, were essentially different from anywhere in Europe. He likewise acknowledged that “the kind of war we are obliged to wage in Saint-Domingue does not resemble any of the wars the French Army fought in Holland, in Germany, in Switzerland, in Italy, and even in Egypt” and that previous experience would not work when developing a strategy for Haiti.⁷³ Yet he also emphasized that his plan was built on “a quite long experience in a more or less similar war.”⁷⁴ From what was absent from his list of French military campaigns in the memorandum, it was obvious which experience he was referring to: the War in the Vendée. How he gathered and assessed intelligence reflected his confidence that his experience in the Vendée made him uniquely qualified to weigh in on Haiti: there was, so to speak, a logical passage from the Vendée to Saint-Domingue. This logical passage consisted in the question of how to durably suppress and “pacify” an enemy fighting with “heartless ferocity” in an inaccessible natural environment “where all physical irregularities (*accidents physiques*) benefit the defense.”⁷⁵ By characterizing fighting in Saint-Domingue as “a war in which everything is irregular and accidental (*irrégulier et de circonstances*),” Turreau even borrowed a formula from his own 1795 wartime memoirs in which he sought to capulate the “singular” character of the War in the Vendée.⁷⁶

By stressing the similarity between the Vendée and Haiti, Turreau engaged in a much broader debate about “irregular” warfare and its tactics—both in

71. CADN, 518PO/1/35, Turreau à Arcambal, commissaire général, par intérim, des relations commerciales, 30 Ventôse 1er Empire [Mar. 21, 1805].

72. AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, Supplément, vol. 38, fol. 179r, Les colons de Saint-Domingue à son Excellence; fols. 193r–v, Rouvray à Turreau, 4 Floréal XIII [Apr. 13, 1805].

73. NLJ, Ms161, *Plan pour la conquête de Saint Domingue*, 48.

74. NLJ, Ms161, *Plan pour la conquête de Saint Domingue*, 4.

75. NLJ, Ms161, *Plan pour la conquête de Saint Domingue*, 7, 54–55.

76. NLJ, Ms161, *Plan pour la conquête de Saint Domingue*, 7; Turreau de Garambouville, *Mémoires*, 41.

Europe and outside it. Europe's colonial wars had long been known for their "extrasystemic" character.⁷⁷ The eighteenth-century wars between European powers and Native Americans in North America, for instance, had been fought with no regard for guiding ideas of a balance of power or existing standards of humanitarian law.⁷⁸ Independent of colonial wars, sustained military efforts characterized by ambushes and surprise raids rather than large standing battles and carried out by light and mobile units were also known in Europe; from the mid-eighteenth century onward, they came to be theorized as "small wars."⁷⁹ Both colonial wars and "small wars" inside of Europe were marked by unrestrained violence, often used against noncombatants. Starting in the revolutionary era, the use of violence in "irregular" settings was cast in ideological terms.⁸⁰ Before the anti-Napoleonic guerrilla war in Spain (1808–14), the Vendée was the epitome of a popular insurgent war in the revolutionary era. And long before racial theories colored the image of Europe's nineteenth-century colonial wars, the Leclerc expedition had already given rise to ideas of a "race war."

While ideas about irregular warfare in and outside Europe were commonly thought of as separate, Turreau saw a continuum between them. Building on this perceived similarity, he returned to a military tactic that—in France, at least—was closely associated with his name: the use of unrestrained violence carried out by mobile units. In a departure from official statements during the Leclerc expedition and many other plans of reconquest put forth by military men, Turreau's project presupposed the restoration of slavery in Haiti.⁸¹ Since rumors of imminent reenslavement had unified and fueled Haitian resistance in 1802–3, Turreau expected a similar outburst of violence and aimed for nothing short of the removal of the former colony's insurgent Black population. By then the idea of the Haitian Revolution as a racial war was not entirely new. Throughout the 1790s white refugee leaders had cast themselves as victims of Black violence, and some had espoused exterminatory ideas against the free-colored and Black insurgents.⁸² In their petition to Turreau, the refugee representatives in

77. Osterhammel, *Transformation*, 487. For a typology of colonial wars since the sixteenth century, see Walter, *Colonial Violence*; and Walter, "Imperialkriege."

78. From a long and rich literature on European-Indian relations and wars, see Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land*.

79. Rink, "Der Kleine Krieg"; Rink, "From Small Wars to Imperial War."

80. Bell, *First Total War*, 8–9, 175; Rink, "Der Kleine Krieg," 373.

81. Projects that sought to avoid the restoration of slavery include AN, AF/IV/1213, [Anonymous] *Idées sur Saint-Domingue* [1798–1801]; *Rapport sur le rétablissement de St. Domingue*, par l'adjudant commandant Beker, n.d. [ca. 1799–1801]; [Anonymous] *Notes sur Saint-Domingue*, n.d. [ca. 1800]; *Notes sur Saint-Domingue*, par l'ingénieur Vincent, 25 Nivôse XI [Jan. 15, 1803]; *Plan de campagne proposé pour la reconquête de la colonie*, par Joseph Debruges, n.d. [XI/1802–3?]; AN, AF/IV/1215, *Examen des mémoires de l'ingénieur Vincent etc.*, Aug. 7, 1806.

82. Daut, *Tropics of Haiti*, 98–109; Dubois, "Avenging America."

Philadelphia alluded to this idea by characterizing the 1793 Fire of Cap-Français as “the butchery of June 20 [that gave] the signal for the general extermination of the white colonists.”⁸³ Into the early 1800s race was only one variable—and an ambiguous one—that shaped the complex front lines of conflict in Saint-Domingue. The Leclerc expedition, however, set in motion a spiral of violence that increasingly followed racial lines. Decimated by the thousands by yellow fever and convinced that they were engaged in a war of extermination, French forces under Charles Victoire Emmanuel Leclerc and (after Leclerc’s death in November 1802) Donatien-Marie-Joseph de Vimeur, vicomte de Rochambeau, turned to mass killings, torture, and indiscriminate atrocities against Saint-Domingue’s Black and mixed-race population.⁸⁴ The use of man-eating bloodhounds from Cuba became emblematic of this last, apocalyptic phase of the Haitian War of Independence.⁸⁵ The bloodshed caused by the French troops was followed by Dessalines’s decision in early 1804 to consolidate the new state by massacring most of the remaining white French population.⁸⁶

Reflecting these developments, Turreau’s strategy centered on unleashing racial violence. Slaves (or, rather, the insurgents categorized as such) could still be considered the “necessary moveable property [*meubles nécessaires*] needed for the colony’s regeneration,” and one should “preserve as many men as one can.” He saw no need for such caution when it came to the free people of color, whom he considered—as many white refugees did—the true instigators of racial violence: “You have to move them away or get rid of them.” Every Black and mixed-race Haitian not surrendering within a specific time limit should be reenslaved and displaced, including those who surrendered voluntarily. Slaves would be brought to Tortuga and free people of color to Gonâve, another nearby island with harsher living and working conditions, as a means to “treat this rebel group less favorably than the Blacks.”⁸⁷ As in the Vendée campaign, Turreau would not acknowledge a clear line between military and civilian population. He regarded women and children as crucial tokens of warfare, “as the Black is particularly attached to his family.”⁸⁸ The fact that Turreau planned to displace all those who would not immediately lay down their arms to two small islands and employ them on plantations implies that he either expected a large portion

83. AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, Supplément, vol. 38, fols. 179r–192r, Les colons de Saint-Domingue . . . ; quote from fol. 183r.

84. Auguste and Auguste, *L’expédition Leclerc*; Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*, 280–301; Girard, *Slaves Who Defeated Napoleon*, esp. 224–47, 318–25; Girard, “French Atrocities.”

85. Johnson, “You Should Give Them Blacks to Eat”; Girard, “War Unleashed.”

86. On layers of violence during the Haitian Revolution, see Covo, “Le massacre de ‘Fructidor an IV’”; Dubois, “Avenging America”; and Girard, “Caribbean Genocide.”

87. NLJ, Ms161, *Plan pour la conquête de Saint Domingue*, 10–18, quotes at 13, 18.

88. NLJ, Ms161, *Plan pour la conquête de Saint Domingue*, 15, 39 (quote).

of the population (with a total estimated at three hundred thousand) to surrender and/or anticipated a considerable death toll among the Haitians. Turreau's tactics of unfettered counterinsurgency violence drew both on ideas circulating among refugees and former members of the Leclerc expedition and on what he considered his own (European) expertise in irregular warfare. Such ideas of mass displacement and killing became an integral part of many schemes against Haiti a decade later.⁸⁹

In yet another respect Turreau drew his lessons from the Vendée, in particular from the backlash he experienced when the atrocities under his command became clear. During his trial and in his Vendée memoir, Turreau defended himself as merely carrying out orders he had received.⁹⁰ Turreau also witnessed the public backlash to Leclerc's and Rochambeau's escalation of violence in Saint-Domingue that had never been instructed or condoned by Napoléon or his ministers. News about mass drownings of Black troops and the use of bloodhounds caused an outcry in metropolitan France and became points of reference in British anti-French propaganda.⁹¹ In his 1806 memorandum, Turreau was anxious not to spell out the consequences of his military strategy too bluntly. The Vendée was never explicitly referenced. In contrast to revolutionary discourse on the Vendée in 1793 and Leclerc's correspondence in 1802, he never explicitly spoke of "extermination" or "annihilation" of the enemy. For the anticipated drawn-out period of *marronage* after the French takeover (he avoided the term *pacification* used for the Vendée), Turreau ruled out the controversial use of human "infernal columns" (as in the Vendée) or of bloodhounds (as in Saint-Domingue). Instead, he came up with a different and, to his eyes, more "humanitarian" solution.

Florida—Louisiana—Saint-Domingue

The most unusual element of Turreau's plan was undoubtedly the role he assigned to Native American warriors. Their participation in the expedition struck him even as "the most prompt and certain way to achieve the submission of the colony."⁹² Drawing on racist stereotypes and citing the unspecified case of an averted slave rebellion around Charleston in the early 1800s, in which only

89. E.g., ANOM, CC9A/47, Robertjot Lartigue, "Considérations sur les moyens de rentrer à Saint-Domingue," May 1814; Vial de Colombeau au ministre de la marine, June 1, 1814; Lescallier au ministre de la marine, July 12, 1814; Charault, *Coup d'œil sur Saint-Domingue*, 15–17.

90. Turreau de Garambouville, *Mémoires*.

91. Girard, "French Atrocities"; Girard, "War Unleashed"; Johnson, "'You Should Give Them Blacks to Eat'"; Brown, "Visions of Violence."

92. NLJ, Ms161, *Plan pour la conquête de Saint Domingue*, 31.

seven warriors tracked down thirty-five people, Turreau praised their innate abilities to trace runaway slaves:

The Savage tracks the black like a good bloodhound follows a wild beast. The Savage does not know any obstacle. He gets through the densest thicket without worrying about wild boars, liana, thorns, which are the natural fortifications of Saint-Domingue. His instinct guides him better in unknown land than the discernment of our soldiers in a region, where they have already fought. When a Savage is on the trail of the black, it is impossible for the latter to escape.⁹³

According to Turreau, deploying Native American warriors was not just a matter of military efficiency. As his detailed description of the hound-like qualities and instincts of Native warriors made clear, he wanted them to step in as the agents of the most controversial parts of violence against Haitians. The use of American Indian auxiliaries seemed to him “much less immoral” than the use of Cuban bloodhounds in 1803. As if to counter objections, Turreau offered extensive details to demonstrate the feasibility of the plan. He indicated that his intermediaries had already secured support among leaders in Florida, who had promised to help “destroy the Black population of Saint-Domingue within six months.” Between four thousand and five thousand men, “all elite warriors,” had already agreed to fight in Haiti, for a daily wage of 26 French sous. Each warrior would receive a gun and a sword, and every surviving man was to be paid 550 French francs at the end of the war.⁹⁴ This would have constituted one of the largest Native armies ever assembled in North American history.

Especially the numbers cited by Turreau suggest that his vision of a French-Indian alliance in the reconquest of Haiti might be no more than a misinformed and naive chimera. Why would a French expedition mobilize en masse American Indians living under Spanish colonial rule? And why would Native Americans be interested in a risky military venture aiming at the suppression of slave emancipation in the Caribbean? With these questions, we are entering the most obscure and ambiguous elements of the memorandum. What is certain is that Turreau did not write as a champion of Native American interests. His memorandum was driven by the quest for auxiliaries he regarded as racially inferior, not by any intimate knowledge of or sympathy for the Native Americans’ cause. Turreau did not bother even to name the Indian communities he wanted to engage with; only the Florida reference suggests it must have been Creeks and Seminoles. His assertion that there was a “relentless, almost ingrained hate between the American Savages and Blacks of all kinds” had little foundation in

93. NLJ, Ms161, *Plan pour la conquête de Saint Domingue*, 32.

94. NLJ, Ms161, *Plan pour la conquête de Saint Domingue*, quotes at 33.

the complex realities of Florida's multiracial Seminole country.⁹⁵ He continuously drew on racist stereotypes, equating American Indians with savage animals, dogs in particular, and referring to their alleged wartime cannibalism, a leitmotif in anti-Native racism and another analogy to the man-eating war dogs.⁹⁶ Likewise, Turreau's regular correspondence barely veiled his ignorance of and contempt for Native Americans. Around the time he wrote his memorandum, for example, he derided President Jefferson's symbolic overtures toward a delegation of chiefs from western interior territories that had been acquired through the 1803–4 Louisiana Purchase: "After covering them with blue pants and redingotes and decorating their arms with bracelets shaped like dog collars [!], he [Jefferson] made them roam through the streets of Washington."⁹⁷

In proposing to employ Native American warriors, Turreau intervened in a long-standing general debate about the involvement of non-European auxiliary forces in France's wars in the Americas and presented a solution to a problem every plan of reconquest had to grapple with: how to enroll non-European troops while seeking to subdue and, potentially, (re)enslave their communities. Unlike Spain, France did not have a persistent practice of enrolling Black troops. This changed dramatically in the 1790s, when French governors and military commanders in the West Indies made free-colored and emancipated Black soldiers the backbone of their war efforts.⁹⁸ Black military service even turned into a key element in France's emancipation policy. In contrast to many plans for Haiti's reconquest at the time, and in line with his position on the restoration of slavery, Turreau abandoned the use of Black or mixed-race troops entirely.⁹⁹ Instead, he proposed to reconnect with a much longer tradition of Native American allied forces in continental America and to extend it into the West Indies.

Turreau's suggestion that Native American warriors be involved was inextricably connected with broader geopolitical questions. As with other major

95. NLJ, Ms161, *Plan pour la conquête de Saint Domingue*, 31. On the maroon communities among the Seminole, see Landers, *Black Society*, 67–68; and Mulroy, *Seminole Freedmen*.

96. NLJ, Ms161, *Plan pour la conquête de Saint Domingue*, 34.

97. AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, vol. 59, fols. 140r–151r, Turreau au ministre des relations extérieures, May 10, 1806; quote at 148v. On Jefferson's ambiguous policy toward Native Americans, see Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians*; and Onuf, *Jefferson's Empire*, chap. 1.

98. Girard, "Rêves d'Empire"; see also the relevant articles in Brown and Morgan, *Arming Slaves*.

99. AN, AF/IV/1212, Aperçu du plan pour faire rentrer la colonie de St. Domingue sous les lois de la métropole, par le citoyen Pierre Braquehais, 2 Ventôse XII [Feb. 22, 1804]; AN, AF/IV/1213, Plan de campagne proposé pour la reconquête de la colonie, par Joseph Debruges, n.d. [an XI/1802–3?]; AN, AF/IV/1215, Examen des mémoires de l'ingénieur Vincent, Aug. 7, 1806. Turreau shared the rejection of Black military service with a few other authors: ANOM, Collection Moreau de Saint-Méry, F3/161, fols. 126–37, Mémoire sur la paix maritime, sur les colonies, sur les moyens de les restaurer et sur la conquête de Saint Domingue, par Jean Barré de Saint-Venant, 1806; AN, AF/IV/1213, Mémoire sur St. Domingue, par Louis Gatien Le Breton des Chapelles, 6 Floréal XII (Apr. 26, 1804).

elements of his memorandum, this proposal built on connections Turreau found on the ground, and it is helpful to put his plan into the larger picture, both chronologically and geographically. When Turreau wrote his memorandum, several decades of geopolitics in the wake of US independence had created close links between French designs for Saint-Domingue and the struggle over continental North America, especially the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi Valley. Throughout the 1780s and 1790s, large swaths of land west of the Appalachians and south of Georgia were de facto borderlands subject to contested, changing, or overlapping claims of sovereignty.¹⁰⁰ Originally part of New France—governed under loose imperial control, with only a few European settlements and largely native lands—these territories, known as Louisiana, had been ceded in 1763 to Great Britain (east of the Mississippi) and Spain (west of the Mississippi). The latter also retook control of Florida at the end of the American War of Independence.¹⁰¹ Whether under nominal US or Spanish control, governmental rule in these territories remained weak. Independent Indian nations, land speculators, and assertive frontier settlers struggled for the control of the land. In this context, the US westward expansion and ascent as a trans-Appalachian/trans-Mississippian power was anything but certain. Many contemporaries, including European imperial policy makers, banked on the weakness and eventual disintegration of the Union, as they expected several polities west of the Appalachians to secede under the leadership of disaffected frontiersmen. Following American independence, Great Britain and Spain in particular vied with the United States for access to these borderlands and for alliances with local Native and immigrant communities. As David E. Narrett has argued, free-wheeling adventurers with multiple alliances, and often high-flying, risky military endeavors and obscure intrigues, were a central factor of empire building and geopolitics in these borderland settings.¹⁰²

In the 1790s France would join the North American competition and connect it inextricably to the revolutionary struggles in the Caribbean. Although they were rumored to be involved in wide-ranging slave conspiracies within US territory, French diplomats aimed chiefly at regaining France's lost imperial domain in the West. In 1793–94 Genet's preparations for a sweeping military occupation of Florida and the Spanish territories of the interior along the

100. For recent attempts at rewriting the history of the early national United States as viewed from these borderlands, see Gould, *Among the Powers of the Earth*; Saunt, *West of the Revolution*; Furstenberg, *When the United States Spoke French*; and DuVal, *Independence Lost*.

101. Scholarship on French mid-America and its legacy has been soaring. See Thorne, *Many Hands*; Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires*; Kastor, *Nation's Crucible*; DuVal, *Native Ground*; Gitlin, *Bourgeois Frontier*; and Milne, *Natchez Country*.

102. Narrett, *Adventurism and Empire*.

Mississippi from New Orleans up into Canadian territory were stopped due to vigorous protests by the US government.¹⁰³ As US-French relations deteriorated from the mid-1790s on, French diplomats increased their spying activities in the American backcountry. They also pressed their new ally Spain to retrocede the Louisiana territory cum Florida, succeeding in 1800, when Spain secretly returned its Louisiana territories (but not Florida) to France. This set off an outpouring of writings about Louisiana and French America, at the very moment projects for the reoccupation of Saint-Domingue and the restoration of slavery in the West Indies proliferated.¹⁰⁴ The effective military occupation and settlement of Louisiana became an integral part of Napoléon's plan for a revival of a French Empire in the Americas. In fact, by now French imperial planners and diplomats regarded a colonial settlement on the continent as a prerequisite for the long-term economic success of a renewed French Saint-Domingue.¹⁰⁵ France's failure to subdue the Black revolutionaries in return triggered the swift sale of the huge territory to the United States, which they considered to be better prepared than Spain to fend off British ambitions.

Like the other imperial powers, French diplomats and imperial planners ascribed major importance to collaboration with multiple actors on the ground. They hoped to restore the French "Creole Corridor"¹⁰⁶ of Francophone settlers and merchants from Detroit to St. Louis and New Orleans and to find common ground with disgruntled Anglo-American frontiersmen. But two groups in particular show up continuously in the plans for a return of France to the continent: Native American nations and French exiles. French diplomats relied heavily on intelligence from traveling French exiles and their land speculation activities in the American backcountry. Genet sought to mobilize Saint-Domingue refugees for his Republican occupation armies. Another project saw the rapid settlement of five hundred to six hundred Saint-Domingue refugees in Louisiana as the best way to secure the territory.¹⁰⁷ Even more important than the enrollment of exiles with dubious loyalties were efforts to rebuild alliances with Native communities. The idea that American Indian nations still harbored

103. Turner, "Mangourit Correspondence"; Ammon, *Genet Mission*; Kukla, *Wilderness So Immense*; Girard, "Rêves d'Empire"; Alderson, *Bright Era*; Havard and Vidal, *Amérique française*, 691–717; Furstenberg, *When the United States Spoke French*, 211–403.

104. E.g., AN, AF/IV/1212, Objets relatifs à la Louisiane, sur lesquels il importe d'appeler l'attention particulière du Gouvernement, par le préfet colonial Laussat, XI [1802–3]; Mémoire abrégé de la Louisiane, par le général Victor, X [1801–2]; Mémoire et notes sur la Louisiane et le Floride, Oct. 25, 1801; Mémoire sur la Nouvelle Orléans, July 16, 1801; Pontalba, Notes sur la Louisiane, 29 Fructidor IX [Sept. 16, 1801]; Baudry des Lozières, *Voyage*; Berquin-Duvallon, *Vue de la colonie espagnole*; and Jacquemin, *Mémoire*. On the broader context, see Potofsky, "Geography as Geopolitics."

105. Hill, *French Perceptions*, 79–104; Covo, "Why Did France Want Louisiana Back?"

106. Gitlin, *Bourgeois Frontier*, 27, 83; Teasdale and Villerbu, *Un Amérique française*.

107. AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, Supplément, vol. 7, fols. 21r–22v, Aperçu sur la Louisiane, n.d. [1793–94].

strong sympathies for France, that they remained “friends of the French nation,” was the linchpin of all plans for a revival of France’s continental American empire.¹⁰⁸ Genet saw Choctaws, Cherokees, Chickasaws, and Creeks as major allies, and France’s special relationship with those peoples was a major argument in the ensuing negotiations with Spain for a peaceful retrocession of Louisiana.¹⁰⁹ Once Louisiana had been retroceded, plans were made to send French agents and gifts to native country as a means to consolidate French influence and to counter British and US American efforts to woo Indian leaders.¹¹⁰

In contrast to his less assertive predecessor, Turreau placed himself squarely in the tradition of France’s combative republican diplomacy of the 1790s. He closely examined the growing US-Spanish conflict in the Louisiana-Florida borderlands. In the light of what he saw as an American project to “dispel the Europeans from the New World, and then to grab the archipelago of this continent,” he urged France to intervene in the various struggles for hegemony throughout the continent.¹¹¹ He seemed receptive to all kinds of intrigues and geopolitical schemes that continued to swirl around: from Francophone Canada to Florida, Cuba, and former French Louisiana.¹¹² He observed in detail the role nonofficial actors—defecting military men, adventurers, refugees, Indians—played in this competition for power and the aid the British Empire provided to their conspiracies.¹¹³ And he, too, emphasized the centrality of robust alliances with Indian nations. US (and British) efforts to court certain leaders were, in his eyes, meant to “erase, among these Savages, the kind of veneration and affection they

108. AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, Supplément, vol. 2, fols. 32r–37v, Supplément aux instructions données au Citoyen Genet [1792], quote at 37r–v.

109. AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, Supplément, vol. 5, fols. 93r–94v, “Instructions données aux colonels des légions révolutionnaires d’Amérique et de Floride,” Mar. 4, 1794; vol. 7, fols. 31r–35r, Le Tourneur et Lagarde, “Mémoire pour servir le développement à la partie des instructions du général Pérignon relative à la Rétrocession de la Louisiane à la France,” 26 Ventôse IV [Mar. 16, 1796], esp. fol. 33r.

110. AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, Supplément, vol. 7, fols. 189r–200v, Louis Villemont au ministre des relations extérieures, 14 Messidor X [July 2, 1802]. On Indian-US American relations during the 1780s and 1790s, see Hoxie, Hoffman, and Albert, *Native Americans*; Wallace, *Jefferson and the Indians*; Nichols, *Red Gentlemen and White Savages*; and Calloway, *Indian World of George Washington*.

111. AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, vol. 58, fols. 190r–208v, Turreau au ministre des relations extérieures, 20 Messidor XIII [July 8, 1805]; quote at 200r.

112. AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, vol. 59, fols. 215r–220r, Harry Pinckney à Turreau, June 25, 1806; fols. 240r–246v, Vermonnet à Talleyrand, Aug. 6, 1806; fols. 273r–279r, Turreau à Talleyrand, Nov. 3, 1806; vol. 60, fols. 7r–12v, Turreau au ministre des relations extérieures, Jan. 12, 1807; fols. 111r–123r, Turreau au ministre des relations extérieures, May 20, 1807.

113. He especially observed the expeditions by Aaron Burr and Francisco de Miranda: AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, vol. 58, fols. 62r–67v, Turreau au ministre des relations extérieures, Mar. 9, 1805; fol. 227r–v, Pièce jointe à la dépêche no. 36; vol. 59, fols. 34r–39v, Turreau au ministre des relations extérieures, Feb. 13, 1806; vol. 60, fols. 7r–12v, Turreau au ministre des relations extérieures, Jan. 12, 1807. On these two expeditions, see Isenberg, *Fallen Founder*, 282–365; and Racine, *Francisco de Miranda*, 155–70.

retain for the French nation. This feeling is profound . . . , and we could easily kindle it, if circumstances require it.”¹¹⁴

Despite Turreau’s and other imperial planners’ assertions of racial inferiority, Native Americans were never helpless pawns on the chessboard of imperial competition. Throughout the eighteenth century Indian communities had used interimperial rivalry to their advantage and developed a complex interimperial diplomacy. Despite increasing pressure from American encroachment into their lands, Indian nations continued to act as sovereign actors (and sometimes empire builders) on the international level at the turn of the century.¹¹⁵ Following their betrayal at the hands of their European allies at the close of the American War of Independence, they sought to broaden their diplomatic network and create larger Indian confederacies after 1783. Certain mestizo leaders and European adventurers, traders, and translators in their midst functioned as important middlemen.¹¹⁶ Among the most ambitious and concerted efforts in the decades after the American War of Independence were those made by the Creeks, whom Turreau planned to enroll in his expedition. The Creeks, a confederacy of some twenty thousand to forty thousand ethnically diverse people, were allied with the Seminoles in Florida and dominated much of the territory west and south of Georgia into northern Florida and the eastern Mississippi Valley. Under the leadership of Alexander McGillivray (1782–93) the Creeks embarked on an ambitious course of centralization and confederation with other southeastern nations. Formerly allied with the British, they now sought substantial support from Spain against Anglophone settlers in Georgia.¹¹⁷

When McGillivray died in 1793, several aspiring commanders competed for leadership and also worked at crafting new international alliances. In doing so, they established links to French imperial planners and Saint-Domingue refugees. One of them was Louis Le Clerc de Milford, an adventurer who had defected from French military service and went to America sometime in the wake of the American Revolution. From the mid-1780s he lived among the Creeks, married McGillivray’s sister, and earned the title of a military leader, Tastanegy.¹¹⁸ Shortly

114. AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, fols. 140r–151r, Turreau au ministre des relations extérieures, May 10, 1806; quote at 149v.

115. Gitlin, “Private Diplomacy”; Sadosky, *Revolutionary Negotiations*; from a global perspective, Fullagar and McDonnell, *Facing Empire*. On Native American empire building that included the use of Europeans across the North American Southwest, see Hämäläinen, *Comanche Empire*.

116. Calloway, “Neither White nor Red,” 48–49; Havard, *Histoire des coureurs de bois*.

117. Wright, *Creeks and Seminoles*, 101–27; Sánchez-Fabrés Mirat, *Situación histórica*, 61–86. On McGillivray and the transformation of Creek society and politics at this period, see Caughey, *McGillivray*; Braund, *Deerskins and Duffles*; Saunt, *New Order of Things*; Narrett, *Adventurism and Empire*, 203–32; and DuVal, *Independence Lost*, esp. 24–34, 75–99, 177–82, 236–38, 246–60, 295–312, 324–32.

118. On Tastanegy, see his own account from 1802 in Milford, *Mémoire*. See also Lyon, “Milford’s Plan”; and Din, “Louis LeClerc de Milford.” On the broader intersections of Native American politics and the conflicts of the revolutionary era, see Crouch, “French Revolution in Indian Country.”

before McGillivray's death, Tastanegy broke with his brother-in-law and, after siding with the Spanish for some years, reached out to French diplomats in 1795. Traveling to Paris in 1796, he lobbied for the Creeks to be given a central role in France's imperial schemes for Louisiana.¹¹⁹ While Bonaparte seemed to have shunned him, other officials took seriously Tastanegy's vision of a Franco-Creek alliance in the reoccupation of Louisiana.¹²⁰

Other actors established new Native-French contacts. An alliance between Creeks and Saint-Domingue refugees was part of adventurer William Augustus Bowles's project of the independent state of Muskogee in the 1790s.¹²¹ Beginning in the late 1780s, Bowles, a Loyalist exile of the American Revolution based in the Bahamas, lobbied for the renewal of the Creeks' commercial and military alliance with Great Britain. After escaping from Spanish imprisonment, Bowles embarked on his nation-building project. Muskogee was to be an independent pan-Indian state of Creeks, Seminoles, and Cherokees, supplemented by European settlers and runaway slaves. Bowles traveled to Jamaica to mobilize support for his Florida expedition in mid-1799 and established close contacts to the Saint-Domingue diaspora in Kingston, at a moment when British authorities desperately wanted to rid the island of the thousands of refugees of all kinds stranded there. As his secretary, Hugh Ferguson, later recalled, Bowles was "preceded by the reputation of a very learned man, which added to the singularity of the Indian dress he wore made him much researched by every class of people . . . and more particularly so by the French emigrants from St. Domingo of whom Kingston was then full."¹²² During his stay in Kingston, Bowles sought to win over the refugees as settlers for Muskogee. Negotiations had already reached an advanced stage by the end of his two-month stay in Jamaica. Bowles had agreed to grant each refugee family considerable tracts of land, and he assured exiled priests that a religiously tolerant constitution would allow them to minister to the refugee community.

119. AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, Supplément, vol. 7, fols. 109r–135v, François Tastanegy, Grand chef de guerre de la nation Crik, aux membres du Directoire exécutif de la République française, reçu le 11 Vendémiaire VII [Oct. 2, 1798].

120. See, e.g., AN, AF/IV/1214, Note, 17 Thermidor VIII [Aug. 5, 1800]; Note pour le premier Consul, 24 Thermidor VIII [Aug. 12, 1800]; AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, Supplément, vol. 7, fols. 99r–102r, Projet d'un Rapport du ministre des relations extérieures sur la nécessité de nous intéresser à la balance des pouvoir dans le Continent de l'Amérique et sur l'utilité de la rétrocession de la Louisiane, n.d.

121. On Bowles and Muskogee, see McAlister, "Marine Forces"; Wright, *William Augustus Bowles*; Landers, *Atlantic Creoles*, 100–110; Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles*, 234–42, 321–23; Din, *War on the Gulf Coast*; Jennison, *Cultivating Race*, 127–55; Narrett, *Adventurism and Empire*, 209–32, 259–62; and Gould, "Independence and Interdependence."

122. Havana, Archivo Nacional de Cuba, Fondos de Las Floridas, legajo 1, exp. 24, no. 10, 81–85, T.H., "Issue of T.H. Ferguson's Adventure to the Muskogee Nation (as Collector of a Town Not Yet Built on the Okelochnee)," June 16, 1800; quote at 81 (transcripts at LC, Manuscript Division).

Tastanegy's and Bowles's competing schemes show that connections and joint (ad)ventures among several factions of Creeks, French diplomats, and Saint-Domingue refugees were already in place when Turreau arrived in the United States. Turreau admitted that it was not through his own official channels that his negotiations for the recruitment of Indian warriors came about. A Saint-Domingue refugee and a network of French interpreters linked with Native communities in Florida had approached him and initiated the negotiations in 1804.¹²³ At that moment, they certainly found willing listeners among the Creeks, just as the ambitious projects that Tastanegy and Bowles and their followers had banked on collapsed. With the capture and deportation of Bowles in May 1803, his Muskogee project lay in shambles. Two months later the news that France had sold Louisiana dealt a final blow to Tastanegy's idea of making the Creeks allies in France's imperial ventures in continental America. Under increasing US American pressure, some Creek leaders abandoned their resistance and negotiated the cession of large parts of their lands to Anglo-American settlers. Even though Turreau did not name his intermediaries, the bold promise of mobilizing thousands of Indian warriors for a Saint-Domingue expedition bore the signature of adventurers like Tastanegy and Bowles. Joining the fight against Haitian emancipation thus promised to become a new arena in Native Americans' desperate struggle for independence. After the failure of Muskogee and other projects, allying with the French was not necessarily a far-fetched idea in Creek country. Despite the long-standing maroon communities living among them, quite a few Creek leaders had been long engaged in the trade and ownership of enslaved Africans.¹²⁴

Turreau clearly feared the strong sense of independence among his potential Indian allies. As he considered them the best suited to fight insurgents during a long period of *marronage* following the initial military takeover, his plan may have suggested a long-term engagement, perhaps even settlement of Native Americans in Haiti. Yet despite his bold promise to make thousands of excellent warriors available, he did not consider it "wise to entrust the Saint-Domingue expedition exclusively to the Savages." Instead, he wanted to limit their number to twelve hundred to fifteen hundred, "used in moderation" and on a clearly defined contractual basis. (Even these limited numbers would have made for one of the largest Native American military operations in history.) While he tried to capitalize on forces from ambitious initiatives and schemes that had just failed, he feared that things might get out of control and lead to claims for a new

123. NLJ, Ms161, *Plan pour la conquête de Saint Domingue*, 33.

124. Narrett, *Adventurism and Empire*, 2, 208, 209, 221.

nation-state, sort of a Caribbean Muskogee: “After the victory, they may want to substitute the independence of the Blacks with their own independence.”¹²⁵

Conclusions

Turreau certainly did not worry much about the prospect of an independent Indian state in the Antilles. Despite months of collecting intelligence, coordinating a network of intermediaries, and laying out the details of a military expedition, he never inspired military action by the French state. So why is this plan—brutal, overly ambitious, and unrealistic as it was—noteworthy? Turreau’s memorandum reveals a lot about the muddled realities of low-level geopolitics in America between Haitian independence and the revolutions in Latin America. It highlights the roles played by freewheeling actors, risky schemes, and unlikely alliances in shaping international politics under the radar of high-level diplomacy.¹²⁶ At a moment when the French state seemed to abandon its imperial ambitions in the Americas, a diverse set of actors on the ground unabashedly pushed in the opposite direction. Turreau’s plan was a composite of his own experience in Europe and ideas circulating among this diverse milieu of exiles, veterans, ex-officials, adventurers, and former allies; it seamlessly combined concepts of the revolutionary and Napoleonic period with ideas that reached well into prerevolutionary times.

Turreau’s memorandum points, first, to the significance of arenas and actors outside France in the shaping of French policy toward Haiti. As French international and military ambitions seemed to refocus largely on Europe, a mix of some official and many nonofficial actors on the ground defined, negotiated, and mapped out imperial schemes in the Western Hemisphere in the name of France. The result was certainly one of the most ambitious plans by a high-ranking representative of France, of which the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs itself remained ironically unaware. Turreau’s expedition would have constituted one of the largest overseas engagements by a European power and, simultaneously, one of the most important Native American military endeavors.

Second, Turreau’s proposed plan shows that Saint-Domingue exiles acted as relatively independent actors in the international arena and sought to shape the policies of France (and other states) according to their interests. Turreau, who on his arrival in the United States had no apparent connections or interests in Saint-Domingue/Haiti, was quickly surrounded by a network of refugees

125. NLJ, Ms161, *Plan pour la conquête de Saint Domingue*, 33–34.

126. See, on the crucial role of low-level diplomacy during this era, Simeonov, “Empire of Consuls.”

who provided him with intelligence and contacts, some pitching their own plans. Many of their ideas eventually became part of Turreau's plan. Third, the plan shows how ideas of irregular warfare and violence circulated among different theaters of the revolutionary Atlantic. It suggests a complex picture of the dynamics between colonial and metropolitan contexts in the escalation of violence in France's late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century colonial empire.¹²⁷ In Turreau's plan, firsthand experience and secondhand reports of the most brutal episodes of the French and Haitian Revolutions, respectively, converged: the 1793–94 War in the Vendée and the 1802–3 Leclerc expedition. The general-turned-ambassador clearly sought to bring to bear his own "expertise" in irregular warfare and its tactics from France in a no less violent move against Haiti.

Fourth, the plan to raise a major Native American army for the reconquest of Saint-Domingue illustrates that French schemes against Haiti were intimately tied to collaborations that went beyond the limited circle of Saint-Domingue exiles and involved people whose motivations were not linked to either France or Haiti. Turreau's plan arose against the background of a messy geopolitical setting in which the struggle over North America's continental borderlands and the fight against slave revolution in the Caribbean were interrelated. He and his collaborators sought to exploit a gray area where the Saint-Domingue refugees' fight against Haitian independence and Native American struggle for their own independence intersected. This intersection was not invented by Turreau. Rather, his plan grew out of connections that had been forged by a variety of actors in a variety of places, such as Florida, Jamaica, and Paris, and it owed much to earlier, no less adventurist schemes.

The odds against a French-sponsored Native-refugee alliance for the reconquest of Haiti were high, and the idea seems to have vanished before any serious steps were taken. While for a moment he thought to make it the cornerstone of his plan for French imperial revival, Turreau quickly moved on. By 1807 he seemed to favor a Spanish cession of Cuba to France as the best way to create, in close collaboration with the large Saint-Domingue community in eastern Cuba, a substitute for Saint-Domingue. In doing so, he again largely borrowed from his connections with refugees.¹²⁸ In a way, these ideas foreshadowed the

127. European colonial armies continued to look at the War in the Vendée for inspiration. See, e.g., British military campaigns in Burma in the mid-1880s in Charney, *Southeast Asian Warfare*, 271–72.

128. AAE, CP, Etats-Unis, vol. 60, fols. 111r–123r, Turreau au ministre des relations extérieures, May 20, 1807. He seems to draw largely on information he received from AAE, MD, Amérique, vol. 15, fols. 217r–219r, Brulley, "Note sur l'utilité d'un commissaire ou agent chargé par le gouvernement français de remplir, dans l'isle de Cuba, une mission particulière relative aux colons réfugiés de Saint-Domingue," 22 Pluviôse XIII [Feb. 10, 1805].

turn of French schemes for America away from Haiti to what would become the dominant current for the remainder of the Napoleonic period after France's 1807–8 invasion of the Iberian Peninsula: the quest for control over the Spanish colonies in Central and South America.¹²⁹ Undeterred by the imperial planners' changing priorities, Saint-Domingue refugees and Native Americans continued to pursue separately their interests as independent international actors and to seek new alliances. Saint-Domingue refugees negotiated terms of collaboration with rebellious Anglo-American settlers in West Florida in 1810, for example, and various Creek leaders continued to look out for potential Indian and foreign allies in their struggle against American inroads into their country.¹³⁰

Although in 1814–15 the Saint-Domingue diaspora and the French colonial lobby were electrified by the possibility of a new military expedition against Haiti, the idea of a Native-refugee alliance figured nowhere in the flurry of new plans and schemes for reconquest. In the short time span between 1806 and 1814, the setting had fundamentally changed. New Orleans had become the permanent “convergence zone” of the Saint-Domingue diaspora.¹³¹ While they maintained a French Creole identity and closely followed events in the Caribbean, many white refugees fared quite well at the geographic margins of the slaveholding US republic. Their mobilization on the American side during the 1814–15 Battle of New Orleans—the final battle of the British-American War of 1812—was generally regarded as proof of their attachment to the United States. Financial wealth in the more solidly established white supremacist US South (especially New Orleans) made the imperative of a return to subjugated Saint-Domingue much less compelling. In 1814–15 it was the British West Indies, especially Jamaica, that served as the central hub of intelligence gathering and planning for French colonial irredentism.¹³² The Creeks were also at war in 1814. Since July 1813 northern Creek bands had been waging a desperate war against increasing US American encroachment. The war, which had started as a civil war between Creek factions, ended in disaster for the Creeks, no matter which side they had fought on. Before turning his military action to Florida and New

129. Parra-Pérez, *Bayona*; Robertson, *France*; Dorigny and Rossignol, *La France et les Amériques*; Blaufarb, “Western Question.”

130. LC, Manuscript Division, West Florida Collection, box 15, C. M. Audibert to Fulwar Skipwith, Sept. 27, 1810. On the West Florida Revolt, see Cox, *West Florida Controversy*; and McMichael, *Atlantic Loyalties*, 149–68.

131. Dessens, *From Saint-Domingue to New Orleans*, 20. See also Lachance, “Repercussions.”

132. See, e.g., ANOM, CC9A/49, Réponse de sa Majesté Louis XVIII aux colons de Saint-Domingue réfugiés à la Jamaïque, accompagnée d'une lettre à M. le comte de Vaudreuil, Sept. 22, 1814; and CC9A/50, Mémoires et renseignements sur la situation de Saint-Domingue, adressés à S. Ex. par Mr Vendryes habitant de la Jamaïque [1814]. See also Wallez, *Précis historique*, esp. 203–4; and Debien and Wright, “Les colons de Saint-Domingue,” 185–89. This may also be the reason that a copy of Turreau's 1806 memorandum ended up in Kingston.

Orleans, Colonel Andrew Jackson forced Creek leaders to cede large parts of their lands to the United States in August 1814, prefiguring their removal from their remaining lands in the 1830s.

US American encroachment of the southeastern borderlands put an end to the independence of many people in the region.¹³³ Along with Americanization came the entrenchment of racial hierarchies, and the results for Saint-Domingue refugees and Creeks could not have been more different: most white Saint-Domingue refugees proved, in the long run, winners; the Creeks were clearly on the other, the losing side. When US troops swept through Florida in the 1830s and early 1840s in their effort to remove the remaining Native communities to the interior, they relied on the use of Cuban bloodhounds.¹³⁴ In light of Turreau's 1806 plan to replace such war dogs with Native American warriors, this was certainly a macabre irony of history.

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133. DuVal, *Independence Lost*.

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