



Kingdom of Spain

Status: Lesser power.

Monarch: His Majesty King Ferdinand VII (left).

Delegate: Don Pedro Gómez de Labrador, Marquess of Labrador (right).

Background

Despite being an absolute monarchy, Spain allied with France in 1795, mostly out of a shared animosity with Britain and Portugal. This ended up backfiring when Spain had an internal power struggle (between King Charles IV and his son Ferdinand) and Napoleon ‘mediated’ the conflict by imprisoning them both and installing his brother Joseph as King. The Spanish people revolted, and began a **brutal guerrilla war** against their French occupiers, during which most of their **colonies severed ties** with Spain. The war ended in 1814, with the Spanish rebels (supported by British and Portuguese forces) victorious.



French forces committing atrocities against Spanish rebels

Despite their victory, Spain remained politically unstable. Ferdinand was restored in December 1813, but found himself at odds with the liberal provisional government established by the rebels in his name. Additionally, Ferdinand distrusted the autonomous governments established in the colonies, and was keen to bring them back under his direct rule.

Objectives

Ferdinand’s goal with the Congress was to **restore and empower Bourbon monarchs** (i.e., his relatives) across Europe to act as an international support network for his absolutist rule over Spain¹. Additionally, Ferdinand hoped the Congress would provide assistance or compensation for his rebellious American colonies.



Spanish American colonies in 1814

¹ The Bourbon monarchs Ferdinand hoped to restore were: **Louis XVIII of France** (already restored, but with constitutional limits on his power), **Ferdinand III of Sicily** (who had previously held the throne of Naples), and the 15-year-old **Charles Louis** ([Wikipedia](#)), heir to the Duchy of Parma, who also had a claim to the Grand Duchy of Tuscany.