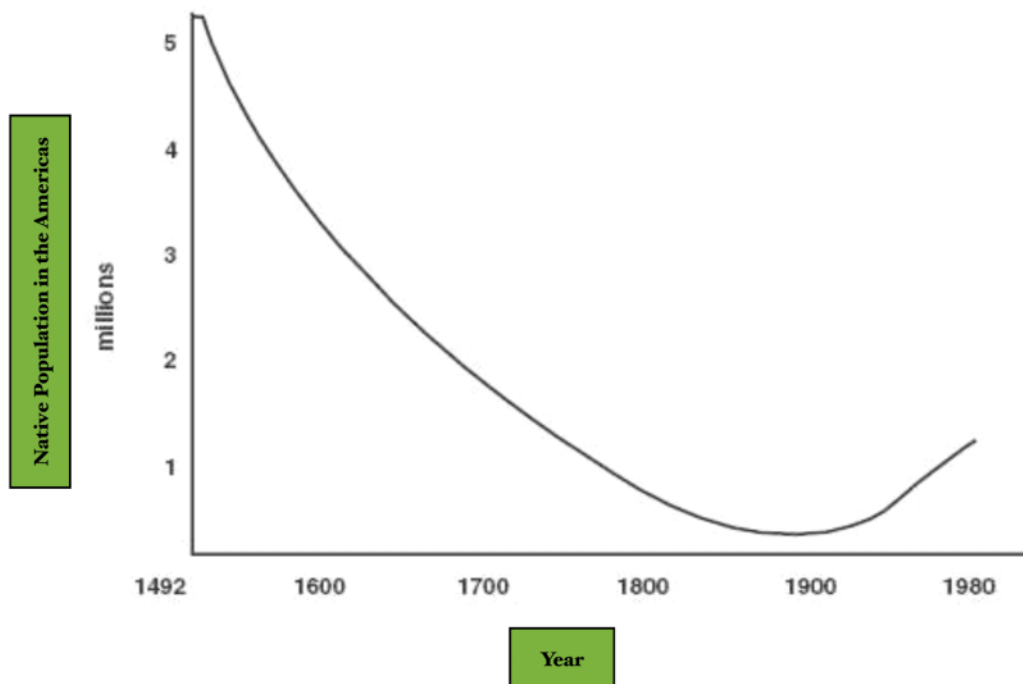


Printout

Thursday, September 21, 2017 8:34 AM

“Why were the outnumbered Spanish conquistadors able to so easily defeat the natives of South and Central America?”



Your task is to use the 5 following documents to answer the overarching question “Why were the outnumbered Spanish able to so easily defeat the natives of South and Central America?”

You should use the handout to guide your note-taking. Remember, a good DBQ essay uses each document to answer the overarching question. At some point in your final essay each document should be used.

Document 1: Pizarro and the Incan Civil War

“...in 1530 a band of approximately 160 Spaniards landed on the Ecuadorian coast under Pizarro’s command and made their push inland. The Spaniards, however, learned from the Natives, of a tremendous civil war that had been ravaging the entire country.

The civil war was the consequence of the untimely deaths of Huayna Capac and his heir, which had left the two oldest of his seven surviving sons fighting for succession to the Inca throne. Huascar was initially crowned....His succession was challenged, however, by his half-brother, Atahualpa....Huascar initially appeared to have the upper hand, even capturing his half-brother. But Atahualpa was able to make his escape, and soon the tide turned....

It was in the immediate aftermath of these turbulent events that the Spaniards appeared on the scene in Peru and first met with the victorious Atahualpa at the northern town of Cajamarca.”

The Spaniards were able to take advantage of the tensions amongst the Incans. They captured Atahualpa, who then ordered his brother to be killed so that he could not take the throne. The Spaniards then killed Atahualpa after he paid them a significant ransom in gold and silver.

“With both warring contenders for the Inca royal tassel dead and the Spaniards greedy for more gold, the conquerors marched on Cuzco. En route they were engaged in several fierce battles by the warriors of Atahualpa’s general Quisquis but received a friendly reception from Atahualpa’s enemies....As a result, the Spaniards succeeded in capturing the Inca capital on Saturday, 15 November 1533.”

Ralph Bauer, “Introduction,” in *An Inca Account of the Conquest of Peru* by Titu Cusi Yupanqui, trans. Ralph Bauer (Boulder, Colorado: The University Press of Colorado, 2005), 4-6.

Document 2: Cortés and the Tlaxcallans

As Cortés began his march inwards towards Tenochitlan, he encountered the Tlaxcallans.

“At this time the Tlaxcaltecas were enemies of Cholula. They feared the Cholultecas; they envied and cursed them; their souls burned with hatred for the people of Cholula. This is why they brought certain rumors to Cortés, so that he would destroy them. They said to him: ‘Cholula is our enemy. It is an evil city. The people are as brave as the Aztecs and they are the Aztec’s friends.’

When the Spaniards heard this, they marched against Cholula. They were guided and accompanied by the Tlaxcaltecas and the chiefs from Cempoala, and they all marched in battle array.

When they arrived, the Tlaxcaltecas and the men of Cholula called to each other and shouted greetings. An assembly was held in the courtyard of the god, but when they had all gathered together, the entrances were closed, so that there was no way of escaping.

Then the sudden slaughter began: knife strokes, and sword strokes, and death. The people of Cholula had not foreseen it, had not suspected it. They faced the Spaniards without weapons, without their swords or their shields. The cause of the slaughter was treachery. They died blindly, without knowing why, because of the lies of the Tlaxcaltecas.”

Miguel Leon-Portilla, ed., *The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico* (Beacon Press, 1962), 40-41.

Document 3: Cortés and the Spaniards move toward the City of Mexico

“When the massacre at Cholula was complete, the strangers set out again toward the City of Mexico. They came in battle array, as conquerors, and the dust rose in whirlwinds in the roads. Their spears glinted in the sun, and their pennons fluttered like bats. They made a loud clamor as they marched, for their coats of mail and their weapons clashed and rattled. Some of them were dressed in glistening iron from head to foot; they terrified everyone who saw them.”

Miguel Leon-Portilla, ed., *The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico* (Beacon Press, 1962), 41.

Document 4: The American Holocaust

“But finally, it’s the microbes, it’s the germs, that will reek havoc in the Americas. Smallpox, influenza, measles, typhus, plague, malaria, yellow fever, do not exist in the Americas before October 1492. Standard estimate of the decimation of the American peoples in the aftermath of Columbus is 85-90% decline within 50 years....This is the largest demographic catastrophe in human history. This is an American holocaust. The usual estimate of the size of the American population [at the time] range anywhere from 35 to about 100 million people. So what we are talking about in the range of 50 years is the destruction of somewhere between 25 and 90 million people. The most destructive impact of the Columbian moment, in fact, is for the Native American people.”

“Christopher Columbus: Path to Conquest,” Conquest of the Americas part 1 of 2, The Teaching Company, 2002, DVD.

Document 5: The Myth of Quetzalcoatl

"He has appeared! He has come back! He will come here to the place of his throne and canopy, for that is what he said he would do when he departed." - Montezuma, on hearing Cortés' description.

Were the Spaniards long-lost rulers or deities of the Aztec pantheon? An unnerving series of coincidences led Montezuma to believe that perhaps Cortés was the Aztec god Quetzalcoatl, who had promised to return one day to reclaim his kingdom.

Quetzalcoatl, "the feathered serpent," stood for the solar light, the morning star. He symbolized knowledge, arts, and religion. In his time, he had been a rich, powerful man, but he had been expelled and vanished across the sea eastwards, near Veracruz, where Cortés had landed. Legend had it that Quetzalcoatl was white-skinned, bearded and he was opposed to human sacrifice. Unnerving as were these similarities to Cortés, there was one factor that was positively spine-chilling: for the year in which Quetzalcoatl was born and died, and the year in which Montezuma's astrologers expected him to "strike at Kings," was 1-Reed. By a 52-1 chance, 1519, the year that Cortés arrived, was 1-Reed.

"Quetzalcoatl," Conquistadors, <http://www.pbs.org/conquistadors/cortes/cortes_d00.html#> (19 September 2006).B

Name _____ Period _____

Document 1: _____

What does this document show you in regard to the over-arching question?

List 3 pieces of evidence that help support your answer:

- 1.) _____
- 2.) _____
- 3.) _____

Document 2: _____

What does this document show you in regard to the over-arching question?

List 3 pieces of evidence that help support your answer:

- 1.) _____
- 2.) _____
- 3.) _____

Document 3: _____

What does this document show you in regard to the over-arching question?

List 3 pieces of evidence that help support your answer:

- 1.) _____
- 2.) _____
- 3.) _____

Name _____ Period _____

Document 4: _____

What does this document show you in regard to the over-arching question?

List 3 pieces of evidence that help support your answer:

- 1.) _____
- 2.) _____
- 3.) _____

Document 5: _____

What does this document show you in regard to the over-arching question?

List 3 pieces of evidence that help support your answer:

- 1.) _____
- 2.) _____
- 3.) _____

Now that you have reviewed all 5 documents....

1.) Which factor do you believe had the greatest impact on the destruction of the natives? Why? _____

2.) Do you think any of these factors that caused destruction could have been avoided? Which ones? How could they have been? _____

