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## A Second Center of Peninsular Gravity: Wellington's Rescue of Cadiz in 1810.

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**Corporate Author :** ARMY COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF COLL FORT LEAVENWORTH  
KS SCHOOL OF ADVANCED MILITARY STUDIES

**Personal Author(s) :** Herson, James P., Jr

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**Abstract :** Napoleon Bonaparte lost over 300,000 men in the Iberian Peninsula combating the British Army and Navy, along with their Spanish and Portuguese allies, in the savage conventional and unconventional Peninsular War. This very important sub-theater of the

Napoleonic Wars set the pre-conditions for the eventual defeat of the First French Empire. The Peninsular War served as a source of strategic consumption for the Grande Armee. Many scholars consider this significant loss of irreplaceable French combat power as an important contributing factor in Napoleon's defeat in Russia in 1812. It is my opinion that the successful allied defense of Cadiz served as a focal point for rising Spanish nationalism and exacerbated the effects of the 'Spanish ulcer' whose passionate resistance so debilitated the French Army. This rebuilding of recognized Spanish resistance against the French gave the Duke of Wellington a complementary center of gravity for allied civil and military resistance outside of Lisbon within the Iberian Peninsula. This joint and combined military operation is unique in the annals of the Peninsular War. Outside of the British Isles, Cadiz was the only belligerent national capital city, stretching from frigid Moscow to semi-tropical Lisbon, that did not fall at some point to the Grande Armee. The age old rhetorical question, how does a shark which is supreme within its element of water, fight a tiger, which is conversely supreme on land? When using this analogy of comparing the combative prowess of the British Navy against the Grande Armee, the principal geographical forum which enabled the two military predators to pit their respective strengths against one another was the Spanish revolutionary capital of Cadiz on the Island of Leon.

**Descriptors :** \*MILITARY OPERATIONS , \*COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS , \*JOINT MILITARY ACTIVITIES , CENTER OF GRAVITY , MILITARY HISTORY , DEFENSE SYSTEMS , NAVY , RESISTANCE , FRANCE , RUSSIA , GEOGRAPHY , LAND AREAS , PORTUGAL , UNITED KINGDOM.

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