
Document 1648B

Letter from Governor Fajardo, dated Manila 31 July 1649

Source: AGI Fil. 9-1-6, pp. 1-4.

Note: He says that it was providential that the relief patache Buen Jesús did not fall into the hands of the Dutch enemy and that he sends to New Spain the galleon Encarnación that was built in the dry-docks in Manila.

The patache Buen Jesús of 1648, etc.

Original text in Spanish.

*Aviendo manifestado a V. Magd. en mis despachos de los años de 46 y 47 que fueron el pasado de 48, y en otros por via del Reyno de Macazar que ya abran llegado a sus Reales manos, las grandes neçesidades con que oy se halla la Caxa de V. Magd. en estas islas y lo arruynado que estan por las grandes inbaçiones que el enemigo Olandes (que no çessa visitarlas con gruessas armadas) haze; quedame solo Señor por representar a V. Magd. las que quedan padeçiendo al presente, por que si en el tiempo de los tres antecedenentes eran mayores, oy lo son mucho mas por la falta de socorros que de Nueva España a avido, que aunque **me vino uno el año passado de 48 en un patache ymbiado por el Virrey** de aquel Reyno Conde de Salvatierra fue mas su despacho por ver el estado destas Islas si estavan por de V. Magd. o del Olandes que socorrerlas, por que no remitió mas de çient mill pesos en Reales, y 107 hombres de mar y guerra, y al respeto algunas armas y municiones que aun no remedió parte de las miserias con que esto se halla, ni menos fue lo bastante para socorrer los Presidios que de aqui se proveen; causa que se deja conoçer que aviendolas grandes antes, oy lo son mucho mayores, y adeudada esta Real Caxa en mas de quinientas mill pessos de prestamos que le an hecho sin lo que ymporta el valor de los bastimentos y municiones que se an pedido al Reyno de Macazar, y destas Provincias conduçido para el Proveymiento de los puntos de Therrenate...*

...

El patache en que este socorro vino que fue providencia de Dios no dar en manos del enemigo antes que tomase puerto por que se hallava con gruesa armada en las Islas infestandolas, lo quemó la persona que venia por cavo del, despues de averse sacado la plata de V. Magd. y parte de algunas munizioni que traya, causado de su poca prevençion, falto de valor y ninguna experiència en la milicia, por no aver militado ni tenido nunca otro exercicio en la Nueva España, y en estas partes, el tiempo que aqui estuvo que ser mercader, y no obligado del Olandes que sabido del paraje donde estava intento tomarlo con solas dos lanchas en que yva alguna ynfanteria por no serle possible (segun la parte donde estava por ser estrecho y de muy poco fondo) hazerlo con otros bajeles de porte que siendo reconoçido por ellas y disparadole algunos tiros de arcabuz, y el respondidoles con otros sin muerte de persona alguna de una parte a otra, se retiraron a sus Naos; y presumiendo, segun su juzgar que bolveria con mas pujança ynadvertido que de qualquiera que obrara se pudo defender por aversele socorrido de aqui con bastante ynfanteria, y ordenadole antiçipadamente (luego que llego a dar fondo) hiziesse todas las prevençiones neçessarias para su defensa y ofensa, que lo pudo executar con façilidad ympidiendo el paso del estero donde estava para entrarle con cantidad de Indios que se dispuso le asistieran, y con la ynfanteria que se le remittio (que todo escuso por estar embaraçado en poner en cobro la plata, y otras mercaderias que trajo fuera de registro para su trato) determinó a pegarle fuego estando todavia en el, parte de algunas munizioni que quedavan por desembarcar a oras de las ocho de la noche, açion tan fea como murmurada de diferentes naciones que an llegado a saberla, que a ser el dho Cavo persona de valor y experiència en la milicia pudo tener un muy buen suçesso, y hazer particular serviçio a V. Magd. segun la parte y ocassion en que se hallava; sobre cuyo suçesso que ynformo (para que si se alegare en esse Real Consejo esta çircunstançia por serviçio particular) provea V. Magd. del remedio conveniente que da presso y dho sobre el causa, y embargo de sus bienes.

...

*El Galeon que assimismo hé avisado a V. Mgd. se fabricó en el Real Astillero[,] nombrado **Nuestra Señora de Guía** que impidio el Olandes su viaje a Nueva España el año de 47. Luego que le dejó libre el passo de la navegacion para esta çiudad se vino, y es el que va este año a aquel Reyno, prevenido de lo neçessario aunque no con la abundançia de marineros y otros offiziales que requiere tan largo y dilatado viaje por los pocos que ay aqui deste Arte, falta tan considerable por que si neçessario fuesse despachar dos Galeones que oy tiene la ribera de Cavite para oponerse a qualquiera ymbaçion del enemigo Olandes que no cessa años à de venir a estas Islas con gruesas Armadas, como al pressente queda en el Embocadero dellas con diez Galeones segun nuevas que se me an dado, a impedir su disinio [=diseño], ademas de no tener plata esta Real Caxa de que poderlos aviar, ni de donde valerme por estar estos miserables vezinos tan faltos della por las perdidas y ruynas grandes que an tenido, me atajara qualquiera disposiçion que mire a esto la falta de Marineros para este avio porque con la salida deste Galeon que despacho a Nueva España los mas que quedan deste Arte son los viejos e ympedidos de poder acudir a qualquiera facçion.*

...

*Guarde Dios la Catholica Persona de V. Mgd. como la Cristiandad ha menester.
Manila y Jullio 31 de 649 años.*

Don Diego Fajardo

Translation.

Having represented to Y.M., in my despatches of the years 46 and 47, mailed in 48, and in others sent by way of the Kingdom of Macassar, that would have arrived in your royal hands by now, the great needs in which the Treasury of Y.M. in these Islands finds itself nowadays, and the ruin done to it on account of the great invasions that the Dutch enemy (who does not cease to visit them with large fleets). The only thing left for me to do, Sire, is to represent to Y.M. the present needs, because, if during the terms of the three previous [governors] they were great, today they are much greater, for lack of succors from New Spain. Although **one succor came to me this past year of 48 in a patache sent by the Viceroy** of that Kingdom, the Count of Salvatierra, it was sent, more to find out the condition of these Islands, whether they were still in Y.M.'s control or that of the Dutch, than to relieve them, because he did not remit more than 100,000 pesos in reals, and 107 seamen and soldiers, and a few weapons and ammunition for them, which provided but a small relief from the miseries we are going through, and even less to reinforce the garrisons that are maintained here. The obvious end result is that, if the needs were great before, today they are much greater, and this Royal Treasury is in debt by over 500,000 pesos in loans done to it, not counting the value of the food supplies and ammunitions that have been ordered from the Kingdom of Macassar, and carried from these Provinces to the relief of the posts of Ternate...

...

The patache [Buen Jesús] that brought this succor was saved by God's providence from falling into the hands of the enemy, before it took port, because the enemy was then infesting the Islands with a large armed fleet. It was burned by the person who came in charge of it, after the silver of Y.M. had been unloaded and part of some ammunition that it carried, on account of his little foresight, lack of valor and no experience of any kind in the militia, as he had not held any military post nor any other functions in New Spain; not in these parts either, for while he was here he was a trader, and not knowledgeable about the Dutch. The Dutch, having learned of his whereabouts, tried to capture him with only two launches, manned by a few gunners, as it was impossible for them to do so with other larger vessels (the place where he was, being narrow and not very deep). When they encountered him, he fired a few musket shots at them, and they answered the same way, with no death occurring on either side; they withdrew to their galleons. So, presuming, according to his judgment, that they would return with more fire-power, not paying attention to his possible defence, since he had been provided with enough soldiers from here, and been ordered (after he had anchored) to take all necessary preventive measures for his defence and offence, which he could have carried out easily by blocking the entrance of the river, through which they were

about to attack him, with a quantity of Indians who had been recruited to help him, and with the soldiers sent to him (which he did not do, giving as a reason the need to unload the silver, and other merchandise that he had brought unregistered for his trading), he decided to set the patache on fire, when part of some ammunition was still on board, at 8 p.m. This act caused some rumors to be circulated by people of different nationalities when they heard about it. Had the said Commander been a person of valor and experience in things military, he could have had some success, and rendered Y.M. a special service, given the part and opportunity he had. I inform about this event (in case he should credit himself with a special service upon this circumstance before your Royal Council) so that Y.M. may provide a proper remedy by ordering his detention and a legal charge, and an embargo of his property.

...
About the galleon named **Nuestra Señora de Guía**, I have notified Y.M. that it was built at the royal shipyard, and that the Dutch had prevented its voyage to New Spain in the year 47. Well, as soon as the way was open for it to sail to this city, it did so, and it is the one going to that kingdom [of New Spain] this year, supplied with everything necessary, although not with as many seamen and other officers as required for such a long and lengthy voyage, for there are few qualified seamen here. In fact, the lack of them is considerable, because, if it were necessary to despatch the two galleons now in the bay of Cavite to oppose any invasion by Dutch enemies, who have been pestering these Islands with large fleets of late, as they do at present, being stationed in the Embocadero with 10 galleons, according to news given to me. To defeat their plan, in addition to this Royal Treasury being without silver to allow me to supply them [i.e. the two galleons], I cannot find another source of funds, the poor residents being so short of cash on account of the great losses and ruin they have had, I will have my hands tied, as far as the lack of seamen is concerned, being unable to man them properly, after the departure of the galleon being despatched to New Spain, there remaining only old and sick seamen who would not be able to fill any post whatever.

...
May God keep the Catholic person of Your Majesty, as Christendom needs.
Manila, 31 July 1649.
Don Diego Fajardo¹

1 Ed. note: This letter was reviewed in the Council of the Indies on 6 May 165 [sic].