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Were the Americas discovered or conquered? Christopher Columbus, a Spaniard who is claimed to have discovered the Americas in 1492 was on a voyage to find a new route to the Spice Islands when he chanced upon the Americas, discovering the new lands to the western world of the period.

Using this knowledge the European nations led by Spain and Portugal made several expeditions to the Americas to explore prospects in the new lands.

(Roark, 2006) noted that to gain control of the new lands the Spanish and the Portuguese had to conquer the natives of the Americas.

The Spanish and the Portuguese through the Treaty of Tordesillas claimed duopoly of all the non-European lands with the Spanish claiming control over all the lands in contact with the Pacific Ocean. European nations such as France and England disputed the Treaty and thus went ahead and unsuccessfully established their colonies in the Americas in the 16th century, and later together with the Republic of Dutch, permanently established their colonies in the Caribbean Islands and North America.

The Spanish together with their Indian allies were able to conquer the Inca and Aztec empires which controlled Central Mexico and Western South America respectively. (Roark, 2006) extensively shows how another Spanish expedition led by Hernan Kortes landed on the Gulf Coast. He allied himself with the Tlaxcallans, sworn enemies of the Aztec . This saw an increase in hostilities witnessed in the City of Tenochtiltan leading to the killings at the Main Temple and subsequent death of Moctezuma II. This led to the Spanish eventually fleeing the city before coming back to lay siege on Tenochtiltan thereby destroying the city. The Spanish then installed puppet rulers such as Andres de Tapia Motelchiuh to further their interests.

Another Spanish expedition led by Pizarro Francisco had to travel back to Spain to get the royal approval to conquer the Inca Empire. They were also able to alienate the Tlaxcallans and turn them against the Tenochtilans. The use of cavalries and cannons made it easier for them to conquer the natives.

These elaborate conquests lay credence to the claim that the Americas were conquered. The conquest was resource-driven. The European Nations were interested in the wealth and treasures of the Americas.

Reference

Roark, J. L. (2006). *The American Promise: Fourth Edition*. Boston: Bedford/ st Martins.