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The Spanish Language and its spread

A posting yesterday referred to the speech made by King Juan Carlos at the Cervantes Prize ceremony in Alcalá de Henares, in which he said that "Spanish has never been imposed. It is the language of meetings". We mentioned the surprise this must have caused among Catalans. We could have mentioned the Arab world, since an earlier posting gave details of the legislation imposing Castilian following the Reconquest.

We could have mentioned the Americas. As part of its campaign to promote Spanish, Spain has sent emissaries to the territories where Spanish was once the dominant language, the latest being the visit of King Juan Carlos to Texas and Florida. Special attention has been paid to New Mexico and Arizona and their native populations in an effort to offset the counterproductive 1992 celebration of the discovery of America under Spanish auspices. A group of Indians from the two states has been invited to Madrid, where, dressed in native costume, they were received by Prince Felipe. The unspoken message was that, unlike the gringos, the Spanish did not impose their language on the Indians. Can sometime enlighten us as to Spanish colonial legislation on the subject?

Ronald Hilton - 4/25/01



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