Governor Glen on The Role of the Indians in the Rivalry Between France, Spain, and England, 1761

Background: The powerful Indian nations on the ridge of the Appalachian Mountains held the balance among the colonial powers on the North American continent. The Six Nations of the Iroquois are best known, but the great tribes southward along the ridge were almost as influential - the Cherokees, the Choctaws, and the Chickasaws. The Cherokees were generally more friendly with the English, but the other two Indian nations were dominated by the Spanish and French. Governor Glen of South Carolina recognized the role of the Indian nations in the contest among the outposts of Spanish, French, and English colonies. He believed that a strong English alliance with the Cherokees in this instance would insure tranquility for Carolina. Following Cherokee attacks on frontier forts in 1760, SC and NC Carolina militias will burn over 36 villages Cherokee villages, forcing them to sue for peace in 1761.

The concerns of this Country are so closely connected and interwoven with Indian Affairs, and not only a great branch of our trade, but even the Safety of this Province, do so much depend upon our continuing in Friendship with the Indians, that I thought it highly necessary to gain all the knowledge I could of them; …

The Catawbaw Nation of Indians hath about Three hundred Fighting Men; brave fellows as any on the Continent of America and our firm friends; their Country is about two hundred miles from Charles-Town. The Cherokees live at the distance of about Three hundred miles from Charles-Town, though indeed their hunting grounds stretch much nearer to us-They have about Three thousand Gun men, and are in Alliance with this Government.

I lately made a considerable purchase from that Indian Nation, of some of those hunting grounds, which are now become the property of the British Crown, … [from] their head men, in the name of the whole people, and with their universal approbation and good will.

…[the French] have not been able to get the least footing among our Nations of Indians; …
… the Chactaw Indians had driven into the Town of Mobile all the French Planters who were settled either upon the river … so that a few of the French who ventured out of the Town to hunt up Cattle were immediately scalped.

… that it will be impossible to retain those Indians, or any other, in his Majesty's interest unless we continue to trade with them. … And since war and hunting are the business of the lives, both Arms and Ammunition as well as Cloaths other necessaries, are the goods for which there is the greatest demand among them-I therefore hope to receive instructions in this particular, as a rule of my conduct.

… the Tranquility of South Carolina will depend upon preserving our Interest with the Indians, which it will be very difficult to do, unless the presents are continued to them, and those Forts built which I have formerly proposed, or at least, one of them, and that to be in the Country of the Cherokees....

Source http://odur.let.rug.nl/usa/D/1751-1775/indians/glen.htm

1. Why does Governor Glen report that the nearby tribes are friendly? What is the basis for their friendship?
2. Evaluate how the English army should respond to Governor Glen's request for presents and at least one fort. Should large sums of money be spent in the southern colonies? Use examples from the text to support your answer.

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Militias: part-time, citizen soldiers

Affairs: public or governmental business

Interwoven: blended together

Alliance: a formal agreement to cooperate

Scalped: to cut off the hair of a victim as a trophy

Tranquility peace

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Retain: keep

Tranquility peace

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1. How does Gov. Glen believe peace will be kept?

2. What does Gov. Glen have his soldiers do in 1761?

3. Which tribes are powerful and on good terms with SC?

4. What types of inexpensive or free presents are needed to keep peace with Indian tribes?

5. Why is ironic that Gov. Glen talks of preserving the peace with nearby tribes?