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The second Anglo-Dutch war (1665-1667) : international raison d'état, mercantilism and maritime strife

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CHAPTER I

The powerplay of European politics 1658-1662

The European system of international politics after 1648

In the first half of the seventeenth century Western and Middle Europe suffered from catastrophic wars. Especially the Holy Roman Empire was affected terribly because of numerous campaigns. Even when no battles were fought, bands of soldiers still swarmed and looted the country. Cities were besieged and plundered many times. Hundreds of thousands of mercenaries abused civilians, looted and destroyed farms and assaulted women. Crops, livestock and savings were confiscated. Starvation and diseases such as typhus, dysentery and bubonic plague depopulated whole regions. During the Thirty Years War almost 35 percent of the German population perished. The survivors were left traumatised and ruined or had fled to safer places. Prints and paintings reflected these emotions.¹ Other countries were struck by the effects of armed conflicts as well, although not to the same extent. Destruction and violence were a very familiar sight throughout the continent. Most Europeans were used to the almost permanent state of war.

Most alliances more or less coincided with the religious lines that divided the continent. The struggle between Lutheranism, Calvinism and Catholicism was an important cause for these wars, yet not the only one. The German princes and cities tried to prevent the Emperor from improving his position. They hoped to maintain their independence and even increase their rights. The Habsburg Emperor for his part hoped to centralise government and to strengthen his influence over rulers. At the same time both catholic and protestant princes and cities fought over numerous bishoprics and other domains. Chaos was increased by foreign powers exploiting the German struggle to their own advantage. France hoped to contain Spanish and Austrian Habsburg power, Denmark wanted to expand its power in the north of Germany and Spain tried to hold on to the military corridors to the Spanish Netherlands and Vienna. Sweden aimed for domination of the entire Baltic and the

1 Wiedau, 'The horrors of war', 155; Burckhardt, 'Katastrophenerfahrungen'; Groenveld, 'Mars und seine Opfer'; Groenveld, 'Achtergronden en betekenis'.

Dutch Republic hoped to keep Spain occupied in Germany in order to divert it from its conflict with the Dutch. Thus, political power and increase of territory were other objectives that sometimes counted even heavier than religion. Roman catholic France for instance, following principles of *raison d'état*, joined the group of protestant states against the catholic Habsburgs and their allies in 1635.²

In the whole of Europe enormous amounts of money and soldiers were employed for fighting the wars. Yet by 1640 most states felt weary of the conflicts, sacrifices and devastation. German Emperor Ferdinand III and his Spanish allies did not have sufficient strength and resources to keep the struggle going much longer. Spain had to deal with revolts in Catalonia and Portugal as well. Sweden and France too were tired of the costs and the losses. In 1632 Sweden had lost its king Gustavus Adolphus who was killed in battle. In the Empire, the situation had reached a military deadlock. Both alliances seemed unable to deal a decisive blow and win victory.

The Dutch Republic had, from the late sixteenth century onwards, fought a war of independence against the Spanish Habsburgs. Most people had grown up and lived in a permanent state of war. The seven provinces had seen their debt rise enormously, though in the 1640s all had their own different motives for desiring a peace. Also a growing majority in States General felt that enough territory had been won and that the borders had been sufficiently secured. Their adversaries, the Spanish kings, had declared an official bankruptcy several times. Their countries had been weakened, depopulated and impoverished. Because of all this a call for peace was arising throughout Europe. Many people felt weary of all the suffering and governments were exhausted. Both felt that peace could and should be achieved.

By 1640 the warlike factions in all states were still very powerful, but their adversaries grew stronger. Rulers and politicians doubted whether armed conflict would be advantageous or peace was preferable. In 1641 dialogues were organised in which the conditions for a peace conference were negotiated. The conferences were to be held in Münster and Osnabrück in 1642. The continuation of hostilities during conferences, with belligerent hoping to improve their bargaining position, was the usual practice. Perhaps the decision could still be made at the battlefield or at least the enemy could be forcefully persuaded to give in to certain demands. Especially Ferdinand III continuously postponed the negotiations hoping to gain the upper hand. These attempts caused significant delays. Yet in December 1644 the negotiations finally began.

The belligerents concluded peace agreements that were bilateral in origin. Yet, there were many informal contacts between members of different delegations that caused the agreements to contain a number of generally accepted guiding principles. Most of the representatives were educated at the different European universities and therefore shared a common intellectual and professional background. This made it easier to comprehend and discuss all arguments, objectives and rhetoric. They understood each other's 'political language'. The delegates also met each other outside the official negotiations, exchanging ideas. Also all treaties were

2 Lynn, *The wars of Louis XIV*, 12.

drafted by jurists who shared the same academic background. The documents were therefore similar as for formulation and style. The collection of all the different agreements could, for these reasons, be considered the first European general conference that tried to outline a peaceful situation for the whole continent.³

Firstly, the sovereign status of many new states had to be recognised, within the Holy Roman Empire but also outside. Secondly, to secure and maintain the agreement for the Empire, Sweden and France were appointed arbitrators. Both states would even have the right to forcefully intervene in the Holy Roman Empire. A third important result of the agreement was that the princes of the different principalities within the Empire gained more independence from the Emperor. They now had the right to conclude alliances and treaties with other states themselves as long as these were not directed against the Emperor. Altogether the Habsburg Emperor lost a lot of power to the electors and princes. The Holy Roman Empire as a real political entity was effectively weakened. More than three hundred princes now had sovereign rights, and no central government or court could control them. Historians do not agree on this point though. Some claim that since the Emperor and Reichstag were forced to co-operate, new opportunities were created for both.⁴

This settlement did not include the British Isles, which had not been involved in continental wars since the beginning of the seventeenth century and were absorbed in their own civil wars. The most intensely ideologically charged and revolutionary phases of these conflicts, were still to be fought between 1648 and 1651. The Second Civil War, leading to Charles I's trial and execution, the purge of Parliament and the conquests of Ireland and Scotland had not yet begun. The new political elite in Britain did not share a common background with their continental colleagues. The Rump MPs had almost limitless confidence in themselves and God's support, and dealt ruthlessly with all opposition. The Royalists, Irish and Scots were forcefully beaten. In 1652 they declared war on the Dutch Republic.

As we have seen, a system of foreign arbitrators was set up to make the political situation in Germany somewhat less competitive and dangerous. Sweden and France both received territories at the borders of Germany and had the right to intervene when necessary. Sweden controlled the estuaries of the rivers Oder, Elbe and Weser, and France the west, allowing both states to move in their troops in case of conflicts or unrest. This way Europe's most unstable political entity should not again be the stage and cause of bloody warfare and destruction. Thus, the Westphalia Peace Conference finally concluded a distinct phase of international problems and religious wars. Traditionally, many historians consider it the end of religious wars in Europe, although some claim that this only happened when Cromwell died in 1658. Also it formed a structural basis from which international

3 Bély, 'La négociation comme idéal', 603-611.

4 Repgen, 'Westfälische Friede'; Duchhardt, *Westfälische Friede*.

5 Burckhardt, *Der Dreißigjährige Krieg*, 199; Malettke, 'Le concept de sécurité collective', 62-66.

matters and conflicts in the next one hundred and fifty years would be discussed.⁵ Yet again historians do not agree on this point. This, however, is a modern historian's analysis and some short comments should be made. Some states had not been involved in the negotiations and did not recognise the authority of the outcome. The Ottoman Empire for example, a powerful and ambitious force in the east, had not taken part in the conference. At least the short-term effect of the treaty was much less impressive. The system of arbitrators supposed to secure the European peace and stability, failed completely. Louis XIV abused the status of official arbitrator for his own political schemes. Any Imperial efforts to increase centralisation could be blocked that way. Moreover, France and Sweden proved to be among the most expansionistic and aggressive states in Europe during the next decades.⁶

In 1655 Sweden declared war on Poland in order to strengthen its position in the Baltic region. Two years later the Baltic conflict became even more complicated when Denmark attacked Sweden. Meanwhile, the struggle between France and Spain was not concluded until 1659. This conflict continued causing unrest in Germany. Despite this, most German electors and princes avoided any further escalation of religious problems by solving them diplomatically. They tried to maintain a relatively stable situation in order to not provoke French or Swedish intervention. As a result of the peace agreements the Empire remained a fragmented state that was not capable of powerful foreign politics.⁷ Foreign powers, notably France and Sweden, tried to take advantage of their powerful situation. Many German sovereigns co-operated in order to pacify politics and not to give cause for a new conflict. Yet the situation would remain precarious for decades to come.

The Westphalia Peace Conference also caused other methods of maintaining international peace to develop. A system of bilateral agreements, concluded between all major states, should keep them all at peace. By concluding defensive pacts no state would cause war, or so the theory went. If one state were to start an offensive war, this would immediately provoke a reaction of all other states.⁸ The one exception was Commonwealth England, whose proposal for a close alliance, possibly even union, with the Dutch Republic in 1651 was based on a search for security for a regime whose survival was still uncertain. The hostile reception of the St John-Strickland diplomatic mission and the rejection of the offer seriously alienated English opinion. However, once in power Cromwell's foreign policies conformed with the European pattern.⁹

Especially Johan de Witt, who had risen to power as the grand pensionary of Holland in 1653, was a great advocate of this system. He thought that a series of bilateral agreements between all governments would ensure stability and peace. France, the English Commonwealth and the Dutch Republic, now the three major

6 Burckhardt, *Der Dreißigjährige Krieg*, 224.

7 Groenveld, *T'is genoeg, oorlogsmannen*, 55-67; Gabel, 'Altes Reich und europäische Friedensordnung'.

8 Groenveld, 'In de schaduw van de Munsterse vrede', 13.

9 Groenveld, 'Als by het huwelyck van man ende wyff', 147-158.

powers in Western Europe, would be most important in this system and would simply force the other, lesser ones into their system. If necessary force could be used. Of course, the lesser states would then join this European concert and sign pacts as well. Eventually it turned out that this construction did not work either. De Witt's system would have required the co-operation of all governments, or at least the three major ones. Yet some states were unwilling to maintain a stable situation because it did not serve their interests. Fishing in troubled waters might be more advantageous. The Dutch Republic would benefit from a status quo. Dutch maritime trade would flourish and territorial integrity would be preserved.

Yet France and the Commonwealth in particular strove to increase their own power and wealth.¹⁰ Territorial expansion and increase of political influence were the prime motives for this. Increase of national wealth and economic power were other reasons. Usually, governments were not willing to conclude alliances when this would not directly benefit their interests. Understanding this, Johan de Witt and a number of smaller European states held on to a policy of active neutrality.

Since two of the most powerful states refused to participate¹¹ European peace and stability could not be enforced with a system of bilateral defensive pacts. From 1660 onwards, some politicians tried to make it work by aiming for multilateral alliances instead. A system of broad coalitions might secure all members from aggressive outside powers. European peace and security would thus be preserved. Other states tried to conclude alliances with strong neighbours to secure their own position and territorial integrity. Yet it only took a relatively small number of aggressive, expansionistic states to disrupt the whole system. One aggressive act caused a wide range of reactions abroad. One event could unbalance international relations. Thus, an international political powerplay developed which caused the threat of war to increase.

Altogether the whole arena of international politics changed; rules, motives and competitors were no longer the same. For a very long time opportunism and pragmatism had played a role in international politics, and even longer so in philosophy. In 1513 Niccolò Machiavelli published *Il Principe* (The Prince), the first purely secular treatise on politics. He had a pessimistic view of human nature which led him to conclude that princes would have to manipulate the people to reach their objectives: "For a man who, in all respects, will carry out only his professions of good, will be apt to be ruined amongst so many who are evil. A prince therefore who desires to maintain himself must learn to be not always good, but to be so or not as necessity may require."¹² This would lead to a stable and well-organised state. Ultimately, Machiavelli dreamed of the ideal prince overcoming all his adversaries by means of cunning and force. Also he stated that politics should be a science and therefore a strictly secular affair. It is not surprising that his publications were

¹⁰ Rowen, *Johan de Witt*, 252-256; Boogman, 'De raison d'état-politicus Johan de Witt', 379-407.

¹¹ In 1662 only a Franco-Dutch alliance was concluded.

¹² Quoted in: McKay, *A history of western society*, Vol. B, 417.

amongst the first to be placed on the Papal Index of Prohibited Books. But although Jesuit writers argued that a prince should always observe catholic norms because their states depend on the will of God, not on princely cunning, few rulers and their ministers could afford to listen. Machiavellian principles of *raison d'état* were increasingly applied in the formulation and conduct of inter-state relations.¹³ Thus, the doctrine of *raison d'état* and the ideal prince were still much discussed in the 16th and 17th century. Many authors like Jean Bodin, Thomas Hobbes, Baruch de Spinoza, John Locke and others continued the theoretical debate. Yet after 1650 it seemed that more and more politicians put the principles, set out by Machiavelli, into practice, though statesmen like Richelieu had applied and defended *raison d'état* some decades earlier. One should also keep in mind that Machiavelli based his theories on the highly competitive political situation of 16th century Italy. His principles could already be observed in praxis in this turbulent climate.

As a result of the Westphalia Conferences, the division between theology and politics became more institutionalised and accepted. Catholicism, Calvinism and Lutheranism were no longer a binding factor in keeping the alliances together. The Westphalia Agreements had also formalised the principle of sovereignty of states. This being agreed on, serving it became, more than before, an officially accepted guideline for policy. This created opportunities for politicians to let other priorities and objectives determine their decisions. Reason of state became a legitimate excuse for their politics. Agreements and treaties were therefore easily concluded and broken, making them worth very little.¹⁴ Alliances with certain states could be bought, but were worth very little. A higher bid made these governments change sides. Sweden and Denmark, for example, were both eager to align in exchange for money. Their practical assistance was usually not very effective, though the Danish and Swedish could always close the Sound for enemy shipping. Also both states were sometimes paid for not joining with the enemy and to simply remain neutral: passive neutrality.

Thus, coalitions changed very quickly, making the game ever more dangerous. Political and strategic isolation could prove lethal. In order to survive or even prosper, states had to orientate on the rules and objectives. Understanding the mechanisms was essential and mistakes could be deadly. Territorial safety and economic interests were at stake and politicians had to manoeuvre carefully and skilfully. It would prove very difficult, if not impossible, to create stability and peace in this situation, though some people were aiming just for this, as the delegates at the Westphalia Conference strove for 'pax perpetua.'

¹³ Kovacevic, *From The Prince to the Modern Prince: the political significance of the doctrine of Raison d'Etat*, 2-8; Giovanni Botero published *Ragion di Stato*, in which he argued that a prince should always observe catholic norms. Pedro Ribadeneyra was a more extreme critic of Machiavelli.

¹⁴ Kishlansky, *A monarchy transformed*; Malcolm Hause, *Puritan mercantilism*, 1.

Changing conditions in the tactical game

Between 1658 and 1660 many important events took place seriously altering European politics. In September 1658 Oliver Cromwell died, leaving England in a politically and socially unstable state. He proved to be the only one who could maintain, political, military and social order. His son, Richard, succeeded him as Lord Protector but did not have the ambition or capability his father had. By the end of April 1659, Richard had been removed from power. What followed was a period of political instability, causing England to reduce its participation in international politics considerably and leaving the initiative to others after having been a dominant factor for some years.

After decades of isolation during Charles's personal government and the civil wars, the Commonwealth increasingly had involved itself in international politics after the royalists had been beaten decisively. Parliament had then striven to strengthen its position abroad. In 1652 Cromwell had offered France an alliance against Spain in exchange for Dunkirk, then in French hands. Yet no treaty was signed. Also the First Anglo-Dutch War broke out. The Dutch were beaten by the strongest fleet in Europe that would from then serve as an important tool for Cromwell's ambitious foreign politics. In 1654 peace was concluded with the Dutch Republic.

Now preparations were made for an aggressive Spanish war. In 1655 the Spanish West Indian colonies were attacked and an alliance was made with Mazarin. The attack was mostly unsuccessful despite the capture of Jamaica, but in 1656 and 1657 Admiral Blake managed to intercept the annual Silver Fleet. In 1658 the New Model Army conquered Dunkirk. This capture was the crowning of a six-year period in which Cromwell had strengthened England's reputation as a major power.

After Oliver's death, the war against Spain was not continued as ferociously as before.¹⁵ Richard Cromwell and the successive governments neither shared Oliver Cromwell's confessional motives in international politics, nor his ambition. Lack of funding was another cause of this withdrawal. Taxes had already been raised to support the enlarged standing army and fleet. Commerce was depressed because of the armed conflicts and the burden became too heavy to bear. In December 1658 rumours about peace could be heard in London. This might have been wishful thinking since most people were tired of the maritime and commercial losses.¹⁶ Especially London merchants had been complaining about loss of trade and Spanish privateering. John Barwick wrote to Edward Hyde that '*what is got by commodities of Spanish growth in England is pocketed by the Dutch. (...) No marvel then the*

15 Stradling, *Europe and the decline of Spain*, 145-146; Capp, *Cromwell's navy*, 102; Malcolm Hause, *Puritan mercantilism*, 51-52.

16 CSPV Francesco Giavarina to the Doge and Senate of Venice 13-12-1658 and 14-2-1659, p. 269-271 and 289-291; The humble petition of the Lord Major, and Common Council of the City of London, presented to the Parliament on thursday June 2nd 1659 (London 1659); The humble petition of the marchants trading to the dominion of the King of Spain (London 1659).

*city should be so desirous to have peace with Spain, and war with the Dutch.*¹⁷ This group might support a new government that would bring peace with Spain and political stability. Thus, between 1658 and 1660 England played a declining part in international politics, but no longer as one of the most dominating participants, leaving space for others to take a leading part.

In 1659 France and Spain finally concluded their war that had started in 1635. France gained Roussillon and Cerdagne (the parts of Catalonia north of the Pyrenees) and several towns in Artois, Flanders, Hainault and Luxemburg. Mazarin promised not to aid England or Portugal in their wars against Spain. Philip IV's daughter, Maria Teresa, was to marry Louis XIV. Both states agreed that she would have to renounce her rights to the Spanish throne in return for a dowry of 500,000 écus d'or soleil.¹⁸

It is clear that most western European states now had to reconsider their politics. France and Spain no longer kept each other occupied. Other states could conclude alliances with both states without the risk of being directly entangled in a war. Both France and Spain would have the opportunity to redirect their resources elsewhere and design new political strategies. France had gained the initiative in European politics and would almost certainly try to expand towards the north and conquer parts of the Spanish Netherlands. To most European politicians it was clear that the treaty was merely a temporary interruption in this Franco-Spanish conflict. Yet it was not clear how long this spell would last.

Thus, for the time being, the Peace of the Pyrenees signalled a new period, in which all players of the game could change their positions, alliances and objectives. Of course they would always have to keep in mind that France had emerged as the most powerful state on the continent. Spain, therefore, was not the most sought after ally. Spain and the Spanish Netherlands were still very valuable trading partners to the Dutch and English. This economic importance increased even more as Colbert's protectionist policies and tariffs began to reduce exports to France. Yet it would have been a strategic miscalculation to connect to such a vulnerable player as Spain. In fact, a Spanish alliance would in the future be a meagre consolation prize when agreements with other great powers would be impossible. This, together with French ambition, caused the Southern Netherlands to be the pivot in this new stage of the game. France could be selective in selecting new allies. It had Europe's strongest army, the most active, extensive and skilful diplomatic system, a new and expanding navy and the resources to support them.

In 1654 England and the Dutch Republic agreed on the Peace of Westminster. In the First Anglo-Dutch War the Dutch Republic had been beaten in most encounters and had been replaced as Europe's most powerful naval state. After 1639, when

¹⁷ Thirsk and Cooper, *Economic documents*, 65-66 John Barwick to Edward Hyde 26-2-1659.

¹⁸ Vast, *Grands traités*, 177-187; Darby, *Spain in the seventeenth century*, 64-66.

the Spanish had been beaten in the Battle of the Downs, the Dutch position of supremacy had been generally acknowledged in Europe. England now took over this role, shocking most other European states. The strengthened Parliamentary fleet had proved superior over a large fleet of converted merchantmen that included only few real ships of the line. Again and again, size and heavier armament turned out to be decisive. Another vulnerability was the way the Dutch tried to protect their merchantmen. The English, on the other hand, concentrated their naval efforts on gaining victory in battles. In the peace agreement it was decided that the Navigation Act of 1651 would not be repealed, Dutch men of war would have to salute the English flag and compensation should be paid for the Amboyna Massacre of 1623.

These conditions, however, were remarkably lenient on the Dutch. Additionally, in secret the States of Holland had agreed to exclude members of the House of Orange from holding any office in the province of Holland. Cromwell feared an Orange-Stuart alliance that would endanger his rule and therefore demanded this term from De Witt.¹⁹ Despite their losses during the war, the Dutch soon recovered and the 1650s turned out to be a flourishing period for them. International status might have temporarily decreased, yet dominance in world trade continued as before.

England began a war against Spain, damaging English trading interests in the Mediterranean and the West Indies. The Dutch took advantage of this opportunity by expanding their maritime commerce in these areas.²⁰ The States General also stimulated naval recovery. During the war the fleet had turned out to be inadequate. In February 1653 they agreed on the building thirty large men of war. In December another thirty were ordered. Consequently, it was decided that the armament should be heavier and that the newly built ships were not to be sold off after the war.²¹ This standing fleet, the 'New Navy', would serve as an instrument to back up political and diplomatic efforts. It would also secure maritime commerce, this being the lifeline of the Dutch Republic. The English had proved very effective in damaging this.

During the war Johan de Witt had been elected Grand Pensionary to the States of Holland. Effectively he could more or less make Dutch foreign policy. The harsh lesson of the First Anglo-Dutch War taught him that a war with either England or France could not be won, only be survived. Also it was clear that maintaining the army and the navy at the same time would be unaffordable. The regent class faction around De Witt was not interested in territorial gains, but merely in maintaining a peaceful status quo in Europe that would guarantee dominance in commerce. The principle of active neutrality meant in practice that an offensive war should only serve to protect trading interests or territorial integrity. So, in 1656 De Witt and the States General paid serious thought about joining the Anglo-French alliance in order to achieve these objectives. Yet this was impossible as both Mazarin and

19 Jones, *Anglo-Dutch wars*, 141-142; Rowen, *John de Witt*, 215-237.

20 Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 727.

21 Bruijn, *The Dutch navy*, 75-82; Oudendijk, *Johan de Witt en de zeemacht*, 57-58.

Cromwell would have urged the Dutch to join in the war against Spain, which De Witt refused,²² but he never abandoned the idea of forming a Triple Alliance with these great powers.²³ This would automatically secure Dutch interests by neutralising key rival states. The international position of the Republic was therefore a very delicate one. It was important not to provoke English or French aggression because only these two states could endanger the very existence of the new state. The course of politics would therefore have to be set carefully.

However if crucial trading interests were endangered De Witt used the navy to protect them, first in 1655 when Sweden turned against its neighbours. Poland was invaded and king Charles X quickly conquered the western provinces and Warsaw. Again soldiers swarmed the land, plundering, stealing and abusing the people. This greatly alarmed De Witt, the whole region being threatened to get involved. He claimed that this conflict would result in 'significant difficulty in commerce and navigation' for the Dutch.²⁴ The States General tried to contain Swedish aggression by sending a fleet. Of course, the Swedes complicated matters even further by playing the English card. Their diplomats in London offered important trading advantages in exchange for political and naval support.²⁵ This conflict was contained rather easily though.

In 1658 the Baltic region was struck by war once again. The Danes had thought themselves secured by their Dutch alliance, and had attacked Sweden. The Swedes, however, proved to be stronger and quickly invaded the island of Seeland. The States General decided to support Copenhagen and sent a large fleet.²⁶ Officially, Richard Cromwell refused to get involved claiming that both Northern kings were his friends. Although De Witt considered England to be on the Swedish side he nevertheless ordered the commander of the Dutch fleet, Jacob van Wassenaer Lord Obdam, to avoid confrontations with English men of war that had been sent to 'observe' the Dutch.²⁷ In fact, De Witt was still looking for a peaceful solution. He hoped for a Triple Alliance of England, France and the Dutch Republic that would pacify the region. His hopes proved to be idle since both England and France did not want the Dutch to dominate the region and did not co-operate. Both had their own interests and were certainly not willing to serve Dutch ones.

In 1659 the States General decided to make Stockholm end the conflict.²⁸ Again they sent a powerful fleet. The Swedes were quickly beaten and peace was forced unto them. In 1660 the peace treaties of Oliva and Copenhagen were signed. In the

22 Rowen, *John de Witt*, 257-261.

23 NA SG 4566 SRSG 31-1-1659.

24 Scheurleer, *Brieven*, Vol. I p. 198, De Witt to Willem Boreel 15-4-1655; 'merckelijcke swaerigheyd in de Commercie, ende Navigatie' (my translation); Scheurleer, *Brieven*, Vol. III p. 68, De Witt to Nieupoort 11-6-1655.

25 Ibidem, p. 102, Nieupoort to De Witt 13-8-1655.

26 Ibidem, p. 453, De Witt to Nieupoort 30-8-1658; NA SG 4566 SRSG 31-8-1658 and 4-9-1658.

27 NA SG 4566 SRSG 11-4-1659.

28 NA SG 4566 SRSG 3-10-1659.

former, John II Casimir, king of Poland and related to the Swedish royal family, gave up his claim to the Swedish crown and Poland received back most of its territories. In the latter, Charles X agreed to return Trondheim and Bornholm to Frederick III of Denmark. Thus, peace had finally been restored in the Baltic. Yet rivalry over dominance remained an important political difficulty. England and France had been passive spectators in this and had not been able to control the situation in the Baltic. By 1660 the Dutch had fully re-emerged as an important player in the international arena. England and France even feared for a Dutch 'imperium maris' in the Baltic.²⁹ Both had left the initiative to the States General, who, by protecting commercial interests, re-established their international position.

From 1658 onwards, the political situation in England had been very unstable. Richard Cromwell was unable to maintain political and social order. He could not manage all the different factions within his Council. Moreover, the army fell out of control. When Parliament was called to solve the government's financial problems, senior army officers demanded that it should be dissolved. The army then surrounded London and forced Richard Cromwell to meet the officers' demands. Consequently, in April 1659 he was forced to retire from public life. The Protectorate had come to an end. In the following months seven different governments, all controlled by the army, caused many people to despair for stability and security. In March 1660, general George Monck headed his army on its march from Scotland to London. Monck had seized power but he was not yet sure how to exploit his position. Finally, he decided to support a Parliament that would invite Charles to return. In May Charles was requested by both Houses of Parliament to accept his father's crown. To the rest of Europe and particularly to Mazarin this sudden change came as a surprise.

The changes in European politics between 1658 and 1660 forced most states to re-orientate on their position and objectives. As always, they depended on many international conditions and developments. Politicians were not certain how to anticipate the altered conditions of the game. Some tried to advance their state's territorial or commercial interests. This way, they could also strengthen their own position. Others were forced on the defensive and hoped to conclude an alliance to protect territorial integrity against an aggressive neighbour. Some politicians and diplomats had even higher aspirations and were willing to sign treaties that would serve to maintain a peaceful status quo in Europe.

Politicians had to keep in mind national affairs in the first place. For this reason, shaping a coherent, long-term and consistent foreign policy was almost never possi-

29 Scheurleer, *Brieven*, Vol. III p. 470, Nieupoort to De Witt 4-10-1658; Ibidem, p. 534, De Witt to Nieupoort 24-1-1659; Ibidem, p. 777, De Witt to Nieupoort 5-12-1659; Scheurleer, *Brieven*, Vol. VI p. 10, De Witt to Govert van Slingelandt en Pieter Vogelsangh 30-5-1659; Ibidem, p. 290, Vogelsangh to De Witt 26-11-1659; Ibidem, p. 323, 324 and 354 De Witt to Van Slingelandt 1-1-1660 and 27-2-1660; NA SG 4566 SRSG 11-4-1659, 18-4-1659 and 3-10-1659.

ble. The ever-changing situations abroad were equally difficult to assess. The change of government or of a leading minister in a neighbouring country, for example, could have serious implications and would require careful assessing of the situation. Both Spain and the Dutch Republic hoped to improve their relations with England after the Restoration. France was not certain how to react to this sudden development. In fact, Mazarin seems to have been taken by surprise, but Louis soon took over control of foreign affairs. On the eve of the 1660s, politicians and rulers looked suspiciously to any developments. Finding a new international balance would, therefore, be an extremely delicate matter and would take time. Perhaps it would be best to wait for the dust to settle down and anticipate on changes. The 1660s promised to require some skilful navigation on the stormy sea of international affairs.

Manoeuvring in the early 1660s

When in May 1660 it had become clear that the tide was turning in favour of Charles Stuart, Monck and Parliament had started careful negotiations with the Royalists. Almost immediately, people anticipated on this political change. A large delegation crossed the North Sea to visit Charles in Breda where he resided in the Nassau Castle. Delegates from the House of Lords, the House of Commons and the City of London came over to seek Charles's favour and to congratulate him.³⁰ Foreign states also expected changes in their relations with England. It had become clear that he would become king indeed, and that any political approaches would have to be directed to him.³¹

The Dutch States General decided to send representatives to Breda. They had to express Dutch readiness to improve Anglo-Dutch relations. Along came a delegation from the States of Holland with the same intentions.³² Many lower institutions hastened to advance their interests as well by presenting him with gifts. Dordrecht, the trading centre of the Company of Merchant Adventurers, for example, saluted him with gunshots when passing the city on his way to The Hague. He received the fruits of the local fishing industry.³³ Naturally, the Act of Seclusion, which was intended to block William III of Orange from holding any offices in Holland and had been demanded by Cromwell in 1654, was revoked immediately.³⁴

De Witt welcomed the new ruler and immediately suggested an Anglo-Dutch al-

30 The Parliamentary Intelligencer, number 20, 7-14 May 1660; House of Lords: Earl of Oxford, Earl of Middlesex, Earl of Warwick, Lord Viscount Hereford, Lord Brook and Lord Barkley; House of Commons: Lord Fairfax, Lord Bruce, Lord Falkland, Lord Castleton, Lord Herbert, Lord Mendeveile, Sir Horatio Townsend, Sir George Booth, Sir John Holland, Sir Henry Cholmley, Ashley Cooper and Denzil Holles; City of London: Crispe, Biddolph, Ford, Bludworth, Bateman, Chamberlain, Frederick and others.

31 NA SG 12589.111 SKE, Nieuipoort to the States General 21-5-1660.

32 NA SG 3266 RSG 14-5-1660, 15-5-1660 and 25-5-1660.

33 Balen, *Dordrecht*, 885.

34 PRO SP 84/163 f50 Extract of secret resolutions of the States General 29-9-1660.

liance and close friendship between both nations. Relations with Cromwellian and Parliamentary England had been difficult. The change of regime was therefore welcomed. But Charles refused to negotiate in the Dutch Republic and first wanted to leave for his home country. Despite this refusal, he expressed his willingness to enter discussions on this issue.³⁵ Yet the monarch's true feelings about this Dutch approach must have been different. The Act of Seclusion against his nephew William III and the old ban on him entering the United Provinces were not forgotten nor forgiven. He immediately asked for favourable treatment of his young relative and Mary Stuart.³⁶ Obviously, the States General now hoped to buy the king.

The States General prepared an embassy to London on a short basis, as the desired treaty had high priority. The gentlemen paid their first official visit to Charles in November 1660. They proposed an 'unbreakable and everlasting alliance', but they already expected much difficulty negotiating this. The City of London and the House of Commons might obstruct the agreement since their objective was to advance maritime trade at the Dutch's expense.³⁷ Charles's attitude had changed as well. This was illustrated by his attempt to increase his influence in the Republic by exploiting his relationship with William III.³⁸

In early 1661 it became clear that negotiating a Triple Alliance with France and England would be impossible. Even securing a coalition with England alone would be difficult, especially when the Act of Navigation was passed in Parliament. The new act was strengthened and could more easily be enforced. De Witt now ordered the diplomats to sign separate treaties.³⁹ The agreement between the Dutch Republic and England was disappointing. Some problems were solved, but most were not. Anglo-Dutch relations had seriously deteriorated because of growing commercial tension and factional rivalry at Whitehall. No conclusive agreement had been reached.⁴⁰

To secure Dutch territorial safety and maritime commerce, the States General also sent a delegation to Paris. The gentlemen had to protect and advance commercial interests and negotiate a firm treaty, preferably a multilateral agreement that involved the three major powers. To secure territorial integrity, the status of the Spanish Netherlands needed to be discussed.⁴¹ They reported that cardinal Mazarin seemed to think favourably about a French-Dutch alliance. Yet a Triple Alliance including England, he stated, would be difficult since the political situation had

35 Rowen, *John de Witt*, 443-447; Japikse, *Verwikkelingen*, 34-41.

36 NA SG 3266 RSG 1-6-1660.

37 NA SG 3266 RSG 22-6-1660; The delegates were Michiel van Gogh, Simon van Hoorn, Van Beverweert and Ripperda van Farmsum; NA SG 12589.111 SKE, Dutch embassy to the States General 26-11-1660; Scheurleer, *Brieven*, IV p. 78-79, L. de Nassau Beverweert and Van Hoorn to De Witt 4-2-1661; "The English will not allow anything that would benefit the subjects of the States General."

38 BL Lansdowne MSS 1236 f115 and f122, Charles II to Sir George Downing 23-9-1661; CSP Clar 147-148 Sir George Downing to Clarendon 28-10-1661.

39 NA SG 4568 SRSG 21-3-1661 and 29-3-1661; Boogman, 'Raison d'état', 393-407.

40 PRO, SP 103/46 14-9-1662; NA SG 3268 RSG 18-9-1662; NA SG 12589.117 SKE 14-9-1662.

41 NA SG 8512, Verbaal Frankrijk 1662; Godée-Molsbergen, *Frankrijk en de Republiek*, 194-205.

changed because of the Peace of the Pyrenees. There was not yet clarity about Anglo-Spanish and Anglo-Portuguese relations, and so he was not certain how to anticipate on the consequences of Charles's ascendancy to the throne.⁴²

In 1661 Mazarin died and Louis XIV effectively took power into his own hands. He devoted himself to making and directing foreign policy. The international arena was ideal for increasing his *gloire*. Louis's aim was to gain a solid reputation and prestige.⁴³ The Dutch hoped for a commercial agreement, but Louis demanded a defensive alliance as well. Yet the Dutch were not prepared to enter a war because of the French.⁴⁴ Louis, on the other hand, had his reasons for a defensive alliance. Firstly, he believed that supporting the republican regime of De Witt could counterbalance the renewed connection between the Houses of Stuart and Orange.⁴⁵ Secondly, Louis was working to isolate Spain politically. He believed it necessary and desirable to gain more territory in the north. This would strengthen France's military position as it would break the Habsburg encirclement and would increase his royal *gloire*. Acquiring the Spanish Netherlands was therefore the central line of his foreign policy.⁴⁶ He thought the Dutch Republic would conclude an alliance with Spain if he would not side with the Dutch Republic himself. Don Esteban de Gamarra, representative of Spain, had proposed a Spanish-Dutch treaty in order to prevent De Witt from concluding the agreement with Paris. This was intended to protect all seventeen Netherlands.⁴⁷ Effectively, this would obstruct Louis's aspirations. The question of the Spanish Netherlands remained open. Also some of the commercial issues were not yet solved. Despite these problems, the treaty was signed in April 1662.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, the negotiations about the status of the Spanish Netherlands and the commercial disputes continued and so the agreement was not ratified until May 1663.⁴⁹ Yet Franco-Dutch relations were good because their interests did not collide.

Both Mazarin and Louis desired good relations with England as well. In 1661, Louis contacted Charles about a marriage between Henrietta-Anne, Charles's sister, and Philippe, duke of Orléans and Louis's brother. The English king immedi-

42 NA SG 12587.158 SKF 10-4-1660; The Dutch delegates were Van Gent, Van Beuningen, De Huijbert and Boreel; The French delegates were Colbert, Le Tellier and Louvois; NA SG 6778 LF, The Dutch delegates to the States General 14-1-1661.

43 Tapié, 'Louis XIV's methods in foreign policy', 3-5; Wilkinson, *Louis XIV*, 12 and 95; Ekberg, *The failure of Louis XIV's Dutch War*, chapter one; Lossky, *Louis XIV*, 24-25 and 122-124; Lynn, *The wars of Louis XIV*, 30-31; Rowland, *Dynastic state*, 34-35.

44 NA SG 6778 LF, The Dutch delegates to the States General 1-4-1661 and 19-5-1661.

45 Rowen, *John de Witt*, 465-469; Willock, *Letters and negotiations*, 123-126, D'Estrades to Louis 12-7-1661.

46 Lynn, *The wars of Louis XIV*, 32; Lossky, *Louis XIV*, 117-122.

47 Rowen, *John de Witt*, 465-490; NA SG 12587.159 SKF, The Dutch delegates to the States General 8-4-1661; CSPClar. 194, Louis to D'Estrades 12-2-1662; Willock, *Letters*, 203-210, Louis to D'Estrades 12-3-1662; Willock, *Letters*, 230-237, Louis to D'Estrades 20-8-1662.

48 NA SG 3268 RSG 3-5-1662; NA SG 12574.128 Lok.F.

49 PRO, SP 84/167 f111, Willem Boreel to the States General 11-5-1663.

ately agreed and suggested an Anglo-French treaty.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, Clarendon, the Lord Chancellor, hoped to borrow 50,000 pounds from Louis. This way, the negotiations about the marriage could continue without Charles having to call for a session of Parliament to ask for funding. Parliament would not have any influence in the matter and foreign politics would remain a royal affair.⁵¹ Louis wanted to hit two birds with one stone when he offered England financial subsidies for aiding Portugal against Spain. The Portuguese king had offered Charles the hand of his sister, Catharina de Braganza, along with one million crowns and the cities of Tangiers and Bombay. In exchange he wanted military assistance in the Portuguese war with its neighbour. France could now wage war by proxy, paying for English troops who defended Portugal against the last serious Spanish attempt at reconquest.⁵²

Thus, Louis tried hard to isolate Spain and hoped to stimulate this marriage proposal. Yet an Anglo-French alliance was not necessary for the policies he was developing and might even endanger future policy, and in 1662 Anglo-French relations became less smooth. Louis blankly refused to acknowledge the English claim of sovereignty of the seas and the naval salute. The English kings had, since the 1630s, insisted that every foreign ship should lower its flag when meeting an English man of war. In March 1662, admiral Lawson wished to enter the harbour of Toulon with his squadron. Yet he would have to lower his flag when saluting the French flag, which his orders did not allow him to do.⁵³ This little incident was illustrative for the increasing Anglo-French tension. Charles was angry because of the promising negotiations between Paris and The Hague, or so the French thought. Louis felt insulted because of English arrogance over the flag salute and pretensions to sovereignty over the seas.⁵⁴

In February 1662, rumours spread about the deteriorating health of Philip IV, the king of Spain. Charles then offered Louis an alliance. The French considered this offer to be an attempt to prevent French-Dutch negotiations. Clarendon had in fact ordered the English ambassador in Paris, the Earl of St Albans, to try sabotage this alliance.⁵⁵ Altogether, this English resentment did not enhance relations between London and Paris. These did improve when England sold the city of Dunkirk taken in 1658 to Louis for five million livres.⁵⁶ Yet an Anglo-French treaty was not signed and relations remained unstable.

50 Willock, *Letters*, 107-113, D'Estrades to Louis 12-7-1661.

51 CSP Clar. 94, 18-4-1661.

52 CSP Clar. 78, Conde de Ponte to Charles 14-2-1661; Willock, *Letters*, 148-152, Louis to D'Estrades 25-8-1661; CSP Clar. 144, 8-10-1661.

53 Bryant, *Letters*, 122-123, Charles to Henrietta-Anne 2-1-1662; BL Egerton MS 2538 f10-11, Downing to Nicholas 3-2-1662; NA SG 6779 LF, The Dutch delegates to the States General 16-3-1662.

54 Willock, *Letters*, 152-159, 160-163 and 183-184 D'Estrades to Louis 20-1-1662 and 16-2-1662, Louis to D'Estrades 25-1-1662.

55 CSP Clar. 107, Clarendon to St Albans 17-6-1661; Willock, *Letters*, 152-159 and 188-192, D'Estrades to Louis 20-1-1662 and 20-2-1662.

56 Browning, *English historical documents*, 851-852 Proclamation 6-11-1662.

The royal regime in Whitehall had not plotted a steady course for its foreign politics yet. Politicians and courtiers had different opinions on these issues. Some favoured a peace treaty and better relations with Spain whereas others considered an alliance with France desirable. Charles himself had certain obligations to Spain – which he had deliberately evaded in early 1660 by suddenly leaving Brugge for Breda, to be free from Spanish control. As an exile he had received some support from Madrid but in 1658 Charles's brother James had switched from Spanish to French service and had fought the Battle of the Dunes. James clearly acted on his own without consulting his older brother. In September 1660 hostilities between England and Spain ceased. Charles lived up to the promise he had made while he depended on Spanish aid during his exile.⁵⁷ All ships, captured since the Restoration, were to be returned. Yet Jamaica and Dunkirk would remain in English hands.⁵⁸ This was unacceptable for the Spanish. Still, the English regime had not decided which side to choose in the Iberian struggle. No official peace treaty was signed until 1667. The Portuguese deal of marrying Catharina de Braganza was tempting. Louis was eager to isolate Spain from England and promised Charles financial assistance. Spain tried to prevent this scenario by offering Charles an alternative bride and a generous dowry. First, one of the princesses of Parma was suggested, but Charles refused. The Spanish ambassador then suggested Maria of Orange, the youngest daughter of Frederick Henry and Amalia van Solms. Her mother favoured this match as well. In exchange Spain would provide the dowry and grant some commercial privileges.⁵⁹

Charles, however, decided to choose the Portuguese deal. There were some important advantages to this. First, he needed the money badly. Second, the English merchants had petitioned for royal support in strengthening their Portuguese trade. They wanted access to every part of the Portuguese colonial empire. Also, they desired some special privileges that would outcompete other foreign traders.⁶⁰ To protect these commercial advantages, England tried to influence peace negotiations between Portugal and the Dutch Republic who had been at war again since 1657. English merchants hoped to keep the Dutch out of the Portuguese colonial empire altogether. The peace agreement should therefore not be too advantageous to the Dutch. Sir George Downing, English representative in The Hague, even tried to sabotage the negotiations in order to make himself indispensable as an intermediate.⁶¹

By 1661 Portugal had become a client of England and a pawn in the French effort to isolate Spain. England's relations with Spain deteriorated quickly after the optimism of the Restoration. Spain had tried to demonstrate its good intentions by

57 Charles did not recognise hostilities against Spain as legally constituting a war because they had been initiated and waged by an illegal, usurped regime.

58 Browning, *English historical documents*, 851 Proclamation 20-9-1660.

59 CSP Clar. 83-4, De Batteville to Charles March 1661 (2 letters); CSP Clar. 97, De Batteville to Charles 3-5-1661.

60 PRO, CO 388/1 f26-47; PRO, CO 389/1 f50-57; Historical Manuscripts Committee, *Heathcote*, 18-20, Charles to Sir Richard Fanshaw 2-9-1661.

61 CSP Clar. 99-100, May 1661; NA SG 7011 II LP, Downing to the States General 18-6-1661; BL Egerton MS 2538 f92-93, Downing to Nicholas 28-7-1661.

allowing English merchants back on the Spanish markets. They even received privileges similar to those of their Dutch rivals.⁶² But the friendship vanished soon because of the Anglo-Portuguese marriage. The English began shipping troops to Portugal and there were even rumours that they would obstruct Spanish vessels that carried soldiers.⁶³ The transfer of the city of Tangiers from Portugal to England caused more anxiety and outrage in Spain.⁶⁴

Another reason for the deterioration of relations was the rivalry in the West Indies. England had conquered Jamaica and planned to expand its commerce even further. In 1660 Spain had even hoped to regain the island when Charles ascended to the throne. The Council of Foreign Plantations, which was established in 1660, advised more conquests in the Americas. Certainly this would lead to armed conflicts with Spain. In 1662 local hostilities broke out between both rivals. Spanish settlements were attacked and English ships were captured.⁶⁵ More competition was caused by the English possession of the city of Dunkirk. Spain tried to harm its trade by imposing high tariffs on all goods. The governor, Lord Rutherford, threatened to retaliate by taxing the surrounding countryside. Spanish authorities then discussed the possibility of outlawing the harvesting of all grain in the city's vicinity. Because of the high costs to maintain the garrison, England sold Dunkirk to France. Spain had hoped to acquire it from Charles.⁶⁶ Thus, England had established good relations with France and Portugal, but by doing so it had alienated Spain.

The war between Portugal and the Dutch Republic had been going on for a long period. In 1642 a ten-year truce was concluded. In 1645 the Portuguese recaptured parts of Brazil from the Dutch *West Indische Compagnie*. Officially the Portuguese regime had had no part in this and the attack was blamed on guerillas. But obviously government supported the succesful reconquest. It was however, the most prominent obstacle for concluding a Portuguese-Dutch peace treaty. Lisbon was also at war with Spain and was therefore very eager to come to an agreement with the Republic. Its representative offered compensation for Brazil and asked the States General to prevent the *Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* from committing further hostilities against Portuguese strongholds in Asia. Yet the Province of Zeeland demanded restitution of Brazil as an absolute condition for peace.⁶⁷ Five provinces then overruled the two protesting provinces of Zeeland and Gelderland, and concluded peace in August 1661.

62 NA SG 7055 II LS, Van Reede van Renswoude to the States General 20-7-1661.

63 NA SG 7056 LS, Sasburgh to the States General 25-1-1662.

64 NA SG 7056 LS, Van Reede van Renswoude to the States General 1-3-1662; Stradling, 'Spanish conspiracy in England', 269-274.

65 BL Egerton MS 2395, f270 Council of Foreign Plantations (1660); NA SG 7057 LS, Sasburgh to the States General 6-6-1662.

66 NA SG 7056 LS, Sasburgh to the States General 14-5-1662, 1-7-1662, 30-7-1662; and 2-10-1662.

67 NA SG 7011 II LP, Conde de Mirande, Ambassador of Portugal, to the States General 25-3-1661; NA SG 7011 II LP, States of Zeeland to the States General; NA SG 4568 SRS, 23-6-1661; NA SG 3267 RSG, 15-7-1661.

Ratifying the treaty was another matter that would cause much difficulty.⁶⁸ The Portuguese had granted letters of marque against Dutch shipping to many foreigners. A large number of merchantmen had been captured by Dunkirk privateers carrying such letters. In December 1661 the States General told De Miranda, ambassador of Portugal, that the treaty would not be ratified if these letters would not first be revoked publicly. Yet privateering continued and more vessels were brought up to Dunkirk. The province of Zeeland threatened to retaliate by granting letters of marque against Portugal. Only with great difficulty could the States General prevent this. In May 1662 De Miranda requested Lord Rutherford, governor of Dunkirk, to make an end to this private warfare. Rutherford then promised to do so.⁶⁹

It was not just Portuguese privateering that prevented the seven different provinces from ratifying; both the *West Indische Compagnie* (WIC) and the *Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (VOC) profited from the state of war to expand their interests in Africa and Asia at the expense of the Portuguese. In April 1662 the WIC conquered the island of Annobon. In the East the VOC captured many vessels and threatened Portuguese possessions in Sri Lanka and India. Also, Dutch privateers operated from Spanish harbours against Portuguese shipping. To prevent the Dutch from taking over most of the colonial empire, De Miranda wanted to have the agreement ratified as soon as possible, whereas it was in the Dutch' interest to delay this. The ratification finally took place in December 1662, but hostilities in Asia did not cease for one more year. In December 1662 Lisbon decided to send a representative to Asia to inform local Dutch and Portuguese officials about the peace treaty and to bring an end to Dutch expansion.⁷⁰ Hostilities there would only cease once the peace had officially been announced. Naturally, the Dutch would probably delay this even further to make more progress. Lisbon, on the other hand, needed the conflict to come to an end as soon as possible and decided to send a delegate itself.

After the Peace of the Pyrenees, Spain tried to secure its position and the territorial integrity of the Spanish Netherlands. After 1660 Madrid hoped for an alliance with England, but Anglo-Spanish relations deteriorated, as we saw. The Dutch Republic was another potential ally that could provide some support. Already in 1656 De Gamarra, Spanish ambassador in The Hague, had tried to persuade the States General to sign a treaty against France.⁷¹ Naturally, the Dutch refused to get involved in the war. In 1659 Spain demanded that the Dutch Republic and a number

68 NA SG 3267 RSG 6-8-1661, 19-10-1661.

69 NA SG 3267 RSG, 4-2-1661, 1-2-1661, 19-2-1661, 24-2-1661, 29-7-1661; NA SG 4568 SRSG, 5-12-1661; NA SG 3268 RSG, 16-3-1662, 4-5-1662, 12-5-1662; PRO, SP 84/165 f248 De Wicquefort to Joseph Williamson 26-5-1662, f280 Conde de Miranda to Lord Rutherford 23-5-1662, f281 Lord Rutherford to the States General 1-6-1662.

70 NA SG 3268 RSG, 14-4-1662, 11-9-1662, 1-11-1662, 24-11-1662 and 22-12-1662; NA SG 7012 I LP, De Miranda to the States General 17-4-1662; NA SG 7056 LS, Sasburch to the States General 5-7-1662.

71 NA SG 12575.31 Lok.S, De Gamarra to the States General 21-7-1656.

of Dutch-Spanish agreements be included the official proclamation of the Peace of the Pyrenees. Madrid had not even informed The Hague or asked for its approval. Spain hoped to connect the Dutch to its territorial interests in the Netherlands. Obviously De Witt was not amused with this attempted Spanish manipulation. In 1660 the States General sent an extraordinary embassy to Madrid.⁷²

In 1662, when the French-Dutch coalition seemed imminent, De Gamarra proposed a Spanish-Dutch alliance again.⁷³ Madrid fearing political isolation that would leave it vulnerable against Louis, kept a coalition with the Dutch as an option. For this reason maintaining good relations with the States General was of essential importance to Spain, especially when friction with England increased again in 1661 and 1662. There were some minor disputes over Dutch ships carrying gunpowder and weapons to Portugal, which provoked Spanish complaints. The States General then ordered the admiralties to take measures against these practices. In reaction to smuggling, Spanish and Flemish privateers captured a few Dutch vessels. The *Pellicaen* was captured and taken to Cadiz. The *St Jan* and the *Geboorte Christi* had been brought to Cartagena.⁷⁴ The States General then ordered their representatives, no members of the 1660 embassy, to protest against this. But these disputes were solved in a friendly way.⁷⁵

Altogether, the precarious situation in European politics that existed since 1660 had more or less stabilised in 1662. Two treaties had been concluded between the three major powers France, England and the Dutch Republic. Louis and Charles managed to establish friendly relations with each other. The new regimes in Paris and London had more or less settled down and other states had plotted a new course accordingly. A number of wars had been concluded. The States General and Portugal had drawn up their agreement, the Baltic troubles involving Denmark, Sweden, Brandenburg and Poland had been calmed down and England stopped all hostilities against Spain. Yet Spain had ceased to be a major power and was forced on to the defensive. This left the Spanish Netherlands in a pivotal position. Madrid had tried to solve this problem by offering treaties to England and the Dutch Republic, but this diplomatic effort failed. Louis XIV's ambitions reached northwards and were well-known abroad, but the Dutch Republic did not want France to be its direct neighbour. The Franco-Dutch alliance had solved this problem for the time being. Yet the status of the Southern Netherlands was still matter of much political discussion. It was clear to everybody that the Spanish monarch and his heirs were weak. Rumours about Philip's IV feeble health kept spreading. Louis was married to a Spanish princess whose rights to the succession he had (at least to his own sat-

72 NA SG 3266 RSG, 8-9-1660: Ebben, *Lodewijk Huygens*; Godée-Molsbergen, *Frankrijk en de Republiek der Vereenigde Nederlanden*, 193; Rowen, *John de Witt*, 286-287.

73 PRO, SP 84/165 f28, De Bacquoy to Joseph Williamson 21-1-1662.

74 NA SG 3267 and 3269 RSG 23-11-1661 and 23-11-1663.

75 NA SG 3267 RSG, 8-1-1661, 11-4-1661, 13-10-1661, 23-11-1661 and 13-7-1662; NA SG 7012 I LP, Wouter van der Houve to the States General 4-6-1662.

isfaction) preserved in the Pyrenees Treaty. By 1662 Louis was well on the way to completing his pre-emptive moves to cover developments after the presumed imminent death of Philip IV.

Thus, by 1662 French ambitions concerning the Spanish Netherlands were becoming apparent. England and the Dutch Republic had signed a treaty, but their relations threatened to deteriorate because of commercial disputes. These two fields of tension threatened the rest of and stability in Europe. The relations between the three dominant states would be decisive in this powerplay. In both areas of possible contention Dutch interests demanded defensive policies to maintain the status quo, but De Witt achieved only the alliance with France which contained no provisions to prevent Louis making territorial acquisitions in the Spanish Netherlands. France could now conveniently profit from the deterioration of Anglo-Dutch relations by putting political and diplomatic pressure upon De Witt. England could exploit Spain's vulnerability against the Dutch.