# Decay or defeat ? : an inquiry into the Portuguese decline in Asia 1580-1645

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# CHAPTER VIII

## THE VOC: FROM PRIVATEERING TO STRATEGY

### Dutch shipping

To what extent was the anti-Portuguese rhetoric of the VOC and the States-General converted into action and where and when did they succeed to thwart the *Estado da Índia*, the Portuguese merchants and, directly or indirectly, the *Carreira da India*? A comparison of the Portuguese and Dutch shipping data to and from Asia gives a first indication of what the final answer would become,[1] but if one weighs the actions against the words, until 1640 there was in fact remarkably little undertaken against the Portuguese presence in Asia.

During the 1620s the annual tonnage of the *Carreira* ships[2] and the number of heads leaving Lisbon were surpassed by the VOC fleets departing from Texel. Whereas the *Carreira* collapsed during the 1630s, the VOC continued to send ever increasing numbers of ships and people: a shipping volume of 10,000 tons or more per year and on average 3,000 to 4,000 men.

Noteworthy are the differences and developments in the size of the ships and the number of people on board. Until 1640 the Dutch ships averaged 400 to 500 tons and were therefore much smaller than the Portuguese ships. After 1610 the giant, 1000-ton-plus *naos* or carracks began to disappear and after 1630 the Portuguese vessels gave way, in number and in size, to the Dutch who after 1640 not only sent more but also slightly larger ships: on average 550 to 650 tons of freight capacity. Consequently, on the shipping route between Europe and Asia the Dutch had the advantage of a greater flexibility in their tonnage and spread their risks more widely, whereas the Portuguese put a similar number of eggs in fewer baskets.

The fact that the Dutch ships were smaller and had a better manoeuvrability had still another advantage: it enabled them to use the same ships in the Asian waters for trade and warfare.[3] The *Estado* not only had its own ships built in India, but the Portuguese merchants also used or chartered the smaller locally built native freighters. The VOC ships had to be built in the Netherlands, were generally larger and better armed than the local Asian vessels and the number of VOC ships retained in Asia was considerably larger than the number of *Carreira* ships that stayed in India.

The number of crew and 'passengers' on the Euro-Asian shipping routes was smaller on the Dutch ships (about 200 per vessel). Also the number of 'heads' per ton of shipping volume was lower: 0.24 to 0.45 against 0.39 to 0.66 per *tonelada* (or 0.59-1.5 per metric ton) in the Portuguese ships. The very high occupation rate of the carracks seems to indicate that per metric ton of freight they offered more room to take passengers. The Dutch indicated maximum of 0.45 was reached in the period 1620 to 1640, when the Thirty

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[1] See appendices 3.1 a, b and c and 8.1, or figures 3.2 a, b and c and 8.1 a, b and c.

[2] Or in the 1610s, if one converts Portuguese *toneladas* into metric tons of freight capacity (see appendix 3.1 a and chapter 7).

[3] L.A. Akveld, S. Hart, W.J. van Hoboken, *Maritieme geschiedenis der Nederlanden* (Bussum 1977) II, 28-32, 41-57.

Years' War assured a continuous supply of soldiers and sailors from the hinterland.[4] This was exactly the time, when the Portuguese had increasing problems in finding people to man their ships, such that their number of heads per *tonelada* descended to the indicated minimum of 0.39.

The losses of the Dutch departing and returning fleets were generally much lower than of the Portuguese fleets: due no doubt to a safer route and less dependency on the monsoons. In 1602 Joris van Spilbergen, on his way to Ceylon, experienced the strong counter current of the Agulha stream between Madagascar and the African mainland and from then on the VOC ships preferred to take the route South of Madagascar via Mauritius towards the Sunda Straits. In 1611 Hendrik Brouwer took another course: from Cape of Good Hope in a southerly direction to 35-40 degrees latitude, then continuing in an easterly direction until pilots thought to have reached the meridian of the Sunda Straits and from there in a northerly direction. The return fleet would leave in the last quarter of the year, through the Sunda Straits, with the Northeast monsoon to the Cape.[5]

The outgoing route was not only less time consuming, but also healthier: the greater part of the voyage took place through non-tropical areas, and with, one would assume, less food decay, fewer illnesses and lower death rates. But apparently, notwithstanding their shipping losses being much lower, the Dutch VOC lost, at least in the 1620s and 1630s, a higher percentage of its men on the outward voyage than the Portuguese.[6]

**The first contacts**

For the Asians, just as with the earlier arrival of the Portuguese, the intrusion of the ugly and greedy 'red barbarians' must have been an experience comparable with that of the Northwestern Europeans during the Viking invasions: 'their trade was piracy and

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[4]Twenty-five percent of the soldiers and crews originated from the hinterland, mainly Germany. In the years 1630-1640 the total of 29,000 heads was composed as follows:

| | Soldiers | Sailors | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dutch | 2,640 | 14,868 | 17,500 |
| Foreign | 5,360 | 6,132 | 11,500 |
| Total | 8,000 | 21,000 | 29,000 |

[J.R. Bruijn, F.S. Gaastra, I. Schöffer, *Dutch-Asiatic shipping in the 17th and 18th centuries* (The Hague 1987) Vol.I, 154-156].

[5]*Akveld* 1977: 196-199.

[6]The percentages of ships and manpower lost on the outward voyage during these decades, as calculated from tables 3.1 a, 3.1 b and 8.1 can be summarized as follows:

| | Portuguese ships | Portuguese men | VOC ships | VOC men |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1620s | 23 | 6.8 | 8 | 15 |
| 1630s | 0 | 8.3 | 2 | 9.3 |

piracy was their trade'.[7] But experience with the Portuguese had taught the Asian princes and potentates that by signing a piece of parchment or paper the danger could not only be averted, but even turned to advantage. In exchange for a monopoly on the purchase of pepper or cloves, they could ask for military support against their enemies and competitors and even against their 'protectors', the Portuguese. Furthermore, although the social behaviour of the English and the Dutch might have been less 'polished' than that of the Portuguese,[8] their arrival led to an increasing demand, a higher price for the Asian products and higher tax revenues.

Especially in the early years, the contents and language of the contracts often gave rise to confusion.[9] To a large extent, the language spoken between Europeans and natives was Portuguese and this language was also used in contracts or in translations.[10] In the flexible Asian market, where trade and politics were fully integrated and where not only Portuguese but also native traders played their competitive role, the signing of a trading document was more often a political move by the local chiefs. The Dutch often accused them of breach of contract, but what else could they expect? The competitive and political pressures were high and from the Dutch side there was never an obligation, at least none that could be extorted, to buy the products. Whereas, as in the case of Amboina, to be discussed below, the native rulers were contractually not allowed to deliver to others, they could never be sure whether the Dutch ships would arrive in a particular year.

The shopping list brought by the Dutch was the same as that for the *Carreira da India*: to Atjeh for the pepper,[11] to Amboina[12]

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[7]Hugh Kearney, *The British Isles. A history of four nations* (Cambridge 1989) 41. The similarity does not stop here: just as the Vikings, the Dutch were good sailors but bad soldiers.

[8]According to C.R. Boxer, 'Portuguese and Dutch colonial rivalry 1641-1661' in *Studia* 2 (July 1958) 10-11, especially the Dutch were known for their heavy drinking and fornication, whereas the women they brought from the Netherlands behaved very emancipatedly.

[9]De Houtman's contract with the prince of Bantam stipulated amongst others 'that they would remain mutually loyal and if anybody would attack one of the two parties they would consider him to be their common enemy and would resist him and help to dislodge him'. The prince of Bantam could not understand at all that De Houtman covered the 'emperor of Java', the prince of Dêmak, to whom the prince of Bantam was subordinate and who cooperated with the Portuguese traders, with homages and presents.[J.E. Heeres (ed.), *Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlando-Indicum. Verzameling van politieke contracten en verdere verdragen door Nederlanders in het Oosten gesloten, van privilegebrieven aan hen verleend enz*.(The Hague 1907-1931) Vol.I, 4-5].

[10]When in 1600 the Dutch concluded a contract in Atjeh to obtain the first right of purchase, before signing it they had it translated from Malay into Portuguese. It then appeared that the Dutch were expected to pay first and thereafter had to wait for the new harvest [*CD* 1907: I, 19-20].

[11]The Dutch had a certain goodwill in Atjeh, because the Atjehnese were regularly at war with the Portuguese in Malacca [C. R. Boxer, 'Portuguese and Spanish projects for the conquest of Southeast Asia, 1580-1600' in *Journal of Asian History* 3 (1969) 118-136 and Jan Huygen van Linschoten, H. Kern (ed.) *Itinerario. Voyage ofte schipvaert van Jan Huygen van Lintschoten naer oost ofte Portugaels Indiën 1579-1592* (The Hague 1910) 19].

[12]Steven van der Haghen departed in April 1599 with three ships, equipped by the *Oude Compagnie*. Via Bantam he arrived himself near Hitu, where the inhabitants asked for his support to chase the Portuguese from Ambon. During eight weeks he besieged

for the cloves and to Banda for the nutmeg and mace.[13] The second voyage of Van Neck sailed via Ternate to Macao[14] for Chinese silks, but when this led to disaster, he sailed southwards to Patani, where he concluded a contract 'to be allowed to build a house' to trade,[15] thus establishing the first Dutch contacts with the Chinese silk trade. Subsequently, VOC vessels would add this destination to their itineraries.

The first voyages, before the VOC was founded, were intended to make quick profits and produce their own return on investment, but they also produced information on the shipping routes and positions of the Portuguese and the Spaniards, which were carefully noted and brought home.[16] A first concern was to find secure refreshment stations on the route to the Indies, and once the sea routes were established it became mandatory to use them.[17] The route via the Strait of Magellan and along the West coast of South America was completely new to the Dutch and from a commercial and military point of view the first voyages along this route were failures. Nevertheless, the information they produced became invaluable in later years.[18] The fact that the voyages were made by more than one

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the Portuguese fort at Ambon, but without success [N. Mac Leod, *De Oostindische Compagnie als zeemogendheid in Azië* (Rijswijk 1927) Vol. I, 6]. In September 1600 he concluded a contract with the ruler of Hitu for a monopoly on the purchase of cloves [*CD* 1907: 12-13]. See also P.A. Tiele, *De Europeërs in den Maleischen archipel* (The Hague 1877-1887) VI, 25, G.J. Knaap, *Kruidnagelen en christenen. De Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie en de bevolking van Ambon 1656-1696* (Dordrecht/Providence 1987) 15].

[13]Treaty with Banda of 23 May 1602 [*CD* 1907: I, 23].

[14]The events in Macao, also from the Chinese point of view, have been described by L. Blussé,'Brief encounter at Macao' in *Modern Asian Studies* 22 (1988) 647-664. The action of the Portuguese in Macao, where seventeen members of Van Neck's crew were executed, was preceded by another incident that also was going to be used by the Dutch to demonstrate the treacherousness and unreliability of the Portuguese. After Steven van der Haghen had given up his siege of the Portuguese fort at Amboina, the ship *Trouw*, which belonged to the fleet of Mahu and De Cordes, arrived on 3 January 1601 at Ternate, where they found Frank Verdoes who was left behind by the Second Voyage, and who warned the captain of the *Trouw* not to go to Tidore, because of the hostile attitude of the Portuguese [F.C. Wieder (ed.), *De reis van Mahu en De Cordes door de Straat van Magalhães naar Zuid Amerika en Japan 1598-1600* (The Hague 1923) 304-310]. In view of the events at Amboina the Portuguese attitude can hardly have been surprising, but the advice of Verdoes was not listened to and the crew of the *Trouw* was enticed to go ashore and was killed. Van Neck arrived near Ternate on 2 June 1601 and heard there about what had happened. He also had the chance to peruse the letter written by the Portuguese of Tidore to the ruler of Ternate, telling him about the disgraceful behaviour of the Dutch. Van Neck's attempt to take revenge was beaten off, whereafter he left for Patani, but, due to bad weather, lost his way and ended up in Macao. [H.A. van Foreest, A.de Booy (ed.), *De vierde shipvaert der Nederlanders naar Oost-Indië onder Jacob Wilkens en Jacob van Neck (1599-1604)* (The Hague 1980) 98]. In view of the fact that in Macao he allowed two groups of his crew to go ashore to seek contact with the Portuguese or Chinese, he must have underestimated the speed by which the reputation of the Dutch went ahead of their arrival.

[15]*CD* 1907: I, 15.

[16]See e.g. an extensive route description in *Mac Leod* 1927: I, 21-51.

[17]These were found at Madagascar, Mauritius and later at the Cape of Good Hope.

[18]The first Dutch voyage via the Strait of Magellan was that of Mahu and De Cordes, who departed from the Netherlands in June 1598. The *Trouw* ended up at Tidore, where

company, which were in competition with each other and were little inclined to cooperate,[19] makes it all the more surprising how fast the information about sea routes, currents and wind directions, possible anchorages and the local politics and trade were conveyed amongst the sailors who left for the Indies.

**The first VOC establishments**

Notwithstanding the insistence of the States-General on offensive action, the fleet of fourteen ships, which on 29 April 1603 was dispatched to Bantam under command of Warwijck and which was still financed by the early companies, was a merchant fleet.[20] However, when it became clear that the pepper and spice trade was not such a profitable business after all and after Wolphert Harmensz had returned to the Netherlands[21], bringing back the news that an *Armada* operating from Goa under Furtado de Mendoza had been blockading the access to Ternate,[22] it became difficult to resist either the pressure or the temptation. Consequently, the next fleet, under Steven van der Haghen, was a real war fleet,[23] with clear orders to take offensive action against the Spanish and Portuguese and to conclude an alliance in Malabar.

Van der Haghen succeeded in establishing a treaty with the *sâmundri* or *samorin* of Calicut[24] but for a long time there was no question of doing any business at the West coast of India. Atjeh was far less risky as a source for pepper whereas textiles could

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the crew was killed (see note 14); the *De Liefde* finally landed in Japan. The ship *Geloof* returned via the Strait of Magallan, where it encountered the fleet of Van Noort who had departed a few months later, and went back to the Netherlands. De *Blijde Boodschap* ended in Valparaiso, where the crew surrendered to the Spanish. The fifth ship, *De Hoop*, sank. Van Noort, after an adventurous voyage, succeeded in reaching the bay of Manila, was obliged to flee and finally returned in the Netherlands with one ship. The four captains of Van Noort had received 'offensive' commissions from Prins Maurits [H. Hoogenberk, *De rechtsvoorschriften voor de vaart op Oost-Indië 1595-1620* (Utrecht 1940) 64-65] The intention of both voyages had been to cause the greatest possible damage to the Spanish and from this point of view they had not been very successful.

[19] *Van Dillen* 1958: 10-14.

[20] S.van Brakel, *De Hollandsche handelscompagnieën der zeventiende eeuw. Hun ontstaan - hunne inrichting* (The Hague 1908) 21-22.

[21] Wolphert Harmensz departed from the Netherlands in April 1601. After his arrival near Bantam, with his three ships and two yachts he chased away some thirty Portuguese ships, but encountered these again in 1602 near Amboina. However, this time he did not dare to attack them, because his ships were 'all richly loaded with mace' and he thought he did better not to put his ships with their valuable loads at risk [*Mac Leod* 1927: I, 6-7].

[22] *Sloos* 1898: 11-12.

[23] *Mac Leod* 1927: I, 16-21.

[24] Steven van der Haghen arrived at the end of 1604 in Calicut, the residence of the sâmundri (samorin). Their treaty aimed 'at the suppression of the Portuguese' and at trade with Calicut, whereas the Dutch recognized the sâmundri's right to issue *cartazes* between Goa and Comorin [*CD* 1907: I, 30-31]. The sâmundri offered Van der Haghen a military fortification, which however was never occupied. The Dutch must have felt to be in the lion's den on the West coast of India, where the *Estado da Índia* was at its strongest and where in Kananor only one and a half year ago a number of Dutch merchants had been hanged by the Portuguese [*Mac Leod* 1927: 52]. In 1608 the treaty was reconfirmed by Verhoeff [*CD* 1907: I, 53-54].

also be bought in Coromandel.[25] It would take until 1620, when the Moghuls encouraged competition among trading groups, before Pieter van den Broecke could be appointed 'commander and head of the trade of Mocca and Surat, residing in Surat'.[26]

It was in the Moluccas that Van der Haghen was able to carry out his orders to the full extent. In 1605 the Portuguese fort at Amboina fell into his hands and not only the local heads, but also the Portuguese who wanted to stay on the island, took an oath towards the States-General, the Prince of Orange and the first governor Frederik de Houtman. Thereafter, assaults carried out together with the Ternatans on the other Moluccan islands ensured that the Portuguese were also expelled from Tidore and Makian.[27] However, lack of manpower made it impossible for the Dutch to occupy all the fortifications at the same time, so that, in addition to Amboina, only Ternate was left with a small Dutch presence. One year later the European power vacuum that was thus created, was filled by the Spaniards, who established themselves at Ternate, Tidore and Makian. From there on the Dutch regularly visited Ternate to reconfirm their position as protectors of the local ruler, whereas in Europe the Spanish presence on the Moluccas became a justification for the warlike spirit expressed in the discussions between the *Heeren XVII* and the States-General during the Twelve Years' Truce.[28]

Another important fact that had a lasting effect on the future thinking of the VOC officials was that the important Asian and Portuguese traders on Amboina who had connections with Malacca, Manila and Macao, withdrew to Macassar. They formed an outlet not only for the Moluccan spices from Hitu and Hoamoal, the islands that had remained independent during the Luso-Dutch conflict, but also for the produce of the Ternatan cultivators. The latter were not in the least interested in delivering to the monopolistic VOC, as agreed in the contract with the sultan, because the merchants

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[25]The first Dutch representation on the Coromandel coast was in Masulipatam, in 1605. Before the Dutch were able to lay hands on cotton textiles and had to pay with silver instead, the Atjeh pepper must have cost them dearly [Denys Lombard, 'The Indian World as seen from Acheh in the seventeenth century' in Om Prakash, Denys Lombard (eds.) *Commerce and culture in the Bay of Bengal 1500-1800* (New Delhi 1999) 189-190].

[26]*Mac Leod* 1927: I, 401. See also chapter 9.

[27]The Portuguese had left the Ternate fort in 1575 because of a lack of supplies during their war with the Ternatans and in 1576 and 1578 established forts on Amboina and Tidore [*Knaap* 1987: 13].

[28]In 1605 the Portuguese fort at Amboina fell into the hands of Steven van Haghen without a blow. Frederik de Houtman was appointed governor. Subsequently Cornelis Bastiaansz, together with the Ternatans, chased the Portuguese from Tidore. The fort at Tidore was made useless, whereas the fort at Ternate was left with a small garrison and the fort at Makian remained unmanned, thus leaving the door open for a Spanish conquest of the Moluccas. By order of the king, Acuña attacked in 1606 with 1,200 auxiliary troops from Spain and Mexico and two galleons under Furtado de Mendoza. A Japanese threat against the Philippines caused Acuña to return, so that Amboina stayed in Dutch hands [D.A. Sloos, *De Nederlanders in de Filippijnse wateren vóór 1626* (Amsterdam 1898) 13-17]. In 1607 Matelieff de Jonge came to Ternate, concluded a new contract, built another fort and left thereafter for China [*Sloos* 1898: 13-17]. In 1609 Wittert arrived in Ternate and concluded a contract with the sultan, who yielded his tolls and domains to the Company as a settlement of the costs incurred for 'the liberation of his country from the Spaniards'.

from Macassar paid far more.[29] As a result, the monopoly on cloves, obtained by Van der Haghen as a reward for the 'liberation' of Amboina,[30] remained a net with a large hole.[31]

For many years the establishment and consolidation of its power and trade in the northern Moluccas and on Amboina and Banda would remain the first priority for the VOC. Continuing skirmishes with Portuguese merchants, Spaniards and local potentates assured a scene full of activity and variation, enlivened further by the presence of English who also came to buy spices and who in 1613 established themselves in Macassar.[32] In 1623 also the English that had to flee from Amboina withdrew to Macassar and in 1625 this place had become the nodal point for all spice trade that was able to circumvent the VOC attempts to obtain 'their' monopoly.[33]

In the course of these events the desired monopoly was to become an immovable corner-stone in the thinking of the VOC. In 1625, using four ships of the Nassau fleet, the local administration initiated its first *hongi* voyages, aiming at the destruction of the clove cultures outside the VOC and Ternatan jurisdiction. At the same time, the VOC tried to improve its position on Hitu by interfering in an ongoing contest between two candidates for the leadership of the island. Apparently they chose the wrong rival, because he did not get the support of his subjects and they went on with their cloves' business as usual. In 1637 Van Diemen interfered personally, using force, putting the independent islands under Ternatan control and obtaining free access for the VOC. The VOC finally accomplished an almost one hundred per cent monopoly on the cloves production and trade with the war against Macassar (1641-1646), when Hitu lost

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[29] *Knaap* 1987: 17, 20-22. The competition offered 50% above the price the VOC was paying for the cloves.

[30] *CD* 1907: 31-35.

[31] In the early 1620s the annual number of Portuguese ships arriving at Macassar varied between ten and twenty-two and 1625 was a peak year with an annual value of the Portuguese trade on Macassar of approximately 500 to 600,000 *taels* (say 18 tons of silver). There was also a direct connection between Macao and Macassar: until 1643 on average 1-2 ships, thereafter, until 1660 1-5 ships. In 1634 the viceroy was even considering to make the Macao-Macassar route a Crown monopoly.[George Bryan Souza, *The survival of empire. Portuguese trade and society in China and the South China Sea 1630-1754* (Cambridge 1986) 88-109].

[32] Upon his return from Asia, Cornelis Matelieff, in a letter to Hugo Grotius, wrote in 1608: 'First one should realize that we have three opponents in the Indies: the Portuguese and Spaniards who want to hurt us with their weapons; the English, French and others, who, whereas we are fighting the Portuguese, navigate freely and trade at little expense, leaving it to us, their protectors, to cover them against the enemy at our expense, and who thereafter harm us by bringing their spices to Europe, spoiling the market without paying us convoy money; thirdly the Indians who feel that, as a result of our protection, they are free from the Portuguese and the second hand merchants like Dutchmen and Englishmen and who are looking at their market for the highest profit, without recognition for the fact that we caused their liberation, and, according to the nature of such a wild nation, look for the highest price they can get for their products, so that, as long this situation is not remedied, the cost will fall on our side and the fruits on theirs' [P.J.A.N. Rietbergen, *De eerste landvoogd Pieter Both (1568-1615) Gouverneur-Generaal van Nederlands-Indië (1609-1614)* (Zutphen 1987) Vol.II 196-197].

[33] *Knaap* 1987: 19-20.

its independence.[34] It would however take until 1676, without sparing efforts, pains or costs, before the VOC would indeed have the power to impose that monopoly to the fullest extent.[35]

The fleet of Cornelis Matelieff de Jonghe was the next one, after that of Van der Haghen, to depart for the Indies. His most important commission was the blockage of the Malacca Straits and if possible, to establish a siege on the town. He was chased away by a Portuguese fleet from Goa, a lesson, which the VOC would still remember in the 1630s. Thereafter he visited the Moluccas and Patani. In a letter to Hugo Grotius of 12 November 1608, he made a sharp analysis of the situation in Asia and demonstrated good foresight into what would happen in the spice trade. One of his recommendations was to befriend the king of Macassar and to let him take the chestnuts out of the Moluccan fire by pushing him into conquering Banda and letting the spice trade flow through him exclusively to the VOC.[36]

One of the problems the VOC had to cope with in the Moluccan spice trade was the fact that the Asian and Portuguese competitors were able to barter with Indian textiles from Gujarat and Coromandel. The VOC had no direct access to these commodities and had to pay with the silver reals of eight, which they brought from Europe. It is therefore the more remarkable that for a long time the VOC directors remained lukewarm towards the idea of an establishment on the Coromandel coast, although it was there and, in particular, in the Gulf of Bengal, that the *Estado* was at its weakest.

In 1605 a first Dutch trading post was established in Masulipatam after the ship *Delft* of the fleet of Van der Haghen had left a head merchant behind amongst the Portuguese living there. A year later the same ship, now under command of Van Soldt, anchored off São Thomé de Meliapur and burned a few Portuguese vessels. Following this, by invitation of the Nayak of Karnataka, the first Dutch settlement was established near Pulicat and in 1610 they were granted the right to build a fortification there. Herewith the Dutch presence in the Gulf of Bengal, where for a long time already trade had existed from Masulipatam with Atjeh, Arakan and Pegu, was a fact. Unfortunately, before the fort was ready the Portuguese of São Thomé were able to assemble a militia that destroyed the fortifications and to take a number of captives, with the result that, in the eyes of the local sultans, the Dutch lost a considerable part of their prestige. It was clear, that in this way the Dutch presence on the Coromandel coast would remain under continuous threat and in 1612 Hendrik Brouwer stressed the importance of the Coromandel coast by stating that it was the left arm of the Moluccas and that the commerce there would be dead without the textiles of Coromandel.[37]

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[34] *Knaap* 1987: 21-22.

[35] S. Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese empire in Asia 1500-1700. A political and economic history* (London/New York) 1993: 177 and C.R. Boxer, *Francisco Vieira de Figueiredo: a Portuguese merchant-adventurer in South East Asia, 1624-1667* (The Hague 1967). In 1669 the VOC finally put an end to the free trade in textiles, carpets, beer and beverages in exchange for spices from the Moluccas, Banda, Macassar, Timor and Solor. On 29 December 1676 Speelman departed with 1,200 men for Macassar and brought this under jurisdiction of the VOC [*Opkomst*: VI, LXXXIV-LXXXV, XCI and CVII]. According to *Knaap* 1987:22 the Macassar trade was already considerably reduced by the war between the VOC and the spice islands of Hitu and Hoamoal (1641-1646) and the destruction of the Macassar fleet in 1642.

[36] *Rietbergen* 1987: 202-203.

[37] G.D. Winius, Marcus P.M. Vink, *The merchant-warrior pacified. The VOC (The Dutch*

In the political game that developed, the *Estado* in Goa contributed by offering money to the appropriate persons, but finally, Governor Van Berchem, through patient diplomacy, came out as the winner. He obtained again the right to establish himself as a VOC representative in Pulicat and to start the construction of a new fort called *Gelria*.[38] In 1615, after an inspection by a 'visitator-general', who was sent to investigate the bad administration of the VOC affairs in Atjeh and Coromandel,[39] the fort was reinforced. At that time, with a total population of 10,000, there were about fifty European families, mainly soldiers who were married to Christianized native women.[40]

Notwithstanding this success, both the Governor-General and the *Heeren XVII* continued to express doubts about the quality and reliability of the Dutch merchants who were sent there. In 1620 the newly-appointed Portuguese captain-general of the Coromandel coast expressed similar suspicions, complaining about the conduct of his compatriots, who were trading with the Dutch in Pulicat and kept them informed about the movements of his fleet.[41] Indeed, the Dutch and Portuguese interests in trade, privateering and piracy became fully intermingled[42] and, for a long time, piracy remained a major activity for both the Dutch in Pulicat and the Portuguese in São Thomé and Negapatam. Both sides presented themselves as the protectors of the Asian seafarers to such an extent that, in 1629, the Indian rulers along the Coromandel Coast were raising their voices against the fact that the Dutch were also issuing *cartazes* and attacked every ship that did not have one. For the years 1627-1631 the VOC accounts of the Coromandel coast could report an average profit of 87,000 guilders (1 ton of silver).[43] One may wonder what this actually meant.

Another Dutch settlement that for a long time would hardly get any support from either the Governor General or the *Heeren XVII*, was that in Hirado. The exchange of diplomatic letters between the Tokugawa *shogun* Ieyasu and Prince Maurits confirmed mutual respect and a mutual interest in trade but, until 1621, the Dutch factory was mainly used for the storage and dispatch of goods captured from Portuguese and Chinese vessels. The Japanese commodities exported from Japan consisted largely of food, iron and timber. Furthermore, Hirado served as a base for the Dutch and English privateering fleets until in 1621 the *Bakufu* interdicted all privateering in Japanese waters, the export of weapons from Japan and the employment of Japanese by foreign nations.[44]

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*East India Company) and its changing political economy in India* (Delhi 1991) 12-13.

[38] In the same year, Wemmer van Berchem was accused by the Governor-General of leading a too luxurious life, whereas he would have bought very low quality textiles for a too high price, causing great loss to the Company [*Generale Missiven* I, 43-44].

[39] *Generale Missiven* I, 30, 37.

[40] *Mac Leod* 1927: I, 122-139.

[41] *Winius* 1991: 15.

[42] See also Kenneth McPherson, 'Trade and traders in the Bay of Bengal: fifteenth to nineteenth centuries' in Rudrangshu Mukherjee, Lakshmi Subramaniam (eds.), *Politics and trade in the Indian Ocean world, Essays in honour of Ashin Das Gupta* (Delhi 1998) 191-192 and *Prakash* 1999: 236.

[43] *Winius* 1991: 177, table 4.

[44] Eiichi Kato, 'Unification and adaptation, the early Shogunate and Dutch trade policies' in Leonard Blussé, Femme Gaastra (eds.), *Companies and Trade* (Leiden 1981)

One important decision that the VOC had to make concerned the location of the port of transhipment, where all merchandise coming from the Gulf of Bengal, Patani and the Moluccas and destined for *Patria* would be brought together. In 1606 Johore became a serious candidate when the sultan appeared to be willing to give Cornelis Matelieff de Jonghe his support in the siege of Malacca. He signed a contract that gave the Dutch the right to use Johore as the nodal point for their trade without having to pay duties on the in- and outgoing goods.[45] After he had returned home, Matelieff recommended Jacatra[46] as the central point and to establish a contract with the local ruler similar to that which the Portuguese had in Cochin. He also strongly recommended the appointment of a *commandeur*, as the head of all VOC operations in Asia,[47] to bring order and discipline amongst the seafaring officers and merchants.

That *commandeur* came in 1609 in the person of Pieter Both, the first Governor-General. His instructions included the recommendation by the VOC *bewindhebbers* to consider both Johore and Bantam as the central point in Asia.[48] Arguments in favour of these locations were that they enjoyed the advantage of being reachable throughout the year by ships from *Patria*, and the trade in Chinese silk, preferably to be brought there by the Chinese themselves.[49]

In 1617 they appointed Coen as the successor of Laurens Reael[50] and his instructions contained further precise stipulations about a *rendezvous* location. At the same time they revealed a complete turn-around in the position the directors were taking towards the English and French presence in the Indies. In 1615 they had indicated again that no spices should be sold to Chinese, Javanese, English, French, Spaniards and Portuguese and that to prevent this, arms should be used.[51] Now, in the new instructions, they stressed that

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207-229.

[45] E. Netscher, *De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak 1602 tot 1865* (Batavia 1870) 9-14. *CD* 1907: I, 44 and 47. In 1608 Verhoeff, with the next siege of Malacca, expected to get assistance again from Johore. But for more than a year the sultan was already engaged in negotiations with the Portuguese, knowing full well that the Dutch would leave again, so that he would be standing alone again against the Portuguese. The sultan did no longer want to adhere to the contract for the construction of a reinforcement near the river, once concluded with Matelieff [*Opkomst*: III, 80]. Verhoeff left two ships behind, but these left soon when news reached Asia about the negotiations for a truce, and they received order to extend the territory of the Company as far as possible in the time still available [*Opkomst*: III, 83-84]. In 1610 Johore saw itself forced, due to lack of money and ships and after a Portuguese blockade which lasted one year, to conclude a peace treaty with Malacca [*Opkomst* III, 89-90]. See also chapter 9.

[46] The original Dutch name for modern Jakarta.

[47] *Rietbergen* 1987: 197-201.

[48] Instruction to Pieter Both of 16 November 1609 in P. Mijer, *Verzameling van instructiën, ordonnanciën en reglementen voor de regering van Nederlandsch Indië* (Batavia 1848) 9.

[49] 'As stated in the memorandum on goods coming from there, the trade from China of fine white silk and curiosities should be promoted as much as possible, either by trading directly in China, or otherwise, by trying to get the Chinese to supply the Chinese merchandise themselves' [ *Mijer* 1848: article 25 of Instruction to Pieter Both].

[50] *RSG NR*, Vol.3 nr 1631.

[51] Gentlemen XVII to Coen, 30/11/1615, *Coen*: IV, 329-332.

in choosing the location of the *rendezvous* the presence of other nations, like the English, the French and others should also be taken into account. More important still, it had to be accessible in every monsoon, both for in- and outgoing vessels and 'it should also be convenient for the Chinese, so that they could get there safely and without problems during the monsoon'.[52]

In the end, the final decision was left to Coen and Jacatra was his choice. With respect to the presence of English and French competitors in the Indies, Coen's ideas differed considerably from what the directors at home wrote to him and in the Chinese love for work he saw great prospects for colonisation.

**The Twelve Years' Truce**

Towards 1609 the VOC officials in Asia received news of the negotiations for a truce in Europe. The message from Amsterdam was accompanied by the order to be careful in giving this information to the local princes, but at the same time, to extend the territory of the Company, conclude treaties with the 'Indian princes' and acquire new settlements for the VOC offices as much as this was possible in the time still available.[53] Verhoeff, who was on his way from Johore to Patani received an additional order: to take Banda and the Moluccas 'by treaty or by force' before 1 September 1609, because: 'the islands of Banda and the Moluccas are the principle target we are shooting at'.[54] In their instruction of 1609 to Pieter Both the *Heeren XVII* again stipulated with great emphasis their desire to obtain the monopoly of the trade on the Moluccan islands, including Amboina and Banda.[55]

The arguments about a hostile threat which, from the beginning of the Twelve Years' Truce, the VOC used in its discussions of the VOC directors with the States-General, also found their origin in the desire to obtain a hundred per cent spice monopoly in the Moluccas. The VOC shipping data (see appendix 8.1) confirm that their continued insistence on more ships and more money met with success. In the years 1610-1620 not only the number of ships that left for the Indies, but also of the ships that were kept behind in Asia, increased greatly. However, besides normal replacement and a more intense Asian trade, they would mainly be used in continuing confrontations with the Spaniards.

The direct cause of the increased Dutch aggression against the Castilians in Asia was the defeat near the Philippines suffered by Wittert, who died there on 25 April 1610, more than two weeks after the Twelve Years' Truce should have taken effect in Asia. It is certainly true that in Asia the news of the Truce could only

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[52] *Mijer* 1848: Instruction to Coen of 22 August 1617, article 76 and 77.

[53] *Opkomst*: III, 83-84.

[54] *Coen*: VI, 37. From Patani Verhoeff set course to Banda where, very much against the will of the inhabitants, he wanted to erect a fort and where he was killed with fifty others. The English who were on the island were accused of having aroused the population against the Dutch. Coen was probably on board with the vice-admiral of the fleet, Hoen, who subsequently founded the fort Nassau and dislodged the English. The murder of Verhoeff must have made a deep impression on Coen. In his 'Discourse to the Gentlemen Administrators regarding the State of the Netherlands Indies' of 1 January 1614 [*Coen*: VI, 451-474] he repeated the story and proposed to populate Banda with Dutchmen or other people. Later on he suited his action to his words.

[55] *Mijer* 1848: 13, article 22.

penetrate very slowly and that for a long time governors or captains could pretend not to know about it.[56] However, the chronological sequence of events around the death of Wittert suggest that the Dutch were at least guilty of provocation.[57]

As mentioned earlier, on 24 March 1611 the States-General accepted the resolution that if the Spaniards did not adhere to the Truce, the Dutch would have the right to defend themselves and their allies.[58] This gave the *Heeren XVII* sufficient reason to appear again before the States-General on 28 July 1611 with the news of Wittert's defeat and a request for six ships, to prevent a Spanish attack on the Moluccas, which they said was expected. They were promised four ships, to be deducted from the subsidy, and to be equipped by the Company.[59]

In the meantime, the Castilians were not sitting still. In April 1612, after the news had come from Amsterdam that the Dutch were preparing twenty ships for dispatch to the Asian waters, two galleons and six caravels were sent to join the combined Iberian fleet in the Philippines. The Manila part of the fleet reached its destination in April 1614 without any losses.[60]

Of the Dutch fleet that left the Netherlands in 1612, six ships with four hundred soldiers on board were destined for Amboina, where they arrived in April 1613. Meanwhile, the situation in the Moluccas had become unstable and, to say the least, confusing. The Ternatans and Tidorese were mutual arch-enemies and Hitu remained neutral. The Dutch had forts at Amboina, Makian, Motir and Halmaheira, the Spaniards at Tidore, but the two European 'nations' were neighbours at Ternate. The six new VOC ships brought the total fleet that was assembled to thirteen ships with seven hundred men, amongst whom fifty Japanese mercenaries, so that it should be possible to move the balance of power in favour of the Dutch. Following the advice of the sultan of Ternate, the attack on Tidore began soon after their arrival. As Mac Leod wrote, 'the result of the expedition was incomprehensible'. With all auxiliary troops together, the force on the Dutch side consisted of 2,000 men who assaulted the fort twice in vain. When the Spaniards in the end decided to leave the fort, the Dutch sailors were chased away by thirty-six Tidorese, who had stayed behind. Pieter Both wrote that: 'sailors are good soldiers as long as they have the wind behind them'.[61]

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[56] When Pieter Both, after his arrival at Amboina, on 20 August 1611 went to see Jeronimo de Silva, the governor of the Spanish possessions at Ternate and Tidore, the latter still denied to have any knowledge of a truce [*Mac Leod* 1927: I, 104].

[57] On 23 September 1609 Wittert left Ternate for the Philippines to privateer on Chinese junks. An interesting detail is that he left the Japanese unharmed. More than two weeks after the date that the Twelve Years Truce would take effect [9 April 1610, see Sloos 1898: 25] Wittert was still in Philippine waters, trying to thwart the Chinese and Spanish trade. His fleet was beaten by the Spanish governor Don Juan de Silva [Sloos 1898: 22-25] and Wittert was killed. De Silva had hoped to get support from the Portuguese fleet from Goa, which at that time was in Macao, with the order to cooperate with the Spaniards in Manila. But the Portuguese commander refused, because De Silva could not show him the order of the king to cooperate in this way [Boxer 1985: VI, 5]. As a consequence, the attack on Wittert became a one hundred percent Castilian affair.

[58] See chapter 7 and *RSG NR*, Vol.1, 350.

[59] *RSG NR*, Vol.1, 432, 434, 437.

[60] *Boxer* 1985: VI, 3-4. See also chapter 3.

[61] *Mac Leod* 1927: I, 110-111.

After these events the Dutch and Spaniards continued to accuse each other of violating the Truce in Asia and in 1614 vice-governor Reael ordered another raid on the Philippines. He could refer to a decision, which the VOC *bewindhebbers* had taken in August 1612 after they had received the news from Pieter Both that the Spaniards and Portuguese did not adhere to the Truce. The *Heeren XVII* had then decided 'to take revenge and to proceed accordingly with all means of offence'.[62] This was quite a change of direction, compared to the defensive attitude as approved by the States-General.

The king of Spain kept himself rather well informed about the Dutch preparations for a confrontation in Asia and the policy of subsidies that was followed and he briefed his viceroy and captains regularly. In 1614, for instance, he wrote his viceroy that the States of Holland had awarded 800,000 guilders to the 'companhia que chamam da India', to be paid in four years.[63] But the Spanish and Portuguese side would hardly ever know what location the Dutch were aiming for: Mozambique, Mombasa, Goa, Galle, Malacca or Macao,[64] whereas in fact their efforts were now directed against the Spaniards in the Moluccas and the Chinese trade with the Philippines.

The tense relations between the Spaniards and Dutch in Asia during the Truce were aggravated by two new expeditions. In 1615 Steven van der Haghen left for Malacca, in search of the Spanish fleet of Don Juan de Silva, who according to well informed sources, would be on his way to the Moluccas, with the intention to chase the Dutch from their footholds everywhere in the Indies.[65] At the same time the expedition of Joris van Spilbergen sailed around the Strait of Magellan, along the West coast of South America and to the Philippines (1614-1616). Van Spilbergen had received an 'act of hostility against the Castilians and Portuguese' from the States-General and, if we may believe the Castilians who were negotiating a possible continuation of the Truce, he made ample

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[62] *Mac Leod* 1927: I, 112.

[63] *DR*: II, 112 (10/10/1611) and III, 43 (15/2/1614), 146 (18/3/1614), 264 (21/2/1615), 384 (6/2/1616).

[64] *Década* XIII: 103-106, 112.

[65] Steven van den Haghen departed in October 1615 from Bantam, on the rumor that in Malacca a large number of Portuguese ships would be waiting for the fleet from China. In fact, they appeared to be two Portuguese galleons and a carrack, which were left over after their fleet had been apprehended by the Atjehnese (*Boxer* 1985: VI, 5). Van den Haghen's attack was successful. Five days after he had left Malacca, first to wait for the fleet from China and thereafter to assist the Moluccas against the fleet of De Silva, the latter arrived in Malacca. Already since 1612 Don Juan de Silva had been preparing himself for an expedition to Bantam, hoping to chase the Dutch from there with the support of Portuguese ships and thereafter to clear also Banda, Amboina and Ternate of the Dutch. Because of the strong resistance against his plans, from the fiscal and from the *Audiencia* of the Philippines, early 1616 he was compelled to make the second part of his plan public, in printed form, for discussion by the *junta* of the *estados*. In the end he was allowed to leave Manila in February 1616, with sixteen big galleons of 600 to 2,000 tons, with 300 bronze guns, 2,000 Spaniards and 3,000 Asians on board, including 500 Japanese, who were put ashore again later because they were considered unreliable. It was the largest *armada* ever brought together in Manila. Upon his arrival in Malacca in April 1616 De Silva was told that the three (instead of the six he had been promised) Portuguese ships in the mean time had been destroyed. Shortly thereafter De Silva died of dysentery. His fleet returned to the Philippines (*Sloos* 1898: 31-33).

use of this opportunity.[66] After his arrival in Manila bay he was informed that de Silva with his *Armada* had just left for the Moluccas, so that he steered his course in that direction, arriving there on 30 March 1616. A few weeks later De Silva's fleet arrived in Malacca, where he died, so that the Spanish fleet returned to Manila.[67]

The final result of all these miscommunications, ship movements and missed chances was that the Councillors of the Indies, who were always on the move, were now, by exception, together in Ternate and they used this opportunity to elect Laurens Reael as the new Governor-General. The number of ships in Ternate was seventeen and the next question was how to make the best use of this fleet, to try again to conquer the Spanish fort at Ternate, or to cruise before the Philippines, robbing a few Chinese junks here or there and maybe even capturing a Spanish ship. In the end their desire to make money to cover some of the costs of the enterprise prevailed above strategic thinking and they chose the latter option. In 1614 the States-General had already expressed their full support for this move by issuing a general commission for privateering against the Portuguese and the Castilians.[68]

The idea that the VOC should be able to create additional income and possibly even a positive cash flow in Asia with privateering not only against the Iberians, but also against their 'friends' (the indigenous traders), probably found its origin in the legendary booty of the *Santa Catarina*. This kind of occasion did not present itself too often, but during the first twenty years of the company's existence, between hundred and fifty and two-hundred big and small prizes were taken in Asia, with an estimated gross revenue at the auctions of 10 to 20 million guilders[69] (5-10 tons of silver per annum). These quantities were nibbled away from the Portuguese trade via Macassar (which had a total volume of 18 tons of silver), the Chinese trade with the Philippines (35 tons of silver) and from

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[66] *Mac Leod* 1927: I, 159-167. One can well agree with Mac Leod that the voyage of Joris van Spilbergen was one of the most remarkable voyages ever made by ships of the Company, albeit in a different sense. One may wonder whether this type of wild action served any purpose at all, but when the negotiations about a continuation of the truce began in 1618, the Spanish ministers insisted that indemnification should be asked for the damages caused by the Spilbergen expedition and for the expenditures for the defence of Callao, Guayaquil, Acapulco and Manila. The Spaniards were in particular irritated by the high expenditures in the Moluccas and the Philippines, where it had been necessary during the Truce to maintain garrisons and a naval power, whereas in Manila bay three sea battles had taken place. In 1620 the Spaniards had four forts at Ternate with a total of 150 soldiers and 35 guns, on which, together with their force in Tidore, since 1606 more than 1 million ducats had been spent (35 tons of silver). The total expenditures of the Mexican treasury in the Philippines and the Moluccas in the period 1607-1619 would have amounted to about 7 million ducats (247 tons of silver), equal to a third of the expenditures in the same period on the army in Flanders [ Jonathan I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic and the Hispanic world 1606-1661* (Oxford 1982) 68-69]. Comparison with appendix 4.2 columns 5, 6 or 7 suggests that this figure was an exaggeration used for negotiating purposes, but it is certainly true that the silver transfers from Mexico to the Philippines increased considerably over this period.

[67] See note 66.

[68] See chapter 7.

[69] Victor Enthoven, *Zeeland en de opkomst van de Republiek. Handel en strijd in de Scheldedelta c.1550-1621* (Leiden 1996) 212-213.

all kinds of other Portuguese and indigenous shipments South and East of the Indian continent. Until 1622 the VOC income from privateering would have amounted to 10 million guilders,[70] which was more than half the average amount of silver which it had been sending to Asia each year, but which did not take in account the costs and losses of the ships and their crews.

The expedition of Jan Dirkszoon Lam with ten ships to Manila, ended in defeat,[71] but this did not keep him from recommending an annual blockade of the Philippines to the *Heeren XVII*. The objectives he had in mind were to damage the trade and thereby the treasury of Manila, to halt the Spanish supplies to the Moluccas and to force the Chinese junks to move their trade from the Philippines to Bantam.[72]

Still, before his ideas were implemented much resistance had to be overcome, amongst others from Coen. After too many defeats, he was of the opinion that the risks of a blockade of the Philippines was too great to send many ships there, only 'to catch a bird in the air',[73] whereas there was still so much to do against the English in the Moluccas, Amboina, Banda, Bantam and Jacatra.[74]

In 1620 Coen had to change his position drastically when, on 27 March, with the English ship *Bull*, he received the news that the VOC and EIC had decided to co-operate.[75] A Council of Defence

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[70] *Enthoven* 1996: 212-213.

[71] *Mac Leod* 1927: I, 168-174.

[72] *Sloos* 1898: 46.

[73] *Sloos* 1898: 48. Coen was still more convinced of his ideas when Westerwolt, during his blockade of Manila during the years 1618-1619, was obliged to break up two of his five ships because of age. The blockade did not yield more than 34,000 guilders whereas the majority of the Chinese junks were warned and escaped. In 1620 another fleet of three ships was sent, which almost succeeded in capturing a silverfleet of three vessels. Due to bad weather and darkness they escaped, whereas the silver of one of the ships that had run ashore, could be unloaded by the Spaniards. The Dutch members of the crew spread the rumor that the volume of the cargo amounted to 'two million in silver' and Coen hastened to inform the VOC administrators accordingly (Coen to Administrators on 6/5/1621, *Coen* I: 635 and *Sloos* 1898: 49-51). One of the three Dutch ships wrecked.

[74] Coen to Gentlemen XVII 26/7/1618, *Coen* I: 371, 377 and 5/10/1618, *Idem* 401.

[75] Already in 1611 the English had raised objections, directed towards the States-General, against the Dutch actions against English ships in the Moluccas. In 1612 they increased the pressure by appearing regularly in their meetings to ask for clarification and satisfaction (*RSG NR,* Vol.1, 570, 601, 603-606, 627, 706). Envoy Winwood accused the Dutch of following the Spanish monopoly aspirations. The answer was that the Company, because of its treaties with the local princes, had the monopoly and that the English could only be allowed to participate after an agreement between the English Company and the VOC. Winwood immediately picked up this lead and not long thereafter negotiations began, in which, as the VOC's lawyer, also Hugo Grotius participated. In 1616 the VOC complained about acts of violence by the English (*RSG NR*, Vol.2, 638 and 645) and in 1618 the VOC administrators moved a 'doleance' (complaint), describing the damage and nuisance to the Company caused by the English (*RSG NR*, Vol.3, nr 2589). A few months later the English envoy informed the States that the English merchants had asked for royal protection and complained about the Dutch interpretation of the principle of the *Mare Liberum*. In his opinion the States-General not only encouraged the VOC, but even gave them a fleet to commit their crimes (*RSG NR* : Vol.3, nr 3527). In 1618 the discussions about a possible cooperation between the two companies almost came to an end. The VOC objected against the time limit, because the agreement would not last longer than the current charter

was established with Dutch and English participants and very quickly a combined expedition to the Philippines was undertaken to prevent the Chinese from trading on Manila and to cruise between China and Japan. However, the expected booty did not materialize and on 19 June the commanders decided to move the fleet towards Hirado. Great opportunities were lost by this decision: two days later the richly loaded frigates from China appeared in Manila, whereas on 28 July the silver ships from Acapulco arrived.[76] At the end of the year the Council of Defence sent another fleet to the Philippines, which stayed there until May 1622, i.e. almost one and a half year, and which managed to capture a large number of junks with food and some with valuable cargo. More or less in the same period a combined English/Dutch fleet cruised in the Indian Ocean, using Surat as a refreshment station, whereas the Dutch on their own attempted a new blockade of the Malacca Straits. Their greatest success was the disaster inflicted upon the *Carreira da India* near Mozambique in July 1622.[77]

In the meantime, in 1620, even the *Heeren XVII* had become convinced that an annual blockade of Manila, also directed against Chinese ships, would be very useful to 'spoil the Chinese trade of the enemy and to attract this to some of our locations, so that we will be able to make it a stable business'.[78] Because the alternative for the Chinese of sailing all the way to Batavia could hardly be attractive in view of the risks and the long distance, the directors advised Batavia six months later to send two ships to Chincheo, so that they could pre-warn the Chinese of the Dutch blockade awaiting them before Manila and offer them to buy their silk directly on the spot.[79] Another half a year later they repeated this advice, mentioning among others *Ilha Formosa* 'or other nearby

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of the VOC, i.e. four years and they preferred to negotiate for a longer duration (*RSG NR*, Vol.3, nr 3918), whereas the English wanted a third of the Moluccas' trade. Finally agreement was reached on 2 June 1619, which according to Mac Leod again led to additional expenditures for ships 'to be prepared for surprises' (*Mac Leod* 1927: I, 258-267). On 27 March 1620 Coen received the message that the VOC and EIC had decided to cooperate. His attitude towards the monopoly position of the VOC hardly changed, but he used the English fleet to undertake combined expeditions in the Chinese Sea and the Indian Ocean.

[76]The little booty that was obtained remained in the hands of the crews, in particular of the English, for whom no arrangement existed yet on how to divide the prize. Coen wrote a complaint about this to the Heeren XVII on 20/12/1621, protesting at the same time against the release of captured Chinese [*Coen* I, 681-682].

[77]The blockade of Manila was carried out with five Dutch and five English ships, from January 1621 to May 1622. Late 1621 a second fleet of four Dutch and three English vessels was sent to the Indian Ocean, to cruise 'for the welfare of the trade of Surat' between Madagascar, Surat and the Indian coast. This 'blockade' lasted until April 1623. In July 1622 a part of this fleet encountered the Portuguese fleet with the new viceroy and 200,000 *cruzados* on board near the coast of Mozambique . Three of these ships ran aground and the larger part of the silver was lost. A fourth carrack, that had left Goa in 1622, was sunk near the Cape (see also chapter 3). A third fleet of eight Dutch ships was sent to blockade Malacca. The VOC documentation is very scarce on the latter blockade. During the same period, in 1622, sixteen VOC ships were sent to Macao [*Israel* 1982, 117-118 and Gentlemen XVII to Coen on 13/5/1620, *Coen*: IV, 458 and 'Vertoogh van de staet der Vereenichde Nederlanden in de quartieren van Oost-Indien' by J.P. Coen, dated 21/9/1623, *Coen* IV, 590-591].

[78]Gentlemen XVII to Coen 24/3/1620, *Coen*: IV, 445-446.

[79]Gentlemen XVII to Coen 9/9/1620, *Coen*: IV, 464-465.

easily accessible places, to have a good trade with the Chinese, ensuring for them security and the least risk'.[80]

By 1623 the Dutch had ninety ships with an adequate number of sailors in Asia, and two thousand white troops, spread over twenty forts, of which Batavia, Banda, Amboina and Ternate had the largest garrisons, whilst the total assets of the VOC were valued at 6 million guilders. Altogether, during the years 1621-1623 something like thirty Dutch ships were engaged in blockades and privateering activities. They might have caused a short interruption of the Portuguese *Carreira*, but also according to Coen,[81] they had done very little for the Company in Asia.

As far as Manila was concerned, the blockades only led to a discontented mood because of the rise in food prices. On the other hand, according to Souza, Chinese imports into Manila suffered large drops in the years 1623, 1624, 1628 and 1629. The Portuguese in Macao also had their problems in 1623, 1624 and 1629 and Portuguese imports from other directions suffered in 1624, 1627 and 1628.[82] It is possible that these fluctuations were indeed caused by the Dutch-English blockades, but they did not present any threat to the Philippine economy: the imports of silver, public and private, were not molested and continued to rise.[83] Nor did the blockades bring military or strategic gains: the VOC would have had an opportunity to set foot on land by taking sides in an internal conflict, but it was never tried.[84]

Also with respect to the objective to move the Chinese trade to Bantam and later to Batavia, the blockades of Manila were unsuccessful. As from 1621 the Dutch were able to deliver minute quantities of silk to the Japanese market,[85] which were probably taken from Chinese junks, but the Chinese simply moved their trade on to smaller ships which could stay out of reach of the large Dutch vessels.

Around 1625 the enthusiasm for the blockades of Manila began to diminish. In the first place, after the 'massacre' or 'resurrec-

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[80]Heeren XVII to Coen 4/3/1621, *Coen*: IV, 494. Coen reacted on their message, comparing the amount of money they were prepared to pay for the Chinese trade with the amounts of money that went into the Asian trade, both in Macao and in Manila, on the side of the Iberians. In his letters of 20/12/1621 and 21/1/1622 Coen wrote that in 1621 six frigates had gone from Macao to Japan with a value of 3 million guilders, whereas earlier in the same year two ships had left Manila for New Spain, of which one had run aground, so that the Spaniards had lost 5 millions. 'Those of' Macao would send annually a sum of 4,000 to 5,000 taels to Japan and would get this year in return at least the double amount, i.e. 3 million guilders. The 500,000 to 600,000 reals the administrators wanted to send were according to him not more than a 'bean in the brewing kettle' (*Sloos* 1898: 77 and *Coen*: I, 690).

[81]Coen's 'Vertoogh' of 21/9/1623 in *Coen* IV, 577-601.

[82]George Bryan Souza, *The survival of empire. Portuguese trade and society in China and the South China Sea 1630-1754* (Cambridge 1986) 83, table 4.7.

[83]See appendix 4.2 and 4.3.

[84]In 1619 Coen and Lam refused to take sides in the conflict between the kings of Mindanao and Boaya (*Sloos* 1898: 49). In 1622 Francx was sent to the Philippines to act as an intermediate between the two parties and to cruise on the silverfleet. After his ships began to make water he had to take refuge in Hirado (*Sloos* 1898: 65-69). See also R. Laarhoven, *Triumph of Moro diplomacy. The Maguindanao sultanate in the 17th centur*y (Quezon 1989).

[85]*Eiichi Kato* 1981: 223, table 1.

tion' of Amboina in February 1623, the bottom had fallen out of the Anglo-Dutch co-operation. In the second place, the expedition of Pieter Muyser, who, coming from Taiwan, was supposed to join the Nassau fleet near Manila, had ended in complete failure.[86]

**The Chinese trade**

From Coen's assessment, how to get the Chinese to open the silk trade for the Dutch, one can only presume that he was becoming desperate due to the lack of results so far. In 1621 he proposed to seize all Chinese junks, unless they had a pass for Batavia.[87] Two years later he made a plea to capture all Chinese one could lay hands on and to send them to Jacatra, the Moluccas, Amboina or Banda, a migration policy which was indeed converted into hard and gruesome reality.[88]

In the meantime, Coen had arrived at another idea to obtain access to the Chinese silk trade. In his letter of 21 January 1622 to the *Heeren XVII* he explained in detail how 'those from Macao, being nothing but a small, little town' made large profits from their trade with Japan, Manila and Malacca, adding that the town could easily be taken with 1,000 or 1,500 heads.[89] Two months later

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[86] The Nassau fleet was put together through deliberation between the States-General and the VOC and with support of Prince Maurits. First discussions began in 1619 and it departed in April 1623 from the Netherlands. The intention was, imitating Van Spilbergen's expedition of 1614-1615, to sail along the West coast of South America towards the Far East and to intercept the silver fleet from Peru before it reached Panama, or alternatively, to intercept the Manila galleons to Acapulco. The fleet consisted of 11 big men of war, amongst them two of the biggest of the fleet of the States, the *Amsterdam* and the *Delft*, with in total 1,637 men on board, including 600 soldiers. Until his death in June 1624, the commander of the fleet was Jacques l'Hermite. The expedition was held up by counter wind in the Strait of Magallan and missed the fleet, bringing the silver from Potosí to Callao, by a few days. From April to August they remained blockading the Peruvian coast, destroyed a few ships in the port of Callao and set fire to the harbour of Guayaquil, without catching much booty. Under vice-admiral Schapenham the fleet continued to Acapulco to intercept the Manila galleons, but except creating panic, they achieved nothing in Mexico. Schapenham finally crossed the Pacific, but had to give up the plan to blockade Manila bay to conquer the Chinese silk fleet which arrived every year in April, because of the bad condition of his crew and his fleet. Also Pieter Muyser, who coming from Taiwan would join him and waited in vain near Manila, was unsuccessful. The instruction to l'Hermite had said nothing about an encounter with a fleet from Formosa and in the end a small part of the Nassau fleet returned in 1626 via the Cape to the Netherlands (*Israel* 1982: 129). According to *Boxer* 1985: VI, 4-5, the idea of the Nassau fleet would have been to support the Basque rebellious movement in Potosí by a conquest of Callao. The enterprise, whatever its purpose may have been, was undermined by the fact that the whole crew, including Jacques l'Hermite, had contracted dysentery at the Cape Verdian islands.

[87] *Bouwstoffen*: I, 289.

[88] *Coen*: I, 794-796 and *Sloos* 1898: 5.

[89] Coen to Heeren XVII 21/1/1622, *Coen*: I, 690-691. Two months later he added further arguments by sending them copies of a number of intercepted letters from Spaniards in Manila and Portuguese in Macao, written in 1621. They proposed a Spanish establishment in Formosa in order to protect the trade with Manila, now that the imperial army had to fight the 'Tartars' and the Japanese and Chinese pirates were infesting the coast again. The most important reason for a Spanish invasion was however that the Dutch would be intending to settle on the island, which would cause the

Coen dispatched his plan for an attack on Macao. If that would fail, the Dutch would settle at the Pescadores or, as a last option, follow the proposal of the Gentlemen in Amsterdam: settle on the peninsula Taiwan on the West coast of *Ilha Formosa*.[90] From there they would request trade with China and if that should be refused, the Dutch would use force. The protest of the administrators against Coen's plans[91] came too late: when their letter arrived in Batavia, the fleet of Reyersen was already well on its way and in May 1622 it arrived before the coast of China.[92] Charles Boxer, using Portuguese and Dutch documents and sources, has described extensively how the attack on Macao ended.[93] After his resounding defeat Reyersen could only withdraw to the bare and sandy islands of the Pescadores. However, the Chinese governor could not accept a Dutch establishment in an area where piracy prevailed and in 1624 the Dutch were compelled to move to Taiwan.[94]

In the meantime Coen had returned to the Netherlands where he was able to convince the *Heeren XVII* that it would be possible to get access to the Chinese market: 'There can be no doubt that we will be allowed to take part in the Chinese trade, either by force, or through mildness, or by connivance or by public concession of the king of China'.[95]

For the modern mind it is almost impossible to understand how Coen could underestimate so much the problems at the Chinese coast and the consequences of the harsh and aggressive actions by the Dutch. Normal trade relations were made almost impossible by the dominant role of Chinese pirates, but, what was worse, the Dutch from Batavia themselves continued to confirm their own reputation with acts of piracy against the Chinese junks and their crews, thereby undermining their negotiating position *vis-à-vis* the Chinese authorities.[96]

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trade with Japan to deviate to Formosa, whereas they would also be able to stop the trade between Macao and Manila, which would finally mean the end of the whole of *India*. [For original documents see *ARA*, entry 1.04.16.36, inv. 1075 (1622) folio 236-238 and inv. 1076 (1623) folio 110v-112v]. In 1621 the Spaniards indeed landed at the North coast of Formosa, where they established fortifications in Kelang and Tamsui.

[90]Although Pehou on the Pescadores had few attractions, the sailors preferred this choice above Formosa, because Pehou could take ships of greater depth (Coen to Gentlemen XVII, 26/3/1622, *Coen*: I, 715-716).

[91]Gentlemen XVII to Coen 14/4/1622, *Coen*: IV, 546.

[92]Coen's instructions to Reyersen sounded slightly different from what he had proposed to his superiors: whether the attack on Macao would be successful or not, the Dutch would anyway settle on one of the islands and if the Chinese would still refuse to trade, force should be used [L. Blussé 'The Dutch occupation of the Pescadores' in *Transactions of the international conference of orientalists in Japan*, No. XVIII 1973 (The Institute of Eastern Culture) 32-33].

[93]C.R. Boxer, *Fidalgos in the Far East 1550-1770. Fact and fancy in the history of Macao* (The Hague 1948) 72-92.

[94]W.P. Groeneveldt, *De Nederlanders in China. Eerste deel. De eerste bemoeiingen om den handel in China en de vestiging in de Pescadores (1601-1629)* (The Hague 1898) 168-290, *Blussé* 1973: 28-44.

[95]*Coen*: IV, 620, 'Points of order and redress of the state of affairs of the Company of the Indies' of November 1623.

[96]According to *Groeneveldt* 1898: 45-46, the rough manner by which the Dutch acted in the Archipel was well known in China. They were known as savages, arrogant and not to be trusted. He quotes a Chinese author as follows:'They (the Dutch) are greedy

It would take about nine years before Taiwan could more or less take the place the *Heeren XVII* had had in mind[97] and until 1633 the contacts with the Chinese pirate merchants produced only scanty quantities of silk. In that year the Dutch governor Hans Putmans, frustrated by the lack of success in the Chinese trade, launched another blockade on the Chinese coast. He was however defeated by the pirate 'Nicolas Iquan' (Cheng Chih Lung) who in 1628 had surrendered to the Chinese authorities on the condition that he would pacify the other pirates and keep the Dutch in their place.[98] After having demonstrated who was in command in the Chinese waters, he was the one who became the sole supplier and thus in control of the trade with Taiwan.[99] In 1636, after his return to Batavia, Hans Putmans, who, through his experience had become a wiser man, had to admit that Dutch aggression against the Chinese would only have an adverse effect on the trade.[100]

In the meantime, whenever they received a *Generale Missive* from Batavia, the high and forever rising costs of maintaining a Dutch presence on the island remained misery for the *Heeren XVII*. It would take until the beginning of the 1640s before the office of Fort Zeelandia on Taiwan could report a regular, positive balance. This result was not so much due to Dutch trading successes, but rather to the revenues from taxes and duties, levied upon the Chinese colonists. To escape from the advance of the Manchus, they invaded Formosa in large numbers and build up a new existence in the sugar and rice culture or the trade in these commodities.[101]

**The Japan trade**

Contrary to the way they tried to put pressure on the Chinese shipping and trade, the Dutch were very careful with the way they treated the Japanese. The Dutch representatives in Hirado were conscious that they had to penetrate a market where the Portuguese had the upper hand and that at the slightest provocation they could be dismissed by the *shogun*. By adroit manoeuvring against the Portuguese Jesuits, who until 1614 acted as the middlemen for the Portuguese traders from Macao, they succeeded in creating a positive image of themselves in the *shogun*'s mind.[102] The exchange of diplomatic letters between the Dutch and the *shogun* Ieyasu paved the way to mutual recognition and the issue of passes for Dutch shipping and

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and cunning, have much knowledge about valuable merchandise and are clever in seeking their advantage; to make profit they do not spare their lives and there is no place, however far, where they would not go'...'Also these people are capable and inventive, they make sails like cobwebs, which turn in all directions to catch the wind, so that in each direction they have the wind behind them. If one encounters them at sea, one can be sure to be robbed'.

[97] Leonard Blussé, 'No boats to China. The Dutch East India Company and the changing pattern of the China Sea trade, 1635-1690' in *Modern Asian Studies* 30, I (1996) 64.

[98] *Blussé* 1990: 251-252, 260-262.

[99] *Blussé* 1990: 263.

[100] 'Memorandum or advice by the honourable gentleman Hans Putmans, upon his departure from Taiwan to Batavia etc.', *ARA,* 1.04.02 inv. 1120: folio 23.

[101] Ernst van Veen, 'How the Dutch ran a seventeenth-century colony. The occupation and loss of Formosa 1624-1662' in *Itinerario* 20 (1996) 59-77.

[102] See C.R. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan 1549-1650* (Berkeley/Los Angeles 1967).

trade.[103] Nevertheless, for the time being, the trade between Japan and China remained almost completely in the hands of the Portuguese,[104] so that in 1617 the *Heeren XVII* still had to write to Coen that 'the Japanese trade rather stayed a matter of idle hope, without results'.[105]

A commodity that could have been amply available, without interference of the Portuguese, was Japanese copper. But the recommendations of the VOC representative Specx were of no avail; throughout the years 1614-1626 the competition of Swedish copper, in the Netherlands manipulated by De Geer, remained too strong. [106] As from 1621 the Dutch managed to import some silk into Japan, in 1622 in exchange for silver.[107] In 1623 Specx and his successor Camps as the VOC representative in Hirado could convince both Coen and the *Heeren XVII* of the enormous potential of the trade with Japan, if the VOC would be able to gain access to the Chinese silk trade.[108]

However, very soon hereafter the Dutch got themselves into problems again. After the Dutch had settled on Taiwan in 1624 the Japanese merchants still continued to use the island as a meeting point with their Chinese colleagues and the native inhabitants. The VOC could only see this as an infringement of its rights as traders and tax collectors. The Dutch confirmed their lack of understanding of East Asian trade relations by appointing the inexperienced twenty-seven-year-old Pieter Nuyts as governor of Taiwan and sending him as an envoy to Japan, to put things straight.[109] The complications that resulted from his visit caused the Japanese in 1628 to prohibit all Dutch trade in Japan. It was brought to life again in 1632, thanks to the insight and understanding of 'things Japanese' of Specx who by then had been promoted to Governor-General.[110]

In 1635, with the ascendance of a new *shogun*, the Japanese were no longer allowed to travel abroad or to return home. In practice this meant the end of the *shuin* system[111] and as a result, the Dutch could step into the role of the Japanese shipping between Japan

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[103] *Kato* 1981: 215-218.

[104] *Kato* 1981: 213-214.

[105] Gentlemen XVII to Coen, 25/10/1617, *Coen*: IV, 384. They proposed either to give up the Japanese trade or to approach it in a better way, without specifying how this should be done. They considered it better to blockade the Malacca Straits or Manila, 'than to wait for the uncertain arrival of the carracks'. It is evident that in thinking of the Japanese trade, the *Heeren XVII* thought in the first place of privateering against the Portuguese.

[106] Kristof Glamann, *Dutch-Asiatic trade 1620-1740* (The Hague 1981) 168-172.

[107] *Kato* 1981: table 1 and 2, 223-224.

[108] See also chapter 4. The report by Specx and Camps [*ARA* 1.04.02 inv. 1077, fo. 115-119, dated 15/9/1622 and 29/1/1623] and Coen's letter [*Coen*: I, 771-772, dated 20/6/1623] were written after the attack on Macao, so that one can also read Coen's letter as a justification for his bold actions.

[109] L. Blussé (ed.), 'Justus Schouten en de Japanse gijzeling' in *Nederlandse Historische Bronnen*, 5 (Hilversum 1985) 69-110.

[110] *Kato*: 1981, 226. Contrary to what was thought of Specx in VOC circles, the Japanese historians take a very positive view of him.

[111] R.P. Toby, *State and diplomacy in early modern Japan. Asia in the development of the Tokugawa Bakufu* (Stanford 1991) 69-110. See also appendix 4.4 and chapter 4. The *shuin* system was a system of vermilion permits issued by the *shogun*, allowing Japanese subjects to ship Japanese goods and to import foreign goods, showing at the same time that they stood under the protection of the *shogun*.

and the Japanese settlements in Siam, Quinam and Tonkin.[112]

The events of the early 1630s, both in Taiwan and in Japan, converged nicely for the VOC. They had a very positive effect on the volume of the Dutch Japan-Taiwan-China trade and to cap it all, in 1639 the Portuguese were denied access to Japan. As from 1635, Dutch imports of silk into Japan and silver exports rapidly increased and peaked in 1638-1640. During the decade the total volume of silver exported through the hands of the Dutch amounted to 264 tons.[113]

In 1641 the *Shogunate* more or less completed Japan's formal 'isolation' from the Western world, by allotting the artificial island of Deshima, which had been used by the Portuguese, to the Dutch. Due to restrictive measures the Dutch silk imports into Japan fell sharply and in that same year 'Iquan' began a direct trade with Japan, bypassing Taiwan. The quantities of silver he and his compatriots were able to barter dwarfed those of the Dutch.[114] Nevertheless Deshima became a relative success because the VOC could obtain its silk instead from Tonkin, a channel they had access to since 1635.[115] As from 1641 the Dutch were exporting on average something like 14 tons of silver per year from Japan (see appendix 4.5). Until 1845 Deshima would remain the window for the exchange of culture, science and merchandise between Japan and the West.

**Malacca, Malacca!**

Whereas during the 1630s the financial results of the VOC were improving, the VOC's gusto for pulling the States-General's chestnuts out of the fire had disappeared, and the *Heeren XVII* began to limit themselves to following their own objectives. The instruction of 17 March 1632 to Governor General Hendrik Brouwer spoke for itself: the emphasis was now on friendly and decent behaviour towards the Asians, in particular the Chinese, and on ways to economize. This meant that plans for attacks on Diu, Malacca or a blockade of Goa were turned down, because 'for the company to get involved in more war was inadvisable, inexpedient and costly'. From now on any possible form of aggression had to be directed against the private trade of the Portuguese and the Macassarese and against the Spanish in Kelang.[116]

In December 1633, following their own interpretation of the instruction to Brouwer, the Council in Batavia could report the presence of the fleet of Jacob Gerritsz Cooper in the Malacca Straits,[117] which had the purpose to cause damage to all Portuguese

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[112] *Blussé* 1996: 63.

[113] *Kato* 1981: table 1 and 2, 223-224, *Blussé* 1996: table 2, 3 and 4, 65-67.

[114] See appendix 4.5 and Richard von Glahn, 'Myth and reality of China's seventeenth century monetary crisis' in *Journal of Economic History* 56 (1996) 429-54.

[115] *Blussé* 1996: 67.

[116] *Mijer* 1848: 47-67. According to Boxer, during the viceroyalty of *Conde* de Linhares (22/10/1629 - 8/12/1635) the Portuguese lost 1,500 men, 155 ships and booty of 7,500,000 *xerafins* (about 150 tons of silver, most by the Dutch). Under his successor Pero do Silva (9/12/1635-24/6/1639) 4,000 Portuguese lost their lives in the first three years, being replaced by only 500 men, whereas three of the most beautiful galleons ever built in India, were lost in 1636 (*Boxer* 1958: 13). Regrettably Boxer did not specify how the Portuguese lost their lives: through acts of war, the famine of 1630 in Goa (see chapter 5) or through tropical diseases.

[117] *Generale Missiven* I, 15/12/1633, 395.

shipping between Macao, Macassar and Malacca.[118] After one year of continuous blockade of the Straits, the profit to the Company of this privateering operation, after deducting the damage caused to own ships, was 60,000 guilders, a result the Governor-General and his Council were not very proud of. Nevertheless it was decided to continue the exercise with five yachts and two hundred-and-fifty men;[119] not exactly the size of fleet one would expect to do much harm to an enemy.

In January 1635 Viceroy Linhares concluded his own peace with the English in Asia. Cooper's messages remained optimistic and he continued to report of his privateering successes. However, soon he had to express his regrets that he was not allowed to attack the English ship *London* that was on its way from Goa to Macao, with money, merchandise and Portuguese merchants. It had stopped in Malacca for three days to take refreshments, without Cooper being able to do anything about it.[120] Another alternative for the Portuguese was to bypass the Malacca Straits altogether, and to sail from Macao to Macassar, or alternatively to Solor or Timor, and from there via the South coast of Java, to India.[121]

Obviously, there were devious ways by which the Portuguese, now apparently assisted by the English, could avoid Dutch control over the freight traffic that would normally go via the Malacca Straits. An attack on Malacca itself and even a new assault on Macao were now becoming serious options for the Dutch. However, since the trading contacts with Japan had just been re-established, the latter could not be followed without their agreement. Early in 1636 the *Heeren XVII* were informed that Koeckebacker in Japan had been asked to find out whether the Japanese would be agreeable to a Dutch attack on Malacca and Macao. In their response, the Japanese had raised no objection, provided the Dutch would take over the supply of Cantonese textiles and pay them the duties, which hitherto they had received from the Portuguese![122]

Finally, in 1636, Antonio van Diemen, with the vigour of a new Governor General and without any orders from his superiors in Amsterdam, took the initiative for a more strategic use of the Dutch fleet in Asia, concentrating its attacks on the Portuguese in Malacca, Ceylon and Goa. Cooper was given fourteen ships and moved to Goa to keep the Portuguese away and Cornelis Sijmonsz van der Veer took over from him to maintain a continuous Dutch presence in the Malacca Straits.[123] Hundreds of Javanese vessels, bringing rice to Malacca, were sent back. As a consequence, not only did this cause scarcity in Malacca but the Javanese ran short of textiles

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[118] *ARA* 1.04.02 inv. 1115, fo 754-760, 791-792.

[119] *Generale Missiven* I, 27/12/1634, 467-469.

[120] *ARA* 1.04.02 inv. 1118, fo 410-411, 465-479, 479a and b. Some of the Portuguese ships he captured were on their way from Goa to Manila and back. In the beginning the Portuguese regarded the English readiness to assist them with considerable distrust. In Macao the Portuguese refused to trade with them, the English were not even allowed to anchor in the harbour. The English offered the Portuguese to take, on their behalf, freight to Japan and to bring back the goods obtained from there to Macao, Malacca, Goa or even Spain, but the Portuguese in Macao refused to make use of their services, because, as they said, they had enough ships themselves [*Generale Missiven* I, 26/12/1637, 661].

[121] *ARA* 1.04.02 inv. 1121, fo 1221-1223; inv. 1125, fo 504-505.

[122] *Generale Missiven* I, 4/1/1636, 508, 514.

[123] *ARA* 1.04.02 inv. 1125 fo 496-499, inv. 1122, fo 581-586.

and now had to buy them from the Dutch.[124]

In 1637, apparently impressed by this demonstration of seapower, and after attempts by Sijmonsz van der Veer to get the sultan of Johore on his side with military support, the ruler of Johore sent his representatives to Batavia, to renew the old contract from earlier times.[125] Family relations between the rulers of Johore, Patani and Atjeh and the exchange of presents with the Dutch did the rest to create a new, but very difficult alliance.[126] In 1638 there were rumours about serious food shortages in the town of Malacca, but the Council of the Indies decided that it was better to be sure than sorry; especially because the sultan of Johore never appeared to be able to meet his promises of sending ships and soldiers to participate in the siege. It was only in May 1640 that the largest part of the Dutch fleet in Asia, which in 1639 consisted of eighty-five men of war, was brought together for an attack on the town. With the assistance of Johore but without Atjeh,[127] the siege began, both on land and at sea. Notwithstanding famine and diseases, the Portuguese demonstrated an unexpected resilience and surrendered the town only after heroic resistance and heavy losses, in January 1641.[128]

The attack on Ceylon was made to coincide with the blockade and siege of Malacca. Although from 1602 the VOC had a representative on the island and had been invited several times by the kings of Kandy to help them against the Portuguese, it was only in 1636, after the Portuguese army in Ceylon had incurred heavy losses, that Batavia decided to get involved with the objective to take over the cinnamon trade.[129]

In the years 1636-1644 the Dutch organized seasonal blockades before the roadstead of Goa, to prevent the Portuguese from sending assistance to Malacca and Ceylon.[130] For this purpose, the establishment of a factory in Vengurla, close to Goa, was of major importance.[131] For many years to come it served as a refreshment station for the Dutch fleets, which normally consisted of about ten ships, and as a base for communication with the VOC spies in Goa. As shown earlier, during the 1630s the effects of the blockades

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[124] *Generale Missiven* I, 2/2/1636, 553.

[125] See note 45.

[126] *ARA* 1.04.02 inv. 1127, fo 401-408; *Leupe* 1859: 254-261. See also chapter 9.

[127] Atjeh refused to participate if Johore did [*Netscher* 1870: 32-33].

[128] *Mac Leod* 1927: II, 212-216. For a detailed description see *Leupe* 1859: 1-130. The Dutch victory came just in time: their troops were being decimated by malaria. A more active attitude of the Portuguese commander might possibly even have prevented a Dutch victory [*Boxer* 1985: V, 123-128].

[129] See also chapter 9. Until then the Netherlands received their cinnamon from the Portuguese merchants in Amsterdam.

[130] In those years two sea battles took place near Goa: the first one in January 1638, where four Portuguese galleons were destroyed against two Dutch ships. During the second battle in September 1639 fifty Dutchmen were killed against four hundred Portuguese. In Goa, on 11 September 1641, Dom João was acclaimed king, with great enthusiasm, because it was thought that this would mean the end of the war against the Dutch. Eleven days later Hendrick Quast appeared with his fleet and captured a carrack, just before Goa. The viceroy protested, but the Dutch refused to accept a truce without instructions from Batavia. In his first letter to the new monarch, the viceroy requested him either to arrange a truce, or to send him a fleet of eight or ten galleons [*Boxer* 1985: 13-14].

[131] See chapter 9.

on the *Carreira da India* remained very limited. The incoming ships suffered no losses at all and only some of the return voyages had to be delayed.[132]

In the meantime, in their letter of 11 September 1640, the *Heeren XVII* had expressed their disapproval and discontent with Van Diemen's actions. His response was rather typical for an overseas' manager of a 'multi-national' company. He first informed them of his success: the fall of Malacca. Thereafter, in his answer of 12 December 1641 he put his views on the problems of the VOC in a fast changing world together in one complicated sentence: 'We have said, and now confirm, that the business of India should be trusted to us and we cannot wait for orders if we wish to serve the company, Your Honours know why that is, that there is no time for it; the peoples of these countries and their actions are also so variable that, as a result, our own decisions and advices seem to contradict each other, ...., however we trust, that if Your Honours would see the matters as close as your servants here, and see and feel them, you would have a different opinion and would be satisfied'.[133] He never revoked his policy and strategy.

**Epilogue**

The year 1640 became a memorable year for the Portuguese in Europe because it brought them the *Restoração* of the Portuguese crown under the Braganças and independence from Castile. One of the first steps of the new Royalty was to establish a truce with the Dutch Republic. As far as Asia was concerned, it was agreed that it would come into force after Batavia had received confirmation from the States-General that they had received the ratification by the new Portuguese king.

As it held the upper hand, the VOC was not really keen on declaring a truce in Asia, quite contrary to the Portuguese sentiment in Goa. Early September 1642 viceroy Da Silva Telles, count of Aveiras, apparently had received the message and began dispatching copies of the treaty, amongst others to Governor Arendt Gardenijs, the VOC governor of Coromandel.[134] The viceroy was therefore greatly amazed [135] to see the new blockade fleet appear before Goa, this time under Commander Jan Dirksz Gaalen. A lengthy correspondence followed between the two,[136] but the Dutchman did not budge: as far as he was concerned there was no truce as long as he had not received confirmation from Batavia. On 7 October 1642, almost immediately after the confirmation had arrived there, the High Government in Batavia finally proclaimed the ten years' truce between the new Portuguese king and the States-General.[137] In their message to Amsterdam, the Council remarked that their ships had left their ports before early March, whereas The Hague had apparently received the Portuguese ratification of the truce in February. 'It

[132] See chapter 3.

[133] *Opkomst*: V, 248-254.

[134] *ARA* 1.04.02 inv. 1144 folio 171-178.

[135] *ARA* 1.04.02 inv. 1141, folio 398-426.

[136] *ARA* 1.04.02 inv. 1144, folio 339-348.

[137] Marcus P.M. Vink, 'The *Entente Cordiale*. The Dutch East India Company and the Portuguese shipping through the Straits of Malacca 1641-1663' in *Revista de Cultura* 13/14 (1991 Macao) 290. The confirmation arrived in Batavia as late as October 1642 [*Boxer* 1958: 14-15], but the blockades of Goa lasted until 1644.

would have been desirable that we had been told secretly, so that we could have used the fleet somewhere else'. They added that the fleet to Goa had been an expensive effort, but that the ships had returned via Coromandel, or Galle, Baticaloa and Malacca, to pick up some business there.[138]

In that same year Van Diemen redirected his maritime and military efforts back towards the Spaniards. The Spanish governor of the fort *La Sanctissima Trinidad* in Kelang on Formosa surrendered without defence to the Dutch expedition of eleven ships with more than a thousand men on board.[139] The Spanish kept their establishments on the Philippines, Ternate and Tidore,[140] and from 1642 to 1648 the Dutch undertook another eight attacks and blockades against the Philippines, where again the advantages did not offset the costs.[141]

Whereas the Chinese trade on Formosa increased in those years, that on Manila suffered another sharp setback, from which it would only recover in the eighteenth century.[142] The main causes were the Manchu invasion of China and the fact that after the Portuguese Restoration of 1640 the Macao-Manila part of the trading triangle Macao-Macassar-Manila ran into disarray.[143]

In the meantime, notwithstanding the truce, the Dutch in Asia continued in their antagonistic policies towards the Portuguese. In 1643 they created an incident about the partition of the cinnamon gardens near Galle, declared the truce null and void and took up the blockades of Goa again. Portuguese ships that wanted to pass through the Malacca Straits were regularly captured, with the result that the Portuguese increasingly made use of English shipping volume.[144] In November 1644 the truce in Asia was once more reconfirmed, when the viceroy and Johan Maetsuijcker agreed on the truce along the coast of India and on the political line to be followed in Ceylon.[145] The Portuguese private trade with the Far East was able to continue, even after the damage received in the years 1641-1645, but arrangements were made for a toll to be paid by Portuguese ships passing the Malacca Straits. After 1652, the Anglo-Dutch conflicts automatically led to a common Anglo-Portuguese interest in checking the Dutch aggression in India and in maintaining the navigation, through the Malacca Straits, to Macao and for many years these tolls would remain a sore point for discussion.

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[138] *Generale Missiven* II, 12/12/1642, 162-163, 170.

[139] *Blussé* 1989: 57.

[140] The last battle of the Eighty Years' War was fought on Ternate on 18 July 1649, when 250 Spaniards and 600 native troops from Tidore landed on the Dutch part of Ternate and destroyed the spice plantations. This was more than one year after the ratification of the treaty of Munster, but before the official announcement in the Far East. The small Dutch force that had to oppose the invasion was driven back with heavy losses (*Isreal* 1982: 336). In 1663 the Spaniards received orders from Manila to return to the Philippines in connection with a possible attack by the Chinese pirate 'Coxinga' [R. Laarhoven, *Triumph of Moro diplomacy. The Maguindanao sultanate in the 17th century* (Quezon 1989) 15]

[141] *Mac Leod* 1927: II, 359-363.

[142] *Chaunu* 1960: 48-49, see also table 4.2.

[143] *Subrahmanyam* 1993: 176, *Souza* 1986: table 4.5, 75 and table 5.3, 102. See also chapter 4.

[144] Vink 1991: 290-294.

[145] *ARA* 1.04.02 inv. 1149, folio 598-607.

The end of the truce with the Portuguese and the beginning of the first English war led to an agreement between João IV and Cromwell, giving the EIC free access to the Portuguese possessions, with the exception of Macao. For the High Government in Batavia it was clear that such rapprochements were bad news and that it would be necessary to intervene by taking action against the weakest of the two partners. The blockades of Goa were resumed and in 1656 the Dutch captured Colombo, in 1658 Jaffna, Negapatnam and Tuticorin and in the beginning of the 1660s Quilon and Cannanore. The capture of Cochin in 1663 meant at the same time the end of the free fall of the Portuguese *Estado*.[146]

For a long time, Portuguese remained the *lingua franca* in Asia. The Dutch who lived in India, Ceylon or Malacca in the 1670s used Portuguese not only in their contacts with others, but even in their own households. At the end of the seventeenth century the ladies of Batavia still abused their slaves in Portuguese. In the areas where the EIC would become dominant, it was only in the early nineteenth century that English would replace Portuguese as the language of communication between the Europeans and the natives.[147]

**Summary**

During the first two decades of the VOC's existence the pepper and spice trade in Europe did not bring the huge profits that were realized with the early pre-VOC voyages. Already in an early stage, i.e. before the Twelve Year's Truce, the *Heeren XVII* therefore decided that obtaining a monopoly in the Moluccan spice trade should become their main objective. For more than thirty years this objective coincided nicely with that of the States-General: to use the VOC fleet to damage the 'arch-enemy' wherever possible. Whereas in Europe the Truce enhanced the trade between Portugal and the Dutch Republic, the VOC, subsidized for that purpose by the States-General, carried on with its 'private war' in Asia.

In the course of the 1610s and 1620s the VOC surpassed the *Carreira da India* in terms of tonnage and numbers of people sent overseas. During the 1610s sixty-four VOC ships were kept or lost in Asia, in the 1620s fifty-nine and in the 1630s seventy-nine, which was even more than the number of ships that returned to *Patria* (see appendix 8.1 and figure 8.1 a). Admittedly, some of these ships were just a replacement for worn-out or lost vessels, but most of them were used to participate actively in the VOC trading and privateering activities in Asia.

However, striking the balance of the Luso-Dutch confrontations in Asia, until 1636 very little happened that really had an impact on the functioning of the *Estado*, the *Carreira da India* or the Portuguese private trade. This fact has been noted earlier by other authors like Blussé and Winius[148] and Chaudhuri.[149] Pearson's notion

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[146]Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese empire in Asia 1500-1700. A political and economic history* (London/New York 1993) 178.

[147]David Lopes de Melo, *Expansão da lingua Portuguesa no oriente nos séculos XVI, XVII e XVIII* (Oporto 196x) 54.

[148]Leonard Blussé & George Winius, 'The origin and rhythm of Dutch aggression against the Estado da Índia, 1601-1661' in T.R. de Souza (ed.), *Indo-Portuguese history. Old issues, new questions* (New Delhi 1985) 73-83.

[149]K.N. Chauduri, *Trade and civilisation in the Indian Ocean. An economic history from the rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge 1999) 84. First published in 1985.

that 'the Dutch arriving in South East Asia in 1596 drove out the Portuguese from this area over the next twenty years and then reduced Portuguese trade in East Asia', [150] and even Chaudhuri's remarks that 'during the first decade of the seventeenth century great sea battles took place between Portuguese carracks and Dutch ships' and that 'in 1605 the VOC captured the Portuguese fort in Amboina as a first step in a general strategy for establishing naval control of the sea-routes in Indonesian waters'[151] suggest a straightforward uni-linear development which is far from reality.

With the skirmishes around the Moluccas, Amboina and Banda, a few captures of ships, an attack on Mozambique,[152] the disaster at Macao, the Goan blockade of 1622-1623 and four unsuccessful sieges of Malacca[153] one has already a rather complete picture of the hostilities between the Portuguese and the Dutch until the mid-1630s. If the VOC had any strategy during that period, it was that of trial and error.

The Moluccan revenues of the *Estado da Índia* were by far not enough to cover the costs of its military presence,[154] because most of the spice trade was in the hands of Asian merchants and remained beyond the control of the Portuguese. When in 1605 the Dutch took over the fort of Amboina they inherited that same problem, except that they were able to become, at least on paper, the sole buyers of the spices produced by the Ternateans. However, the Dutch were not able to man all the islands and fortifications, with the result that they had to allow the Spaniards to return to Tidore and Ternate, whereas the island of Hitu and its allies remained independent.

The difficult spice market in Europe, the Spanish presence in the Moluccas and the wish to consolidate their position before the Twelve Years' Truce were the main reasons for the Dutch to concentrate their efforts on these islands and on Banda. In order to ensure that the VOC trade in cloves, nutmeg and mace would remain profitable, it would be necessary to limit the supply to Europe and until the 1630s the Dutch remained fully confident that they could shape the Asian situation to their desires by the use of force.

However, the 'big' Portuguese and Asian private merchants who left the Moluccas took a large volume of the spice trade with them to Macassar (probably up to a value of 9 tons of silver, see appendix 4.6). Together with the Spanish presence in the Moluccas this would remain an obsessively sore point until well in the 1660s.

In the Bay of Bengal the *Estado* was only weakly represented, but, although the textiles from there were essential to make the

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[150] M.N. Pearson, 'The Portuguese in India' in *The New Cambridge History of India* Vol. I-1 (Cambridge 1987) 134.

[151] *Chaudhuri* 1999: 84.

[152] By Verhoeff in 1607, when he was on his way to Malabar.

[153] P.A. Leupe, *Stukken betrekkelijk het beleg en de verovering van Malakka op de Portugezen in 1640-41. Benevens het rapport van den kommissaris Schouten over den verleden en tegenwoordigen toestand dier stad. Uit de papieren der voormalige Oost-Indische compagnie* (Utrecht 1859) 5-7. The Dutch actions against Malacca took place in 1605, 1608, 1623 and 1627. They either failed or only disturbed Portuguese shipping.

[154] See appendix 4.1.

trade in pepper and spices a success, until 1615 the VOC directors in Amsterdam took only a limited interest. In search for a *rendezvous*, they thought good relations with Johore of much greater importance, but due to other priorities their representatives in Asia were unable to give the Sultan sufficient protection. In Hirado they were able to establish a positive relationship with the *Shogunate* but it took a long time of hard learning before this could come to fruition. Looking at the delays or missed opportunities, one can only conclude that until the 1620s the VOC had the same problems as the Portuguese: insufficient resources to meet all the challenges.

From the beginning of the 1620s the efforts that required most of the ships and manpower were the blockades of the Philippines, directed against the Spaniards and the Chinese trade with these islands. As shown in chapter 4, from a privateer's point of view these blockades had a certain logic. The Spaniards brought each year something like 20 tons of silver from Acapulco to Manila and returned with a similar value in the form of silk and other niceties from the Far East. The total Chinese trade with the Philippines amounted to about 35 tons of silver. The chances of being at the right place at the right time were however very small: the blockades were a succession of failures and missed opportunities and were even not cost-effective, let alone beneficial for the Company. If they had any repercussions, it must have been in the minds of the Chinese merchants and authorities, which could only see the Dutch as pirates and slave hunters.

The promising potential of acquiring a share in the Japanese silver trade, with a total export value of which the estimates vary between 50 and 150 tons, led both the VOC directors in Amsterdam and their Governor-General and Council in Batavia to think about ways and means to get access to the Chinese silk trade. Accessibility for the Chinese silk traders was also a major factor in the decision to establish the Asian VOC port of transshipment in Jacatra and a factory at Formosa. The idea that China could be forced to engage in trade with the Dutch had to result in failure. Formosa first had to become a Dutch colony with refugees from China as the working population, before the financial results became positive. Trade with Japan became only possible when Japanese subjects could no longer obtain the necessary permits. Around that same time, 'Iquan', the Chinese pirate merchant, dropped the Dutch Taiwan connection and went straight into the Japanese market, which offered far larger opportunities and which could only partly be taken up by the Dutch. Nevertheless, Deshima became a success although on a much smaller scale, with quantities of silver of around 15 tons per year, for many years.

In 1636 and for the first time, Governor-General Antonio van Diemen took the initiative for open and strategic warfare against the Portuguese, with a siege of Malacca, combined with an attack on Ceylon and a blockade of Goa. The blockade of Goa caused only delays to the return fleets of the *Carreira da India*, but it was certainly successful in keeping the bigger Portuguese ships away from Malacca. Nevertheless, it was January 1641 before the Portuguese of Malacca surrendered. The attack on Ceylon was ostensibly intended to protect the Singhalese against the Portuguese, but in reality aimed at getting a hold on the cinnamon trade, and fully succeeded in 1640.

It was only after 1640, so after the truce between Portugal

and the United Provinces, that the Dutch were able 'to drive out the Portuguese', 'to establish (some sort of) naval control' and 'to reduce Portuguese trade'.