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Your High and Mighty Lordships' Most Humble Servants: Dutch Consuls and the States General's Diplomacy in Spain, 1648–1661

Maurits Ebben

1 Introduction¹

“And to tell the truth, these Consuls only want to protect interests, ... usually they are just merchants who are sent abroad, not in order to represent their Prince in another sovereign state, but to be advocates for the subjects of their Prince with regard to trade ...”² Thus wrote Cornelis van Bijnkershoek, an internationally respected legal scholar. Consuls did not represent a monarch; they were not public servants; moreover, because they did not serve at a court, they were not diplomats. This was the general consensus in early modern times, and some leading historians continue to accept this notion to this day.³ Yet, recent international interest in the institution of ‘foreign consuls’ and its importance in the context of international European relations has altered opinions about the position and importance of the consul in early modern diplomacy.⁴

1 This article was originally published in Dutch in *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*.

2 “Et à dire le vrai, ces Consuls ne sont autre chose que des protecteurs, ... d'ordinaire même ce ne sont que des marchants, que l'on envoie non pour représenter leur Prince auprès d'une autre puissance souveraine, mais pour protéger les sujets de leur Prince en ce que regarde le négoce. ...” C. van Bijnkershoek, *Traité du juge compétent des ambassadeurs* (The Hague: 1721). Re-edited in conjunction with A. Wicquefort, *L'ambassadeur et ses fonctions* 2 vols (Amsterdam: 1730), of which it was a commentary. The quotation is from this edition. See vol. 2, 63.

3 L. Bély, *L'art de la paix en Europe. Naissance de la diplomatie moderne XVIe–XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: 2007), 677; M. Herrero Sánchez, “La red consular europea y la diplomacia mercantil en la edad moderna” in: J.J. Iglesias Rodríguez e.a. eds., *Comercio y cultura en la Edad Moderna* (Seville 2015), 128–130.

4 Müller, L., *Consuls, Corsairs, and Commerce. The Swedish Consular Service and Long-distance Shipping, 1720–1815* (Uppsala 2004); J. Ulbert and G. Le Bouëdec eds., *La fonction consulaire à l'époque moderne. L'affirmation d'une institution économique et politique, 1500–1800* (Rennes: 2006); J. Melissen and A.M. Fernández eds., *Consular Affairs and Diplomacy* (Leiden and Boston: 2011); M. Aglietti, M. Herrero Sánchez, and F. Zamora Rodríguez eds., *Los cónsules de extranjeros en la Edad Moderna y a principios de la Edad Contemporánea* (Madrid: 2013); S. Marzagalli, ed., *Les consuls en Méditerranée, agents d'information XVIe–XXe siècle* (Paris: 2015); Ch. Windler, *La diplomatie comme expérience de l'autre: consuls français au Magreb*,

Scholars now recognize that in the late 16th century and throughout the 17th century, monarchs made efforts to control consuls and assigned tasks to them in which consular and diplomatic activities of the early modern sovereign state were closely interwoven. But the formal and informal position of the consul remained unclear in the 17th century, especially because of the ambiguous nature of the position, which was in fact both commercial and for the public good. There appears to be general agreement that consular contributions to diplomatic work were limited to providing political and military information to the ambassador in residence and to the government.⁵

The present article examines the position of the Dutch consul within the States General's diplomatic activities, both as a provider of services to Dutch merchants abroad and as a public servant. On the basis of actions taken by Dutch consuls in Spain, it will be demonstrated that these 'unofficial diplomats' were able to accomplish more than provide just military and political information. They formed an important link within the diplomatic activities of the States General, and what is more, because of their initiatives, they were able to influence the Republic's policies towards the host country, Spain.

Historians studying diplomacy conducted by the States General have generally approached their topic from the perspective of ambassadors and the highest administrators in the Republic, while the consular network and its corresponding sources have been ignored almost completely.⁶ Yet this Dutch

1700–1840 (Geneva: 2002). In 2011 the Centre de la Méditerranée Moderne et Contemporaine organized in Nice an international congress on consuls, "Les consuls en Méditerranée: agents d'information et de contre-information (XVIe–XXIe siècles)," with follow-ups in May 2014 and fall 2017. In September 2012 an international congress was held in Seville about consuls in the early modern period and at the beginning of the contemporary period: "Los cónsules de extranjeros en La Edad Moderna y a principios de La Edad Contemporánea."

- 5 K. Malettke, *Hegemonie—multipolares System—Gleichgewicht, 1648/1659–1713/1714* (Paderborn: 2012), 64–66; G. Poumarède, "Consuls, réseaux consulaires et diplomatie à l'époque moderne," in: R. Sabbatini and P. Volpini eds., *Sulla diplomazia in età moderna. Politica, economia, religione* (Milan: 2011), 193–218; F. Zamora Rodríguez, *La 'pupilla dell'occhio della Toscana' y la posición hispánica en el mediterráneo occidental, 1677–1717* (Madrid: 2013), 113–122.
- 6 See, for instance, for ambassadors of the States General: J. Aalbers, *De Republiek en de vrede van Europa* (Groningen: 1980); S. Barendrecht, *François van Aerssen. Diplomaat aan het Franse hof, 1598–1613* (Leiden: 1965); M.A.M. Franken, *Coenraad van Beuningen's politieke en diplomatieke activiteiten in de jaren 1667–1684* (Groningen: 1966); J. Heringa, *De eer en hoogheid van de staat* (Groningen: 1961); J.G. Stork-Penning, *Het grote werk* (Groningen: 1958). On Dutch consuls, see: A.H. de Groot, *The Ottoman Empire and the Dutch Republic: A History of the Earliest Diplomatic Relations 1610–1630* (Leiden: 2012), 128–137; K. Heeringa, *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis van de Levantschen handel*, 2 vols (The Hague 1910, 1917); A.E. Kersten and B. van der Zwan, "The Dutch Consular Service: In the Interest of a Colonial and Commercial Nation," in: Melissen and Fernández eds., *Consular Affairs and Diplomacy*, 275–301;

network of consuls abroad was extensive, much more close-knit than that of the Republic's official representatives, and deserves much greater attention than it has received so far. Actually, the States General's network of ambassadors in residence was quite modest. The Republic had diplomatic missions in London, Madrid, Vienna, and at the French Court, but these were rarely occupied permanently and the envoys did not always have the rank of *ordinaris* ambassador. The number of Dutch consuls appointed to European ports was significantly larger; they may well have constituted the largest consular service in Europe. In the Mediterranean area in particular the Dutch had established a tight network of consuls and vice consuls.⁷

Although the choice of a study of Dutch consuls in Spain may not seem obvious, several arguments can be made in its favour. To begin with, their number was, as just mentioned, rather high. Within 13 days after the conclusion of the Peace of Munster, the States General sent five consuls to Spain, and shortly thereafter another four left for Spanish ports. Dutch and Spanish archives provide ample opportunity to study Dutch consular representatives in Spanish territories across Europe. The consuls corresponded regularly with the States General, albeit that some did so more frequently than others. Jacob van den Hove, consul in Cádiz from 1648 until his death in 1667, was particularly active and a polygraph. His correspondence forms an important component of the sources that were consulted.

Archival documents of the States General are the traditional sources for studies of the Republic's foreign policy and diplomacy, and they have been frequently consulted for this study. In addition, several Spanish sources pertaining to local and central administrative institutions have been examined, as well as sources in the archives of the Directie van de Levantse Handel. The use of diplomatic correspondence in support of historical research often meets with

N. Steensgaard, "Consuls and Nations in the Levant from 1570 to 1650," *The Scandinavian Economic History Review* 15 (1967), 13–55; H. Wätjen, *Die Niederländer im Mittelmeergebiet zur Zeit ihrer höchsten Machtstellung* (Berlin: 1909), 104–113.

7 M. Herrero Sánchez, "Las relaciones económicas entre la monarquía hispánica y las Provincias Unidas de 1648 a 1680. La red consular holandesa en los puertos españoles," in: A. Alvar Ezquerro, J.M. de Bernardo Ares, and P. Molas Ribalta eds., *Espacios urbanos, mundos ciudadanos. España y Holanda (ss. XVI-XVII). Actas del VI Coloquio Hispano-Holandés de Historiadores* (Córdoba: 1998), 100–110; O. Schutte, *Nederlandse vertegenwoordigers in het buitenland, 1584–1810* (The Hague: 1976). While there was a significant number of English consuls during the reign of Charles II, Violet Barbour believes that the Dutch consular service was the largest of all European countries. See V. Barbour, "Consular Service in the Reign of Charles II," *The American Historical Review* 33 (1928), 574; D.B. Horn, *The British Diplomatic Service, 1689–1789* (Oxford: 1961), 254–255.

disparaging remarks.⁸ But such criticism is valid primarily for letters and *nouvelles* from ambassadors and other envoys that are full of details about court life and superficial, unreliable news. The letters from consuls to the States General, however—both their public and secret messages—discuss, in addition to general matters, concrete incidents that had triggered complaints and protests from Dutch merchants. In combination with other, Spanish, sources and studies, it is possible to get a clear image of what the consuls did in the Spanish ports and how they participated within the Dutch diplomatic network. By the way, no records are known to exist of regular and direct correspondence with Johan de Witt, who was the central architect of the States General's foreign policy during the First Stadtholderless Period (1651–1672). There is no doubt, though, that the grand pensionary was well informed about the contents of consular letters because he did see almost all messages addressed to the States General.⁹

Before actually examining the work of Dutch consuls in Spain and their share in the diplomatic activities of the States General, a brief overview will be given of the primary duties of consuls in general, and of Dutch consuls in Spain in particular.

2 Consuls and the Directie van de Levantse Handel en de Navigatie in de Middellandse Zee

Recent publications and conferences confirm that historians of diplomatic affairs have become interested in consuls and that, as a result, knowledge of the topic has increased significantly. In the fall of 2012 Arnaud Bartolomei took stock of research on the institution of the foreign consul in early modern and contemporary history. Regarding the duties assigned to consuls he concluded that there were three large areas.¹⁰ The first one concerned providing

8 G. de Bruin, "Buitenlands beleid en gezantschapswezen in de Republiek," *Nederlandsch Archievenblad* 99 (1995) 9; J.C.M. Pennings and Th.H.P.M. Thomassen eds., *Archieven van Nederlandse gezanten en consuls tot 1813*. vol. 1. *Overgedragen archieven van gezanten en consuls in de christelijke wereld* (The Hague: 1994), 47–66.

9 R. Fruin and N. Japikse, *Brieven aan Johan de Witt*, 2 vols (Amsterdam 1919–1922); Franken, *Coenraad van Beuninghen*, 25–31. In the De Witt archives there is, however, a letter from the grand pensionary to Van den Hove. NL-HaNA, De Witt, 3.01.17 inv.nr. 2652 f 237, De Witt to Van den Hove, 28 February 1661.

10 A. Bartolomei, "De la utilidad comercial de los cónsules. Problemáticas y estado de la cuestión (Europa y el mundo mediterráneo, siglos XVII, XVIII y XIX)," in: Aglietti, Herrero Sánchez, and Zamora Rodríguez eds., *Los cónsules de extranjeros*, 247–258. Read additional observations in: idem, "Débats historiques et enjeux scientifiques autour de

information, the second one dealt with protection of and service to private merchants in their district and in the homeland, and the third area was related to legal matters. All duties were closely interwoven but can be reduced to these three areas. One should point out as well that the institution of the consul in the 17th century was in full development and was subject to many local variations.

Much is still unclear about the tasks performed by consuls but we know most about their role as informers on economic, political, and military matters.¹¹ Historians recognize that consular correspondence is a rich resource not only for the history of trade but for military affairs and sociopolitical developments as well, and they therefore turn to it frequently. In many instances consuls were required to inform their superiors and others in the homeland about the general political and economic developments in the host country. Nevertheless, most of their messages deal with specific trade problems that had arisen. The majority of such problems were related to the way a consul's fellow citizens were treated by local authorities. This brings us to the most important assignment of the consul: to defend both the collective and individual interests of merchants from one's homeland. Consuls from all nations busied themselves primarily with providing assistance to merchants from their own country. Yet, the numerous and serious conflicts that their involvement caused, raises questions about their usefulness to these merchants and sailors. Answers may be found in an analysis of whose interests consuls actually tried to protect. Many problems, by the way, developed because the right to make appointments had not been established clearly and the duties, powers, remuneration, and delimitation of the area of activities had been described too concisely.¹² Thus, the legal position of the consul vis-à-vis his fellow citizens was not always clear. Did he have adjudicating powers over them in civil and criminal cases, or was his role limited to that of an arbitrator who acted at the request of merchants in conflict? Did the consul have the right to act as a notary and to conclude legal agreements between trading merchants from his country?

l'utilité commerciale des consuls," *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* 93 (2016), 49–59, and idem, "Introduction" in: idem et al. *De l'utilité commerciale des consuls. L'institution consulaire et les marchands dans le monde méditerranéen (XVII^e-XX^esiècle)* Publications de l'École française de Rome, 2017 <http://books.openedition.org/efr/3270>.

11 T. Barker, "Consular Reports: A Rich but Neglected Source," *Business History* 23.3 (1981), 265–266; Herrero Sánchez, "La red consular europea," 130; Poumarède, "Consuls," 113–122.

12 M.C. Engels, *Merchants, Interlopers, Seamen and Corsairs: The 'Flemish' Community in Livorno and Genoa, 1615–1635* (Hilversum: 1997), 127–128; M. van Gelder, *Trading Places: The Netherlandish Merchants in Early Modern Venice* (Leiden and Boston: 2009), 162.

Remarkable is the fact that princes and states gradually increased their efforts to exert influence on the consuls. Whereas in the late Middle Ages consuls were administrators chosen by the members of the foreign colony of merchants, in the early modern period it was more and more often the prince or administrators in the homeland who made the appointments and set the rules for their employment. Historians are debating whether consuls should therefore be considered diplomats.¹³ Arguments in its favour are the facts that consuls were in one way or another sanctioned by the prince or state that sent them abroad, and that the ruler of the host country granted them some type of official permission to carry out their duties. Moreover, some of the tasks they actually assumed were characteristic of the work done by diplomats. Among these the most important one was to provide information to the homeland. As suggested above, in the 17th and 18th centuries people also wondered sometimes whether the consul was a diplomat.¹⁴ In general, one was of the opinion that in a legal sense he definitely was not. He usually did not enjoy the privileges and immunities accorded to envoys. Also, access to the monarch was reserved for the ambassador or envoy. Yet the status that consuls gave themselves and the way in which the authorities of the host country addressed them, often alluded to a diplomatic position. Gradually the foreign consulate acquired an internationally recognized status. That recognition, together with the relation to 'the state,' made it possible for consuls to look after the interests of merchants at the very highest level.

In general, the duties of the Dutch consuls were similar to those of their European colleagues. Although much remains unclear about the exact descriptions of their tasks—because the official regulations imposed on them tend to be rather vague in this respect—actual examples show that they were first and foremost expected to assist, and defend the interests of, Dutch merchants. In 1656 Jacob van den Hove provided an overview of his consular activities since his appointment, in 1648, in Cádiz. He did this because he wanted to recommend himself to the States General as a candidate for a vacancy in Seville.¹⁵

13 Herrero Sánchez, "Red consular europea," 128–130; Horn, *British Diplomatic Service*, 241–242, 253–254; Pennings and Thomassen, *Gezanten en consuls*, 25; Poumarède, "Consuls," 193–217.

14 See, for instance, A. de Wicquefort, *L'ambassadeur et ses fonctions* 2 vols (Amsterdam: 1730, first edition Leiden: 1680–1681), vol. 1, 63.

15 Consul Isaak van Swanenburch died on 18 August 1656. Van den Hove applied for the position and recommended at the same time that the consulates of Seville and Cádiz be merged under his authority. NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 11918, fol. 221, Van den Hove to S-G, 20 August 1656.

During his eight years in office he had devoted himself to the protection of his fellow citizens against all Spanish infractions of the agreements made in Munster between the Spanish king and the States General. He had protested at all levels, including the very highest, against unlawful inspections of vessels, other controls, payment of deposits, and new regulations introduced by Spanish authorities. The Dutch sailors and merchants had been able to count on his assistance in legal cases and in their conflicts with port and customs authorities. He had managed to keep Dutch renegades who had been taken prisoner by Spanish privateers and warships, out of the tentacles of the Inquisition. Furthermore he had welcomed Dutch sailors who had been freed from Turkish slavery. He had arranged for the Dutch warships that sailed in convoy with merchant vessels or that fought against Berber corsairs, to be welcome in all ports on Andalusia's Atlantic coast. Moreover he had been meticulous about sending reports on all these matters to the High and Mighty Lordships and to the colleges of the admiralties. In addition, he had informed the Spanish king and his councillors in Madrid of violations of both the collective and individual interests of Dutch merchants in the Cádiz area. While he does not mention this himself, Spanish authorities required all foreign consuls, including Van den Hove, to assist merchants from their respective home countries in completing all customs formalities.¹⁶ He may also have had duties as a notary for transactions within his area between Dutch merchants.¹⁷

Consuls most definitely were not allowed to demand of Dutch merchants that they use their paid services for loading and unloading vessels. It was possible to use such consular services but only on a voluntary basis. Furthermore, consuls did not have any authority or any type of jurisdiction over merchants and sailors. Remuneration of consuls was kept "separate from the expenditures and burdens of the Generality." Instead, they were allowed to charge a fee, based on the size of the vessel, and to keep a fixed portion of that sum for their living expenses. The matter of payments would, however, be an ongoing problem.¹⁸ The appointment of consuls was not a clear and transparent procedure. The directors of the Directie van de Levantse Handel en de Navigatie

16 J. Everaert, *De internationale en koloniale handel der Vlaamse firma's te Cádiz, 1670–1700* (Brugge: 1973), 223.

17 NL-HaNA LH inv.nr. 1.03.01, fol. 173; Heeringa, *Bronnen*, xxix, note 4.

18 NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 11920 Hendrick van Deutecom to SG, Sevilla 21 April 1661 and inv.nr. 11921 Hendrick van Deutecom to SG, Sevilla 7 August 1664; L. Aitzema, *Saken van staet en oorlogh in ende omtrent de Vereenigde Nederlanden* (The Hague: 1669–1672), vol. 4, 38, 256; Heeringa, *Bronnen*, vol. 1, 467, vol. 2, 52; Steensgaard, "Consuls and Nations," 33; Wätjen, *Niederländer im Mittelmeergebiet*, 106–107.

in de Middellandse Zee and the States of Holland had decisive roles in the nomination of a candidate. Without going into the details of the complex procedure, it is important to mention that the official appointments were made by the States General, who gave consuls a kind of “certificate of competence,” yet they were not official representatives of the States General, even if they were allowed to use an official stamp of the Generality. A clear distinction was made regarding consuls in the Ottoman empire, who represented the ambassador in Istanbul, which gave them a sort of indirect sovereignty. Moreover, these consuls did have authority and jurisdiction over Dutch citizens in their district. Their colleagues in Christian states only were special assistants (“alleene en specialijcken behulpers”).¹⁹

Consuls were closely associated with the community of merchants in their district, with merchants in Holland, and with the directors of the *Levantse Handel*, to whom they also reported.²⁰ Unlike the VOC and the WIC, the *Levantse Handel* was not a trading company with a monopoly but an interest group of private merchants doing business in the area near to and beyond the Strait of Gibraltar. The administration consisted of prominent Amsterdam merchants who were appointed by the city’s burgomasters and who met on a weekly basis in city hall. Later on, the organization would be expanded with a chamber in Hoorn (1644), Rotterdam (1670), and Zeeland (1696), but Amsterdam remained the most important player in the administration. The States General gave the Directie authority and means—such as the right to collect *lastgelden* [taxes based on the size of a ship]—that exceeded city and state levels, which is why it may be viewed as a Generality college. The Directie was one of the, for the Republic, typical semi-public institutions that emphasized the protection of merchants’ interests.²¹

19 NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 11921, fol. 303; Aitzema, *Saken van Staet*, vol. 4, 38, 256; C. Cau, *Groot Placaetboek* 11 (The Hague: 1658), Generael Reglement voor de Nederlandsche consuls, 1343–1444; De Groot, *Ottoman Empire*, 105, 128–132.

20 NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 7049, Van den Hove to SG, 5 May 1656; NL-HaNA LH inv.nr. 1.03.01, 173–175, 177–179, 181; Jacob van den Hove wrote that in Cádiz he had some 30 merchants under his care. A. Crespo Solana, *Mercaderes atlánticos. Redes del comercio flamenco y holandés entre Europa y el Caribe* (Córdoba: 2009), 104–128; J.I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic and the Hispanic World, 1600–1661* (Oxford: 1982), 420.

21 A.H.H. van der Burgh, *De Directie van de Levantse Handel en de Navigatie in de Middellandse Zee* (The Hague 1881–1882); A.H. de Groot, “The organisation of Western European trade in the Levant, 1500–1800,” in: P.H. Boulle, L. Blussé, and F.S. Gastra eds., *Companies and Trade: Essays on Overseas Trading Companies during the Ancien Régime* (Leiden: 1981), 234–235; J.I. Israel, *Dutch Primacy in World Trade, 1585–1740* (Oxford: 1989), 16–18.

3 Dutch Consuls in Spanish Ports: Jacob van den Hove, Consul in Cádiz

The Peace of Munster was ratified on 15 May 1648. The ink was barely dry when, on 28 May 1648, the High and Mighty Lordships decided to appoint consuls in Seville, Cádiz, Málaga, Alicante, and San Sebastián. At the same time two Dutchmen were instructed to establish consulates in Spanish territories in Italy, namely in Naples and Sicily. Within only a few years several additional consulates would be created, among other places in Tenerife, at the time the principal island of the Canary Archipelago. In Galicia, Barcelona, and on the Balearic Islands consuls made their appearance as well.²² The consulates on the Atlantic coast in Andalusia were the most important ones because of the Spanish wool trade and the commerce with the West Indies. The ports on the east coast of the Iberian Peninsula were important to Dutch merchants as well, because of the intra-Mediterranean trade, while in the north—on the Galician, Cantabrian, and Basque coast—the Dutch were involved in the wool and iron trade.²³

The appointment of consuls in Spain was not only indicative of Dutch merchants' interest in Spanish and Spanish-American markets, but was also a direct result of the Peace of Munster. The negotiators for the States General had managed to stipulate extremely favourable economic conditions. The treaty articles related to economic matters, which were further elaborated with the Spaniards in the 1651 *Traktaat van Marine* [maritime treaty], gave the Dutch a privileged commercial position in Spanish ports across Europe. Restrictive regulations, of all sorts, for foreign merchants no longer applied to Spanish-Dutch trade relations, which gave the Dutch an enormous competitive advantage on the Spanish markets. Moreover, the now officially sanctioned use of the ports

22 NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. NA SG Brievenboeken, 11916–11920; liassen Spanje 7042–7055, Secrete kast, 12575.34–12575.35; A. Domínguez Ortiz, *Los extranjeros en la vida española durante el siglo XVII* (Madrid: 1960), 377–378; Heringa, *Bronnen*, vol. 1, 54–155, vol. 2, 108–109; Herrero Sánchez, “La red consular holandesa,” 100–110; Israel, *Dutch Republic and Hispanic World*, 420–423; idem, “The Dutch Merchant Colonies in the Mediterranean during the Seventeenth Century,” *Renaissance and Modern Studies* 30 (1986), 99–100; Schutte, *Nederlandse vertegenwoordigers*, 389–425; Wätjen, *Niederländer im Mittelmeergebiet*, 113.

23 J.I. Israel, “The Phases of Dutch *straatvaart*, 1590–1713: A Chapter in the Economic History of the Mediterranean,” *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 99 (1986), 1–30; J. Le Moine de L’Espine, *Den koophandel van Amsterdam, naar alle gewesten des weerlds ...* (Amsterdam: 1715), 644–654; J. de Vries and A. van der Woude, *Nederland 1500–1815. De eerste ronde van moderne economische groei* (Amsterdam: 1995), 563–564.

of Andalusia's Atlantic coast provided opportunities to the Dutch to participate more actively in the Spanish-American trade, either through authorized channels or through smuggling. These new circumstances definitely did not hurt the Dutch. In his book, *Interest van Holland*, Pieter de la Court noted with great satisfaction that the Dutch had succeeded in dominating trade with Spain throughout the 1650s.²⁴

Spain's king had agreed to these far-reaching concessions in order to involve the Dutch in the defence of the Southern Netherlands. He assumed that the Republic would agree to this military collaboration because France's growing power in that area would also threaten the Republic's security. It was the king's expectation that eventually the Republic would form a political and military alliance with Spain.²⁵ That expectation became even stronger when the Republic, because of the fight over Brazil, got into a war with Portugal, which since 1640 had been trying to secede from the Spanish Monarchy. Moreover, the king expected Dutch businessmen to come to Spain's economic and financial aid. For all these reasons the Dutch received the same exceptional privileges that the Hanseatic League members had been enjoying since 1621 so that they would supply Spain with much-needed goods from northern Europe. According to the king, this special association with the Hanseatic League had not been sufficiently successful and he thought that the Dutch, with their extensive business opportunities, were the obvious alternative.²⁶

24 P. de la Court, *Het interest van Holland, ofte grond van Hollands welvaren* (Amsterdam: 1662), 162.

25 See, for instance, the leagues that the Spanish ambassador proposed to the States General. Archivo Histórico Nacional Madrid (AHN), Estado libro 720, Liga de las 17 Provincias 3 September 1663; NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 3442, 2 July 1656; 12.588.69, Une ligue pour la Sureté reciproque des deux Etats, 15 December 1661; 3465, 19 June 1664. M. Ebben, "'Een simpel tractaet van commercie ende marine sonder obligatie tot eenige defensie.' Spaans-Nederlandse betrekkingen rond 1660," in: M. Ebben and P. Wagenaar eds., *De cirkel doorbroken. Met nieuwe ideeën terug naar de bronnen. Opstellen over de Republiek* (Leiden: 2006), 87–100.

26 A. Girard, *Le commerce français à Séville et Cádiz au temps des Habsbourg* (Paris and Bordeaux: 1932), 77–88, 99–104, 109–110; J. Kernkamp, *De economische artikelen inzake Europa van het Munsterse vredesverdrag* (Amsterdam: 1951), 3–24; Th. Weller, "Entre dos aguas. La Hansa y sus relaciones con la Monarquía Hispánica y las Provincias Unidas en las primeras décadas del siglo XVII," in: B. García et al. eds., *El arte de la prudencia. La Tregua de los Doce Años en la Europa de los pacificadores* (Madrid: 2012), 179–199; A.M. van der Woude, "De Vrede van Munster en de economische ontwikkeling van de Republiek," in: H. de Schepper et al. eds., *1648. De Vrede van Munster* (Hilversum: 1997), 99–119.

Jacob van den Hove was the first active Dutch consul in Spain after the Twelve Years' Truce.²⁷ The States General had appointed him on 28 May 1648 to Cádiz, the Andalusian port on the Atlantic coast that was clearly on the rise. Nine days later several nearby ports were added to his consulate: Puerto Santa María, Puerto Real, and Jerez de la Frontera. Van den Hove received his commission on 13 June and arrived in Spain in August. The first three years probably were the most challenging of his career. These were years full of tension and conflicts with local Spanish authorities culminating in a search of his home and his administrative records on 22 July 1650. Van den Hove and his colleagues had their hands full dealing with complaints from the Dutch about the behaviour of Spanish port authorities. According to the Dutch consuls the Spaniards violated articles of the Peace of Munster and the Traktaat van Marine. Dutch sailors were charged tolls that were inappropriate or too high, and there were also allegations that Dutch merchants were accused unjustly of all kinds of smuggling activities. Dutch vessels were frequently attacked by Basque, Irish, and Dunkirk privateers because they were alleged to bring goods from the enemy to Spain. Moreover, local admiralty authorities forced the Dutch sailors to pay large deposits as soon as they entered a Spanish port, to make sure they would not leave the port without paying tolls and tariffs. Furthermore, the local authorities required the Dutch merchants to contribute to loans to the royal treasury. The king had imposed this requirement on all domestic and foreign merchants and they had to meet their obligations immediately.

Van den Hove made serious efforts to get along with the local and regional authorities. His contacts with the captain-general and overall coordinator of the defence of Andalusia's Atlantic coast, Juan Luis de la Cerda, Duke of Medinaceli, were cordial.²⁸ Because all kinds of fiscal regulations, intended to finance military efforts, were associated with Medinaceli's duties, the duke had significant influence on trade in southern Spain. Moreover, he was responsible for the sale of prizes and other matters related to privateering in his district.²⁹

27 Theodore van Rodenburgh was officially consul in Lisbon but between 1611 and 1613 also represented Dutch interests at the Spanish Court, for example in conflicts with the Spaniards in West Africa. Johan van Hoorn had received his commission for Seville on 14 March 1615 and most likely had been forced to resign in 1621 (if not earlier) when war resumed between the Republic and Spain. Schutte, *Nederlandse vertegenwoordigers*, 405, 410; Wätjen, *Niederländer im Mittelmeergebiet*, 113.

28 Medinaceli was Capitán General del Mar Océano y Costas de Andalucía. Everaert, *Vlaamse firma's te Cádiz*, 23–24; L. Salas Almela, *Medina Sidonia. El poder de la aristocracia, 1580–1670* (Madrid: 2008), 386.

29 Salas Almela, *Medina Sidonia*, 230–231.

Van den Hove recognized the influential position of the *Grande de España* and did his utmost to make him an ally of the Dutch, in particular because the duke had direct access to the king. It was indeed through Medinaceli that Van de Hove received several important royal commitments that were favourable to Dutch traders.³⁰ The consul sent Medinaceli gifts on several appropriate occasions. For example, when Medinaceli's daughter married the marquis of Heliche, eldest son of Don Luis de Haro, the king's principal minister, Van den Hove offered his best wishes on behalf of the Dutch community in Cádiz and sent the duke a Japanese trunk filled with East-Indian products.³¹ The two men were on such good terms that Van den Hove had direct access to the captain-general. During a stroll near Puerto de Santa María, Medinaceli allegedly even confided to Van den Hove that his house had always been favourably disposed towards the Dutch. To support this claim he said that his ancestor Juan de la Cerda had condemned the brutal regime of the duke of Alba in the Netherlands when he was designated to be the latter's successor.³²

Van den Hove also got along rather well with the count of Frigiliana, governor of the city of Cádiz, and his successor, the count of Molina. The king had instructed Frigiliana to support the Dutch merchants and to protect them against extortion by Spanish authorities. Van den Hove was able to convince Molina that Dutch merchants had to be treated according to the terms of the Peace of Munster and the *Traktaat van Marine*. Although Molina and his successors did not always cooperate immediately, they usually, after some admonition from Madrid, obeyed the king's wish that they behave in a correct and generous manner towards the Dutch. Such was not the case with the *veedores-generales* or customs officials, who clearly targeted the new foreign traders in Spain. Andrés Hurtado de Corcuera and in particular his successor, Esteban Fermín de Marichalar, persecuted the Dutch whenever and wherever they could. According to Van den Hove it was Don Andrés's principal goal in life to torment and ruin Dutch merchants. Between the customs officials of the Almirantazgo [admiralty] and Dutch sailors numerous problems arose about tolls levied on imported and exported goods. According to the Dutch consuls their fellow citizens were exempt from paying tolls or other port taxes in light of the agreements made at Munster. Moreover they enjoyed the same rights as the Spaniards and the members of the Hanseatic League. Time and again, so the consuls claimed, the authorities of the Almirantazgo had violated the privileges of the Dutch. Van den Hove also protested against the already mentioned

30 NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 7042.

31 NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 7043.

32 NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 7042, 7046.

payment of deposits imposed on the Dutch by the *veedores-generales*. Such payments were required to prevent the departure of vessels without the consent of the Almirantazgo. The consul argued that this was a serious impediment to the development of Dutch trade, especially because it was hard for the Dutch, as newcomers on the Spanish markets, to find people willing to grant them loans. But that was not all: the requirement was incompatible with those articles of the Peace of Munster that provided for free trade between the "respective citizens" [of both countries]. The same applied, it was argued, to the high tariffs that Spanish customs officials tried to levy on Dutch vessels cruising the Atlantic within the 20-mile zone off Andalusia's coast. The Spaniards had created this regulation in an attempt to prevent illegal trade near their coast, especially when the American fleet was approaching.³³

Although the Dutch accusations of fraud and extortion by Spanish officials were not entirely unfair, Hurtado's and Marichalar's determination to deal firmly with the Dutch was somewhat understandable. In the short time that Dutch sailors had been coming to Spanish ports, they had acquired among friends and foes a reputation for being smugglers of the worst kind. In 1652 the duke of Medinaceli informed the members of the Spanish Council of State and the Council of the Indies of the illegal practices by the Dutch. What was already known was confirmed by Seville's *veedor*, Don Lorenzo Andrés García, with a statement from a German sailor according to whom the Dutch abused the favourable trade position that they enjoyed. Dutch vessels were subject to fewer inspection regulations. Therefore Dutch sailors smuggled goods from enemies into Spain and, worse yet, did the same in Spanish America, even though all persons, including Spaniards, were strictly forbidden from conducting business with these territories without the express consent of the king and the Casa de Contratación. What infuriated Spanish customs officials most of all was the excessive manner in which the Dutch violated the rules. Everyone was aware that in the Spanish customs system secret trading was inevitable, especially because the Spaniards themselves participated in it. But apparently the Dutch went too far, in the eyes of the Spaniards, in their attempts to circumvent regulations and to avoid paying tolls and tariffs.³⁴ In order to prevent or at least restrict the import of illegal goods Spain forced the Dutch merchants and the States General to use certificates and passports for better control of Dutch trading activities. This led, however, to even more fraud and shrewd avoidance

33 Archivo General de Simancas (AGS) Estado legajo (leg.), 2096, 26 January 1660; Everaert, *Vlaamse firma's*, 488–512; W. Klooster, *Illicit Riches: Dutch Trade in the Caribbean, 1648–1795* (Leiden: 1998), 50–51.

34 Archivo General de Indias Sevilla (AGI), Indiferente, leg. 767.

on the part of the Dutch, followed by Spanish retaliations and protests from Dutch sailors and consuls.³⁵

Another source of irritation for the Spaniards were the large-scale violations by the Dutch of the Spanish-American trade monopoly. Dutch merchants, as well as other Europeans, entered the American markets via the semi-legal practice of bribing Spanish or naturalized frontmen who did have the right to trade with the New World. But Dutch smugglers also conducted their business with the Americas by way of the Canary Islands, the Dutch Antilles, or Buenos Aires, without any contact with Spanish merchants or institutions.³⁶ Although these cases of fraud were officially considered in Madrid by the Consejo de Indias, the Dutch consuls played a role in their handling as well. Balthasar Polster and Emanuel Dommer, both working as consuls in Tenerife, were overloaded with American contraband cases, not in the least because in all likelihood they were very much involved personally in this illegal business.³⁷ The consul in Galicia, too, had to spend time on similar cases: quite often ships would arrive that had been separated from the American fleet because of weather conditions or damage, or on purpose. Van den Hove also had to deal frequently with fellow citizens who were questioned or punished by Spanish customs officials because of their fraudulent activities. Dutchmen were trading on so-called *navíos almacenes* [ships with considerable storage space] near the coast of Andalusia with vessels coming from the Americas. Outside the Spanish ports, goods that had all kinds of origins would then be loaded from one ship onto another with the deliberate intent to avoid paying tolls and tariffs. When talking to Spanish authorities, the Dutch consul in Cádiz claimed to be completely ignorant of such practices, but in 1654 he did report to the States General that the fraudulent activities of the Dutch were seriously testing the patience of Spanish authorities.³⁸ Van den Hove had personally experienced that the local authorities were much less forgiving than the administrators in Madrid. On 22 July 1650, the *veedor-general* of Cádiz, Don Esteban Fermín de Marichalar, had, with the consent of a city magistrate, given orders to search the consul's home. Even though Van den Hove considered this to be an illegal act, on the basis of his

35 M. Herrero Sánchez, *El acercamiento hispano-neerlandés, 1648–1678* (Madrid: 2000), 101–103.

36 AGI, Gobernación y Gracia, leg., 765–773; AGS, Estado, leg., 2677; Herrero Sánchez, *Acercamiento hispano-holandés*, 107–110; Klooster, *Illicit Riches*, 52–58.

37 AGS Estado leg. 3980; Klooster, *Illicit Riches*, 56; Schutte, *Nederlandse vertegenwoordigers*, 423.

38 NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 7046 Van den Hove to SG, 21 September 1654; 7047 Van den Hove aan SG, 30 May 1655, 10 August 1655.

assumed consular immunity, officials searched his administrative documents and his warehouse looking for proof of illicit trade and possession of contraband. They did not find any such proof. Van den Hove submitted complaints to the local authorities and to the king in Madrid about the methods used by Marichalar and other government officials. These complaints did have results: the *veedor* was severely reprimanded and transferred to an insignificant post in the Sierra Morena, in Spain's interior. Philip IV announced again to the local authorities, emphatically, that they were required to observe the terms of the Peace of Munster and to treat the Dutch properly.³⁹

4 Dutch Consuls and the Court in Madrid

After the conclusion of the Peace of Munster it did not take the Dutch much time to acquire a bad reputation in Madrid because of their illegal trading activities, and that reputation would only get worse in the following years.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, the king's councillors decided without fail in favour of the subjects of the Republic. The decision to reprimand and transfer Marichalar was a clear example of their attitude. Madrid insisted that Dutch merchants be treated kindly, that searches of homes be avoided, and that tolls be levied only according to the agreed terms.

The Dutch consuls could count on sympathetic listeners when they took their complaints to the royal councils in Madrid because the king had very high expectations of the new Spanish-Dutch collaboration since the Peace of Munster. Don Gaspar de Bracamonte y Guzmán, Count of Peñaranda, who should be considered as one of the architects of the Peace, was a strong advocate of cordial contacts with the Dutch. In 1649 the king charged Sancho Dávila y Toledo, Marquis of Velada, with the very special task of safeguarding the interests of the Dutch in his capacity as member of the Council of State.⁴¹ This remarkable appointment was not only the result of the Court's favourable disposition towards the Dutch but also of the Dutch consuls' constant pressure

39 NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 7043.

40 J. Barrionuevo, *Avisos de Madrid, 1654–58 y apéndice anónimo 1660–1664*. New edition by A. Paz y Mélia (Madrid: 1894), vol. 2, 115; Girard, *Commerce français*, 109–110.

41 He was appointed as 'protector de los vasallos de las Provincias Unidas en todos los Reinos de Su Majestad.' Velada knew the Netherlands because he had been governor of Dunkirk and had occupied high military and diplomatic positions. NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 7042 Jacob van den Hove aan de Staten-Generaal, 1 August 1649. R. Vermeir, *In staat van oorlog. Filips IV en de Zuidelijke Nederlanden, 1629–1648* (Maastricht: 2001), 155–156, 187, 244, 325.

on Madrid. Van den Hove proudly saw the appointment as a personal accomplishment. In spite of the high expectations and the gifts offered by the Dutch consuls, the marquis of Velada did very little, which led to efforts to have a Dutch ambassador or other high-ranking diplomat appointed to the Court.⁴² The consuls continued to put pressure on the States General for this matter while simultaneously trying to find their way in the labyrinth of royal councils and committees.⁴³

Van den Hove carried out his duties with great success: with the help of gifts he got on the good side of various key figures. The most important person for the Dutch cause probably was Juan Alonso de Sala, solicitador de Cámara del Consejo Supremo del Rey. He was the one who made sure that the letters and memoranda of the Dutch consuls arrived on the right desk and were indeed considered. Don Juan Alonso got on good terms, for example, with the personal secretary and doorman of the marquis of Velada and they accepted the petitions and other messages from this high-ranking nobleman. About himself Sala said that because of his social background and the offices he had held, he had the right contacts to provide valuable services to the States General and to Van den Hove and his colleagues.⁴⁴ Another important contact person was Don Fernando Ruiz de Contreras, secretary of the Council of State. However, the consuls also had strong opponents, whose hostility they had incurred with their numerous protests and complaints. Thus, they encountered the resistance of the powerful Don Luis Oyanguren, the Basque secretary of the Council of War, to which the admiralties reported. In 1655 Pieter van Oorschot, consul in Spain's Basque provinces, had to call on Juan Alonso de Sala in order to placate Oyanguren somewhat.⁴⁵ When the Basque official gave Van den Hove a stern warning, the latter apologetically admitted that sometimes Dutch sailors did go too far and that he would prevent new excesses.⁴⁶

42 To encourage the marquess of Velada, he received a trunk with 50 boxes of chocolate and a hat made of beaver fur. NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 7043, Jacob van den Hove aan de Staten-Generaal, 4 July 1650.

43 NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 11.916, Van den Hove to SG, Cádiz, 10 March 1649; Van den Hove aan SG, Cádiz, 10 April 1650; Van Oorschot to SG, San Sebastián, 20 May 1655. Consuls themselves were not allowed to stay in their professional capacity at the Royal Court of Madrid. Herrero Sánchez, "La red consular europea," 147.

44 NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 7043, Sala to Van den Hove, Madrid 20 June 1650.

45 NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 11.916, Van Oorschot to SG, San Sebastián, 20 May 1655.

46 NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 11.916, Van den Hove to SG, Cádiz, 20 September 1655.

The many efforts by the Dutch consuls to have influence at the Court apparently did not have the desired outcomes, and neither did the gifts and marks of respect, for the consuls continued to insist that the States General send a high-ranking diplomat to Madrid in order to have the Dutch complaints actually considered by the Spaniards. Deliberately or not, often no progress was made on these cases in the slowly moving system of royal councils. Van den Hove's description in 1649 had been quite accurate:

... because we have no other recourse than to persons who themselves are at the service of His Majesty, and while His Majesty shows that he wants to favour us in every respect, there is no shortage of other persons who are in a privileged position at the Court because they have their own friends there and who thus obstruct and make useless that which His Majesty clearly enough mandates in our favour.⁴⁷

The pleas of the consuls did not fall on deaf ears. On 20 May 1656 the High and Mighty Lordships sent two gentlemen to Madrid, one of whom, Hendrik van Reede van Renswoude, would stay there as resident.⁴⁸

5 Van Renswoude Resident in Madrid

Although the Spanish king had expected the States General to send a plenipotentiary ambassador with a wide range of powers, Van Reede received only the title of resident minister and was given limited authority. These restrictions were particularly obvious in 1659 when he conducted lengthy negotiations with the Spaniards about Dutch access to the salt lagoon in Punta de Araya, in present-day Venezuela. The Dutch had requested this exception to the American monopoly in exchange for a potential alliance with Spain in the struggle against Portugal. In a direct confrontation with Portugal, the Dutch risked losing their access to the important salt pans of Setúbal. According to the States General, Spanish salt from Andalusia, Ibiza, and La Mata was available in insufficient quantities, was too expensive, and could therefore not meet demand in the Netherlands. The rich layers of salt in Punta de Araya, although far away, would be a good alternative to the loss of the high-quality Portuguese salt. Moreover, although this was obviously not mentioned, free passage to

47 NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 11.916 Van den Hove to SG, Cádiz, 10 March 1649.

48 Aitzema, *Staet en oorlog*, 36, 1313–1314; Barrionuevo, *Avisos de Madrid*, 11, 275–276; Schutte, *Nederlandse vertegenwoordigers*, 389.

Tierra Firme would provide opportunities to transport goods to the Americas and then trade them illegally. The Spaniards had high expectations of these negotiations. In particular they wanted to commit the Dutch to a blockade of Portugal's ports, which would leave the rebels without war materiel and food. Spain would then be able to enter the kingdom from the east, over land, and reconquer it. When they were close to reaching an agreement, the members of the Council of State learned to their great disappointment that Van Reede was not authorized to sign a treaty. He was allowed to conduct negotiations on conditions and specific terms regarding Dutch sailors' access to, and exploitation of, the salt lagoon, but that was the extent of his powers. Even when the Spaniards no longer required an official alliance in exchange for access to the salt lagoon in Venezuela, he was not allowed to sign an agreement. The king's councillors then decided to have the matter handled by the Spanish ambassador in The Hague.⁴⁹

The most important assignment given to Van Reede was to carry out the task that the consuls had repeatedly mentioned in their pleas for the appointment of an ambassador to the Spanish Court. He would have to make sure that all complaints collected by the consuls would be considered by the appropriate councils. That had been the specific request of the consuls and that was what he had to do, in close consultation with them.⁵⁰ Van Reede did carry out his task. In December 1657 he submitted to the Consejo de Estado a 63-page report and had it printed in a Spanish translation. This exposé of complaints submitted by the Dutch nation to the Spanish Court, or *Vertooch van clachten wegens den Staet aen t'Hoff van Spangien*, as he called it in Dutch, is indeed a collection of complaints regarding violations of the Peace of Munster and the Traktaat van Marine by Spanish officials, for which the consuls had been seeking adjudication for some time—in some cases, for several years.⁵¹ Without any ostentation Van Reede reminds the king's highest authorities in this document of the injustices suffered by Dutch merchants and consuls. In the first place he denounces, in general terms, the violence of the Dunkirk, Irish, and Basque privateers, the unlawful confiscations, the problems with certificates,

49 AGS Estado leg., 2092; M. Herrero Sánchez, "La explotación de las salinas de Punta de Araya. Un factor conflictivo en el proceso de acercamiento hispano-neerlandés, 1648–1678," *Cuadernos de Historia Moderna* 14 (1993), 173–194; Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 408–411; R. Valladares, *La rebelión de Portugal, 1640–1680. Guerra, conflicto y poderes en la Monarquía hispánica* (Valladolid: 1998), 161–163.

50 NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02 inv.nr. 3218, 413ff. and 3262.

51 AGS Estado leg. 2676, Memorial que el Residente de Holanda dio en el Consejo de Estado; NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 12.575.35, *Vertoogh van clachten jegens den Staet aen t'Hoff van Spaigne*.

and the ambiguities in instructions to lower-level officials. This is followed by a multitude of specific cases that serve to illustrate the numerous irregularities that have occurred. To avoid giving an endless list, he only mentions the cases still pending at the courts. Van Reede based his extensive argumentation on the detailed information the consuls had collected on these cases as well as on older cases they had handled before Van Reede's arrival. He had received all information directly from the consuls or from the States General, whose members had previously been apprised by the consuls.

Pieter van Oorschot, for example, who was consul in the Basque and Cantabrian coastal areas, had written several times to the Lords States General about a case that because of obstruction by Spanish officials at all levels had not been solved. In December 1654 the Consejo de Guerra [Council of War] had ordered that 16,000 silver reales be confiscated in the Cantabrian port of Santoña. The sum had been paid for the 70,000 *fanegas* [unit of capacity] of grain that Jan Cooijmans' company in Amsterdam had supplied to the Baron de Batteville, who was captain-general of San Sebastián and Guipúzcoa.⁵² The latter had purchased the grain for sustenance of the garrisons stationed in the local fortresses. Spanish law expressly prohibited the export of precious metals, with the exception of gold and silver received as payment for the sale of military-related goods. Van Oorschot had asked Philip IV three times to annul the judgement of the Council of War, but while the king had decided in his favour, the councillors still had not acted accordingly. They were hiding behind all sorts of military emergency measures. Next, Van Oorschot had asked the Lords States General to write to the king, which they had done twice. Nevertheless, the silver had not been released yet. Van Oorschot himself also had a claim, which had been pending since 1655, regarding the supply of two orders of cordage and ammunition to the tune of more than 4,500 silver reales, of which two years later he had seen nothing yet.⁵³

In his *Vertoogh van clachten* Van Reede also mentioned lawsuits initiated by Jacob van den Hove. The case of the ship *De Haes in 't Velt* demonstrates the close collaboration between the consul and the new diplomat in Madrid in their efforts to promote the interests of Dutch merchants and sailors. On 20 June 1656 Van den Hove reported to the States General that *De Haes in 't Velt*, which had entered the bay of Cádiz as part of a Dutch convoy, had been confiscated by the *veedor* Andrés Hurtado de Corcuera. The captain, Jan Kien from

52 Carlos de Batteville or Charles de Watteville de Joux (1605–1670) was captain-general of Guipúzcoa from 1654 to 1660. Next, he became Spain's ambassador in London. One *fanega* equals approximately 55.5 liters.

53 AGS Estado leg. 2676 Memorial del Residente de Holanda, fol. 26v–27v; leg. 4.111.

Zeeland, had been arrested by the city's governor and imprisoned in the castle of Santa Catalina. Kien was accused of sailing on an English vessel and of transporting English and French contraband. Moreover it was alleged that he had deliberately used his ship as a warehouse where smugglers could purchase goods. The consul registered a protest with the local authorities, while also informing Van Reede van Renswoude of the incident. Both Dutch representatives promised to keep each other carefully apprised of any new developments pertaining to the *De Haes in 't Velt*.⁵⁴ Although Kien was freed in August, the case would linger for several months.⁵⁵ Van Reede included it in his *Vertoogh van clachten* and added strong arguments to support the claim that both the vessel and its goods should be released. In this, he relied primarily on information received from Van den Hove.⁵⁶

6 The States General, the Resident, and the Consul

Although the consuls often complained that they were lone voices in the wilderness because they seldom received an answer from the States General, their efforts did lead to results in The Hague's administrative circles. The States of Holland and the States General took note of the information supplied by the Dutch consuls in Spain. It was discussed and led to new measures by the Lords States General. Summoning the Spanish ambassador in The Hague to request clarifications and, in appropriate cases, ask him to relay the Dutch views, complaints, and protests to his superiors, was one of the most important diplomatic steps taken. Between 1650 and 1660 Antoine Brun, the first Spanish ambassador in The Hague, and Don Esteban de Gamarra y Contreras, his successor, appeared several times before the States General to hear complaints and to receive memoranda in which irregularities occurring in Spanish ports and in the legal process were pointed out.⁵⁷ The great advantage of this approach was that through ambassadors the highest levels at the Spanish Court could

54 NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 11918 Van den Hove to SG 1 October 1656 and inv.nr. 7049 Van Reede van Renswoude to SG 4 October 1656.

55 AGS Contaduría del Suelo Contrabando leg.131 (2) 19 January 1657; NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 11918 Van den Hove to SG 2 August 1656.

56 AGS Estado leg. 2676 Memorial del Residente de Holanda. The marquess of Velada was inclined to decide the case in favor of the Dutch, on condition that the sailor be severely punished in the Netherlands because officials in Cádiz did have proof that Kien was in fact guilty of secret trading.

57 NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 293 resoluciones 27 March and 2 May 1656; AGS Estado leg. 2676, 25v-26; Israel, *Hispanic World*, 424.

be reached rather easily—at least, that was the assumption. Moreover, it was much less expensive to communicate with the Spaniards this way, instead of through one's own ambassador in Madrid. Nevertheless, because of pressure from the merchants and on the recommendation of the consuls, the States General had appointed Van Reede van Renswoude as resident minister. Evidently this had not been sufficient to put an end to the constant friction with Spanish authorities. It was therefore deemed necessary to use other diplomatic methods to exert greater pressure.

On 14 September 1660 the High and Mighty Lordships decided to send an extraordinary embassy to the Spanish Court, with the specific mission to ask the king and his councillors most urgently to put an end to the violations of the Peace of Munster and the *Traktaat van Marine*.⁵⁸ From The Hague, Johan de Witt personally guided the members of this embassy by sending them many letters filled with instructions.⁵⁹ During their audiences with the king, Don Luis de Haro, and other high-level officials, the ambassadors presented memoranda which they had composed on the basis of Van Reede's *Vertoogh van clachten*, resolutions by the States General, and information compiled over time by the consuls and sent to the States General. They had copies of documentation that served as evidence. In Madrid they were advised by Van Reede while preparing for their meetings with the king, Luis de Haro, and the councillors. They also sought his assistance in composing the memoranda that they wished to present.⁶⁰ It had been their hope that Van den Hove would come from Cádiz and join them to discuss the pending cases. Illness and business problems with local authorities prevented him, however, from travelling to Madrid in time for such meetings. It was not until after the envoys' departure that he would go to the capital to evaluate the embassy's work with Hendrik van Reede.⁶¹

While in Madrid, the ambassadors wished to prepare themselves thoroughly in order to be as knowledgeable as possible when meeting with the Spaniards. They therefore requested very specific information from the consuls.

58 NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 8509 Verbael van de heren HHM extraordinaires Ambassadeurs, instructies 14–16; 11920 Van Merode, Van Reede van Amerongen en Aebinga van Humalda aan SG, Madrid, 13 May 1661.

59 Between January and mid-May 1661 De Witt sent 12 letters with instructions to the embassy. NL-HaNA, De Witt, 3.01.17 inv.nr. 2652; R. Fruin, G. Kernkamp, and N. Japikse, *Brieven van Johan de Witt* 4 vols (Amsterdam: 1909–1913), vol. 2, 282, 307–309.

60 NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 8509 Verbael, 33, 40–41, 48, 52, 69; 11920 Van Merode, Van Reede van Amerongen en Aebinga van Humalda to SG, Madrid, 12 January 1661 and 21 January 1661.

61 NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 11920, Van den Hove to SG, 23 and 27 March 1661 and 12 May 1661.

Pieter van Oorschot, for example, was asked to prepare a comprehensive report about the “excesses of piracy and the violations vis-à-vis the Dutch by the privateers in Biscay” (“excessieve piraterijen en violentieën aan de Nederlanders aangedaan door de commissievaarders in Biskaje”). They included the details of this report by the consul in San Sebastián about injustices suffered by the Dutch in their memorandum to the king.⁶²

7 Conclusion

The Dutch consuls in Spain formed an important link in the States General's diplomatic relations with the Spanish king after the Peace of Munster. With the agreement and collaboration of the High and Mighty Lordships, they looked after the interests of Dutch merchants at local and higher-level administrative offices and in the judicial courts. As early as 1648 they requested the appointment of a high-ranking diplomat to the Spanish Court to emphasize the importance of the complaints of Dutch merchants about violations by Spanish officials of certain articles of the Peace of Munster and the Traktaat van Marine. The request was granted by sending Van Reede van Renswoude to Madrid as resident minister. He became the advocate of Dutch trade interests at the Spanish Court. Although he was at the centre of the network of consuls, he did not become their head or a supervisor who gave them instructions. Rather, he was the person who somehow had to solve at the Court the cases that were stuck at lower administrative and judicial levels. The consuls submitted the complaints and protests to him, with all kinds of supporting evidence. While Van Reede's official diplomatic status was higher than the position of the consuls, his political assignment was limited, and without the input of the consuls his role actually was only ceremonial and information-seeking.⁶³

The consuls also corresponded about these cases with the Directie van de Levantse Handel and the States General. They provided information on the basis of which their High Mightinesses chose their course of action. What is more, the documented requests of the consuls led to new diplomatic steps. Several times, the Lords States General summoned the Spanish ambassador in The Hague and requested that he point out to the king that the constant violations of the Peace and the Traktaat risked damaging the friendly relations and economic collaboration. The concrete knowledge received by their High

62 NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 8509 Verbael, 69; 11920 Van Merode, Van Reede van Amerongen en Aebinga van Humalda to SG, 4 and 9 February 1661 and 18 March 1661.

63 Pennings and Thomassen, *Gezanten en consuls*, 25.

Mightinesses about the way in which Spanish authorities treated Dutch merchants, contributed to their decision in 1660 to send an extraordinary embassy to the Spanish Court. Much of what was discussed during the audiences with the king and his councillors was directly linked to the problems signalled by the consuls, as was the content of the memoranda that were presented. Obviously, the policies and diplomatic efforts of the States General towards Spain were not exclusively influenced by the consuls. Others whose interests were at stake, spoke out as well, as was the case of the Amsterdam Sephardic Jews, who by means of the Mahamad [the administrative body of the Amsterdam Sefardim], the city's burgomasters, and the States of Holland submitted petitions to the States General in which they demanded the same treatment as the Dutch. As residents of the Republic they were entitled to equal treatment according to the Peace of Munster. Their efforts were successful, for the States General became, at the highest levels, the advocate of their demands as well. In this case, too, before adopting their position, the Lords States General sought documentation from the consuls who already were working with Amsterdam Sefardim in Spain.⁶⁴

It would be naive to assume that only information provided by the consuls and their requests contributed to the States General's policymaking with regard to economic relations with Spain. The procedure was much more complex and included prominent roles for commercial interest groups, the directors of the *Levantse Handel*, the burgomasters of Amsterdam, the States of Holland, and the grand pensionary. But that does not change the fact, at least for the relations with Spain, that the consuls, who represented private merchants' interests, were in fact part of the diplomatic service of the States General and as such were able to have an impact on official policymaking. What they actually did was to make use of the sovereign diplomatic tools of the state in their efforts to defend the interests of Dutch merchants and, if possible, to improve the latter's competitive position. Whose interests the consuls really represented is not entirely clear: those of all Dutch merchants or more specifically those of the great Amsterdam commercial houses with a seat on the board of the Dutch Levant Trade? Frequent conflicts between consuls and members of Dutch merchant communities in foreign countries give rise to the presumption that consuls gave priority to the interests of the latter.

Most likely, the issues considered in this study applied not only to the consuls in Spain but to those in other places as well—for instance in the Ottoman

64 NL-HaNA, Staten-Generaal, 1.01.02, inv.nr. 8509 Verbael, 10–11; W. van de Water, *Secrete Resolutiën van de EGMH Staten van Holland* (Utrecht: 1717), vol. 1, 229.

empire, where they enjoyed greater official powers. There also are strong indications that consuls from other western European states, in their dual role as informers in the service of their state and as advocates of the interests of private merchants, made comparable contributions to foreign-policymaking, although they were not members of an official diplomatic network.⁶⁵

What this study demonstrates is that an actor-based approach regarding historical figures who are not recognized as official diplomats, in this case consuls, reveals the complexity of premodern foreign relations. Influential interest groups seized the opportunity to participate in diplomatic exchanges primarily to the benefit of their personal or group interests rather than state interests. The state, on its part, used the networks, knowledge, infrastructure, and material means of merchant communities to meet its political ends. What ultimately matters as much as their political influence on the state's foreign-policymaking is the fact that interest groups contributed to shaping the characteristics and nature of the state's diplomatic culture. In the Dutch case, they gave it a significant commercial orientation.

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65 Herrero Sánchez, "La red consular europea," 144; Poumarède, "Consuls," 193–218; Zamora Rodríguez, *La 'pupilla dell'occhio'*, 170–172.

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