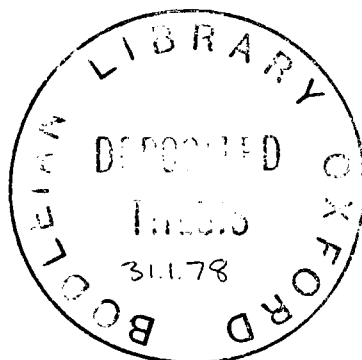


POLITICS AND WAR IN THE
SIXTEENTH CENTURY STATE
THE CASE OF THE UNITED
PROVINCES 1585
TO 1609.

D. Phil. Thesis by
P. F. Purton .

MS 1922



CONTENTS.

A Note on Terminology	i
Abbreviations used	iii
I Some Problems of the Low Country Wars	1
II Concepts of Strategy	16
III A War of Resources : Devastation and Contributions	53
IV Vital Interests & Expendable Towns	101
V Aims and Conduct of the War : the Consequences of Decentralisation	150
VI National Interest & International War : The United Provinces & Henry IV, 1589 - 1598	195
VII The Siege of Ostend and its Place in the War, 1601 - 1604	242
VIII The Impact of Defeat : The Crisis Years 1605 - 6.	288
IX Politics, War & The State : Some Conclusions	333
Appendix I The Edward Norris affair, 1591-2	359
Appendix II Tables IV - VII	368
Bibliographical Note	371
Bibliography	373

MAPS.

I The Northern Netherlands	following	iv
II The Levying of Contributions	following	52
III The Meyerij of 's Hertogenbosch,	following	80
IV The Southern Netherlands and the French frontier		194

TABLES IN THE TEXT.

I Estimated annual revenue from contributions levied by the United Provinces	61	
II Contributions paid by various areas to the Dutch or Spanish	following	100
III Dutch Aid to Henry IV, 1588-98	241	

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

Throughout, the term 'Holland' is used to apply only to the province of that name. Similarly, where 'Flanders' appears in the text it applies only to that province, although commonly used by contemporaries to designate the Netherlands as a whole. 'Dutch' is employed as a convenient shorthand for the inhabitants of the rebel provinces, but 'Belgian' has been avoided for the southern provinces because it implies a predetermined racial/national division in the Netherlands. 'Spanish' is used generally to describe the government and the armed forces operating against the United Provinces even though, in the armed forces, Spaniards were themselves a small minority. This is justified by the commanding position held by the servants of Madrid during this period.

Rather than adopt a slavish consistency with place names, we have employed forms familiar to English speakers, such as The Hague (Den Haag), Antwerp (Antwerpen), Flushing (Vlissingen). Elsewhere, the form familiar to the inhabitants has been employed (Mechlin for Malines, Liège for Luik).

Dates are given according to the 'New Style' except where otherwise stated, or where it is unclear which style is being used.

CURRENCY

Wherever possible, sums of money are given in Gulden, which exchange at the rate of £1:10 gulden (fl.). As a rough guide, French livres are equated with gulden, while écus and ducats approximate to one-third of a £

sterling. There were of course frequent fluctuations in the exchange rates but absolute precision is not necessarily useful to establish the general points made.

ABBREVIATIONS USED

The following abbreviations are used in the foot notes for the most commonly cited sources. Full references for all sources are given in the bibliography.

Manuscript sources

AGR CC	Archives Generales du Royaume, Brussels, Chambre de comptes.
ARA SG	Algemeen Rijksarchief, Den Haag, Staten-Generaal.
ARA SH	Algemeen Rijksarchief, Den Haag, Staten van Holland.
ARA RdvSt	Algemeen Rijksarchief, Den Haag, Raad van State.
GA	Gemeente Archief
KB	Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Den Haag.
KHA	Koninklijke Huisarchief
Liège (U)	Bibliothèque generale, université de Liège
Liège (V)	Bibliothèque centrale, ville de Liège
PRO	Public Record Office, London
RA	Rijksarchief (Followed by name of province)
RA NB	Rijksarchief, Noord Brabant

Collections of Documents

CSPF	Calendar of State Papers, Foreign
Col. Doc.	<u>Coleccion de documentos ineditos para la historia de Espana, Madrid</u>
Collins	<u>A. Collins, Letters & Memorials of State, London, 1746</u>
Deventer	<u>M.L. van Deventer, Gedenkstukken van Oldenbarnevelt, 3v, Hague, 1860-65</u>
Do dt	<u>J. Dodt van Flensburg, Archief voor Kerkelijke en wereldsche geschiedenis, 7v, Utrecht 1839-48</u>
Groen	<u>G. Groen van Prinsterer, Archives ou correspondance inédites de la Maison d'Orange-Nassau, series 2.</u>
HMC	Historical Manuscripts Commission (followed by name name of series)
JvO	<u>Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, bescheiden betreffende zijn staatkundige beleid, I, ed. Haak (1934), II, ed. Veenendeel (1962), The Hague, Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatien</u>
Kemp	<u>C. M van der Kemp, Maurits van Nassau, 4v, Rotterdam, 1843</u>
Kronijk	<u>Stukken voor de Geschiedenis van de jaren 1588-95, kronijk van het Historisch Genootschap te Utrecht, ser. 4, XVI - XXI (1860-65)</u>
Lefèvre	<u>J. Lefèvre, Correspondance de Philippe II, Brussels, 1956-1960</u>
Lon & Cuv	<u>H Lonchay & J Cuvalier, Correspondance de la Cour d'Espagne sur les affaires des Pays Bas, Brussels, 1923.</u>
Recueil	<u>M Berger de Xivrey & J Guadet, Recueil des lettres missives de Henri IV, 9v, Paris 1843-72</u>

- Res Holl Resolutien van der Heerenstaten van Holland,
vol. per year
- Res St G Resolutien der Staten Generaal, ed. Japikse
& Rijpermann, Hague, 1915-70, R G P
- Winwood E Sawyer, Memorials of Affairs of State
from the .. papers of .. Winwood, 3v, London, 1725

Periodicals

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Acta Hist Brux | Acta Historica Bruxellensia |
| Ann Ac Arch Belg | Annales, Academie royale d'archeologie
de Belgique |
| Ann Soc Arch Namur | Annales, societ  d'arch ologie de Namur |
| Ann Soc Em Br | Annales, societ  d'emulation de Bruges |
| Bijd Gesch Z N | Bijdragen voor de Geschiedenis van
Zuid Nederland |
| BVGN | Bijdragen voor de Geschiedenis der
Nederlanden |
| BvG | Bijdragen voor Geschiedenis, formerly BVGO |
| BVGO | Bijdragen voor Vaderlandsche Geschiedenis
en Oudheidkunde |
| BeM | Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende
de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden
(formerly BeM, HGU) |
| Bull CRH | Bulletin, Commission Royale d'Histoire |
| ECHR | Economic History Review |
| EHR | English Historical Review |
| HG U (trecht) | Historisch Genootschap gevestigd te
Utrecht, various publications |
| Hist Zeit | Historische Zeitschrift |
| JMH | Journal of Modern History |
| MMA | Mededelingen , Academie van Marine
van Belgie |
| Ned Hist Blad | Nederlandsche Historiebladen (became BvG) |
| P & P | Past and Present |
| Preuss Jahrb | Preussische Jahrbuch |
| Rev Bel Phil | Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire |
| TRHS | Transactions of the Royal Historical
Society |
| TvG | Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis |
| Verhand KAW | Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Akademie
van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam |
| Versl Med Leiegouw | Verslagen en Mededelingen van de Leiegouw |

MAP I .

THE NORTHERN NETHERLANDS .

Forts :

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Isendike | 8. Hemert |
| 2. Liefkenshoek | 9. Hedel |
| 3. Lillo | 10. Crevecoeur |
| 4. Clundert | 11. S. Andries |
| 5. Sevenbergen | 12. Zwartesluys |
| 6. Werckendam | 13. Blockzijl |
| 7. Hardinxveld | |

Provincial boundaries : - - -



I

SOME PROBLEMS OF
THE LOW COUNTRY WARS,
1585-1609

The Netherlands at the end of the sixteenth century were an arena for many conflicts, fought out simultaneously at different levels. The strife, according to a modern historian, was¹

an international war, a civil war, a class war all rolled into one and it spanned eight of the most savage decades in the history of modern warfare.

The Dutch revolt played a vital part in the history of early modern Europe. This much has been recognised since the time of Motley², while the participants themselves were aware of the wide-ranging ramifications of what they were doing. By challenging the awe-inspiring power of an empire which straddled Europe and reached out into other continents, the rebel provinces inevitably found themselves involved in developments which spread far beyond the narrow confines of their own land. Inevitably also, they came to represent a "semi-permanent pole of political and religious ferment" in the crisis-ridden seventeenth century.³ In another sense, the revolt represented the first successful defeat of an essentially seigneurial social system defended by a centralising, absolutist monarchy, by a society in which the dominant role was played by an aggressive, expansionist commercial and entrepreneurial class. In this sphere too the Netherlands became the pole of a vast struggle.

1 Wilson, Queen Elizabeth & the Revolt of the Netherlands, 3.

2 Motley, Rise of the Dutch Republic, (1886 ed) v: "Without the birth of this great commonwealth, the various historical phenomena of the sixteenth and the following centuries must have either not existed, or have presented themselves under essential modifications".

3 Parker, 'The Dutch Revolt & and polarisation of international politics', TvG 89, 1976, 429.

G N Clark characterised it as¹

an indescribably complicated series of conflicts in which not only the Netherlands but many other countries were involved.

Certainly, these conflicts were complicated. That they are, however, indescribable may be questioned. The various attempts made to describe the general course of events, and explain them, have naturally been coloured by the historians' philosophies and concepts. Thus the debate between Dutch writers has been termed "Historical trench warfare" based on the nineteenth century division between a "reactionary", Calvinist school represented by Groen van Prinsterer and his disciples on the one side, and a "liberal", republican school represented most notably by Bakhuizen and elaborated by Fruin on the other, while a third, Roman Catholic, school of thought has attached both.² The nationalist-inspired work of Geyl presented a valuable critique of all preceding accounts, but his alternative explanation of the development of the Dutch republic does not stand close investigation.³

The events in the Netherlands cannot be understood in a narrow national framework, and in this respect the wider perspectives of non-Dutch historians have provided a valuable corrective. Not only must the establishment of the Dutch republic be put into an international context, it must also be seen in terms of underlying social and economic developments: the Dutch state was

1 Clark, 'Birth of the Dutch Republic', Proc. BA XXXII, 1946, 189-90.

2 Smit, 'The present position of Studies regarding the revolt of the Netherlands', Britain & the Netherlands, ed. Bromley & Kossman, I, **11**.

3 Examined in chapter II below, p.34f .

not an autonomous, neutral body but one created through the interaction of various dynamic and conflicting forces, both internal and external. Amongst these forces was the pressure of the war itself, which all too often has been placed in a separate category with a merely subordinate relationship to other developments. It is not within the scope of this study to present a complete reinterpretation of the revolt of the Netherlands. However, it will attempt to examine the inter-relationship between the politics of the Dutch state (in their widest sense) and the war being fought by that new-born body. For the war developed out of a revolt which contained at the same time social, political and religious elements, and the events and demands of the war reacted back on those elements in the formation of the state of the United Provinces. The ends and means of the conflict cannot be considered independent of the social and economic formation of the state, but must be seen as a fully integrated part of it. Social and economic developments were profoundly influenced by the nature, and extraordinary length, of the struggle and the demands of the war effort in terms of resources and policies, while the conduct of the war was dictated by the different nature of the rival powers.

It must always be borne in mind that the war of the insurgent provinces against the Kings of Spain and their deputies was part of a developing international struggle against the overmighty Habsburgs. The Netherlands and the Mediterranean became the two great spheres of conflict in the second part of the sixteenth century. Until 1577, when the Spanish reached an accord

with the Turks, there were cases of direct collaboration between Philip II's enemies in the north and those in the east.¹ The isolation of the United provinces and their English allies in the 1580's was soon ended by the resumption of the old Valois-Habsburg conflict under a new guise, such that the 1590's saw the outbreak of an international war, in which the first decades of the seventeenth century were a pause for regroupment rather than a return of peace. At the same time that England and France became entangled, many German states found themselves drawn in. The network of alliances which developed during the Thirty Years War were centred in the rival capitals of the Dutch-Spanish confrontation.² It was primarily as a state-directed act of war that the Dutch East India Company launched its offensive against the Portuguese overseas empire.³ Clearly, therefore, no study of the events in the Netherlands can overlook the international dimension.

However, it would also be wrong to overstress the influence of external factors in explaining developments within the northern Netherlands provinces during the period of this study, for two reasons. Not only was the Dutch revolt part of the international struggle - for most of the time it was the central part, the nub around which all else revolved, the reason why the Spanish found themselves embroiled in England, in the Rhineland, in the Baltic. Thus the influence of the

- 1 These connections are well summarized in 2 articles by Parker: 'Spain, her enemies & the Revolt of the Netherlands', Past & Present, 1970; & 'The Dutch Revolt', TvG 89, 1976, 430-33.
- 2 For a clear general discussion see J V Polisensky, The Thirty Years War, 9-19.
- 3 Tex, Oldenbarnevelt, II, 398-405; & see below, pp 179.

Netherlands on the European situation was usually no less, and often more important than the reverse process. This alone would justify a "Netherlands-centred" approach.

But there is a further argument. It will be demonstrated that during the years when the civil wars in France tended to usurp the central position of the Netherlands struggles, the famous "ten years" between the *Armada* and the peace of Vervins, the impact of these events on the development of the United Provinces was considerably less than might have been expected. It will be shown that the foreign and domestic policies of the rulers of the Dutch republic were obviously influenced by the international struggle in which they were involved, but that far from controlling their actions, the opposite was true. The international activities of the Dutch state were entirely subordinated to considerations of domestic policy, and where the States General responded willingly or enthusiastically to the calls of their allies, it was because of the coincidence of their allies' needs with the immediate interests of the dominant maritime provinces, Holland and Zeeland.¹ Self-interest was, of course, the motivation of all the participants in these wars, and the most the States can be found guilty of was short-sightedness. But for that failure to develop, or act upon, a wider vision and a clearer understanding of what were their long-term best interests, there were valid material and structural reasons, without an examination of which it is not possible to understand the development of the rebel state and the features which were unique to it. The European framework can help put

1 See chapter VI below for an examination of Dutch policy, 1588-98.

the birth of the Dutch republic in perspective, but cannot wholly explain what was happening.

In investigating the nature of the Dutch state, it is also necessary always to remember the social forces which created that state. It has at least been generally accepted that the revolt of the Netherlands constituted a 'revolution' comparable in significance with those of 1688 in England or 1789 in France.¹ But it has been a matter of fierce dispute whether this 'revolution' was conservative or modern, whether the revolt against absolutist, centralising tendencies was or was not in fact a reactionary defence of medieval practices and liberties, as Geyl among others has maintained. The defence of often narrow liberties and privileges certainly played a very significant part in the revolt, and the further defence of local rights against all attempts at centralisation continued throughout the history of the United Provinces, with a critical influence on the policies of the state, and their execution. But to use the framework of this argument means accepting a failure to explain the Dutch revolt as anything save a fortuitous series of different, if overlapping, revolts. This represents description, not explanation, of an admittedly complicated phenomenon.²

Despite all the distortions and internal contradictions imposed by the specific conditions and by extremely uneven social developments within the seventeen Netherland provinces, the essential feature of the revolution was the rise to power of a new class, the commercial bourgeoisie

1 E.g. Fruin, Tien Jaren, 34f.; Presser, Tachtigjarige Oorlog, 170

2 E.g. Smit, article cited, 28.

of the big towns. This was a force based on new entrepreneurial methods which were part of a general process in which the old economic order was being transformed, and the results were seen both in Europe and Asia.¹ Differences in the economic structure of the various parts of the Netherlands, and therefore in the social formation, along with differences in the religious pattern, the maintenance of suicidal particularist policies, and simple strategic reasons, determined that this was to occur only in the maritime provinces of the north-west, notably Holland. The migration of capital and its owners from reconquered Flanders was an integral and vital part of this process. In various of the United Provinces, the almost complete disappearance of the old nobility occurred (Holland, Zeeland, Friesland, Gelderland), in some cases as a consummation of a long process, in the rest as a consequence of the revolt itself. In the other provinces, the social and governmental structures were little changed.² Even within the maritime provinces, a new ruling oligarchy rapidly developed which had little connection with the burghers it ruled, and increasingly also distanced itself from commerce.³ Oldenbarnevelt himself was no merchant, as the directors of the companies united in the East India company rapidly discovered.⁴

1 E.g. Steensgard, Asian Trade Revolution, 9-11, 127f.

2 Fruin, Tien Jaren, 34; P. Muller, Staat der Vereenigde Nederlanden, 537-48, concluded on such evidence that the revolution was conservative.

3 Fruin, 35-9

4 Tex, II, 405.

These were features which had their origins in the specific historical circumstances of the Netherlands wars and of the previously-existing structure. The profit-hunting free enterprise of the Hollanders and Zeelanders was strengthened by some of the old liberties and privileges, while the sheer weight of economic expansion, reinforced by town governments' support, especially in Amsterdam, overcame those which were restrictive.¹ Although not often themselves exercising direct political power, the commercial bourgeoisie was able to make the ruling elites aware that it was the wealth produced by their trade which was the foundation of the state. The burgher may not always have been represented, but his rulers were only too well aware who paid the taxes. The trading interests of the maritime provinces were paramount in the United Provinces, although they often conflicted with the demands of allies and the immediate interests of the rest of the republic. Open trade with the enemy was the clearest sign of this dominance, but there are many other examples which show conclusively in the interests of which class the policy of the whole state was normally made, and vigorously defended. This class and its wealth were concentrated in the towns of Holland, and it was unusual - although it did occur, as will be seen² - for the interests of the States of Holland to be subordinated to the interests of the other provinces. Authority was vested in many bodies in all the republic's constituent parts; but power lay in the purse, and the money was paid over so

- 1 Barbour, Capitalism in Amsterdam, 16f, 24f, 30; Brugmans, Opkomst en Bloei van Amsterdam, chap. 3 passim; Van Houtte, Economische en Sociale Geschiedenis, esp. 195f.
- 2 E.g. 1592, see pp. 183.

long as the authorities protected the merchants' right to make it, by almost any means they chose.

It is impossible to understand the policies pursued by the republic unless the social basis of the state is considered. The long-standing resistance to centralisation and defence of local autonomy, combined with the profit-by-any-method concepts which ruled in the dominant provinces, could not but dictate the course of the States General in its foreign, domestic and military policies, and therefore strongly influenced both the goals and the conduct of the war.¹ The great contrast between the general defensiveness of the republic with regard to the land war, and the aggressive approach adopted overseas towards the end of the period, is indicative enough of these trends, which were to reach their full development in the second part of the war with the attack on Brazil combined with years in which no army was even put in the field in the Netherlands.²

It would, though, be a gross oversimplification to say merely that the Dutch state was based on great commercial wealth, and that this wealth ensured the survival of the republic through years of disasters, and obtained a notable victory in the Twelve Year Truce. For, as has already been suggested, the forces involved were far more complex, and sometime completely obscured these fundamentals.

The numerous other centres of power and interest groups did not allow either the dominance of Holland or the dominance of commercial interests to go unchallenged. They could not be ignored. They were as capable as the

1 Examined in detail below, esp. chap V.

2 Parker has also pointed this out, article cited in TvG, 1976, 439.

Hollanders of obstructing, indeed sabotaging, policies which they did not like, or found to be against their own immediate interests.¹ These rival sources of power might be provincial estates, town governments, groups of merchants, or individuals in office, most notably the Nassau princes. The specific interests of each region, class or individual were bound to be different and often contradictory: and the form of the Dutch state ensured that these different interests would always be represented, without providing a process for the resolution of contradictions. Thus agreement on state policy, let alone its execution, was very hard to obtain - which made the conduct of a war for survival rather difficult.

Moreover, a detailed examination of the conduct of the war itself will demonstrate that it would again be an oversimplification to see a direct correlation between wealth obtained by commerce and the ability of the United Provinces to defeat Spanish power. The republic's strength lay at sea: but it was fighting a war against a centralised, land-bound military power. The Spanish, certainly, never found the means to challenge the United Provinces at sea, and there is no question that such a challenge, if successful, would have led rapidly to the defeat of the Dutch. But there were sound, material reasons for the imbalance between the maritime strengths of the two sides,² which make this line of enquiry entirely hypothetical. What is not hypothetical, however, is the other side of the equation: that the usually superior Spanish forces by land could have secured the defeat of the United Provinces by military reconquest.

1 See especially chapter IV for examples.

2 See P. 105, note 3.

It is necessary to recognise that the wealth of the republic was not of a form which could be directly transformed into armed strength. The direct revenue obtained by duties on imports and exports went toward the costs of the fleets - and were an increasingly inadequate contribution even to that outlay. For the payment of the army, the building of fortifications, the purchase of munitions and provisions, the Dutch were no less reliant than any of their neighbours on the slow and uncertain yield of various forms of taxation - and their mercenaries no less insistent on receiving their pay in coin. The Dutch leaders had bitter experience of the harm done to the state by mutinies, desertions and betrayals committed by unpaid troops, and they had the constant spectacle of endemic mutinies among the Spanish forces before them. They were thus in an insoluble dilemma: if they kept their armed forces and their activities at a level where they could be sure of paying for them, how could they either resist Spanish attacks, or take the offensive themselves? This problem will be found to have influenced the whole of the period here studied. Furthermore, the very prosperity of the Netherlands ensured that prices there were the highest in Europe, and the costs of waging war were correspondingly higher.¹ The cautious, defensive-minded form of warfare which was imposed on Maurice and Willaim Louis by the conditions of the struggle, and

1 Chaunu, 'Seville et la Belgique', Revue du Nord, 42, 1960, 266. The period itself saw substantial price rises. The figures of Sillem, 'Marktprijzen te Utrecht', Verhand. KAW. 1901, show that between 1584/9 and 1594/9 wheat prices rose 41%, rye 65% and oats 83%, due largely to the bad harvests of the early '90's. However, there was no general fall again until after 1604. Cf. Posthumus, Nederlandsche Prijsgeschiedenis, I.

the overall strategies pursued by the republic, played a major part themselves. The defensive was in fact a far more expensive form of war than the offensive, for a number of reasons which will be examined.¹ Of course, wealth was crucial. Ultimately it did pay for the war effort, and throughout it made the republic rather more credit-worthy than the Spanish government (although even this credit was beginning to crumble before the truce²). But the capture or loss of a vital town was an immediate event largely dependent on the forces available at the point of action. It would not be determined by economic trends or by the quantities of uncollected money lying in merchants' coffers, or tied up in the goods in their warehouses or ships.

The point to be stressed, therefore, is this. The Dutch republic was created by new, essentially revolutionary and progressive forces and was based on an aggressive commercial bourgeois class. The period witnessed a rapid growth in the prosperity of the republic, by means of an inter-related growth of trade and industry on the one hand, and of a commercial, capitalized rural economy on the other, both developments occurring despite rather than because of the war.⁴ Nonetheless, it remained always possible, and sometimes indeed very probable, that this new republic could be defeated by the military strength of the Spanish empire,

1 In chapter II.

2 See pp. 24f. The great shortage of cash in the U.P. in 1585 had been remedied by trade with Iberia, openly or covertly. Thus Spanish reliance on Dutch carriers provided the silver used to pay the republic's armies. Dillen, 'De Opstand en het Amerikaanse Zilver', *TvG*, 73, 1960, 25-33.

3 De Vries, Dutch Rural Economy, 119ff.

4 Summarized by Parker, 'Economic cost of the Dutch Revolt', in War and Economic Development, ed. Winter, 58-66. The war inevitably helped the republic's competitors, although this was concealed in this period by the massive expansion of Dutch

even when in so many respects it was an empire in decline. The very nature of the new state will be shown to have made it particularly vulnerable to the type of war fought by Parma, Fuentes, the archduke Albert, and Spinola.

The re-examination made below of the period 1588-98, the decade in which the survival of the United Provinces is assumed to have become assured, will show that this was far from being the case, for reasons inherent in the structure of the republic itself. It will show that far greater significance than hitherto must be attached to the events which followed the peace of Vervins, that a vital diversionary role was played by the siege of Ostend, and that the Dutch republic came as near to defeat in 1605-6 as it had at any time previously, including the darkest days of the early 1570's and early 1580's (on both of which occasions it was still desperately hunting a foreign sovereign). The evolution of the state into the form which was to be maintained in most respects throughout the next century clearly occurred during the 1590's. But in terms of the war itself, the qualitative change in the situation which occurred after 1598 was no less significant than that which occurred around 1588.

The role of the war itself, it has been suggested, cannot be ignored in understanding the events of this period. In the same way, the conflict in the Netherlands and the actions of the participants cannot be properly comprehended without a grasp of the mechanics of the conflict. Warfare in the late sixteenth century must

be seen in a very definitely pre-Clausewitzian framework - although accepting the concept that warfare represented the continuation of politics by other means as being no less applicable in this period than any other. Its place in the so-called 'military revolution' also needs to be established.¹ The prevailing strategic conceptions, and the way that they were directly determined by a combination of previous experience and the specific conditions of the Netherlands, must be indicated if the conduct of the war is to be explained adequately. Similarly, it is vital to establish the role of 'little war', the permanent conflict in the frontier regions which determined the control or denial of the resources without which the struggle could not be continued, people and territory. It will be suggested that this war of raids and plunder, which was to become systematized by the payment of sauvegardes and contributions, was no less central to the strategies of the Hague and Brussels than the major military expeditions, and that the victory of the United Provinces in this particular contest was very significant in determining the willingness of the loyal provinces to make a truce at almost any price by the first decade of the seventeenth century. Further, the policies of the various parts of the United Provinces only make sense when seen in the light of the specific economic and strategic interests of each region.

1 The work of J W Wijn, Krijgswezen, accomplished this. Parker has challenged Roberts' arguments (JMH, 48, 1976, 195-214) but the main thesis stands. Its relevance for the Netherlands will be established later (see pp. 17f.).

The starting date of the mid 1580's has been selected because it represents the opening of the final phase of the Dutch revolt before the truce. The fall of Antwerp and the alliance with England represented the peak of the Spanish counter-offensive on the one hand, and on the other a definitive broadening of the war into an international conflict. There was a clearer and more conscious development within the insurgent provinces of the features which were to characterize the emergent state, even though these developments spanned the whole decade from the Union of Utrecht and the rejection of Philip II's sovereignty to the assertion of the independence of the United Provinces from all foreign domination.

In the light of these considerations, the present study will firstly attempt an analysis of the strategic concepts prevalent in the Netherlands at the end of the sixteenth century, and will stress the role of the continuous frontier war. The particular interests of the various parts of the country will then be examined, in order to provide the basis for understanding the attitudes and actions of the various provinces' rulers, and also to demonstrate the strategic strengths and weaknesses of the republic and the measures necessary to remedy them. Closely connected with these considerations is the analysis of Dutch war aims, and how these and the conduct of the war itself were determined by the form of the state. This is followed by a detailed study of the place of the Netherlands in the international conflict of the 1590's, of the significance of the siege of Ostend and the light thrown by that operation on a number of wider questions, and finally of the critical events of the years 1605-6.

II

CONCEPTS OF STRATEGY

The war in the Netherlands, it was once said, was fought on a stage "where grizzled Mansfelds, drunken Hohenlos, and truculent Verdugos have been so long enacting that artless military drama which consists of hard knocks and wholesale massacres."¹ While Motley has long been downgraded as an authority on the revolt of the Netherlands, his views on the conduct of the war have been largely shared by later historians. The modern reassessment of the value of the tactical reforms of the Nassau princes has been accurate and useful. But the assertions made with regard to the level of strategic thinking require reconsideration. It is the purpose of this chapter to show what the level of strategic awareness was amongst the military and political leaders in the anti-Spanish camp, to indicate the political basis of all the military planning, and to consider what were the most important established tenets of strategic thought, the accepted guidelines which mediated between the political desires behind every plan and their physical execution by military leaders.

The term 'strategy' is used here in a wide sense. At one extreme it covers planning at the highest level: the reaching of decisions with regard to objectives in the pursuit of certain political ends. At the other it concerns decisions made in the field about day-to-day movements, supplies, communications and the like: what a later age would define as Grand and Local Strategy.

1 J L Motley, The United Netherlands, III, 99

The role of the latter in determining the range of possibilities, and hence influencing the opinions of the military leaders, should never be underestimated.

The 'military revolution' of the late sixteenth century in the Netherlands may be defined as a largely technological and tactical revolution only, in which the most significant features were the reversal of the roles of the cavalry and infantry, the rising use of firearms, and the establishment of disciplined, regular armies.¹ The clear establishment of civilian control over the army of the United Provinces, with all this entailed in terms of strict financial supervision and limits on operations, also marked out these changes as very distinctive.² Quite naturally, these changes have attracted most attention. Little investigation has been made of strategic developments. Historians of the tactical changes have observed the small number of battles and the little use made of victories,³ have nodded their agreement that this was not, after all, the age of the Napoleonic mass army, then accepted the view stated by Michael Roberts that in the late sixteenth century "strategic thinking withered away; war eternalised

-
- 1 For summaries, see C Oman, Art of War in the 16th Century, 568-78; H Delbrück, Geschichte der Kriegskunst, IV, 178-94; M Jaehns, Handbuch, 1206-22 on detailed aspects, G Roloff in Preuss. Jahrb., III, 1903 & G Oestreich in Hist Zeit 1953; W Fahlweg in BeM, 1971, Nassauische Annalen, LXXX (1969) & LXXX (1960). J W Wijn, Krijgswezen is the master-work on Maurice, and M Roberts, Military Revolution, (repr in Essays in Swedish History) an influential reassessment, partially challenged by G Parker 'Military Revolution - a myth?' JAH 48, 1976.
- 2 See further, p³⁵².
- 3 Wijn, Krijgswezen, 518-32, is the longest general discussion.

itself."¹ Undoubtedly, the great length and apparent indecisiveness of wars in this epoch are proof of something: but surely evidence of the superiority of fortified towns over the means of attack, and of the lagging of a state's military capacity behind its ruler's ambitions,² rather than a lack of strategy as such? Under the heading strategy must be considered the best use of limited resources, especially financial, and not simply the accomplishment of military objectives in the abstract.³ At this level no people were more strategically aware than the sixteenth century leaders in the Netherlands, on both sides. The best way to establish what the level of military thinking was in this period is not to seek text book studies, which existed for tactical questions, but to study the way in which military decisions were made and plans put into operation. For the most effective methods of deploying troops of different arms, for exercising them, for constructing camps and entrenchments, kings and generals might well benefit from learned instruction. But strategic principles related at their widest to questions of state policy, and at their narrowest to matters of local geography or the state of the weather, for neither

-
- 1 Roberts, 'Gustav Adolf & the Art of War,' Essays, 60. Cf. J R Hale in N Cam Mod Hist III 200.
 - 2 Both points are well made by G Parker, Army of Flanders, 3-20, and 231-68, and Art, cit, 203-5, 209f. He overstates, however, the effect of the purely physical strength of fortifications, as the military history of this period proves.
 - 3 The point about the relationship of a state's plans to its resources is made also by M A Lloyd Roven Campaign (Oxford) 1973, 191-7. H.

of which was it easy to make useful generalisations.¹

This is certainly one explanation for the paucity of comment on strategic matters in the vast literature of military textbooks which appeared during the sixteenth century, and found a new source of inspiration in the Netherlands wars. Inevitably, the theoreticians were most concerned with tactical developments. They stressed the usefulness of the methods of Greek and Roman antiquity and the importance of drill and discipline. Machiavelli established a precedent when the closest he came to thoughts on strategy was advice on how not to have to fight at battle at a disadvantage.² Most of the writers who tried to turn their knowledge and experience to advantage fall into the category of "military technicians".³ Some genuinely attempted a wider view into which strategic ideas were fitted - such as De la Noue, Mendoza and Jan of Nassau⁴ - but they were the exceptions. Even these writers rarely went beyond the stage of pontificating on the dangers of battle and how the risks involved could be minimised.

But the very nature of these books holds a clue to the 'right approach to this question. They set out to benefit from the lessons learnt in the French and Dutch wars, not to be used as text books for those wars.

-
- 1 And still harder to make fixed rules. Clausewitz is not a strategic textbook but a philosophical and analytical discussion of war; and 18th C. efforts to make strategic 'rules' produced nonsense only.
- 2 Machiavelli, Art of War, ed N Wood, 122-4, 130.
- 3 Such as G Basta, J de Walhausen, J de Billon, H Hondius, J Bingham, S Stevin, H Hexham, who all wrote with knowledge of the French or Dutch wars.
- 4 F de la Noue, Discours (1596) 477-87; B de Mendoza, Theory & Practice (1597 English ed), 20-5; Krijgskundige aatekeningen van Johan van Nassau, ed Wijn, Werken H G Utrecht, 1947. Jan in particular reflects the practices of Maurice, with whom he served.

The military leaders in the wars did not learn their strategy from books in the way that they could - and in the case of the Nassau princes, did - deduce ideas on tactics and discipline from existing authorities. Strategic principles have always been in part truisms, and in part the application of common sense to specific conditions. They defy strict codification of the sort the theoreticians indulged in. Because they were not written down by authorities on the Art of War does not mean that they did not exist. They are to be found in the words and deeds of the men who fought the wars rather than those who commented on them. A detailed study of a number of campaigns, in later chapters, will show these principles at work, but it is possible to outline a number of concepts which became firm rules through the bitter experience of failure to follow them.

In a number of cases - for example, the view that battles were unwise because their results could not be predicted by calculation - the concept was well established by the beginning of our period.¹ Indeed, in the case of the Netherlands, it would have been surprising if the leaders of the insurgent provinces had not shrunk from battle after the unbroken series of defeats suffered between Jemmingen (1568) and the battle of the Kouwenstyn dyke (1585). But in a majority of cases, the strategic ideas which were prevalent in the northern provinces by the time of the truce had been learnt in the experience

1 The attitude of Lazarus von Schwendi is typical: "Man soll nimmer im Krieg ein Vorhaben oder Anschlag hasstarrig willen fortsetzen, wann die Gelegenheit der zeit nicht wil beyfallen". E Von Frauenholz, Das Heerwesen des Reiches in der Landsknechtszeit (1937), 68.

of war. They were the ideas also, in large part, of Henry IV of France and of the greatest of the Spanish commanders, Parma and Spinola. The Spanish, in fact, had to develop their strategic thoughts further, insofar as their political aims called for something more positive than the mere survival which was the predominant concern of the Dutch. It will be shown that from the time of Parma onwards the Spanish knew how the United Provinces could be defeated militarily, or at least brought to a position where they would have to negotiate on Spanish terms. It will also be demonstrated that both civilian and military leaders in the north were fully aware of the risk, and also aware that at times they would not have been able to prevent military defeat, had the resources of the enemy been greater, or better used.¹

One concept which was rapidly established was that the offensive was in most ways preferable to the defensive. But unlike modern opinion, this was held to be true not simply because the defeat of the enemy could only be brought about by offensive war. "Ordinarilie", Mendoza wrote,² "the successes of war favor more the invader than the defender". The reasons why the offensive was thought so preferable were financial, psychological and political. The idea that a military invasion of

1 See below pp 122 & 288

2 Mendoza, op. cit., 20. Jan of Nassau quoted favourably Thucydides dictum: "Mieux vaut assaillir qu'estre assailly". Kriegsbuch des Grafen Johann, éd. W. Hahlweg (Wiesbaden, 1973), 519.

enemy territory could produce decisive results by forcing the enemy to battle was proven false by bitter experience rather than by philosophical precepts about the dangers of the incalculable. The campaign of 1568, where Alva so skilfully thwarted William of Orange without having to give battle with his inferior army, showed how it could be done.¹ Unless the invader was prepared to assault a strongly entrenched opponent - and experience again proved that this was rarely successful² - then his position was hopeless. The chief cause of this was logistic. The sixteenth century army could not carry all its supplies with it and had to obtain local food, or rely on convoys. In a hostile country, surrounded by enemy-held towns and with a vigilant opponent close by but unassailable, an invader must soon retreat, or see his army dissolve. These lessons were not lost on Jan of Nassau who drew precisely these conclusions,³ nor on the Dutch military leaders. William Louis used the very same arguments to oppose the invasion of Brabant in 1602, a clear example of an occasion when diplomatic and political necessity overrode sound strategic argument.⁴ The costs of such operations were invariably astronomical, and the fruits few.

-
- 1 E Teubner, Der Feldzug Wilhelm von Oranien gegen den Herzog von Alba, 1568, (1892). Alva achieved his objective of "einen Angriff ohne Gefahr". (p.36).
 - 2 E.g. Spanish attempts at Coevorden & Sluis; Dutch efforts from Haarlem to Antwerp.
 - 3 Jan of Nassau, (ed Wijn) 17.
 - 4 Groen, II, 122, 131, 142-8; Johan v Oldenbarnevelt, II, 5-10. This expedition is examined in Chapter VII. 3000 waggons & mobile bakeries were provided but proved inadequate, as well as vastly restricting mobility. This was criticised by Stevin, Onderscheydt van de Crijchspiegeling (1649), 219, but was an endemic Maurician failing.

The essence of the argument in favour of the offensive was the transfer of the seat of war onto the enemy's soil. The same action both contributed to the discomfiture of the enemy and the relief of the native population. The extracting of contributions, which is examined in detail in the next chapter, was a highly-organised form of warfare in the Netherlands. The taking of the offensive compounded the advantages: partly by increasing the burden on the enemy, and partly by preventing the levying of contributions by the other side. The army on the defensive, of course, was a vast additional burden on the region and population it was trying to protect. At a time when the difference between prosperity and starvation was small the presence for any length of time of two armies in an area had devastating consequences. At the same time, the defender incurred the costs of a substantial field army and reduced the ability of his state to pay for it. By the simple act of establishing himself on enemy soil, a commander was waging offensive war, consuming the resources of the enemy and weakening the morale and loyalty of his population.

There is strong evidence that the achievement of this situation became in large part the highest aim of the Dutch in the ten years before the truce, aided by the recognition that the failure of the Spanish to take full advantage of the growing isolation of the United Provinces was a result of the weakness and misery of the southern provinces: and that this in turn resulted

from the carrying on of the war in those provinces.¹
 Indeed, Sir John Ogle wrote at the end of 1602, the
 States General

projected to attempt this next yeare to bringe
 the Archduke to the ground, beinge in the
 common opinion alreadye on his knees

because of the mutinies and deprivation which ensued from
 the long continuation of the war in Flanders.² The great
 cost and small success of the defensive campaigns of
 1598 and 1599 had driven the lesson home - the course of
 the Admiral's 1598 campaign was heavily influenced by
 problems of finding unravaged sources of sustenance³ -
 and the Dutch determination to take the offensive in
 1600 was related to this question.⁴ William Louis, noted
 for his opposition to the Flanders invasion of this year,
 consoled himself with the thought that the enemy

dissen sommer sein eigenen bodem durch sein
 eigen leger verderbt und also der krieg
 gedivertit bleibt

The corresponding disadvantages of the defensive
 were similarly known. Experience proved, Duyck wrote
 in 1602, than the defensive was more expensive than the
 offensive.⁶ The experience of which he spoke dated back
 through the 1590's but especially from the year 1596
 when the States General had been rocked out of their
 defensive complacency by the loss of Hulst. Van Reyd

1 Duyck, Journael, III, 500-501. Cf. Res. St. Gen XII 581-6

2 Cecil MSS 96/8, Ogle to Cecil 24 Oct 1602 (OS)

3 Carnero, 137; Coloma, 178-80. There was a similar
 motive behind Parma's Rhine campaign of 1586-7:
 Ianario, 83-6; L van der Essen, Alexandre Farnese,
 V, 30-2; Correspondance de Granvelle, XII, 465.

4 E.g. Collins, Sidney Papers, II, 160; Reyd, 675.

5 Groen II, 40-1

6 Duyck III, 176

stated the conclusion to be drawn¹: "Guerre defensive, Guerre consumptive" In addition to the loss of resources, the state on the permanent defensive ran the continual risk of popular discontent resulting from demoralisation and physical hardship. The consequences were generally not as disruptive as the rulers feared but the fears were genuine enough.²

The southern provinces were in so continual a state of misery that the complaints were endless, but the disloyalty and mutiny which was always feared came, of course, from unpaid and unfed troops rather than the populace. Nonetheless, Parma expressed his fears in his Political Testament and warned that unless there was a rapid return to the offensive against the United Provinces the country would be

tanto disfatto et depopolato che no si possono finir le leve che bisognarieno per il principio dell'estate a comminciar la guerra offensiva ...³

The ultimate risk of the defensive therefore might be said to be the eventual loss of any capacity to resume the offensive. This was certainly the situation in the

-
- 1 Reyd, 447. He goes on: "Dat is, die altoos slaghen wil keeren ende nimmer wederstaen die moet ghewis vergaen".
- 2 For fears in 1595, Cecil MSS 33/41, Gilpin to Essex. For 1598-9, *ibid.* 66/12, Vere to Essex; Vreede, *Lettres.. de Buzanval .. et d'Aerssen*, 66f & 101f. For 1606, Cecil MSS 118/46, Conway to Cecil. Foreign observers invariably exaggerated the risk of revolt in the north. For the Spanish, see Croy's "Avis", *Bull CRH* 83 (1914) 272 (1598) & *Correspondence de ... Frangipani*, III, 290, 466; Lefèvre, III, 594, IV, 13, 56, 68, 101, 235, 347. For a general discussion of popular discontent see pp. 321f & 348f.
- 3 L van der Essen, 'Testament Politique d'Alexandre Farnese', *Bull CRH*, 86 (1922), 183, 206 Cf. Taxis to Philip II, *Kronijk* XX, 326-7.

northern provinces when Antwerp fell, and it was to the credit of Leicester that he understood this better than the Dutch leaders: just as Maurice, William Louis and Oldenbarnevelt were to have to struggle again for the acceptance of the concept during the 1590's.¹

A natural corollary of this was the realisation that it was vitally necessary to seize the initiative and put an army into the field before the enemy did, in order to be able to impose one's will upon the foe and force him to react, rather than allow him to dictate when and where the campaign was to be fought.² The nature of the Dutch state, with its slow process of decision-making and of collecting agreed funds, militated strongly against achieving this, and throughout the 1590's it was their ally Henry IV who was to be found repeatedly urging the great advantages of seizing the initiative. In 1597 he pressed the States General:

Soyons ... les premiers aux champs ... pour l'assaillir dedans son pays ... car il est perilleux et douteux de demeurer tousjours sur la deffensive.³

There is no question that the Dutch military leaders were also aware of the advantages to be obtained from prompt action each year. In 1598, for example, Maurice

-
- 1 For reaction to Leicester's plans, Res Holland 1586, 43, 60, 100, where there is reference to "de heroique resolutie .. om een Velt-leger tydelick op te richten." Heeringa, Notulen v Zeeland, V, 461; for the view of Oldenbarnevelt, J den Tex, Oldenbarnevelt, I, 322.
- 2 Schwendi wrote: "Viel sicherer is's den Feindt in sein Landt anzugreifen, da man gefasst sein mag, dann seiner in sein eygenen Landt zu erwarten". Frauenholz, op. cit, 65-6. Jan of Nassau quoted Plutarch: "Qui frappe le premier en guerre, a un grand avantaige sur son ennemi". Kriegsbuch, ed. Hahlweg, 551.
- 3 Recueil, IV, 670. Cf ib. III, 653 & Laffleur, (2) 16, 93, for similar urgings & JvO, I, 330, for his own plans in 1596.

and William Louis persuaded the States General that despite the absence of numbers of deputies and the lateness of incoming funds, every effort should be made "om den vyant te velde te prevenieren".¹ In 1601, when pleading with Elizabeth for additional troops, one of the chief reasons presented by the States was that without them they would be compelled to follow the moves of the enemy.² Awareness on this point seems to have percolated through the military leaders to the more responsible politicians and to the States of Holland, under the influence of Oldenbarnevelt, but the major obstacle was always to be the inability to assemble sufficient money early in the year. The seizing of the initiative was also an idea which was bound to have deeper roots in the strategic thinking of the Spanish, whose aim was more positive than the Dutch, and indeed was an integral part of the planning of the Brussels government whenever Spanish strength was not diverted into France. The ability of the United Provinces to exploit this diversion, and the use of which they put their opportunity, will be considered later.³

The strategic ideas sketched above appear to the modern eye to be essentially negative, indecisive and careful to avoid risks. This was certainly also how some of those who served the Dutch saw it:

... security only wellcum, and danger, how probable so ever to succeed well held uncounsellable: strang positions for the warr.⁴

1 Res St Gen X, 23.

2 Ibid XI, 476.

3 See chapter VI.

4 Cecil MSS 94/135, Grey to Cecil, 22 August 1602.

Yet it can also be said that the policies followed so consistently by the northern provinces were those which flowed most obviously from the strategic purpose of the war, to survive, and to force the enemy to recognise that survival by reducing his ability to reconquer. The type of offensive which Maurice envisaged, and to which the Spanish commanders were themselves often reduced, was not an operation to defeat an opposing army, but rather to extend control over territory, simultaneously increasing and defending one's own resources and reducing the enemy's. This was war fought at its most basic level, a war fought for control of the means to wage further war. Later wars were perhaps fought more with an eye towards destroying the will to resist of the enemy: the conflict in the Netherlands was a matter of attempts to destroy both the will and the means to resist. The war as it was fought by the Dutch, and the plans made by the Spanish, were directed consistently at this end, consciously or unconsciously. In suggesting that this age represented a nadir of strategic thought, modern critics under-rate the ability of statesmen and generals in this period to understand the mechanics of war and the ways of preserving a fragile state - both sides having to cope with potentially dissident populations.¹

1 These points are developed at length in the next chapter.

It is also worth noting that by a short extension of the methods discussed could be turned into even more direct weapons of the offensive. It was by the cutting off of their provisions and supply routes that Parma reduced the great cities of Flanders and Brabant in 1583-5 at a time when his military strength was far too small for a regular siege of any of them. The method conserved Parma's limited resources, encouraged dissent and disloyalty in the opposition, and ultimately broke their will to resist. The nearest comparable action by the Dutch was, perhaps, Maurice's attack on Antwerp in 1605, which misfired. But the Spanish admitted that Maurice's apparent plan to cut dykes and set up a line of forts would have cut all communications between Antwerp, Brussels, Louvain and Mechlin.¹

The reason why Parma's great success of 1583-5 was unrepeatable was the growing realisation that it was necessary for both sides to have an army in the field, and not just the side on the offensive. The idea that it was also necessary to have a proper army if a successful defence was to be maintained took some time to take root in the north. Arguably, it never found complete acceptance, partly because of the immense extra cost involved - an army required additional artillery, provisions, munitions, waggons and horses, ships and sailors, engineers and workmen - and partly through the notion that the state could be defended by well-held towns, all fortified at great expense.

1 Lanario, 176; Cecil MSS 227 p6, Edmonds to Cecil; Rodriguez-Villa, Spinola, 105.

For many years, of course, the rebel provinces managed without a regular army, using troops brought by Anjou or Johan Casimir, or short-term levies at times of dire emergency; and during those years they saw their ad hoc forces regularly scattered and their towns and provinces reduced one by one.¹ The field force established by Leicester was intended for offensive action, but even this was regarded as something of a novelty.² The idea that all the expense of an army in the field should be suffered while that army did nothing positive, and consumed the area in which it was posted, was naturally difficult to accept: and even more so when at the same time vast sums of money were being spent on providing frontier towns with the bastions and outworks of the new methods of fortification.³ The point about the fortifications requires a rider, however: during the period of the war under study, there were far more towns without the new defences than with them - and during the period of reconstruction, the towns concerned were highly vulnerable. It was because the site had been cleared but the new bastions not built that the town of Zaltbommel, a vital part of the Dutch frontier defences, nearly fell in 1599.⁴ Fortresses crucial to the eastern frontier such as Zutphen, Doesburg and Coevorden were found to be inadequately fortified in 1605, as will

1 The inability of the States General to field a competent army is the fundamental reason for the speed of Parma's reconquests, 1579-87, a fact of which he was aware.

2 See the references on P26 nl above.

3 For a good short summary of the effects, Parker op. cit. 6-10.

4 Reyd, 609: "d' onvolmaekte wercken meer schadelic dan hut waeren".

be shown.¹

The rush to erect vast new fortifications was not without its critics. De la Noue, while pointing out that many of the additional refinements added very little to the defensive power of a town, ended by wisely suggesting that the money was much better spent on an army in the field,

Sans laquelle les plus fortes places se prennent:
ainsi qu'il est apparu en Flandres.²

The whole history of the Netherlands war proved this completely. The military leaders knew it too. Parma complained bitterly that by breaking up the field force left in Brabant while the duke was in France, Mansfelt had made it impossible to resist Maurice's counter-offensive in 1590-2.³ He stressed that defence must be through a field army and could not be through garrisons.⁴ The strongest town must fall eventually, and an area of small towns could be swept away like dominoes unless there was a field force to protect them.⁵ The case of Hulst was, again, a sharp lesson, the town being lost

1 ARA SH 2587 (h); ARA SG 4914 II* (18 Dec 1606); ARA SG 12548/142. De la Noue had much earlier recognised this risk: Discours, 482. Cf. Meteren, 434.

2 De la Noue, op. cit. 487 - his fourth 'paradoxe'.

3 Essen, Testament, 188-93.

4 Essen, Farnese, V, 359: letter to Philip II, 31 July 1592. The danger of relying on Farneses and not a field army was stressed by F Patrizi, Paralleli Militari (Rome 1594), 96-99. Contrast the failure before the weakly-fortified but strongly-held Roven in 1591/2 (Lloyd, op. cit., 138f, 153-67) with the immediate collapse of the modern fortress of Lingen in 1605: Meerbeeck Chroniicke (1602), 1072; Croy, Memoires Guerriers (1605) 192; intercepted letters of Anthon Pijnsen in ARA SH 2634 (a).

5 Thus Maurice's later successes, in the face of opposing armies, required greater skill than his first victories. The towns of Overijssel were all easy targets if left without an army. For a criticism of the way they were defended by the Spanish in 1597, Coloma, 173-4.

partly through inability and partly through laxity, such that although it was well-garrisoned and provisioned, it fell to assault because Maurice was too weak to challenge or divert the besiegers in the field.

William Louis commented in 1598,

ayant l'exemple de Hulst appris que villes
foibles qu'on peult forcer, demandent prompt
secours.¹

The present of an enemy army compelled an invader to proceed with circumspection, to keep his forces concentrated at one point, and to watch that while he attacked one town his opponent did not cut him off from his supplies² or attempt a diversion. The skilful defender could impose a complete stalemate, provided that the resources could be found to keep the army together for as long as the enemy did. This was what happened in 1598 and 1599. The answer to the strategic dilemma thus posed was to create two armies, one of which would engage the defender's attention while the other took the offensive at another point. This was what could have been done by Albert had he not become bogged down before Ostend, and Spinola demonstrated precisely how dangerous it could be in the campaigns of 1605 and 1606.³

1 Groen, I, 399.

2 As the Spanish tried at Geertruidenberg and Grave. direct attempts at relief made Maurice abandon sieges of Grol in 1595 and 1606.

3 Lonchay & Cuvalier, I, 207-11; Rodriguez-Villa, Spinola, 96-104. Instruction to Croy, 1604: Bull CRH 77 (1908), 198f. For Dutch awareness of the danger, Res St Gen XIII, 82-3, 461-8.

Nonetheless, the Dutch military leaders felt obliged year after year to explain and justify the need for a field army.¹ Those who had to provide the money were to prove repeatedly that they did not really grasp what the purpose of the army was. In 1599, 1602 and 1604 especially they urged Maurice to seek battle when there was very little to be gained, and much to be lost, from such a course of action.² At other times they proposed to cut corners - and costs - by making a small army do the work of a large one. This occurred most often when answering a plea from the French for a diversion. Thus in 1596 they agreed to put a small force in the field for a few weeks "alleene om den vyant in jalousie te brengen".³ The following year Buzanval presented a demand from Henry IV, who had serious troubles of his own, for more than

une petite parade d'armée qui sera contemptible,
a vos ennemis et de peu d'utilité a voz amis.⁴

However, the experience gained in time and through mistakes eventually led the political leaders of the United Provinces to accept by around 1600 that the cost of maintaining an army in the field was less than the cost in towns, territorial control and loss of revenue through enemy depredations of not having one. It was a strategic principle, moreover, understood by Maurice and William Louis, by Parma and Spinola, but not by some of the

1 E.g. Res St Gen VI, 340, VII, 243-5, 459

2 For William Louis's reaction in 1599, Reyd 610-11

3 Res St Gen IX, 84-5

4 Ibid. 416

lesser Spanish commanders,¹ and it was the failure of the latter during the 1590's which was responsible to a large extent for Maurice's successes in reversing some of the disasters suffered by the rebellious provinces during the many years when they too had been unable or unwilling to match their opponents in the field.

The political ends of the warring parties in the Netherlands could be conceived in the abstract, and so too the strategic principles already considered. But strategic thinking must also be related to the conditions pertaining in the theatre of war, and the special features of the crowded, urbanised and water-laced Netherlands stamped the war there with unique features of its own. Many of these aspects were considered so obvious that contemporaries took them for granted, but the role of a number of them will benefit from repetition. The most obvious special condition was the number and configuration of the rivers and estuaries. The role of the great rivers in determining the result of the war has been the subject of debate.² All the evidence of the campaigns themselves suggests that Geyl massively overrated the role of the great river barrier; but his critics, in establishing this

1 Such as Peter & Charles Mansfeld, & Frederick van den Berg. On the other hand, Francisco Verdugo and the nonagenarian Mondragon showed a firm grasp of strategic principle in their campaigns, and it was Verdugo who advocated attack of the Yssel: Essen, Farnese, V, 24, 250. See also Chap IV below.

2 The attack on Geyl was led by C Wilson, Elizabeth & the Revolt of the Netherlands, 7-12. Parker supported him, op. cit. 17 nl.

have not made a number of important points about the role of the waterways. As the dominant geographical feature of the country, they were bound to influence the war. What needs to be established is what precisely was their function. That they were trade routes is obvious, and the importance of this in Dutch planning will be considered later. But their military role was also crucial.

The Rhine, Maas, Yssel and their tributaries were not just part of a defensible frontier: to Maurice and the Dutch, with their total control of the seas and shipping, they were avenues of the offensive, a means of transferring the mobility and cheapness of water transport to the relief of the slowness and expense of the war on land. If Reyd is to be believed, it was William Louis who recommended that the offensive be directed against Spanish towns on the great rivers, in 1589 and 1590, developing a theory that the rivers could be used both as a means to transport heavy siege artillery and supplies at unprecedented speed, and also used as what would now be termed a strategic barrier, to cut off the besiegers and avoid the risk of relief by an enemy army.¹ It was possibly the only way that the defence-minded States General, who had not indulged in the regular siege of a major town within

1 Reyd, 253-5, 262. River towns could be assailed "sonder Velt-slacht te waghén, oft yet was in onghewisse fortun te setten". The leading role of William Louis in the decision to take the offensive has been strongly challenged by Haak (in *BvG*, 5, VII, 1920, 16-36), who attributes it to Maurice instead. The point is the same, of course, wherever it originated.

recent memory,¹ could be induced to take offensive action. Maurice's sweeping successes in 1591-2, the conquests of Geertruidenberg in 1593 and of Groningen in 1594, were all made possible by the exploitation of the rivers and sea power in an offensive manner. The waterways provided an easy way for the Dutch state, which had never previously experienced anything except grim and usually hopeless defence to take tentative steps in the opposite direction. When Deventer fell, its governor, Hermann van den Berg, expressed his astonishment that the United Provinces had found the strength to mount any siege and bring suitable artillery into the field.² The Nassau princes were deserving of praise for their determination and tactical skill in these early successes, but it was the rivers which provided them with the means to act with speed, decisiveness and, above all, relative security. Parma was wholly aware of the advantages derived by Maurice from the rivers, and firmly believed, in 1592,

che halbi a de continuar et prosperar principalmente contra la villa o piazze per dove puo' arrivare per mare o per riviera, non essenduci una sola guarnigione che possa resistere a una batteria di tanti cannoni che l'inimico meno con la commodita de suoi vascelli.³

-
- 1 Breda was surprised and Maurice's other captures were just forts and castles (1586-90). Doesburg was captured by Leicester in 1586. The last town to fall to regular siege was Middelburg, 1574, and it fell to starvation rather than assault.
- 2 Reyd, 265
- 3 Essen, Testament, 204, cf. Lefèvre, III, 512, 564.

The vital part played by the waterways is brought into sharper relief when operations were attempted away from them. The attack on Coevorden in 1592 was much disputed because of the risks and costs involved: one of the chief reasons for this was, as the States General stressed in a letter to Henry IV, that the town was far from rivers or the sea.¹ Had Verdugo been able to field a substantial force quickly enough, this siege might never have occurred. The town of Grol is another example. Three times - in 1594, 1595 and 1606 - Maurice considered or began and then abandoned sieges of this town. Obviously, there were factors unique to each occasion, but Grol was not a strong town, and it fell quickly enough in 1597. The town (modern Groenlo) lay, however, between morasses far from any usable river, over difficult marching country, and with slow and costly communications.² The advantages of the rivers for offensive war were never more clearly marked than when they were not present. Thus, far from being an impenetrable barrier behind which the United Provinces could survive, the waterways both dictated and made feasible the lines of offensive operation, once the States had agreed that a field army was a useful weapon;

-
- 1 Kronijk XIX, 375-6. Substantial additional quantities of waggons and horses were required: Res St Gen VII, 533-6; Schwarzenberg IV, 793; Duyck I, 107-15. Holland objected: Res Holland 1592, 49-50.
- 2 See the Michelin 1/200,000 No 6; Grol's position in the 16th C is well shown in Caarten de XVII Nederlantsche Provincien (n.d.) B7, based on the maps of Abraham Ortelius; & Blæu, Tonneel der Steden, I; both also show well the situation of Coevorden.

and also restricted the sphere of action in making Maurice remarkably dependent on them. They were the means whereby the Dutch could use their strength at sea to reinforce their weakness on land. Cut off from his rivers, Maurice was to prove significantly more unsure, more vulnerable, less ready to take risks. This was not a hard and fast rule, but more often than not it can be seen as an established strategic principle of the Dutch commanders. No single factor explains the outcome of any campaign, but this one played a major role in most of them.

The defensive function of a series of large rivers is however the most obvious at first sight. That Geyl was wrong in attributing almost magical powers to them is clear enough. Parma, the Admiral of Aragon and Spinola crossed and recrossed them with large armies and with very little difficulty and the building of pontoon bridges even within sight of an enemy army was well within the capabilities of the rival generals.¹ Naturally, the rivers imposed delays and extra expense but it is worth noting that both in 1598 and 1605 Spanish armies were to operate over the Maas and Rhine without first seizing the Dutch outpost at Rheinberg to secure their crossings: a boldness quite beyond the

1 Notably in the Bommel campaign 1599. The most striking example, of course, is Parma's Scheldt bridge of 1585. Rarely, the waters proved too high or fast of themselves, as with the Yssel, November 1598: Coloma, 183; Carnero, 442.

imagination of many a more recent general.¹ In 1599, it was only the slowness and disunity amongst Spanish commanders which prevented them crossing both Maas and Waal in one operation.² The configuration of the country and rivers was such that an army defending them would inevitably find itself fighting a war by cordon, which this particular campaign showed to be dangerous, and in certain instances potentially suicidal. The rivers provided a considerable accession of strength to the defender, but only if backed by an adequate field army. It was Maurice's army, taking advantage of the rivers, which preserved the United Provinces in 1599.³ When that army was weak, the rivers would not stop the Spanish army:

to defende all quarters from invasyons ... is not in the power of these States with these forces they now have ...

wrote Gilpin in October 1598.⁴ It was the appalling Autumn weather which made the Yssel into an impassable barrier on that occasion. The rivers provided easy communications but as lateral defences they were almost

- .
- 1 Apart from Marlborough or Frederick the Great, few generals before Napoleon would have contemplated such a scheme. This it was thought possible to obtain supplies from the country, and from friendly German prairies, in no way reduces the boldness of the plan, merely its apparent foolhardiness.
 - 2 Coloma, 192; Carnero, 448-9; Le Petit, 746. See Van Dam van Isselt, "Veldtocht van 1599", Orgaan Krijgswetenschap 1917/18, 43-7.
 - 3 Van Dam van Isselt, op. cit. 85-93, summarises the strategic lessons.
 - 4 Cecil MSS 177/134.

more dangerous than useful in that to prevent a crossing would involve the distribution of troops in a long line of posts none of which could resist a determined onslaught, but which precluded the rapid concentration of a field force. Maurice was general enough to recognise such a policy as pernicious.

Yet the rivers could and did play a major part in the defence of the United Provinces. This culminated in the great line of posts and redoubts along the Rhine and Yssel in 1606,¹ erected at enormous expense and on the urging of Maurice. Their primary function was not, however, to take the place of the army in resisting the expected invasion by Spinola's armies; it did not represent a lapse into cordon thinking by the Nassau princes. It was, rather, the fulfilment of a policy long pursued by the States of Holland and Utrecht in an attempt to preserve their open countryside and villages from the raids and contributions levied by the enemy.² The great concern of the Dutch with their rivers, and the measures taken to fortify them were to protect the countryside against small war, rather than the country against full-scale military invasion. This was the war of raids and devastation which became formalised with the introduction of regular payments of protection money, 'sauvegardes' and contributions.³ It was conducted by

1 Well illustrated in Parker's map, op. cit. 14-15.

2 The role of these lines is generally misunderstood. Parker wrote that they "effectively held back the powerful Spanish offensives" of 1605-06: 'Why did the Dutch revolt last 80 Years?', TRHS, (5), 26, 1976, 60. See further p.45f. below.

3 Parker, op. cit. 11-12, 17-18, gives a short summary. The role of contributions and their collection, and the extension of the frontiers to prevent enemy levyings, played a part in all planning.

small parties of troops from frontier garrisons operating all the year round.¹ The result was an amelioration of the burden of supporting these frontier garrisons, and the reduction of the resources of the enemy. As the frontier of the United Provinces became stabilised on the line of the great rivers - on the south, anyway, - then the opportunity arose to make this little war a one-way contest, using the rivers to prevent Spanish incursions onto Dutch soil while continuing to levy contributions on Flanders and Brabant, most notably from Ostend, Hulst (until 1596), Bergen op Zoom, Geertruidenberg, Breda and Grave (from 1602).²

As the first line of protection, the condition of the rivers themselves was always a matter of deep concern to the authorities in the United Provinces. There were two dangers: that the waterways might become too shallow to prevent easy crossing, or that they might become frozen over. In both situations the risk was much increased if there was a powerful enemy army in the field which might take advantage of the position; and on a number of occasions Maurice had to gather troops in mid-winter as the rivers froze.³ But for most of the time, the anxiety of the States resulted from fear of incursion.

1 Regulations for parties of min. 50 troops were made by the States General in 1589 (Placcaet of 29 April), revised down to 25 in 1590 (Placcaet of 26 September)

2 See Chap. III below.

3 Frozen rivers might not support artillery or supply waggons required by invading armies; and conditions of frost made all campaigns most undesirable to the participants. However, these problems did not pertain in the extraordinary 10 week frost of 1595, when the Sichern mutiny prevented the Spanish taking advantage. Bor, (31) 880.

In 1586 the lakes and rivers protecting Friesland froze over and the States there expected the enemy to invade and with "rooff ende brandt te verwoesten". They called upon citizens of Leeuwarden to break up the ice and maintain a gap of at least 40 feet.¹ In December 1594, the inhabitants of the Veluwe warned the States of Utrecht that the Yssel was freezing hard and could be passed by horse and foot: a company of troops from the Harderwijk garrison was ordered to stand by to protect the locals from incursions.² By January 1595 the risk was spreading and Utrecht appealed to the Generality, discussing with Maurice means to keep open the Waal, Rhine and Yssel.³ Within four days the breaking of the ice on the Waal was proceeding, and Utrecht was asked to send some 200 "strong men" to carry on the work.⁴ The problem was recurrent: in 1600, Rhenen begged for the despatch of a company of troops to protect it, which indicates that small towns were not necessarily safe from small-scale attack.⁵

The same period offers an example of dangers of a different kind. In March 1594 the eastern provinces reported in alarm that the widening of the Vossegat at 's Gravenweert would divert the Rhine and lower the Yssel and Lek, opening the country to the enemy.⁶

1 Schwarzenberg, IV, 663-4.

2 Kronijk XX, 519, 524.

3 Ibid. XXI, 35.

4 Ibid. XXI, 45. Maurice was interested because of an assembly of Spanish troops at Turnhout, and feared an attack on Tholen: Kemp, II, 127; Res St Gen. VIII, 376: Res Holland 1595, 119-122. Cf. p 41 n 3.

5 R A Utrecht 279-2, 25 Jan 1600.

6 Res St Gen. VII, 251. ARA SG 12548/1129 for reports of commissioners on the need for the countryside "van alle contributie vande Viant bevryt .. ende verseeckert te zyn blyven zoude mogen".

Nothing seems to have been done, for the same complaint was made in October 1595: this time, an engineer and a group of Holland's deputies were sent to investigate.¹ It was another eight years before the same provinces reported their concern with the shallowness of the Rhine and Yssel once more, a phenomenon which they stated would harm trade, weaken the defences of riverside towns, and open the country to incursions. This time, energetic measures including the blocking of the Old Waal and a series of dams and sluices were considered.² Maurice investigated the same spot - the junction of the Rhine and Waal - in 1606 and reported that the situation was still serious. That the risk was perhaps exaggerated is indicated by the decision of the States General to construct dams but to allow no more than 3000 gulden for the work.³ It can be stressed that while such problems did threaten the overall security of the state, freezing and shallow waters usually occurred in winter or early spring, times when few commanders would wish to start a campaign, and also, as experience proved when treasuries were too empty to allow a strong field army to be established.

However, if the rivers did not of themselves constitute an impassable obstacle to large armies, then even less could they prevent the passage of small raiding parties: and the ample proof of this is that the danger

1 Res St Gen VII, 518.

2 Ibid. XII, 521.

3 Res St Gen XIII, 690-2. Unlike other cases, this dated from August/Sept.

was not removed even when all the riverside towns had been captured by the Dutch, although it was much reduced by the securing of towns such as Zutphen, Deventer and Nijmegen.¹

The prevention of enemy incursions was the chief concern of the States of provinces such as Utrecht while they were still frontier regions. In the Winter of 1588 the governor of Rhenen complained that the Spanish garrisons of Zutphen and Deventer acted such that "die meeste landen in onze vryheyt desert ende ongebout moeten blyven leggen".² The following Spring, the Utrecht deputies to the States General were informed that safe communications between towns as far as Amsterdam were impossible. They demanded regular patrols of 25 horse and 36 foot on the river banks, but added that the enemy was often 200 strong.³ That May a conference was held between Holland and Utrecht: the frontier was inspected and the construction of redoubts - "cleyne schantzkens" - and watch towers recommended. Garrisons of 20 were to be placed in strong houses and castles along Utrecht's and Holland's southern frontiers.⁴ The following year, however, Gornichem still complained of the incursions of the enemy and proposed a great scheme for the construction of redoubts and the fortification of villages along the Waal from Hardinxveld on the Biesbosch to

-
- 1 There were apparently numerous small boats available to make crossings - see Rhenen's complaints, RA Utrecht 279-1, 25 May 1591 (o.s.)
 2 Kronijk XVI, 180-1.
 3 Ibid. 295-99.
 4 Ibid. 340-44. Res Holland 1589, 286-7.

Tolhuis on the German frontier, and along the Rhine as far as Rhenen.¹ The contrast between these schemes and the requirements of full scale war was not unclear. At the same time as these schemes were under discussion Utrecht insisted that the only way to prevent a full scale invasion of the Betuwe aimed at the conquest of Utrecht was the expenditure of 40,000 gulden on the fortifications of towns such as Wageningen, Rhenen and Buren and the provision of substantial garrisons.² For the protection of the Veluwe, nothing less than the capture of Zutphen and Deventer would suffice. The scale of penetration into Utrecht from there precluded any stop-gap measures being effective. The deputies of Amersfoort to the States of Utrecht could not go there without a large escort.³ It was apparently impossible to cultivate the region.⁴

These developments of 1589-91 foreshadow those of 1605-6, when once again the war was brought up to and onto Dutch soil. The decision to erect a full fortified line along the Yssel was taken at the end of 1605, but bears a resemblance to a proposal made in 1604.⁵ The main fear of the Dutch was of an enemy invasion from this quarter, but the redoubts were specifically intended to prevent the levying of contributions by the enemy.

1 Kronijk XVIII, 20-23.

2 Kronijk XVI, 346-53.

3 R A Utrecht 279-1. 19 Jan & 3 Feb. 1590 (o.s.)

4 Kronijk XVII, 212-18; XVIII, 429-30.

5 ARA SG 12548/124: a scheme for 38 redoubts and garrisons along the Waal from Tolhuis to Ghent, including castles and houses at Batenberg, Bommelshuis etc. to be held by c. 850 men.

The plan was for 30 redoubts to hold 20 men each, with 4 horsemen in every fourth redoubt.¹ Quite obviously, such a line would not hold up an invading army for longer than it took to arrange a capitulation.

Maurice's defensive measures were on a wholly different scale, involving the deployment of substantial forces of regular troops and the reinforcement of the garrisons of the crucial frontier fortresses.² The cordon of small posts - which was extended along the Waal and Rhine, where the States of Holland took responsibility³ - did not indicate that Maurice intended to use the rivers for a static, linear defence, such as is implied by most considerations of these works. Maurice, of course, used field fortifications on a massive scale,⁴ but he employed them to compensate for the inferiority of his armies. His campaigns in these years were fought as much beyond as behind the Yssel: Friesland and the eastern provinces could not be protected from the frontiers of Utrecht. There is, further, little evidence that the Spanish rated the defence line as any obstacle at all. The Admiral of Aragon gave Maurice's field works no consideration in 1598⁵, and Spinola had not the slightest doubts of his ability to force the river lines in 1606.

-
- 1 Res St Gen XIII, 312-13. 18 redoubts (whether extra, or part of the 30, is unclear) were ordered in February 1606: ibid. 534. The orders, a detailed report on 26 Veluwe redoubts dated October 1606, and a series of plans of them, are in ARA SG 12548/135. The best contemporary description is by Guistiniano, Delle Guerre di Fiandra, 228.
- 2 Kemp II, 519-20; Res St Gen XIII, 558-61.
- 3 Res Holland 1605, 223; 1606, 50, 274, 316; 1607, 13.
- 4 Res St Gen XIV, 24: 6 redoubts were built in March 1607 in the Betuwe for garrisons of 200, provided with additional firearms, which suggests for these constructions a genuine military purpose.
- 5 Coloma 183; Carnero 442; Lonchay & Cuvalier, 16; Col. Doc. 41, Cartas del Admirante, 526.

That he did not was for logistical and strategic reasons, and had nothing whatever to do with the redoubts.¹

Facts such as these must all be taken into account in assessing the real significance of the river lines and the defensive works built on them by the Dutch.

The most significant geographical feature of the Netherlands - or at least those parts of it which were fought over after 1585 - thus had a more complex function than either a simple boundary or a trade route to be controlled. The rivers made it easier for the Dutch to go onto the offensive during Parma's absence, and at the same time exercised a restricting influence upon Maurice's scope of action. As ~~the~~ defensive barriers, they were of use as a strategic barrier only when abnormally high, or when backed by a field army. At all other times they served to prevent small-scale incursions, but again only if backed by lines of small defence posts and watch towers.

The planning and execution of war in the Netherlands was circumscribed in two ways: by the political objectives of the opposing sides, and by the nature of the country which formed the battle-ground. That the planning of the Dutch should be essentially defensive-minded was inevitable and natural for a state fearing for its survival.² It was natural also that for the same reason their military leaders should proceed always with great caution,

1 Lonchay & Cuvalier, 233; in full in Rodriguez-Villa, op. cit 141-2; Col Doc. 43, 'Cartas del Archiduque,' 5-6.

2 For a detailed examination of Dutch war aims and policy, see Chapter V.

shunning the incalculable risks of unnecessary battles, preferring the obloquy of abandoning a siege which could be resumed in better times to the risk of a defeat which might lay open a whole region to enemy reconquest. This goes a long way towards justifying the ultra-cautious approach and unenterprising nature of many of Maurice's later operations.¹ But it would be wrong to imagine that Maurice, and even less William Louis,² were generals truly capable of envisaging a type of war other than that which they were fighting.

Maurice's military thinking was inseparably linked to the conditions of the Netherlands wars. The Low Countries were not good cavalry country and the proportion of cavalry to infantry as a result was lower here than almost anywhere else in Europe. In consequence, Maurice was a fine commander of infantry but failed to use his horse for reconnaissance purposes, their fundamental function when not in battle.³ Since Maurice was a commander of high calibre, it may be assumed that his neglect of this essential intelligence-gathering service was at least in part a result, rather than a cause, of his reliance on the relatively dense urbanisation and heavy internal trading of the Netherlands which made

1 Which at times angered the States General, especially in 1595 and 1602. See Ogle's comments, Cecil MSS 94/26, for 1602.

2 For a comment on William Louis' sometimes infuriating over-caution, HMC De Lisle, II 382 (Gilpin to Sidney, 12 August 1599)

3 Parker, op. cit. II, 271, for Spanish cavalry proportions. Dutch cavalry strength was always under 10% of the total infantry force. See Table IV.

secret military moves almost impossible, and the gathering and passing of information extraordinarily easy.¹

Similarly, Maurice never rose above his fears of deep penetrations, most notably during the years of the siege of Ostend² Nourished early on a war of short moves and rapid communications, Maurice later proved most unwilling to move far from his supply ships or secure magazines, and when he did move away from the river routes he provided himself with such an encumbrance of a supply train that telling manoeuvres were totally inconceivable. The contrast with Parma's brilliant manoeuvres in the campaigns he fought against Henry IV for the relief of Paris and Rouen is indicative of the greater strategic skill of the Italian and of the restrictive influence of conditions in the northern Netherlands upon the development of Maurice's concepts of strategy. It was possible for the Nassau prince to argue sincerely that deep invasions were unwise and unnecessary for the United Provinces while at the same time maintaining a firm personal opposition to such ideas.

1 Wijn, op. cit. 371-5. The rather better Spanish practice, based on wider experience, is described by G Basta, Governo de la cavalleria ligera (Span. Trans 1624), 83-9, 116-20, 128-33; & L Melzo, Regole Militari sopra il governo della Cavalleria (1611). The nearly disastrous lack of reconnaissance in Flanders in 1600 produced no change of policy. Stevin, op. cit. 249-50, called for light cavalry, but not for scouting purposes. In May, 1605, however, Maurice speaks of Using Cavalry to scout, ("Prendre langue"): KHL A22-IXA 309. For an open reference to spies, ARA SG 4913 II 20 July 1606.

2 Discussed in Chapter VII.

In a sense there was no contradiction, because the thinking of the Dutch military leaders grew out of the same conditions that dictated the ends and means of the war itself, and a very deep understanding of the needs and capabilities of the United Provinces which, it seems, has proved as frustrating to recent military historians¹ as it once did to fire-eating adventurers who went to the Low Country wars only to discover that

this people fight in the nature of mechaniches for comoditie, and have little sense of honor² so they lye in wate to catch without hazard.

Yet this in no way implies a lack of understanding of basic strategic principles. It was just that these principles were dictated by the basic political aim of survival in the first place, and thereafter by the unique features of the country over which the war was to be fought. The military thinking of Maurice and William Louis grew out of a long experience of war in these conditions, an experience which ultimately also made the ruling civilian bodies equally aware of the most important principles.³ The armies which took the field were not intended to seek final victory by defeating

1 Such as Oman or Roberts.

2 Cecil MSS 33/46, Thomas Burgh to Essex, 21 July 1595 (os).

3 Although even in 1601 the States General could advocate a foolish separat^{ion} of forces, which William Louis suitably castigated: Res St Gen XI, 395; Groen II, 80-84; Duyck III, 57-8. The continual diplomatic and financial pressures at work on the States General led them at times to overestimate their military capabilities, a facet which counterbalanced Maurice's often excessive caution.

the enemy in battle, because that final victory would not result from a hard-fought battle, while the consequences of defeat could be the loss of territory and towns and the destruction of very expensive troops and military equipment.¹ The armies of both sides were too small and fragile to achieve successes against strongly-defended fortresses if they had first been through the slaughter-house of a battle between evenly matched forces.² The role of the army, in Dutch military thinking, was less dramatic than this, but no less essential.³ It was, as we have seen, a means for conducting a war concerned with the control of resources and population, which was absolutely vital for the capability to continue fighting. It was, after all, the inability of the southern provinces to support the Spanish war effort which compelled the Archduke to rely on funds from Spain and the credit of Spinola: and it was to a considerable extent the kind of war fought by the Dutch which exhausted Flanders and Brabant. Ultimately, the strategy pursued by the United Provinces was justified by the outcome of the war.

The evidence of the campaigns fought in the Netherlands and the words and deeds of the military leaders testifies to the existence of basic strategic

-
- 1 For further developments of these points, see Chap V.
 2 As Nieuwpoort demonstrated. It has been shown above how inferiority in numbers could be compensated for by fieldworks or geographical advantages. In an interesting comparison with criticisms of Maurice's methods, Albert's defeat was blamed by some on Spanish impetuosity. HMC Salis, X, 200.
 3 Wijn, Krijgswezen, 518f, makes sensible comments on this.

principles. They were not, to be sure, principles which concerned decisive manoeuvres and great victories, but tenets which grew out of the nature of the wars in the Low Countries and the political aims of the warring parties. The words used by Maurice about his siege workings at 's Hertogenbosch in 1601 -

Je scay que cela est long ouvrage, mais il est
seu^r

- are an apt description also of the way he conducted his strategy, but the steady and unspectacular methods by which he worked ought not to be allowed to conceal the fact that they were based on sound and sensible principles.

1 Groen, II, 107-8.

III

A WAR OF RESOURCES:

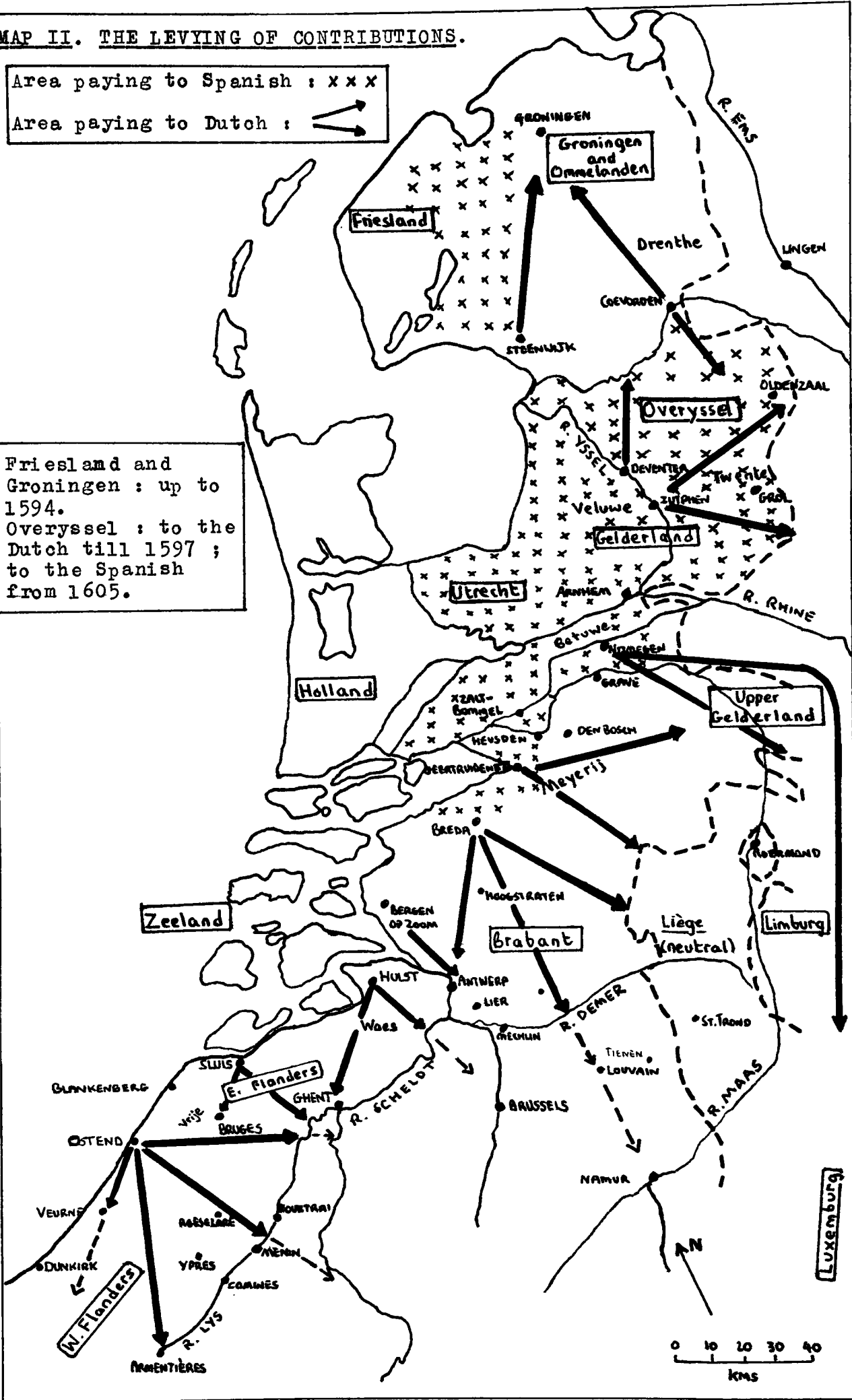
DEVASTATION & CONTRIBUTIONS

MAP II. THE LEVYING OF CONTRIBUTIONS.

Area paying to Spanish : x x x

Area paying to Dutch : 

Friesland and Groningen : up to 1594.
Overijssel : to the Dutch till 1597 ;
to the Spanish from 1605.



'CONTRIBUTIONS' AND THE WAR

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there was a direct and immediate relationship between the ability to wage war and the control of the resources of finance and materials necessary for the support of armed forces. The most important single element in the strategic planning of a state, therefore, had to be the control of the territory which provided those resources.¹ The extraction of funds as taxes from friendly territory required that it be protected from the ravages of the enemy; while the ability to extend control over the enemy's lands was in itself a weapon of war which attacked the very heart of his military effort. As the Greek Onosander had said,²

the infliction of property losses and scarcity of revenue weaken the sinews of war.

Thus the levying of contributions was a vital element of the war in the Netherlands, before developing the even more crucial and wide-ranging role which it was to play in the Thirty Years war. The terminology itself is imprecise, in that the system which came to exist in the Netherlands contained elements of two previously existing forms: the 'Contributions' raised as a special war tax by German princes, and the 'Brandschatzung' which was in effect a ransom paid by a village in return for not being plundered.³ The brutal ~~sophistication~~

1 See Chapter II above, pp 23f.

2 Strategicus, VI, ii quoted by Grotius, De Jurae Praedae, 45.

3 Redlich; 'Contributions in the 30 Years War'; ECHR (2) XII, 1959/60, 247.

of the methods of Wallenstein did not occur in the Netherlands for there was a distinctive line of development there imposed by the length of the conflict and the small size of the theatre of war: by the mid 1530's it was clear that a totally devastated countryside could benefit neither side while a prosperous one could provide larger resources.¹ In this way an element of restraint came to be imposed. Of course, the effects of war on the countryside were still to be devastating, but the self-defeating extent of Wallenstein's exactions was not to be reached.²

There was an ample body of legal opinion to justify the practice of limited plundering, even though this was undoubtedly more significant to government jurists than to soldiers demanding ~~the~~ ^{and} peasants paying up. The sixteenth century Italians Belli and Gentili, and the Spaniards Victoria and Ayala, recognized a legal right to unlimited looting of an enemy.³ Grotius was rather more careful: while not denying an unrestrained right to the enemy's property, he urged that farmers, merchants and artisans should be spared, and that it was foolish to destroy what was useful, although devastation was totally justified if it was either necessary, for military reasons, or in payment of a debt,

- 1 Grotius, De Jure belli ac Pacis, bk. III 748f., stresses this.
- 2 Redlich, 'Military entrepreneurship', Kyklos, X, 1957, 189-90. Redlich hardly mentions the Netherlands in his major work "The German Military Enterpriser and his workforce".
- 3 Redlich, De Praeda militari, (1956), 2-5.

or as a punishment. All the constraints placed on these 'rights' to total destruction were purely pragmatic.¹ Military regulations reflected this situation faithfully, being concerned to end illegitimate private looting in order that the unfortunate inhabitants of an area could pay the legitimate demands.² It was a principle codified by Grotius that while individuals had the right to booty gained on raids, property seized by act of war belonged to the state.³ The right of the state to all contributions was a jealously-guarded attribute of sovereignty, as is shown by the furore created by the attempt of Norris, English governor of Ostend, to extract payments from Flanders on his own authority rather than that of the States of Zeeland, in 1591.⁴

The regularisation of exactions for military purposes into a formal institution took a number of forms. Their administration was entrusted to Receivers for given areas lying under the domination of a frontier garrison which represented the ever-present threat to the recalcitrant. Villages were assessed by these Receivers and required to pay a monthly tribute⁵ which often also entitled them to a Sauvegarde, a declaration that they

1 Grotius, De Jurae Praedae, 733 f, 745f.

2 Redlich, op. cit. 6-18. For example, placards of 25/3/1581, 22 /2/1582 and 27/11/1595, Placaetboek van Vlaenderen (2) 674, 679, 131; Placaet of the States General, 26 September 1590.

3 Grotius, De Jurae Praedae, 143, 162; De Jure belli, III, 672-4.

4 Meteren, 319; Le Petit, 593; Vlietinck, Oostende, 249 quoting Notulen van Zeeland, 1591-2. Having invoked Elizabeth's aid, the Dutch then had to protect Norris from her fury! See further appendix I.

5 In Flanders this was based on previous tax assessments in the Transport van Vlaenderen. In 1606, one village successfully claimed that on this basis it was paying too much, compared with its neighbours: ARA SG 4913

were under protection and not to be molested, although occasional mistakes were made.¹ The grant of sauvegardes, whether to districts, villages or individual owners of property, was not an automatic process: devastation could be found strategically preferable. It will be seen that an element of bargaining was possible, but there was never any doubt that the relation was one of master and subject. Whenever it was deemed necessary or expedient, surcharges could be imposed, while demands for forage, horses and carts, supplies of timber, provision of billets and so on, were always liable to be made. Frequently, of course, the demands could not be met, especially at times when both sides asserted their rights over the same region; while examples will also be given of districts being placed under contribution simultaneously by the Dutch, the legitimate Spanish authorities, and groups of Spanish mutineers. Nonetheless, oppressive though this systematic impoverishment undoubtedly was, it was still incomparably preferable to the undisciplined and ruthless pillaging of the 1570's and '80's.

Where the right to levy contributions was expressly denied by the other side, or where villagers took arms to resist having to pay, the threat of retribution could be invoked. Towns without Sauvegardes might be thoroughly plundered, such as Tilburg and Tienen in 1588,² and the whole country from Bergen op Zoom to Antwerp in 1589.³

1 Eg. Where Sauvegardes were raised by 'inadvertentie' at Hasteren in 1596 (RA Zeeland 902, 3 Jan) and 4 villages under Bergen op Zoom in 1599 (ARA SG 4891, 27 Apr - letter of Maurice).

2 Meteren, 296.

3 Ibid., 317.

The next year, when Mondragon, commander at Antwerp, prohibited the paying of contributions to the Dutch, which it was said were costing the seigneurs half their dues, States cavalry indicated by their destruction of the village of Ulrich that it was a choice between keeping half or keeping nothing at all.¹ The villages of the Antwerp quarter, enjoying some protection from the garrisons of Antwerp and Lier, were in fact remarkably obstinate in refusing the contributions demanded by the Dutch. But they suffered for this regularly. They were raided in 1593.² In 1596, 23 villages were burnt³, while three years later an expedition of some 3000 troops was despatched in an apparently successful attempt to recover the arrears.⁴ Finally, in 1606, an even larger force marched against Brabant villages which still owed 17 years' arrears of contributions. On this occasion strong resistance was reported, but the States troops returned with much booty, 600 of the wealthiest local inhabitants as hostages, and destroyed the village of Duffel near Mechlin.⁵ These were the full-scale operations. In between, there were countless cases of actions against single villages. In 1601, the States receiver Pierlinck reported, Ineghem had paid part of its arrears of 2000

1 Le Petit, 575-6.

2 Lefèvre, III, 382.

3 Bor, (bk. 33), 187, 261; Meteren, 370.

4 Meteren, 440; Bor, 562; Res St Gen X, 468.

5 Ebeling, Urkundliche Beiträge, I, 118; Meteren, 555; HMC De Lisle III, 261.

gulden following its 'ruining' by troops; in the otherwise obedient quarter of Herentals, "those of Enthoudt are by execution taken" in order to obtain payment of a 1000 gulden debt, he noted.¹ It was common for villages to be threatened by both sides: in 1604, Grobbendonck, governor of 's Hertogenbosch, himself a local nobleman, informed the inhabitants of St Oedenrode - a village under his own jurisdiction - that they would be "uytgeplondert .. en voer goede prys gegeven" if they failed to send him 200 waggons and horses.² There is thus not the slightest doubt that 'Brandschatting,' fire-tribute, did mean literally that.

The economic and social consequences of such a form of warfare over so long and uninterrupted a period were naturally wide-ranging, and will be considered in due course. But the place of this aspect in the overall context of the war, and the uses to which it was put, may first be established.

Most obvious was the contribution made towards the immediate cost of the war effort. Any opportunity to obtain cash with which to pay soldiers was eagerly seized, of course, at a time when normal forms of state revenue were slow and uncertain. Parma's absence in France in 1591 gave the States the chance to raise unprecedented sums from Brabant and Flanders, such that

1 ARA SG 4902. I, report dated 8 January, 1602: that is, inhabitants were seized for ransom.

2 GA St Oedenrode, 52.

the Brussels merchant Jan de Pottre noted that "the beggars made war on us with our own money".¹ Whether the role of contributions was critical in the finances of the United Provinces cannot be established simply. The figures suggest, however, that they must have played an almost indispensable part. It is clear, for instance, that they formed a major element of that difference between the financial affairs of the two sides which meant endemic mutiny amongst the Spanish and its virtual absence from the Dutch side.

Assessing the total value of contributions in straight monetary terms is rendered difficult by incomplete and inaccurate evidence, and the near-impossibility of establishing how much of what was demanded was actually paid. It may be estimated that in 1588 280,000 gulden were brought in although this excludes Flanders; by the mid 1590's, the total was between 350 and 450,000; by the end of this decade, the level was around 650,000, and this was maintained until the Truce.²

These regular levies, however, tell only part of the story. The arbitrary demands of sums as extraordinary contributions was frequent, sometimes for a specific purpose, sometimes simply because of the opportunity, sometimes to execute a claimed legal right. In 1591, when Maurice besieged Hulst, the surrounding Pays de Waes contributed 5500 within 14 days.³

1 Dagboek van Jan de Pottre, 187-8.

2 See Tables I & II, where the sources for the figures are given.

3 R A Zeeland 897, 12 & 23 Sept; Bor (2), 572-3. Contributions agreements were also drawn up at once for other nearby districts (R A Zeeland 897), and for the district of Cortryck the next year (ARA SG 4872 April 1592). For an example of an arbitrary increase, R A Zeeland 902, 13 Feb 1596, & ARA SG 4883 II 30 April 1596

The most dramatic case of extraordinary demand, however, was in 1602, when during Maurice's otherwise fruitless march into Brabant it was said that 700,000 gulden had been obtained.¹ Even without these bonuses, it seems that up to 10%, and sometimes more, of the war expenditure of the United Provinces was met from contributions levied on the enemy,² (until the last years before the truce when costs reached a level which it proved impossible to sustain). The value of this element was greatly increased by the fact it was provided regularly and in cash or kind.

Logically, the collected sums went to pay for the troops, officers and officials in the frontier garrisons. In 1585, a good 10% of the armed forces of the States was being directly supported from contributions.³ In 1587, the States of Holland directed that 4 cavalry companies were to be paid out of the contributions of Brabant;⁴ when Breda fell in 1590, it was ordered that the new Dutch garrison be paid 12,000 gulden from the same source.⁵ The payments made by Overijssel, Lingen and Drenthe before their reduction to the obedience of the United Provinces were used to maintain companies of foot and horse in States service.⁶ Commonly, the cost

1 HMC Salis. XII, 260.

2 See Table I.

3 Raa & Bas, Het Staatse Leger, I, 82.

4 Res Holland 1587, 215; fl. 9000 pm was still paid in 1608, Raa & Bas, II 399.

5 Res St Gen VII, 168.

6 Raa & Bas, II, 344f.

of maintaining or building fortifications was also met from this source.¹

The same facility was used by the Spanish, although the loss of Breda and Geertruidenberg seriously reduced the sums they could extract.² Not until Spinola ensconced himself in the eastern provinces of the Dutch state in 1605 were the Spanish able to obtain regular contributions from their enemies, and throughout, geographical barriers reinforced by fortresses and guard-posts ensured that the extent of hostile territory open to Spanish 'brandschatting' was substantially smaller than the area of the 'obedient' provinces exposed to the insurgents.³

T A B L E I

ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE FROM CONTRIBUTIONS LEVIED BY
THE UNITED PROVINCES

<u>Year</u>	<u>Revenue in Florins</u>	<u>As % of War Costs</u>	<u>Comments</u>
1588	220,000	10	Parma prevented any money being drawn from Flanders.
1592	480,000	16	Some extraordinary levies included.
1593	300,000	10	
1597-99	660,000	12 (1597)	Loss of Hulst counterbalanced by large increases elsewhere.
1601-04			Loss of Flanders revenue until capture of Sluis.
1608	600,000	7	

Note: these totals are arrived at on the basis of the sources indicated on table II.

1 E.g. Hulst, 1591 (R Zeeland 897, 25 Nov): Ostend (ARA SG 4894 I, 6 Oct 1599).

2 AGR Brussels, Chambre de Comptes 24307, 24308.

3 See Table II, & Chap. II pp 40f.

To be able to support the garrisons of fortresses such as Ostend, Bergen op Zoom, Breda and Geertruidenberg with sums of money paid by the enemy was thus a meaningful advantage for the United Provinces. It was rendered even more significant in that what was paid to the Dutch was by the same act denied to the Spanish, far more constructively than was possible by the unlimited devastation which marked the 1580's. The impoverishment of whole regions was anyway a direct weapon of war. A depopulated and wasted province could not provide the resources necessary to maintain an army in the field. Parma faced a major strategic problem in 1586 because the regions in which he wished to operate were too poor.¹ In 1591 he reported with brutal brevity that Gelderland was 'destroyed',² - a view supported by the Dutch receivers who in 1588 had informed the States General that Gelderland's quarters were for the most part "geheel desolaet".³ In December 1587, the city government of 's Hertogenbosch told Philip II that the exactions of States troops were ruining the country, destroying trade and industry, and impoverishing workers, 'rentiers' and citizens.⁴ The army sent to besiege one of the most important Dutch posts, Heusden, vainly, in 1589,⁵ in fact only increased the poverty of the area it was intended to protect,

1 Lefèvre, III, 102, 127.
 2 Ibid. III, 610.
 3 ARA SH 2592 (bviii).
 4 Lefèvre, III, 261.
 5 Ibid. III, 410.

because of the demands made upon it for pay and war materials. The quarter of Kempenland suffered an extraordinary levy of 4000 gulden in three consecutive years for operations against Heusden.¹ The whole Meyerij of 's Hertogenbosch was in arrears of the same amount to Mansfeld's army in 1589.²

The consequences of such exactions from both sides were not slow in materialising. In Brabant it became necessary for the Spanish administration to abolish its own contributions system in return for an Aide which Parma complained was inadequate even to support the local garrisons.³ In fact, in January 1592, it was feared that the province might not even be able to pay the Aide:⁴ and after Flanders, Brabant was the largest and wealthiest of the 'loyal' provinces. In the examples of general poverty dating from the 1580's, lawlessness, banditry and freebooting were probably more significant causes than organised exactions, but the role of the latter became predominant as frontiers became stabilised and disorderly elements gradually eliminated. In 1596 the archduke Albert reported that with the incursions of the enemy, several provinces had been rendered incapable of paying anything to the war effort.⁵ Two years later, cardinal Frangipani wrote that Flanders could once more

1 AGR CC 24310.
 2 Ibid. 24303, fol. vii.
 3 Lefèvre, III, 610f.
 4 Ibid. IV, 3
 5 Ibid. IV, 382

be prosperous,¹

con esser solamente la provincia liberata del peso di contribuir al nemico

The many other financial problems of the southern provinces tend to make it difficult to separate the effects of contributions levied by the enemy on areas from which every spare penny was habitually extorted anyway. The best example of the impact of this extra burden comes from the other side: Spinola's contribution demands on Overijssel and Dutch Gelderland resulting from his 1605 invasion immediately made it impossible for these regions to pay their quotas of the war costs, involving the maintenance of a number of companies of troops.²

The general effect of contributions levied on the southern provinces, in so far as the ability of these areas to support the burden of war was reduced, may be judged by the figures for 1600. In that year, when the Dutch were extracting at least 600,000 gulden a year, the States General in Brussels resisted granting payment of 3½ millions a year to pay for the war on grounds of poverty.

-
- 1 Correspondance de Frangipani, III, 65; cf. Lefèvre IV, 448. The chronicler Hermelghem wrote (1590): "Vlaenderen was de melkcoë, maer stond droog, daer en kwam niet meer af". Nederlandsche Historie, ed. Fütte, 129.
- 2 R A Gelderland, III, 1, Zutphen 94, fol. 68; *ibid.* Nijmegen 18, 12-18 December 1605. Res St Gen XIII 457. For the recovery of revenue in the south, see the figures of the Recette-Generale quoted by D Gheret, 'Produit des Licentes', Acta Hist Brux, II, 1970, 50f. See further Chap. VIII, pp. 303.
- 3 Gachard, Actes des Etats Generaux, c-cxxiv; Dhondt, 'Bijdrage tot de kennis van het financiewesen van Vlaenderen', Ned Hist Bladen, 3, (1941) 149-151. The correlation was sometimes exact; in 1601 Brabant demanded a remission of fl. 26,000 monthly, the sum they paid to the United Provinces: Meteren, 476.

The exhaustion of the Archduke's lands, in large part caused by the exactions of the United Provinces, ensured that the Spanish military effort was always to be totally dependent upon the despatch of vast sums from Spain itself.

In addition, the laying of the countryside under contribution had another, more immediate, strategic value. While the regularisation of military exactions permitted, as will be demonstrated, a return to a more nearly normal form of life in the districts concerned, it also served to demarcate a zone around the frontiers which through its general impoverishment was unable to support a major burden such as that imposed by an army. This partly explains the reluctance shown by Maurice to operate in Flanders, and justified his objections to the invasion of Brabant in 1602, where it became impossible to obtain victuals. In the same campaign, the opposing army of the Admiral of Aragon gradually fell to pieces while sitting fruitlessly outside Grave.¹ A similar fate had befallen the same commander three years before, during the Bommel campaign.² A number of strategic reasons were involved in the direction of the various Spanish offensives during this period, but it seems clear that a significant cause of the immunity from siege of most of the fortresses held by the States south of the

1 For this campaign, see Chapter VII, pp. 268. Cf. 1593; Carnero, 297.

2 See especially the Admiral's letters, Col Doc, 41, 20, 21, 31, 42, 61-3, for his complaints about victuals, forage and pay.

great rivers was that the surrounding countryside was considered too poor to bear the burden of a besieging army. The question of contributions played a continual part in military planning at all levels, as has been indicated.¹ A number of operations were mounted solely with the aim of extending the area under 'brandschatting'. The abortive attack on Menin in July 1592, launched from Ostend, was certainly of this type.² At some point in time during the existence of the Triple Alliance, a similar plan was drawn up,³ urging a surprise attack on Menin to secure the Lys, whence all Artois could be placed under contribution: which the anonymous author rather optimistically put at 200,000 gulden a month.⁴ The scheme was directly counterposed to the alternative of a full-scale advance with a large army, stressing that it was both easier, cheaper and more effective to wage war on the enemy's resources than on his towns or armies. The largest and most expensive action of the whole war, the three-year siege of Ostend, was motivated almost exclusively by the immense harm its garrison inflicted on the province of Flanders, and Henry IV was not alone in believing that Spinola would besiege Sluis in 1605 simply because it was capable of filling the place of Ostend in levying contributions.⁵

1 Chapter II above.

2 Messiaen, *Histoire de Comines*, II, 133.

3 In ARA SH 2604 (f), 'Moyens pour mettre tout le plat pays de Flandres ... sous Contributions', undated and unsigned.

4 Ibid, fol. 10.

5 Recueil, VI, 325.

Furthermore, the control which it was possible for the United Provinces to exercise over substantial tracts of hostile territory gave them a significant bargaining counter. In 1598, when troops from the Spanish army began to levy contributions on Dutch Gelderland in excess of the Sauvegardes already being paid, the States General were able to threaten that if this continued, they would extract reprisals of twice the value on the Meyerij.¹ A few months later, the governor of Nijmegen was instructed to raise his demands to a quarter more than the enemy in Grave were making on the surrounding country.² In 1600, when the garrison of fort Grevecoeur attempted to obtain materials worth 1480 Carolus gulden³ from the villages of Holland south of the rivers, which already paid contributions to the Spanish, a reprisal of three times the amount was threatened, again on the Meyerij.⁴ In 1602, when it was heard that an extraordinary levy of 100,000 gulden was being made on Brabant, the States responded with a demand for 200,000 gulden within six weeks.⁵ On this occasion 450 copies of the edict were printed and distributed to the Receivers of the three Quarters of Brabant: in July, receiver Bruyninx reported the success of the action, the seizing of prisoners and

1 Res St Gen X, 15: Bor (35), 49, 7.

2 Ibid. 24.

3 Approx. fl. 2800.

4 Res St Gen XI, 5. There was a similar case in 1605: RA NB Peelland 9, 31 March 1605.

5 Ibid, XII, 32-4.

cattle where no money was forthcoming, and the thwarting thereby of his opposite number, the Spanish receiver in Den Bosch.¹

This threat could also be applied at sea. When wholesale arrests of Dutch shipping and sailors began in 1598, it was decreed that if any seamen were ransomed above an accepted level, reprisals of a comparable nature would be taken against the local officials of Flanders and Brabant villages.² In 1605, when Dunkirkers attacked Holland and Zeeland herring fishing fleets, the Dutch responded with a threat of burning Brabant villages.³ These various examples perhaps indicate an obsession with archaic legalism far removed both from the terrorism of the early years of the revolt and the indiscriminate butchery of the Thirty years war. But this apparent adherence to forms in the midst of war was really soundly based on the pragmatic consideration that it was better to preserve the resources of the country, even if that involved sharing them with the enemy, than to destroy them and deny them to both.

Another indication of the importance attached to obtaining payment from the enemy is the succession of measures taken to ensure the protection of friendly regions from the attentions of the other side's collectors

1 ARA SG 4903, 17 July 1602, Bruyninx to States General.
 2 Placaet of the States General, 2 April 1599.
 3 Ebeling, I, 52-4.

and raiders. The worst ravages committed during the very fluid military situation up to 1588 were the work of freebooters, bandits and undisciplined soldiers, who, in Flanders at least, often operated out of States fortresses, Ostend¹ and Sluys. Their deeds of murder, kidnapping and robbery are well documented, but they were obviously of negligible military value, and, indeed, rapidly became a great nuisance even to their protectors. The freebooters conducted a merciless, animal warfare against peasants, merchants and especially priests.² A number of them were former inhabitants of the regions they now ravaged, a reincarnation of the "guëux de bois" of the 1560's.³ As such they received short shrift from the Flemings, captured raiders being summarily hanged or burnt.⁴

The stabilisation of the military frontiers in the period 1588 - 1590 was the precondition for the establishment of a regular system of Sauvegardes and contributions, organised and administered as state policy. Groups or individuals raiding 'hostile' villages would hinder the collection of contributions, quite apart from the consideration that the granting of a Sauvegarde theoretically involved a responsibility to protect the village

-
- 1 In the period June-September 1591, the 'captain of Freebooters' was paid 1000 gulden out of the contributions, a rate not much below what the governor himself received at Ostend: PRO SP 84/43/156.
 - 2 Accounts in: Vivere, Chronique van Ghendt; Ronse (ed) Jaerboeken van Veurne; van Male, Geschiedenis van Vlaenderen; Vlietinck, Oostende, 238ff; Hoevel, "Oisterwijk Kroniek", B&M, XL, 1919; Hemelghem, Histoire I & II; Custis, Jaerboeken der .. Brugge, III.
 - 3 Bonours, Siège d'Ostende, 4; Bor (34) 332; Vivere, 385.
 - 4 Vivere, 385, 389, 399, 401; Jaerboeken, II, 278.

concerned.¹ Villages could and did complain to their 'protectors', leading the States General to issue regulations strictly limiting and controlling the movement of their troops in frontier garrisons, instituting 'exemplary punishment' for offenders.² In 1597, the villages of the Vrije of Bruges complained so forcefully that the Dutch banned all freebooters in that part of Flanders, threatening the death sentence for any infringements.³

The measures taken by the Spanish governors for the defence of their own taxpayers were correspondingly yet harsher, but their success was limited. In 1591, Peter Mansfeld raised 300 local troops to act against raiders in Brabant: but their deployment on the Scheldt and the Demer tacitly conceded that more than half of the province was out of his control.⁴ Nonetheless the actions taken by both sides almost simultaneously seem to have been effective: by the Summer of 1592 Mansfeld could claim to have eliminated freebooters everywhere except in Luxemburg.⁵ His assertion was over-optimistic, as the Flemings could have told him, but these few years did witness a general shift from unlicensed plunder to licensed exactions.

1 E.g. Sauvegarde for 's Gravenmoer in the Langstraet, Res Holland, 1596, 466.
 2 Placaet of 29 April 1589 & 26 September 1590.
 3 Bor (34), 28, 73-4, HMC De Lisle, II, 330.
 4 Meteren, 319; Lefèvre, III, 522, 587.
 5 Lefèvre, III, 36.

On both sides, attempts were made on several occasions to ban the payment of contributions to the enemy, but these efforts frequently floundered not only because they were impossible to enforce, but because the local inhabitants usually preferred to buy security from the enemy when their own side could not provide it. On the Dutch side, the States of Holland prohibited the paying of contributions by Altena and Worcum in 1601.¹ On the eastern frontier it was more difficult, for the ability to ban payments to the enemy was directly related to the ability to keep out his raiders. The capture of Zutphen and Deventer in 1591 expelled the Spanish from the Veluwe, and the payment of contributions and sauvegardes was immediately forbidden.² Nonetheless it proved necessary to renew the placard in 1595 because it was being infringed, and two years later a rewards system was instituted, whereby any person capturing or killing an enemy was to be given 100 gulden.³ With the extension of the eastern frontier achieved in the same year, it became possible to make similar regulations for the county of Zutphen, but this also had to be renewed, in 1601 and again in 1604.⁴ It was an impossible regulation. If opposing troops

1 Res Holland, 1601, 32.

2 Groot Gelders Placaetboek, II, col. 33.

3 Ibid. cols 51, 61; RA Gelderland III, 1, Nijmegen 138, 11 March & ibid. 17, same date, where the measures are debated by the States.

4 Placaetboek, cols 67, 81, 99-104. In 1606 the Gelderland States compromised with the inevitable and banned only unauthorised payment to an enemy then once more established in the region: col. 106.

could enter a village, the inhabitants would rather pay them a contribution, and their legitimate rulers a fine, than be plundered. Legal authority ran no further than the direct authority of armed force,¹ and it was where that authority was disputed that the worst suffering occurred.

Such was the case in a number of instances when the Brussels government banned the giving of contributions to the United Provinces. This happened in both Flanders and Brabant, and testifies to the importance attached by the government to this method of reinforcing their foe. As a measure, it was to prove generally to be an expensive disaster, since it was impossible to protect the areas which were thus laid open to unrestrained attacks from the Dutch.

The departure of Parma for France in 1591, leaving only skeleton garrisons, was the opportunity seized by the rebel provinces to extend substantially their range of operations.² Almost immediately, the Vrije, the country around Bruges, bought itself immunity for 3000 gulden a month but the city itself was forbidden by Parma to make any such arrangement, and as a consequence suffered the complete destruction of all its commerce.³ The pleas of the city fathers that Antwerp and Ghent already had arrangements to pay a Licent to the Dutch

1 See, further, pp 348f (Chapter IX)

2 Lefèvre, III, 587: a letter expressing the hopelessness of trying to prevent enemy incursions.

3 Vlietinck, Oostende, 248; Male, 297; Custis, III, 192-8. Bruges did obtain a treaty with Zeeland allowing unmolested navigation via the Sluis channel, for payment of a Licent. This was renewed in 1597.

in return for a limited freedom from molestation apparently fell on deaf ears.¹ Two years later Bruges appealed again for permission to pay brandschatting, and was again refused.² It was perhaps too much of a blow to Spanish prestige for one of the foremost cities of the state to have to pay contributions to the enemy. But the capture of Hulst in 1591, combined with possession of Ostend, had made it entirely impossible for the Spanish to prevent villages in the quarters of Dendermonde, Ghent and Bruges from paying contributions.³

Elsewhere in Flanders, however, the ban was imposed, so that the indiscriminate raiding and plundering continued, regularly as far as the Lys, and often beyond it, into the districts between Courtrai and Oudenarde.⁴ Whereas the districts under sauvegarde began a slow recovery,⁵ much of the rest of the province, especially in the areas closest to Ostend, suffered destruction and depopulation: and yet it was government policy to prevent emigration from desolate areas to the Vrije since this would contribute further to the Dutch war effort.⁶

1 Meteren, 319; Le Petit, 593.

2 Vlietinck, Oostende, 249.

3 Bor (28), 573; Werveke, Gand, 95.

4 Male, 302; Vivere, 395-404; Vlietinck, 'Documents ..
concernant L'occupation de la ville d'Ostende ..'
Bull, CRH 70, (1901), 255, 268; Messiaen,
Comines, II, 143f.

5 Jaerboeken, IV, 7: Vlietinck, Oostende, 251f.

6 Jaerboeken, IV, 8.

The orders of the Spanish government were that wherever possible the Ostenders were to be resisted, but these were naturally easier to issue than to execute. Defence meant fortifications, watchtowers and garrisons. For towns and villages within a few miles of Ostend, this in fact meant destruction at the hands of the garrison.¹ The front line of the resistance was as far south as the district of Veurne. A defensive line was constructed along a line of dikes and throughout the 1590's new forts were built in a vain attempt to keep out Norris's raiding parties: in a determined effort in 1599, 18 forts were constructed against Ostend.² The local administration found it necessary to raise troops at their own expense, as well as arming the inhabitants, who were assembled by the ringing of church bells to drive off raiders, although frequently the most they could achieve was to watch them disappearing, laden with booty. Additional to the taxes they were still required to pay were the contributions levied by the garrison of Dunkirk when it mutinied in 1594, and that of Ardres in 1598.³ In 1593, Brussels ignored a request for additional ^tgroops, and at the same time rejected a plea that Veurne be allowed to pay contributions, although these were already substantially less than the district was paying to resist them.⁴ Yet while the costs were a heavy financial burden, the yearly reports of the Veurne

1 E.g. Potter, Blankenberge, 35.

2 Jaerboeken, III, 273, 282, 306; IV, 9. Forts demolished when Ostend was besieged were hurriedly rebuilt when Maurice took Sluis: IV, 31.

3 Ibid. IV, 298, 318.

4 Ibid. III, 290-4.

chronicler, and the evidence of the tax returns, demonstrate that the district, and the areas which its resistance shielded from hostile attacks, managed a substantial recovery during the 1590's from the desolation of the mid '80's.¹

Similar measures were taken along the Lys, with the erection of forts to the great cost of the region itself,² but there is every indication that the raids were not effectively halted, and that the costs of the operation was greater than the demands the Dutch would have made, as well as reducing the ability of Flanders to pay taxes at all.³ Not until after the Twelve Year Truce was any realistic attempt made to block off access to the province from Dutch-held towns - by this time, Sluis and Aardenburg - by the digging of a canal between Ghent and Bruges backed with forts on the south side. But even this measure recognised that a significant region of the province remained under de facto enemy control.⁴ The financial returns indicate no significant difference in the rate of recovery between those areas of Flanders which willingly paid the contributions required by the States, and those which unwillingly resisted them. However, the comparison is made less meaningful when it is recalled that the regions

1 Maddens, 'Krisis .. in Ieper', Rev Bel Phil 39 (1961) 374; *ibid.* 'Brugse Vrije', Ann Soc Em Br 97 (1960) 39.

2 Vlietinck, 'Documents', 255, 219n. (Resolution, States of Flanders, 1600).

3 Diegerick, Inventaire .. d'Ypres, VI, 296, 298, 306. A Ghent magistrate complained of the costly inactivity of the fort garrisons: Brants (ed), 'Avis ..1598', Bull, CRH. 81 (1912), 349. The inhabitants saw the garrison of Oudenburg as being effectively accomplices of the Ostenders: Hermelghem, II 149.

4 Werveke, Gand, 96.

which fell under the sway of Ostend and Hulst were already the worst devastated and most catastrophically depopulated, such that without a system of sauvegardes they could never have been recultivated at all.¹

In Brabant, there was also an attempt to prohibit the paying of contributions to the enemy, with a draconian edict of Mansfeld in January 1593 which also stopped the giving of quarter.² To try to make this order have real effect, the count reissued orders and regulations for the raising of local defence forces from the peasantry and villagers similar to those established during the campaign against the freebooters two year earlier.³ In many ways this was a strange decision. During the previous year both Parma and Mansfeld had expressed alarm at the idea of arming the populace - an alarm which, interestingly enough, the Dutch did not have when they were compelled to arm local inhabitants against incursions in 1606.⁴ The concern of the Brussels government was to some extent justified by the results: the Brabant locals resisted and molested Spanish troops and officials, but made no effort to attack enemy raiders beyond the confines of their own villages.⁵ As to the banning of 'quarter', once the States General had reluctantly reciprocated, it seems

1 Vivid descriptions, as well as figures, in: Meteren, 269; Vivere, 374; Jaerboeken, III, 236f; Male, 286f; Descriptio .. Abbatiae Trondiniensis, 672; Meestre, Historia Episcopatus Iprensis, 132.

2 Le Petit, 617; Meteren, 327.

3 Ordinantie, 27 July 1593.

4 Ebeling, I, 145, 149. See further pp. 343f.

5 Lefèvre, III, 36, 63, 78, 87, 103, letters of Mansfeld and Parma. Cf. Van Heurn., Histoire... van's Hertogenbosch, II, 200.

that the balance of suffering was very much against the Spanish: one chronicler claims that for every States soldier killed, three Spanish soldiers lost their lives.¹ It would appear that this particular reversion to terror was mercifully short-lived as its consequences became clear.² Moreover, in the areas of northern Brabant where it was impossible to protect the countryside from the Dutch garrisons which lay on or adjacent to them, the paying of contributions went on much as before. But the measures were sufficient to reopen safe communications between the great cities of the area, Antwerp, Mechlin and Louvain, previously rendered almost unusable by freebooters and States raiders.³

The question was thus again raised of the relationship between legality and force. The 'right' of the States to levy contributions on the Meyerij of Den Bosch and the quarters of Breda and Antwerp was tacitly admitted because it could not be prevented. Further south, the situation was different. The States General claimed a right to contributions as far as Brussels, and kept official accounts of the arrears from all the villages concerned. In some cases it was poverty which was responsible for non payment, in others, notably in the Louvain district, it was the resistance of the local population and the protection of Spanish garrisons which

1 Le Petit, 617; Lanario, 101.

2 De Thou, Histoire Universelle, XI, 650.

3 Lefèvre, III, 587; Dagboek van ... Pottre, 188.

disputed this right. In some instances, there was no consistency: in 1602, only one of the seven villages of Lier was resisting, and in Herentals only one of 15¹. On the other hand, the quarters of Arckle, Mechlin, Brussels and Louvain stubbornly fought off the demands throughout.² Against those who refused what they saw as legitimate demands, the Dutch were prepared to mount substantial punitive expeditions in order to obtain payment.³ These were often very large and sometimes dangerous military undertakings in themselves. It is not clear, for example, which of the 'enemy' was responsible for making the road between Luxemburg and Namur unsafe for cardinal Frangipani in 1596, but whoever they were, they were a long way from home.⁴

The States General in fact also claimed a right to contributions in Namur, Limburg and Luxemburg, but the collection of them had to be left to intermittent major expeditions, as in 1593-4, 1596, 1599 and 1602. The booty obtained on these 'chevauchées' was certainly very substantial. In 1596, for example, the ~~abbot~~ of Echternach alone was ransomed for 16,000 rixdalers.⁵ In 1602, Ogle claimed, the raiding corps returned with no less than 200,000 rixdalers in ransoms.⁶ On this occasion, the

1 Enthoudt, mentioned above p. 58 .
 2 The list dated 8 Jan 1602 in ARA SG 4902 I.
 3 See p. 56f above.
 4 Correspondance ... de Frangipani, I, 172.
 5 Meteren, 370. A Rijksdaler was approx. fl. 2.
 6 HMC Salis, Pt. XII, 506.

senior officers and colonels shared out a personal booty of 137,233 gulden.¹ The successes of Spinola in the country between the Rhine and the Maas in 1605 did something to shut off the easy route to these distant quarters for the Dutch, but at the truce they were still obtaining 6000 gulden a month from these parts.² No such protection, however, was ever provided for the upper Quarter of Gelderland, continually under contribution from the Dutch as well as frequently ravaged by mutineers. Here, even eight years after hostilities ceased, it was reported³ that

Populus ... pauper est bellicis, cladibus et
exactionibus exhaustus

By comparison with the areas of States territory exposed to the control of the Spanish - a small part of south Holland, Utrecht and the Veluwe up to 1591 and again from 1605, Friesland up to 1594, Overijssel before 1597 and after 1605 - the area of the southern provinces which were compelled to contribute to the war effort of their enemies was wide and the advantage derived therefrom was of significant, and perhaps critical importance in ensuring

-
- 1 'Rantsoenen uyt Luxemburg, ARA SH 2592 b6, undated. On the raids in general, Emde, 'Gebroeders Bacx', Kronijk HGU XV, (1859), 174f. For an example proving that Namur was under contribution, 'Abbaye de Solières', Ann. Soc Arch Namur, 8 (1863), 131. On this 1602 raid, Triumphs of Nassau, 351-3. The ban imposed by Mansfeld on giving contributions was responsible for the high level of payments.
- 2 Correspondance ... de Frangipani, III, 566. Raa & Bas, app. cit., II, 405.
- 3 Cornelissen (ed). 'Relationes Status ... Roermond', Pub Soc Arch Limburg, 64, (1928), 40, 43; cf. Pasture, Restauration religieuse, 214. In general it seems that the evidence of ecclesiastical reports and monastic chronicles is well corroborated by the available statistical material.

the ability of the rebel provinces, and the inability of the loyal, to support the burden of the war. The deep and serious impact of Spinola's invasion of 1605-6 on the United Provinces is a forceful indication of the consequences of a major incursion into the countryside of the northern state,¹ and makes it possible to establish in clearer perspective the major role of this largely one-sided war for resources in giving a massive advantage to the state able to conduct it.

II WAR AND THE COUNTRYSIDE

The securing of peace for the country community by the paying of regular contributions was never of course an absolute security, nor was it easy to find the money required in return for sauvegarde: if it had been, the very purpose of levying it would have been frustrated. On the other hand, available evidence indicates, with little room for doubt, that the gradual recovery of the devastated provinces began almost simultaneously with the stabilisation of the military frontiers and the establishment of systematic contribution collection in place of the indiscriminate plundering of the 1580's, at the beginning of the last decade of the sixteenth century. If in 1609 the situation in many areas was still grim, it was nonetheless much happier than it had

1 See Chapter VIII for the great anxiety caused by the invasion and the massive precautions taken against incursions into Utrecht and Holland.

been twenty years earlier. The main problem in areas such as the Meyerij of 's Hertogenbosch, which will be considered in more detail, was no longer the random looting of bands of undisciplined soldiers, but the exactions of the various groups of mutineers who were to lodge in the region, and whose demands were to prove even more extortionate and remorseless than those of the States receiver Gerard Bruyninx. But what emerges most clearly is that normal life, which had become impossible in many regions of Brabant and Flanders by 1589, was able to resume or continue, despite the hardships, in the country which lay under States contribution.

At one level, the absence of sauvegardes in areas exposed to incursion made the administration of local government hazardous if not impossible. Local officials and notables were seen by raiders as targets almost as valuable as clergy and merchants. In Flanders, some of the most noteworthy victims were the burgomaster and two aldermen of Poperinghe in 1590 and the Governor of Dunkirk in 1597.¹ It soon became difficult to find suitably qualified men to fill vacancies thus created. In 1585, the Bailli and Echevins of Becelaere declared it impossible to exercise their jurisdiction near Ypres;² in 1596 it proved necessary to over-ride correct jurisdictions in St Pol "a cause des guerres et de l'absence de toute gendarmerie".³ In Roeselare it was impossible

1 Vlietinck, Oostende, 243-4. For the details of this case, Acts of Privy Council, NS, XXVIII, 10, 165, 563.
 2 Diegerick, Inventaire ... de la Ville d'Ypres, VI, 280.
 3 Diegerick, Inventaire ... de l'abbaye de Messines, 202.

to assess the town's finances or renew the magistracy in 1604.¹ In December 1591 the officials of Lier were seized and killed by freebooters.² Threats of reprisals, we have seen, were also normally directed against these easily identifiable targets, and it is not difficult to understand how the fruits of office and the call of civic duty must have rapidly lost their attraction, thus also immensely complicating the work of government.

In the Meyerij,³ however, the local officials were able to hold their quarterly assemblies to discuss, normally, financial matters, and without molestation - except in unusual circumstances - to carry out the administration of their districts, collecting the taxes for one side and the contributions for the other.⁴ Over years of dealing with the same States officials, it is likely that some form of understanding must have developed, probably to the benefit of both parties, although the evidence shows no more than that the representatives of the Meyerij were able to present their pleas and requests with complete freedom. For the cheapest and most effective collection of contributions, it was clearly preferable for the Receiver to be able to rely on the co-operation of the local officers, rather than put himself to trouble and danger.

1 Potter, Schets eener Geschiedenis van .. Rousselare, 265.

2 Meteren, 319.

3 The resolution books of the 'Vergaderingen' for two of the Quarters, Kempenland and Peelland, are in RA NB, as well as collections of letters and demands for all four quarters.

4 E.g. RA NB Kempenland, 3, fol. ci. - a demand to bring payment to Heusden, April 1601.

It seems that the local States commanders managed to derive personal profit from their positions of power: the quarter of Oisterwijk paid an annual 'gratuity' to the governor of Heusden,¹ while in 1603 a similar payment of 100 gulden was made by Peelland to the governor of Grave.²

The effect of years of devastation and war damage upon economic life was also inevitably far-reaching. The distribution of population, the pattern of land ownership, rent and property values, and traditional local industries and markets were all modified more or less profoundly by the way in which the war was fought.

In many parts of the Netherlands, the topography of the country meant that dykes and windmills were vital elements in the agricultural scene; both, naturally, were highly susceptible to war damage. A windmill for drainage purposes cost some 3,500 gulden in 1574, and as such was an enormous capital investment.³ It is therefore not surprising that the mills of Antwerp and of Mechlin figure as the largest single payers of contributions from those quarters.

The maintenance of dykes was naturally of concern to all parties, but where a system of sauvegardes had not been established there was little opportunity or money to undertake repairs. It was six years before the

1 RA NB Oisterwijk, 20, 12 April 1600.

2 RA NB Peelland, 8, 25 August 1603.

3 De Vries, Dutch Rural Economy in the Golden Age (1974), 30-2, 198.

damage done by the inundations unleashed to relieve Leiden was restored, and that was in conditions of relative peace.¹ Parma reported that the damage done to the Antwerp dykes during his siege would cost 600,000 gulden to repair,² and in 1587 told the King that the abbey of Ter Doest in Flanders had been ruined because its properties had all been flooded.³ It was only possible for Bruges to undertake work on a necessary new dyke in 1604/5 because the States garrison in Sluis granted permission.⁴ Many other areas of northern Flanders, less fortunate, were lost for decades, and in some cases for ever, because of the destruction or neglect of their sea defences.⁵ This was less of a problem in the Meyerij, which was predominantly high, dry heathland, although watermills provided a major source of employment.⁶ The quarter of Maesland was however exposed to inundation when military operations on the Maas in 1599 weakened the dykes there, and caused serious flooding. It is possible to follow this case to its conclusion.

It would appear that following the great destruction caused in the quarter by the operations of 1599, the local inhabitants had resumed the cultivation of their temporarily abandoned lands, believing that the Maas dyke was firm enough,⁷ the belief, however, proved to be stronger

1 G 't Hart in the collection Leiden 74, 30.

2 Lefèvre, III, 104.

3 Ibid. III, 189, passing on a complaint from the bishop of Bruges.

4 Custis, III, 221.

5 Gottschalk, 'Historische Geografie', II, 219-21 Stormvloeden, II, 766-7, 817f.

6 Oudenhoven, Beschryvinge .. van 's Hertogenbosch (1649), 8; Enno van Gelder, 'Nederlandse Dorpen' Verhand KAW 59 (1953), 123.

7 RA NB Maesland, 23, undated letter to States General, summer 1601.

than the dyke, and petitions were submitted via Receiver Bruyninx to the States General, pleading for remissions of contributions, both by the quarter of Maesland and by individual villages near 's Hertogenbosch, such as St Michielsgestel and Schijndel.¹ The position was complicated by the fact that a new contributions list, involving an increase of one-third, had just been introduced.² The Council of State determined to investigate the situation before accepting these pleas. Several months later, in October 1600, Bruyninx reported that the position was indeed as bad as was claimed, with a third of the land in Dungen, Vught and Cromvoirt still under water, and that therefore the remission of, again, a third, should be granted.³ As for the Maesland villages, they had to wait until December for the decision of the States General: villages furthest from the Maas received a minimal remission of their arrears; those in a second category were granted a stay of execution for the new rates of contribution, and four villages on the banks of the river itself, 'having regard to their great devastation through billeting and floods', were discharged of all arrears and given three months grace before contributions again became due.⁴ Unfortunately, it seems that nothing was done to repair the dykes, for Maesland were appealing for the relief to be continued in 1601, because of continued flooding.⁵

1 ARA SG 4897 I, 9 July; petition of Schijndel, considered August 1600.

2 Cf. Res Holland 1600, 371; see below, 96-7, for other Meyerij reaction.

3 ARA SG 4897 II, 6 Oct 1600.

4 RA NB Maesland, 23, extract from resolution of 8 December 1600.

5 RA NB Maesland, 23, letter referred to in p.84,n.7 above. Cf. Gramaye, Taxandria, 29.

The rate of recovery from the nadir of the mid'80's varied between regions, naturally, but it is possible to establish a correlation not merely with 'war zones', but with the different categories of exposure or protection. The Flemish flax industry in Courtrai and Oudenarde recovered rapidly to approach the levels it had attained in the 1570's; in places such as Armentières, production figures were soon at old levels once more.¹ But where depredation remained the order of the day, as at Comines, Roeselare, Hondschoote, and other towns in the front line of the war, the flight of skilled weavers, the disruption of markets, and the overall poverty of the area prevented any restoration.²

In the Meyerij, there was a substantial rural drapery industry. Before the wars, the inhabitants of Oisterwijk used to send 700 cloths to the markets of Holland.³ It has been shown that even in a rich village - in the Pays de Waes - up to a third of the inhabitants owned too little land to support themselves from agriculture alone, and were therefore dependent on some form of extra employment;⁴ there is nothing to suggest that the situation was substantially different in Brabant. As a consequence, the disruption of local commerce, and the prohibition on trade with the rebel provinces reiterated through the 1590's,⁵ must have caused serious misery. Indeed, there is evidence of a

1 Sabbe, Belgische Vlas Nijverheid, I, 305f;
Verlinden, 'Hoe lang duurde de economische Crisis...?'
BVGN, IV (1949), 20f.
2 Sabbe, 306; Potter, Rousselare, 263; Messiaen,
Comines, 134.
3 "Oisterwijk Kroniek", 130.
4 Enno van Gelder, 'Dorpen', 42, 59, 123f.
5 Sabbe, 316, 344.

massive spread of impoverishment indicated by the dramatic increase in the numbers who flocked for alms to the monasteries of the Kempenland.¹ Nonetheless there is reason to believe that the relative degree of peace established in northern Brabant enabled the trade to the United Provinces to continue, although it was officially no less illegal than the payment of contributions itself.² The records of 's Hertogenbosch show that the city was in secret communication with individuals in the Hague to arrange unhindered trade with the Dutch: and this a few months only after the second (abortive) siege of the city in two years by Maurice.³ This occasion - the early months of 1604 - provides further negative evidence that commercial activity in the Meyerij was far from dead. The mutineers of Hoogstraten had changed sides and had been granted the town of Grave by the States General. The Archduke, pursuant to his declaration of war against these mutineers, issued an edict banning henceforth all contact between Meyerij and Grave. The quarter of Maesland noted the decision with alarm⁴, and this was increased when the mutineers promptly responded with a ban on all contacts between the villages of the Meyerij and the city of

-
- 1 Heylen, Historische Verhandeling over de Kempen, (1837), 44-7, using the history of Tongerlo abbey.
 - 2 Sabbe, 345. Local trade in Holland was not entirely protected from Spanish interference. See the complaints of Bammel, ARA SG 4902, I, 28 Jan 1602.
 - 3 Van Zuijlen, Inventaris der archieven van ...'s Hertogenbosch, II, 1154: 20 March 1604.
 - 4 RA NB Maesland, 23, 30 Dec. 1603. For a precedent in 1600, *ibid.* Oisterwijk 228 (18).

Den Bosch, "on pain of the gallows". The Schout of Oisterwijk wrote to his counterpart in Kempenland stressing that these bans involved the ruin of his quarter, and called for a gathering of all four quarters.¹ The assembly of Peelland considered the matter so crucial that they resolved within days to send a deputation to the Hague to plead for a restoration of the right to traffic.² There is a further indication of the recovery in the figures for the receipts of excise dues and rents in Den Bosch: the average annual receipts in the period 1584-1590 were 43,000; in 1600-1605 they stood at 63,000, equivalent to the average for the 1560's.³ It seems therefore that the fears expressed around 1590 that the region would become a desert - some parts of it at least were as depopulated, uncultivated and ravaged as the worst-hit areas of Flanders⁴ - were not justified.

Other forms of evidence also demonstrate that there was qualitative change in the impact of the war on the countryside around 1590. Valuable pointers can be found in the history of the church for this. The religious element in the conflict, and the tempting target for looting that monasteries and the clergy

1 RA NB Kempenland, 15, 27 Dec 1603.

2 RA NB Peelland, 9, 4 Jan 1604.

3 Van Zuijlen, Inventaris, provides the annual 'stadsrekeningen'. Some of the increase is due to higher tariffs (e.g. 1601/2, p. 1142), but the ability to pay is in itself significant in a period with two sieges.

4 "Oisterwijk Kroniek", 145-50; Gramaye, Taxandria, 16f; Heurn, Historie, II, 189.

provided, of course tend to distort the picture of destruction, but for the same reason any signs of recovery in this area are especially revealing of a changed situation. Even after the conclusion of the Twelve Years truce, the situation of the Catholic church in the bishoprics of Flanders, Brabant, Namur and Gelderland was pitiful, with a high proportion of deserted or destroyed parish churches, and an even greater shortage of priests as a result of the poverty of the districts involved.¹ Gilbert Maas, bishop of Den Bosch, blamed this on the "bona variis et exorbitantibus oneribus, contributionibus et exactionibus ex parte hostium gravantur",² while the bishop of Roermond attributed the collapse of a seminary in his See³ to the same cause.

The fate of monastic communities in the 1580's had been grim: the vast majority of those in war zones had been destroyed or abandoned.⁴ However, while many were permanently transferred to the nearest cities, or had to wait until after the Truce for their restoration,⁵

-
- 1 Pasture, Restauration, 210-18; Moreau, Histoire de l'eglise, V, 285ff.
 - 2 Cornelissen, 'Relationes status ...'s Hertogenbosch', Bosche Bijd. IX, (1928), 144.
 - 3 Ibid. 'Relationes status... Roermond', Pub Soc Hist Arch Lim 64, (1928), 40.
 - 4 Pasture, 266-70; Moreau, 207f.
 - 5 E.g. Eversham, 1609: Meestere, Chronicon Evershamiensis, 41; Oudenburg, 1616: Malou (ed), Chronique, 73.

the community of Tronchiennes began reconstruction in 1590,¹ Vormezele near Ypres did the same from 1600,² Nunnebosch was actually founded in 1604,³ and a new Capuchin monastery begun at Veurne in 1605.⁴ A comparable situation developed in north Brabant, with a very high proportion of abandoned or devastated abbeys and convents. Yet here also, work on the restoration of the convent on the Eikendonck started in 1598, and it was only the sieges of Den Bosch which prevented any progress until 1607.⁵ The priory of Hoijsonck, while it was compelled through poverty and indebtedness to sell off property to individuals whom the war had clearly not impoverished, was nonetheless able to survive.⁶ Similarly, there is no evidence to suggest that any harm was ever done to the priory of Waälwijk, almost under the guns of the States garrison of Heusden. We may assume here that it was a substantial brandschatting which ensured this immunity. The changing pattern of land-ownership is also suggested by ecclesiastical evidence. In addition to Hoijsonck, the great abbey of St Trond, formally neutral although this did not save it from a brandschatting of 9000 gulden in 1602⁷

1 Description ... abbatiae Trundiniensis, 672f.

2 Chronicon Vormelense, 18.

3 Meestere, Historia, 134.

4 Potter, Ronse, Borne, Geschiedenis.. van Veurne, II, 341.

5 Meerendonck, 'Eikendonck', Bijd Gesch Z Ned II, (1964) 115-6.

6 Sasse van Ysselt, 'Hoijsonck', Bossche Bijd. I (1917), 118f.

7 Simenon (ed), Chronique de .. St Trond, 46.

provides evidence for major sales of land, falling rents and a heavy fall in tithe incomes. These sales - and the speculative land purchases of merchants such as the Antwerp Della Faille and their associates - is a clear enough indication that poverty remained strictly for the poor.¹ The fall in land value was certainly a very transitory phenomenon: the return of peace to an area immediately boosted rents, indicating a very rapid rate of recovery. In Groningen, revenues rose to three or four times their wartime levels within a few years.² Holland, only cleared of the enemy in 1576, was developing a highly specialised and intensive rural economy by the end of the century, the vulnerability to disruption of which made the rulers of Holland and Utrecht particularly nervous at the possibility of new Spanish incursions in the later stages of the war.³ Even in Overijssel, poor and much subjected to the wasting of war, lands were rapidly restored to cultivation, and in areas protected from devastation either by states garrisons or agreements with the enemy, the growth in population and of local industry remained unarrested.⁴

1 Brulez, De Firma Della Faille, 185-205.

2 Feith, 'Rijkdom der Kloosters', Groninger Volksalmanak, 1902, 10-11.

3 De Vries, Rural Economy, esp. 119 ff. On rents, 136f; Blink, Geschiedenis van den boerenstand, II, 8-10.

4 Slicher van Bath, Samenleving onder Spanning: Overijssel, 34, 45, 540f, 729f.

The speedy restoration of relative prosperity in the northern provinces was not of course matched in the south, for the areas which have been considered, Flanders and Brabant, were war zones throughout, and in many places the wounds were too deep for the change in the nature of the war to register more than a moderate recovery.¹ In the Meyerij, the sauvegarde system allowed the rural population to cultivate their lands, but with the aim primarily of thus enabling the region to pay war taxes and supply materials as demanded.

Demands for horses, forage and manpower were all liable to disrupt a local economy, especially when it was already in a precarious position, and when the orders came from both sides at the same time, the one often simply a reprisal for the other.² In May and June 1596, Kempenland had to send pioneers to Tienen, and also provide 34 teams of horses with their drivers.³ In 1599, a petition was sent to the States General that peasants taken to work on the fortifications of Nijmegen against their will be released - and they probably were, in due course.⁴ The call for labour was to reach far greater levels. In 1602 it was decided that Peelland had no choice but to obey Maurice's order to send 300 men to carry out presumably very dangerous work in the

1 As shown by Maddens' figures, articles cited, & 'Krisis.. in ... Kortrijk', Versl Med Lei egouw I, 1 (1959), 75f.

2 E.g. in 1595, Heurn, Historie, 211-12; on general consequences, Potter & Broeckart, Geschiedenis van den Belgischen boerenstand, 244-6

3 RA NB Kempenland, 36 Cf. a repartition of pioneers between villages in Ibid. Peelland, 56, 9 Aug 1597, or problems raised in 1599: Ibid Kempenland 15, 16 Feb 1599

4 RA NB Peelland, 147, Feb 1599.

trenches before Grave.¹ The following year, with Maurice marching on Den Bosch itself, governor Grobbendonck summoned 84 men, with tools, from Maesland, to improve his fortifications.² Each summons in itself might not have been onerous, but the continuous spate of orders would seem - judging by frequently reiterated demands for the same number of pioneers for Helmont in 1604 - to have caused great problems, either for the villages in finding the men, or for the officials in persuading them to go. It need hardly be added that the threat in this case was "infallible extraordinary execution".³ When Kempenland complained to Brussels about the deprivations of the Helmont garrison, they were bluntly told that although intervention would be made on their behalf, they should expect "little profit" from it because they had failed to meet the troops' demands for pioneers and palisades.⁴

No less burdensome than the requisitioning of human labour was the call for animals and materials, again to both sides, and often no doubt involving permanent loss. The requirements of the frontier garrisons and, much worse, those of armies operating in the area, were always substantial. In 1600, simultaneously with a demand for forage from the Herentals mutineers came one from Breda for 4385 bales of hay.

1 Ibid. 8, 26 September 1602.
 2 RA NB Maesland, 23, 8 November 1603.
 3 RA NB Kempenland, 15, 23 Feb, 8 April 1604.
 4 Ibid. 29 Dec 1603.

Despite an attempt, via the mayor of St Oedenrode, to petition against this, the quantity was duly provided.¹ Later in the same year, an additional burden was placed on the Meyerij villages by the requisitions of the mutineers established at Weert, who sought both forages and horses, including 7 from St Oedenrode alone, despite pleas of poverty.² Similar demands were always being made, now from the States, now from the Archduke's government, most often from the Spanish mutineers who habitually fortified themselves in a north Brabant town.³ The consequences cannot be measured but they may be imagined. One of the main complaints of every petition to the Hague or Brussels was the loss of horses and cattle, either because they were stolen, or requisitioned.⁴ The villages around Heusden petitioned in 1602 that the forage they had lost during the preceding Winter was now causing them great difficulties feeding their cattle.⁵ Equally, without sufficient horses it was inevitable that the recultivation of abandoned fields should not be undertaken.⁶ With no extension or

-
- 1 RA NB Kempenland, 3 fol. li - lxxviii; *ibid.* Peelland, 8, 12 September & 26 December 1600.
- 2 RA NB Peelland, 56, 12 August.
- 3 "Oisterwijk Kroniek", 143ff. Other examples, RA NB Kempenland, 15, 16 Oct. 1603 & 28 Jan 1604 *ibid* Maesland, 23, 12 March 1604; GA St Oedenrode, 52, 12 Feb 1604.
- 4 Petition of Oosterhout, ARA SG 4902 I, 14 Jan 1602; of Boxtel and Liempde, *ibid.* 4897 I, August 1600.
- 5 ARA SG 4902 II, 6 March 1602.
- 6 Report of 1598 quoted by Potter & Broeckaert, *op cit* 282; cf 246f.

improvement of the land, there could be no increase in wealth necessary to pay the war taxes of both sides, which certainly at least kept pace with the rate of recovery. The almost complete freedom from molestation which permitted the rural economy of the heartland of the United Provinces to regain prosperity so rapidly was denied to north Brabant, partly by act of policy, and partly by the ill chance of being a frontier zone.

That the financial burden of contributions was by itself a cause of great impoverishment is also abundantly clear. The secretary of the Oisterwijk Vrijheid listed the fiscal burdens as taxes, the 50th and 100th pence, excises, hearth tax, requisitions of victuals, munitions, recruits, waggon and horse hire, pioneer service, building materials, the contributions to the enemy, and, worst of all, the "merciless and injurious contributions, exactions and impositions" of mutineers.¹

The state of endemic mutiny amongst Spanish troops from the late 1590's meant an endless succession of exactions from the defenceless countryside in lieu of wages. In 1596, Oisterwijk was burdened with a demand for 1200 carolus gulden (around 2300 gulden) for mutineers, to be delivered within two weeks; and this was repeated in the following two months.² Earlier in the same year, States cavalry from Bergen op Zoom had lodged in the town of Oisterwijk, departing with

1 'Oisterwijk Kroniek', 160-1.

2 RA NB Oisterwijk, 80, 5 October & 16 November.

all the horses and some 500 gulden. Three of them were seized by the villagers, an error of judgement which cost them a further 5000 gulden to appease the fury of the governor of Bergen.¹ But the worst period for exactions was undoubtedly around 1600. In February of that year, the quarter of Oisterwijk found itself paying for the support of no fewer than five mutinous garrisons. In March, 1500 gulden to Helmont; in April, 2000 to Crevecoeur; in May, 1100 as well as billets, horses and forage; in June, nearly 4000 to Hamont and San Andries: the tale could be continued throughout the year.² Worse was to come. In 1601, the mutineers of Weert levied 111,000 gulden in north Brabant, of which the Meyerij was required to pay 41,000, as well as providing 300 horses.³

The problem was, of course, that these exactions came on top of all the other burdens, which we may be sure were already calculated to be the maximum it was believed could be extracted. The Oisterwijk figures illustrate the situation. Taxes accounted for only some 320 gulden, and an excise of some 2500-3000 a year was paid towards the support of local garrisons.⁴

1 'Oisterwijk Kroniek', 152/3.

2 RA NB Oisterwijk, 80, 100 (5-11), 228 (3), 228 (52).

3 RA NB Peelland, 169; *ibid* 56 & 147 for detailed lists of payments & requisitions over the period 1600-1604. Peelland appealed to Grobbendonck for protection, offering a fl.600 gratuity, in 1605: *Ibid*, 9, 6 July 1605.

4 RA NB Oisterwijk, 23, 28 May 1599; *ibid* 80, 1604; AGR CC 24394.

By comparison, the States were demanding 1300 gulden monthly in 1588, 3200 ten years later, and still 2800 in 1609, after the initial cessation of hostilities:¹ and this in no way precluded the imposition of surcharges and special demands which, especially around 1600, multiplied these figures several times. Where the villages were charged with defending themselves, the position, as demonstrated already, was in fact much worse. The tiny village of Waalre paid 790 gulden in 9 months, for its garrison, and 880 to mutineers in the same period.² St Oedenrode, paying the Dutch 600 gulden a month, and mutineers 800, told Brussels that these contributions had brought the inhabitants to extremity, and that the imposition of a garrison would drive them to abandon the town altogether. They were accorded the right to raise a loan of 10,000 gulden to pay off their debts.³ It appears that some at least of the town's loan was raised from inhabitants of Heusden: that is, the Dutch were lending money to St Oedenrode so that it could pay it back as contributions.⁴

Finding the money to meet the contributions was clearly a major problem. In 1600, the quarters of the Meyerij resolved to send a 'well-qualified' person to the Hague to argue that their burdens were far too

1 ARA SG 12549/4; ARA GH 2592 b7; ARA Raad van State 2404.

2 GA Waalre, 52.

3 GA St Oedenrode, 12 & 175. A loan of 7000 Rijngulden had been raised for the same purpose in 1595: *ibid*, 11.

4 *Ibid*. 52, April 1606: a demand for repayment.

great: it was apparently Receiver Bruynincx who advised them to this course.¹ The deputation sent on this occasion achieved nothing, returning only with a demand for the prompt payment of the sums due; and leaving Kempenland at least with no option but to raise a loan.² It was in the following year that a crisis point was reached when the States imposed a massive surcharge which took the contributions of the Meyerij to 24,350 gulden a month, for eight months.³ It is no surprise to find agonised pleas of poverty from the quarters, especially when it is recalled that this was also a time when the demands of the mutineers were exceptionally great.⁴ Bruynincx sent in his report of the arrears of the Meyerij with the comment that they were due not to 'rebelliousness' but to simple poverty, and he singled out Maesland as a whole - whose trouble with floods we have examined - and a number of other villages including St Oedenrode. But it is interesting that he blamed this situation not on a general poverty, but solely on the impoverishment and loss of horses and materials during the siege of Den Bosch in the previous year.⁵ Later the same year, Peelland appealed direct

1 RA NB Oisterwijk, 20, 8 June 1600.

2 RA NB Kempenland, 3, fol. xv, xxxf.

3 Ibid 3, fol xlv.; Peelland, 56, 20 March 1601. The division was: Peelland 8657, Kempenland 5936, Maesland 3105, Oisterwijk 6651. See Bruynincx's report ARA SG 4902 I.

4 Petition of Oosterhout, ARA SG 4902 I, 14 June 1602; RA NB Peelland, 116. This quarter raised a 1000 daler loan to pay mutineers: ibid 8, 8 October 1602.

5 ARA SG 4902I, 1 Jan 1602. St Oedenrode continued poor. In 1607 it sought remission: GA St Oedenrode 52. At the time it was providing billets for some 60 soldiers and their womenfolk: ibid 1160. The request was not immediately granted but a promise to investigate was given.

to prince Maurice to protect the quarter against the mutineers, in order to prevent the ruin of the country.¹ These are clear indications that whatever the level of misery, there was still more to lose.

- - - - -

The available evidence precludes a firm conclusion about the degree to which the countryside recovered under the more stable and better regulated system of war exactions from about 1590 onwards. Only by comparisons, and by uncertain extrapolation, can it be observed at all. The edicts of government were frequently totally ignored; to offset against the demands of neighbouring hostile garrisons was the opportunity to trade with them;² the complaints of the chroniclers were clearly justified in part, but the continuous complaints of the inhabitants over so many years indicate strongly that they still had some wealth to lose. The appalling indiscriminate destruction of the mid-1580's which left many villages burnt out and abandoned and whole districts totally depopulated, fields uncultivated, towns crowded with refugees and swept by epidemics, most notably in parts of Flanders, had certainly given way to something substantially better by the time of the Truce. But the rapid recovery in the northern provinces,

1 RA NB Peelland 56, undated letter 'A Son Ex.^c'

2 Moryson, Itinerary, I, 105.

which contributed so much to the wealth of that state, could not and did not occur in Flanders and Brabant, the largest and most prosperous of the loyal provinces. The reasons were primarily strategic. Partly by the advantage of geography, and partly through their own efforts, the United Provinces had an immense advantage over their opponents which they did not fail to exploit in the war for control of the resources of war. It was this factor which played a highly significant role in the situation that Sir Thomas Overbury described in his comments on the southern provinces.¹:

... the people here growing poorer, with less taxes, than they flourish with on the States' side.

If commercial prosperity was the main foundation of the rebels' strength, so also was the inability of the Brussels governments to control their own country the main foundation of their weakness, which left them utterly reliant on an unreliable flow of subsidies from distant Spain, and thus deprived them very often of the ability to launch the offensive war which was the only way to reverse the situation. .

1 Overbury, Observations, IV, 306.

Notes to Table II .

1. ARA SG 12549/4 & ARA SH 2592(b.viii).
2. ARA SG 12555/3 for Den Bosch ; ARA SH 2587(f2) for Overysael, the figures here being per 48 days.
3. AGR CC 24308 : figures for Breda, S. Holland and Altena.
4. RA Zeeland 897, 23 Sept. ; Vlietinck, Het Oude Oostende, 248.
5. AGR CC 24339 : Heusdenland 22,737; S.Holland 150 ; Altena & Tiel, 0; Langstraet 1500, Bommel 15,136.
6. ARA SH 2592(b1) & (b2).: Hulst, Axel, Terneuzen, Lillo, Waes.
7. AGR CC 24308. 8. ARA SH 2592(b4); Limburg from ibid.(b2).
9. AGR CC 24335. 10. ARA SH 2592(b1).
11. AGR CC 24396. 12. ARA SH 2592(b4).
13. AGR CC 24308 : Heusdenland, S. Holland.
14. ARA SG 4885 I. Sum is Contributions 12,060, confiscations and redemptions 5283.
15. ARA SG 4984, year April '96- March '97.
16. ARA SH 2592(b7), undated.
17. ARA SG 4886I & 4887I, sum received Dec. '96- July '97.
18. ARA SG 4887I, 4888I & II, sum received May '97- March '98.
19. ARA SG 4888 II.
20. ARA SG 4894, sum received April '98- March '99.
21. ARA SG 4894, sum received July - Dec. '99.
22. Meteren, Historie, 476. 23. RA NB Kempenland 3, fol. xcvi.
24. ARA SG 4902 I, 1 & 8 January.
25. AGR CC 24397. 26. ARA SH 2604(e), 22 February.
27. AGR CC 24398. 28. AGR CC 24400.
29. AGR CC 24311.
30. Kurze Erzehlung...A^o 1608, quoted by Raa & Bas, Het Staatse Leger II, 405.
31. ARA RD.v.ST. 2404.

All figures in the table are in gulden. Except where otherwise stated on the table, they refer to monthly payments. Payments from South Holland, Zevenbergen & Zwalve and Cuyck & Megen (the latter formally neutral) were to the Spanish, the rest to the Dutch. Figures for Contributions payments from other areas have not been found. A thorough search through the 'ingekomen stukken' of the States General would undoubtedly produce further figures, especially for Flanders.

Caution must obviously be used in interpreting the figures. Apart from the problems of different values attaching to gulden from different areas, fraud in the accounts was very probable. It is also sometimes difficult to distinguish between money paid and money owed, between regular and extraordinary payments, gratuities, confiscations and redemptions, special sauvegardes etc.

A summary table is given on p. 61.

IV

VITAL INTERESTS AND

EXPENDABLE TOWNS

Thus far, in endeavouring to establish and clarify the principles which underlay the conduct and character of the war in the Netherlands, we have isolated the major concepts behind contemporary strategic thinking, and the absolutely central role of the control or denial of territorial resources has been stressed.¹ For a proper understanding of how these considerations related directly to the course of events, it is necessary to bring them down to earth with a study of the military and political geography of the Netherlands. It will be shown that these considerations played a vital role in determining both the war aims of the various provinces of the rebel state, and the precise strategy advocated by the representatives of these provinces, thus dictating the course of the war itself.² The role of provincial particularism which will be discussed later can be better comprehended when the strategic priorities of the various regions are explained.

Matters of both internal and international politics must also be related to the topographical and logistical realities which circumscribed and often dictated the range of options available. That is, the collaboration of the Dutch with the French, for example, can only be properly understood if the problems of communication are clearly recognised;³ while the question of the loyalty or otherwise of a town or region can be correlated

1 See chapter II & III above.

2 See chapter V below. Parker has written that "throughout modern times ... military geography shaped military strategy". JMH 48, 1976, 206.

3 Examined below in chapters V & VI.

closely with its accessibility to an enemy.

It is also necessary to examine what represented the irreducible minimum of territorial control for the survival of the United Provinces as a viable state, and, on the other side, for the continuation of Spanish rule in the southern Netherlands.¹ Contemporaries spoke often of places being "keys" to a given region. What were these places? Further, if some towns were vital, it follows that others were not, or at least were less so. In a war which revolved so much around the control of "key" towns it is important to establish what such control actually entailed. The role of the waterways has been studied at some length already, but the question of whether a water-protected 'fortress Holland' was considered, as it was to be in 1672, must be examined, because of the obvious importance that such a scheme would have had in determining the strategic priorities of the most influential province in the state.

The United Provinces, as they existed during the 1590's, may be divided into a number of strategic zones, each with their own specific needs and special features. These were firstly the Holland/Zeeland area which had an obvious concern with maritime defence; secondly, the block of these two provinces with Utrecht, behind the river lines and on the landward side; and

1 See Chapter V pp. 160 .

thirdly, the provinces of the north and east, Friesland, Groningen and Overijssel which formed a very different region, both topographically and in terms of their defence requirements. Supplementary to all was the additional role of the great rivers themselves, especially the Rhine. The changing overall situation was of course to alter the relative importance of various regions at any given moment, but it is possible to see a close adherence throughout the period by each province to what it regarded as its particular interest. The problems which arose stemmed mainly from either an inability or an unwillingness to see that the defence of a part was more often than not best served by the defence of the whole. Ultimately, it was the small size and close interconnections of the insurgent provinces which ensured that the defensive, even when a collective defensive, was the most dangerous course of action for the state as a whole.¹ One of the primary reasons for this was the divergent local strategic requirements of each province which it is the purpose of this chapter to analyse. This same divergence itself reinforced the particularist tendencies of the various regions when it came to determining both long-term objectives and short-term planning. It is not possible to divorce the question of local particularism from an understanding of what provincial rulers saw as their first responsibility, protection of the province.

1 As was seen by Buzanval: Vreede, Lettres.. 1598-9, 30.

That Holland and Zeeland formed the core of the United provinces was not, and has not been, a matter for argument. The plans of Madrid and Brussels were never to envisage the possibility of victory by any other means than the reduction of these two provinces. To force them to capitulation, however, a number of courses could be followed, each of which would secure the end, although at very different speed. Invasion by a powerful army would have entailed the most rapid victory, since the circumstances of the desperate, isolated resistance of 1572-6 were not repeatable ten years later, and even less so thirty years later, as will be demonstrated.

That the wealth of the maritime provinces was founded on a flourishing commerce is also a truism. This burgeoning mercantile capitalism led to inevitable internal and inter-provincial disputes, which were at times to threaten the survival of the state itself, but for all that, there was a common interest of these provinces against the attempts of the Spanish to interfere with the trade routes. Neither the crucial western Europe - Baltic route, nor the fisheries, nor the internal river traffic of Zeeland and Holland, were immune from attack.

Even while devoting the greater part of his energies to the reconquest of the Netherlands by military might, Parma was aware of the possibilities of striking at the vital interests of his opponents by sea. Cardinal

Granvelle consistently urged that the way to defeat the Dutch lay in cutting their commerce.¹ More than twenty years later, another native of the Netherlands pointed out both the reliance of the States on their commerce and fisheries, and the relative ease with which these might be disrupted.² That the situation for the Dutch, while often becoming dangerous, never became critical, can be attributed to the never remedied naval weaknesses of the Spanish,³ the vigilance of the Dutch, and the control exerted by Holland and Zeeland in the union which ensured that their interests were regularly given the highest priority.

In concrete terms, the situation revolved around Spanish naval operations out of the Flemish ports against Channel traffic and the fisheries, plans for the establishment of a naval base on the Ems or further east, and operations with suitable vessels against Dutch shipping in the Zeeland estuaries. Direct attacks on the coast were another possibility that the maritime provinces could not afford to ignore.

Within six weeks of capturing Dunkirk in 1583, Parma had established an admiralty there.⁴ A privateering fleet of 11 was operating from there by 1585, with a

-
- 1 Piot (ed), Correspondance de Granvelle, XII, 67f 101f, (1585).
- 2 Blok (ed), 'Een merkwaardig aanvalsplan', BeM, 19 1898.
- 3 The loss of most of the Netherlands bases, arsenals and ships to the rebels was crippling. Simultaneously, dependence on distant naval supplies, rising costs and state economic policy were causing a decline of native Spanish ship-building. For a summary, Clayton in Mariners Mirror, 62, 1976, 235-45.
- 4 Graefe, 'Die Flandrische Küste', Marine Rundschau, 27, 1922, 366f; Debrock, 'Kaapvaart...' MMA, IX, 1955, 252-9.

smaller squadron at Nieuwpoort. The size of the harbour at Dunkirk combined with the fact that sandbanks made it extremely difficult to blockade,¹ meant that it was to represent a threat to which the maritime provinces continually devoted money, energy and thought, without ever obtaining a solution - the only solution being the capture of the port itself. In order to reduce the depredations of the privateers to an acceptable level, the States were forced to construct specially designed warships, and to maintain a blockading fleet off the Flanders coast for year after year, which grew to over 40 ships by the time of the Truce. The burden ensured that the admiralties, particularly that of Zeeland, were in a state of continuous financial crisis, exacerbated when Spanish trade bans massively cut the revenue from Convooi and Licent duties out of which the admiralties were expected to pay for the equipment of their fleets. Nor were the blockade efforts successful, apart from intermittent victories over individual Dunkirkers.²

The problem was that once a privateer had evaded the blockade, it was impossible to protect all the traffic from his attacks. Especially vulnerable in this regard were the fisheries, by their very nature representing a large defenceless target. Their protection was

1 Faulconnier, Description Historique de Dunkerque, I, 91f.

2 The measures are debated annually by the States of Holland in the Res Holl, the only change being the increases in the number of ships employed. Cf. Van der Moer in Marine Blad, 65, 1955, 897; Mollema, Geschiedenis van Nederland ter Zee, II, 89.

obviously a matter of great concern, not solely for economic reasons, but because of the large number of people employed in the fishing industry. These people represented a volatile social element whose role in the original uprisings of 1572 had been substantial, and to whose interests the ruling layer had to be sympathetic.¹ In 1596, on the appeal of the fisheries, the States of Holland agreed to provide an escort of six warships and a subsidy of 16,000 gulden to pay for their equipment; three years later, this was increased to 9 ships and 20,000 gulden.² Regular instructions for the convoying of the fishing boats, their dates of sailing, and so on, were drawn up, but all to no avail: the Dutch could never do more than respond once an attack had occurred, despite regular warnings from an agent in Calais about the Dunkirkers' forays. Often the only possible measure was the reinforcement of the Dunkirk blockade in the hope of catching the homeward-bound privateers with their prizes.³ This area which was such a vital interest of the maritime provinces, was one in which maritime measures themselves were virtually powerless.

This comment could indeed be applied with equal vigour to the whole question of the protection of the western trade routes. The unhesitating despatch of aid to Henry IV's forces in Brittany when the Spanish

1 For a contemporary estimate of its size, Blok (ed), art cit, 7-14.
 2 Res Holl 1596, 41; 1599, 72-4.
 3 E.g. States Gen to States of Zeeland, 15 Aug 1600, R A Zeeland 906.

established a base there, and the instant although vain response of Maurice to the surprise attack on Calais in 1596 are indicative of how closely the trading interests of the seaboard provinces were watched.¹ By 1600, when the situation had been worsened by the arrival of Spanish galleys at Sluis, the continuous naval effort of the Dutch was for its time extraordinarily large: 22 ships on convoy and fishery protection duty; 42 vessels equipped by Holland and 32 by Zeeland for protection of the coasts, and a fleet of 16 despatched to the Spanish coasts to prevent the reinforcement of hostile naval power.² The immediate consequence of these vast preparations was the virtual bankruptcy of the admiralties³ and the necessity of providing them with a subsidy from funds which might otherwise have gone to improving the position of the United Provinces on its landward frontiers.

There remained another way in which the overseas commerce of the republic could be attacked, a danger never realised but always a possibility: by Spanish naval power established in the Baltic or on the river Ems. The former plan, a precursor of Wallenstein's schemes during the Thirty Years War, was a more distant prospect which would have involved a Spanish alliance with the Swedes. Explored in 1570's, and again after 1598, the idea foundered on the passive resistance of the Hanse towns, the change of monarch in Sweden, and the inability of the Spanish to offer suitable

1 See Chapter VI below.

2 Report of 1 Jan 1600, RA Zeeland 906.

3 See eg. Notulen v Zeeland, 1599, 243-8, 314;

rewards.¹

A far more immediate danger was the establishment of Spanish power on the Ems, which posed a threat both to the north-eastern provinces, which will be considered later, but also to the Baltic and the Norwegian trade. Simultaneously with the establishment of the Dunkirk admiralty, the Spanish governor Verdugo equipped a squadron of privateers at the mouth of the Ems. The port of Deflzijl shared with Dunkirk the great advantage that, for reasons of configuration, it could not be properly blockaded.² Furthermore, the Ems estuary represented a genuine deep-water harbour which was capable of taking large warships, quite unlike the Flemish ports. Thus in 1588 a large States squadron was placed off Emden lest the Armada attempt to seek refuge there, and other measures were taken, such as the removal of beacons by the Frisians.³ The capture of Delfzijl by Maurice in 1591 reduced the danger. But it did not stop privateering against Frisian shipping,⁴ nor did it end fears of Spanish involvement in East Friesland, where the running battle between the Counts and the city of Emden caused continual alarms in the republic. The French ambassador Buzanval noted accurately in 1602 that the preservation of Emden was no less important to the Dutch than the defence of Ostend itself.⁵

1 Meteren, 421; Paul, 'Nordische Politick der Habsburger', Hist Zeit 133, 1926, 433f; Franz, 'Deutsche Reichs-Flottenpläne', Marine Rundschau, 1907, 1031-41.

2 Hagedorn, Ostfrieslands Handel .., 176f; Kernkamp, Handel op de Vijand, II, 5.

3 Res St G, VI, 27; Bor (25) 318; Kernkamp, 8

4 E.g. in 1601 and 1606, Winsemius, Chronique .. van Vrieslant, 872, 884.

5 KB 73 C 33, p. 20.

Both the States and the Emdeners themselves were convinced that Spanish plotting lay behind the hostile behaviour of the counts. After alarms in 1595, 1596 and 1597, the last following the revelation of plans to establish a Spanish naval base in the Ems,¹ the military events of 1598 brought home the danger that Emden might be seized by a Spanish army advancing from the Rhine. Suspicion was focussed especially on the forts being built by the Count on the Ems,² such that the despatch of States troops to Emden became only a matter of time: a major expedition was sent against the forts in 1602.³ In 1603, and again in 1605, it was rumoured that the Spanish intended to send a fleet to the Ems: in both cases the forces involved were said to be around 35 galleons and 12,000 troops, or in other words a serious effort to win the war.⁴ Neither of these threats materialised, but the fears they provoked were real enough. The maritime interests of the United Provinces were intimately linked with the course of events over the whole European coast from Brittany to north Germany, and neither in theory nor in practice could the problems be resolved by narrow provincial measures.

But before examining precisely what strategic demands were made by the requirements of protecting

-
- 1 William Louis' letters, 19/12/95 (ARA SG 4883 I), 3/4/97 (ibid 4886 II); Hagedorn, 287-94. For 1598, HMC De Lisle, II, 342, 354.
 - 2 The States lent 46,000 gulden. See letters of William Louis and the Emden council, June-Dec 1598, ARA SG 6697; Hagedorn, 304f.V
 - 3 Vervou, Geschiedenissen, 141-6, and see chap VII below.
 - 4 Saily's letter of 21/6/1603 (ARA SG 6750): Emden's of 26/6/1605, O.S. (ARA SG 6702 I)

overseas trade, it is necessary also to see the importance of what may be termed internal commerce, the traffic of the great rivers, the trade between Holland and Zeeland, and the great concentrations of shipping and fisheries which despite the shift of emphasis to the Holland ports of the Zuider Zee¹ still occurred in the estuaries of Zeeland. The protection of these areas posed very special problems, difficulties which ultimately could be solved only by major military operations on land. While Dunkirkers and Nieuwpoorters played their part on the one hand, and on the other the changing control over the fortresses controlling the great rivers caused fluctuations in river traffic, the most consistent havoc was wreaked by raiders based on Sluis. After its seizure by Parma in 1587, following a long siege which itself indicated the value attached to it by both sides, Sluis's intended original role as a base for the invasion of England was replaced by a less far-reaching but still deadly function. In the sixteenth century there was direct access from the town to the estuaries of the Scheldt and Maas via a channel known as the Zwin. The depredations of Sluis-based raiders were to be made qualitatively more dangerous to the Dutch by the arrival there of Spanish galleys in 1599.

1 Christensen, Dutch Trade to the Baltic, 18. Revenue from the Zeeland and Rotterdam Convooi & Licent remained far higher than that of the other Admiralties until at least 1599: Becht, Statistische Gegevens.

The plan to use galleys dated back to a scheme of Frederick Spinola's in 1593, which the States had learnt about through an intercepted letter.¹ That galleys were totally unsuited to the open seas of northern Europe had been proven in 1588, and it does seem that Spinola had an inflated idea of their potential, (a mistake that was to lead directly to his own death in 1603 when he tried to match them in direct combat with a Zeeland squadron.²) The true value of the galley was its ability to operate when Dutch warships were either becalmed or faced by contrary winds. At Sluis, the Genoese admiral was close enough to the shipping lanes and fisheries of Zeeland to take advantage of the weather conditions as soon as they became favourable for oared vessels.³

The Dutch certainly did not underestimate this particular threat. Great anxiety was expressed at the outset, especially when it was found that Spinola was able to elude easily the ships looking for his approach. The trade of the Zeeland ports was considered to be at immediate risk.⁴ What the real potential of the galley squadron might be was demonstrated the following year, when part of the fleet conveying Maurice's forces to Flanders was attacked from Sluis and over

1 Spinola to Ibarra, 3 Aug 1594, ARA SH 2634a; Rodriguez-Villa, Spinola, 21-9.

2 See chapter VII below.

3 It is ironic that this should have occurred at a time when social, economic and technological changes were ending the primacy of the galley in the amphibious and privateering warfare of the Mediterranean in favour of broadside-armed sailing ships like those of the Dutch: Guilmartin, Gunpowder & Galleys, esp 262-73.

4 Res St G, X, 451; Cecil MSS 73/109 (Gilpin to Essex, 26/9/99); Collins, II, 123-4; Winwood, I, 105.

20 ships taken or burnt while the escort stood by, impotently becalmed.¹ The only naval answer lay in the course of action almost immediately taken by the States, the construction of a galley fleet of their own.² Successful though this experiment was in certain spheres,³ the threat posed by the Spanish galleys was disposed of ultimately only by the recapture of Sluis itself.

The possession by the foe of a naval power which for a time at least could not be contained involved a further consequence: the possibility of serious attacks on the mainland of Holland the isles of Zeeland by Spanish troops, something from which most of these two provinces had been immune for a quarter of a century. The towns were weakly garrisoned, if they were at all, their fortifications mostly in ill repair, with the exception only of the bigger Zeeland towns, and the population of the countryside was quite unprepared for resisting hostile raiders. The States of Holland ordered the erection of a watch tower, well provided with arms, on Goederee and West Voorn.⁴ It can scarcely have been a coincidence that in 1600 a plan of Maurice's to fortify the Hague was accepted.⁵ It was found necessary in this period also to tighten up the discipline of the burgher schutterij, and to authorise a

1 Le Petit, 763f; Triumphs of Nassau, 281-2
2 Res Holl 1599, 243f; 1600, 121, 185, 277, 408, 435; Mollema, 96-7.

3 A raid on Antwerp in November which carried off the flagship of the Scheldt admiralty, and merchantmen: Res Holl 1600, 432; Meteren, 460; True Report of a most famous Victorie ..., London 1600; Mollema, 99. For Spanish reaction, Lipsius, 129-30.

4 Duyck, II. 559; Res Holl 1600, 30-1.

5 Res Holl 1600, 150-2. There is a plan of the project dated 1603 in GA Den Haag, Kaarten, 12.

substantial increase in its size - in the Hague, from 8 to 13 companies.¹ Such measures obviously involved a significant diversion of the Hollanders' attention to their own well-being.

The situation of Zeeland was clearly still more critical. Their response to the arrival of Spinola was an immediate plea to the States General for greater naval assistance, and for operations by the army.² In terms of local defence, what was involved was of course similar to the measures undertaken in Holland: orders to town governments to ensure that a good watch to sea was kept, and the re-use of old fortifications, guard posts and the like, especially on isles directly exposed, such as Biervliet.³ As a more offensive-minded measure, the States of Zeeland wanted immediate moves to build forts to control the Nieuwerhaven Gat, the main point of access to the Zwin, where the Spanish themselves were heavily fortified. This operation would have required a major military presence on the isle of Cadsand, such as was not at that time a practicable proposition.⁴

In fact, as the Zeelanders made clear even while demanding help against the risk posed by the galleys, there was a continuous threat to the province's security created by the proximity of the enemy, both to the south,

1 GA Den Haag, 611, cxxxiii - cxlv; *ibid* 5509, ordonnance of 8/2/1603.

2 Res St G, X, 452-4. Cf. report from Middelburg admiralty, 26 Jan 1600, ARA SG 4895 I.

3 Maurice to States of Zeeland, 15 Aug, 9 & 11 Oct 1600, RA Zeeland 906.

4 Res St G, X, 455; XI, 60-1; Notulen van Zeeland, 1599, 359; cf. Hemelrijk, Vlaamse Krijgsbouwkunde, 154.

in Flanders, and to the east, in Brabant. Here, the role of the fortress of Bergen op Zoom was seen as vital. It represented, as the States of Zeeland stressed in 1585, a very valuable outwork for the province. Without it, they urged in a sixteenth century version of the 'domino theory', it would be impossible to hold the island of Tholen, while the consequence of that would be the loss of South Beveland and Schouwen.¹ Quite apart from the risk of full-scale invasion, the threat of unstoppable incursions whose effect has already been analysed meant that this way of looking at things was in fact perfectly justified. Bergen played a major part in subjecting Brabant to contributions, and simultaneously helped prevent this fate being visited upon the people of Zeeland. It had an additional role as a harbour which would have been extremely valuable to the Spanish.² It cannot have been purely out of a desire to recover reputation, as a number of commentators believed, that Parma resolved to besiege Bergen in the Winter of 1588, when there were many easier targets available.³ It seems clear that the duke indeed had a plan to launch a deep invasion of Zeeland,⁴ exactly along the lines the States had feared, and was not merely concerned with preventing raids on the Brabant countryside.

-
- 1 Heeringa, (ed), Notulen ... van Zeeland, V, 465f.
 2 See the comments of Baselius, De Obsidione Berg op Zomii, 14-18.
 3 Coloma, 6-11; Carnero, 231-2; Meteren, 292.
 4 Lefèvre, III, 366; Essen, Farnese, V, 242.

Bergen op Zoom was not to suffer another serious direct attack until 1605, but it remained of course a high priority always for the Zeelanders that it should be in good repair and well garrisoned. Possession of it, however it may have precluded any major invasion of the province from the east, did not prevent the exposure of Tholen to lesser but still significant perils. Both that island and Tergoes could be reached without boats at low tide, and of course with great ease and rapidity by using small boats or pontoons.¹ Such moves could only with great difficulty be prevented. Both in 1591 and 1592, the governor of Breda reported that Spanish forces were assembling in Brabant with pontoons and might attack the islands.² In 1595 it was found necessary to rush 10 companies of troops to ensure the security of Bergen and Tholen.³ The defence of this area could never be made foolproof, and it could only be by the policy of establishing a wide 'glacis' that the Zeelanders could feel secure from the east: that is, the removal of Spanish power from northern Brabant was vital to the defence of Zeeland.

The same consideration applied with even greater force to the military frontier between the United Provinces and the Spanish in the province of Flanders, where for both sides the control of a town or area was a vital

1 Coloma, 9-10; Baselius, 19.

2 Letters of Heraugière, 30 May 1591 (ARA SG 4870), 13 July 1592, (ibid 4873 I).

3 Res St G, VIII, 389f. Cf a similar instance in 1605: Maurice to States General, 29 August, ARA SG 4911 I.

weapon for despoiling the enemy and simultaneously a shield for friendly territory. The largest and most important of Zeeland's islands, Walcheren, was directly concerned with setting the greatest possible distance between itself and the nearest hostile forces. When those forces were as close as Sluis or Cadsand, anxiety was well-founded. In 1588 and again the following year the Zeelanders found it advisable to maintain substantial garrisons of both infantry and cavalry on the island,¹ troops which could not perform any offensive role comparable to that which garrisons in mainland frontier towns could perform. This was the case even though the States held towns in Flanders which partly shielded Walcheren - Terneuzen and Axel. These places, in themselves very small, nonetheless were regarded as of great importance for the protection that they did offer. Maurice's capture of Axel in 1586 significantly improved the province's outer defences.² The States were well aware that the loss of either place would expose South Beveland as dangerously from the south as the loss of Bergen or Tholen would do from the east.³ The capture of Hulst in 1591 ensured five years of relative peace on this sector, being a valuable extension of the defences as well as a weapon against East Flanders. The loss of the town to the Archduke

1 Res St G, VI, 23, 299, 464.

2 E.g. the comments of Marnix, Bertius, Epistolae, 979-80.

3 Res St G, VII, 31.

Albert in 1596 threw the Zeelanders into great anxiety, and caused them angrily to dismiss the unlucky governor.¹ When pleading for English aid to raise the siege, the Dutch agent stressed that its loss would threaten the islands once more.² The popular murmuring reported after the surrender was undoubtedly based on fears that the war would be brought nearer to Zeeland soil;³ Maurice worked furiously to improve the fortifications of Axel in order to prevent such an eventuality.⁴

Further west, Sluis was a problem even before the galleys made it a high priority target for the maritime provinces. Maurice's overall concern with the securing of a wide glacis in Flanders is well indicated by the immense sums of money poured into its defences after the conquest of Cadsand, Sluis and Aardenburg in 1604. It was far from being the only reason, but was important nonetheless. The aim was to erect such a powerful barrier in Flanders that the maritime provinces would remain unmolested from that quarter for good. The reverse would have been the case had Ostend fallen before any such barrier been created, since that fortress acted as a distant outpost, dominating the part of Flanders from which attacks on Holland and Zeeland would have had to be launched.

-
- 1 Llorente (ed), Comentarios..., 162f, See chapter VI below.
 2 Letters of Caron, 2 & 22 August 1596 (O.S.), ARA SG 5883 I; HMC Salisbury, VI, 276.
 3 HMC Salisbury, VI, 344.
 4 Res St G, VII, 46.

Cecil was told in 1601 that if Ostend were to fall,¹

it is more cleare then the sonne that all the townes in Zeelande will be transformed into villages: yf (which is worse) they be not utterly abandoned.

This was a clear and dramatic indication of the consequences of allowing the Spanish the opportunity to set foot in the maritime provinces. It was also of course precisely what States forces had been doing to the countryside of Flanders, and it is interesting to note that one of the reasons for the objections raised by Zeeland to selling sauvegardes to east Flanders was that it would permit cultivation - and therefore the support of Spanish troops.² This was a very clear sign that where it was not possible to build a military barrier, the States were ready to envisage the creation of a wilderness as an alternative.

It is equally obvious that the interests of the maritime provinces which centred primarily on their defences against water-bound attack could be adequately met only by a combination of marine and military measures, and that simply to have an overall naval superiority was not sufficient. The limited naval power available to Brussels had an effectiveness completely out of proportion ^{to} ~~with~~ its strength. To contain or destroy it was not within the scope of the States' fleets, and therefore the only logical answer was to deprive the

1 Cecil MSS 182/147. Cf Chapter VII. The danger was also, of course, that Ostend would become another Dunkirk.

2 Notulen... van Zeeland, 1591, 23, 84. Cf. Appendix I.

Sluis galleys and the Dunkirk and Nieuwpoort privateers of their bases. The protection of the commercial interests of Holland and Zeeland thus necessitated military offensives in Flanders. At the same time, it is easy to see how anything short of such a solution - that is, any localised defensive - would inevitably lead to clashes of interest in the allocation of naval, military and financial resources, even within regions which formed a strategic unity such as the one under consideration. Zeeland, although spared most of the dangers it always feared, was a 'front line' province whose specially virulent form of particularism¹ was reinforced by its specially pressing strategic interests which led it to be one of the most consistent opponents of campaigns in other parts of the United Provinces or further afield. More than any other part of the state, Zeeland felt that its defence requirements were specific to it alone. One clear reason for this line of thinking was that the outworks of 'fortress Zeeland' had to be conquered from the enemy; there was no other region of the republic which acted as a shield in the same way that the other most important provinces,² Holland and Friesland, were to have an intervening barrier of friendly territory between them and invasion.

To some extent, Zeeland also formed part of the strategic zone made up of Holland and Utrecht. This was the zone comprising the territories protected by the river Yssel to the east and by the Maas and Waal to

1 Poel, 'Particularisme van Zeeland', Archief, Zeeuws Gen. der Wetenschappen, 1929, 1-113.

2 In the sense of being firstly the original core of the state, and secondly the wealthiest and most influential.

the south. These waterways represented the longest continuous military frontier in the Netherlands, and it has already been shown how the States of Holland and Utrecht regarded it as being in their joint interest to ensure that the rivers always acted as a barrier to invasion or incursion, and that it was the latter threat which was the only continuous danger.¹ The defences of Holland and Utrecht, insofar as they were concentrated on the river lines, had three main functions: protection of the countryside against raiding, defence of the provinces against full-scale invasion, and no less significant in the long term, control of the great volume of traffic which used the Rhine, for the immediate purpose of collecting tolls.

There is no question that most of the Spanish commanders understood that this area was the essential core of the United Provinces, the one part of it the conquest of which would end the war forthwith. It certainly might have been possible, as cardinal Granvelle frequently urged,² to defeat the Dutch by a total closing off of their river trade, but this was never to occur, as will be examined in due course. Both Parma and Philip II fully realised the importance of controlling points on the great rivers,³ but obstruction of Dutch commerce was only one of the motives. For control of certain fortresses on the rivers opened up the possibilities of a direct military defeat of the United Provinces.

1 Chapter II above.

2 Piot (ed), XII, 67f., 84.

3 Ibid XII, 453, 464-7, letters of Parma and Philip, 1586.

Before Philip diverted his attentions to the Armada and France, a number of these places were in Spanish hands; by the time, ten years later, that it was possible to renew the all-out offensive against the republic, they had all been secured by the Dutch. In 1599, the direct route from the south was tried and successfully resisted. In 1598 and again in 1605-6, the far more promising approach via the Yssel was the plan.

The aim of the Spanish 'grand design', was, throughout, the same: to establish an army beyond the river lines, in the middle of Utrecht. There was never any doubt in Brussels that such a move would drive that province at least to an immediate capitulation.¹ This assumption was based on the strategic grounds that the interior of Utrecht was indefensible, which was clearly true, and on the belief that much of the population was disaffected, which was more problematical, but undoubtedly contained an element of truth. From such a position, it was thought that Holland could be placed in an impossible situation. The only differences between the Spanish commanders related to which invasion route to follow. Verdugo was long a proponent of forcing a crossing of the Yssel, since beyond the river there stood only the open country of the Veluwe (part of Gelderland) and Utrecht itself.² The main

1 Coloma, 15; Carnero, 441; Correspondancede Frangipani, II, 351-2, for Parma's and Albert's almost identical plans.

2 Coloma, 16; Essen, Farnese, V, 24. The chaos caused by the short-lived crossing of the Yssel by Spanish forces in 1629 (Geyl, Netherlands in the 17th Century, I, 89) is evidence of what could have happened, and also of the value of the Rhine fortresses in preventing it.

problems were logistical, such that the otherwise more difficult project of driving into Utrecht and southern Holland across the Maas and Waal was an attractive alternative.

For the Dutch, defence against either approach was a matter of the highest priority. It was no coincidence that Maurice's first significant offensive operations were the surprise of Breda and the capture of forts in north Brabant in 1590, and the securing of the Yssel town in 1591. In the first instance it was a cast of establishing outposts, in the second of plugging gaping holes in the inner defences themselves. Along both fronts there were a number of fortresses which were vital to the defence of the interior. Control of them either denied the river crossings to Spanish armies (as opposed to small raiding parties) or else made those crossings available to the invader.

Starting from the west, the towns of Geertruidenberg and Breda form a slight exception to this general rule in fact. The loss of Geertruidenberg to Parma, after its garrison had mutinied in 1589, was a direct blow to Holland, to which province the town belonged. The Dutch naturally lamented the loss of its offensive potential, but their concern was rather more that it was possible to enter Holland itself across the Biesbosch marshes from the fortress.¹ In order to reduce these risks, the States of Holland and Maurice were forced to

1 Groen, I, 95-8; Kronijk, XVI, 381 (Letter of Elizabeth).

undertake a whole series of measures. To prevent a serious disruption of river commerce, a naval blockade had to be instituted, which, because of the lack of ships available to the Geertruidenberg garrison, was almost completely successful. Further, it was necessary to spend money and resources in ensuring that a fortified cordon still stood between the enemy and Holland: forts at Sevenbergen, Werckendam and Clundert were necessary to guard Dordrecht and Gorinchem.¹ Control of this town however involved further consequences against which it was not so straightforward to protect.² There was a permanent threat to the whole frontier from Willemstad to Heusden, and deep raids into Holland and Utrecht occurred.³ Communication by land between Holland and Zeeland was also obstructed, and (after its capture in 1590) Breda was dangerously isolated: the town council complained frequently of the damage done to its trade by raiders from Geertruidenberg. In 1592, for example, they claimed that only about 100, in place of the usual 7 - 800 waggons, were entering the town.⁴ The recapture of Geertruidenberg, finally accomplished with great difficulty in 1593, was something the States of Holland had vigorously urged in each of the preceding years. Important though it was, for all these reasons, Spanish possession of this place did not however open Holland to the risk of a full scale invasion.

1 Res Holland, 1589, 240-245.

2 Bor (30), 690.

3 Chapter II above.

4 ARA SG 4873 I, 5 July 1592; cf. *ibid* 4870, 30 May 1591.

The same comment applies to Breda, the importance of which lay in the area it dominated and the opening of more of Brabant to States' forces.¹ Although it obviously came to play a major role as another outer defence of the United Provinces, its importance was not so much as the "key of Holland"² as the "key of Brabant". We have already seen how it acted as one of the centres for the collection of contributions. Always well garrisoned, especially with cavalry, Breda became one of the most effective offensive weapons available to the States.

Between Breda and Nijmegen, defence was provided by Heusden, which was a town very difficult to approach, Zaltbommel, and a number of forts, the most important of which were Hedel, Hemert and Crevecoeur.³ The nature of the terrain and the configuration of the waterways, in addition to the proximity of 's Hertogenbosch as a base for a Spanish army, meant that the most vulnerable sector of this front was the land between Maas and Waal known as the Bommelweert. Zaltbommel was thus a key town. Alva had recognised its value in 1572, when it offered him the only passage to Utrecht and Amsterdam.⁴ This part of the river line remained one of the most sensitive of the whole frontier; the reactions of the States of Holland to any possible threat were always immediate and vigorous.⁵ As the Utrecht deputies pointed

1 Coloma, 26f.; Carnero, 244-7.

2 Wijnbeek, Turfschip van Breda, 16.

3 Bor (28), 539.

4 Veen, 'Zaltbommel in den Zomer van.. 1572'; Gelre, IX, 1906, 100-1, n.

5 E.g. Res Holland 1585, 426, 440.

out in 1589, there was no place between Utrecht and Amsterdam which could resist an attack,¹ and the cost of fortifying all the small towns, such as Rhenen, Wageningen, Wijk bij Duurstede and the like, to a strength which would enable them to resist an army, was far beyond the province's means. Only with continuous aid from the Generality could Utrecht's frontiers be preserved. The most serious test came in 1599, when through neglect and the speed of the Spanish this most crucial of posts was nearly lost. The persistence of the Admiral of Aragon in besieging it even when Maurice's entire army was defending the position demonstrates how much weight the Spanish attached to its capture. The campaign fought around this siege was widely recognised at the time as being potentially decisive.² The States General were adamant that the enemy must be expelled from the Bommelweert, and were even prepared to urge Maurice to a battle to achieve this, a position totally out of character.³ Although eventually compelled to withdraw from the weert back into Brabant, the Admiral's army first took another step which posed a big threat to the Dutch: the construction of fort St. Andries. This fortification was erected at great cost on the narrow neck of land which separated the Maas and the Waal, the Rossumerwert, so as to dominate both rivers. It was, as the Spanish claimed, a 'bridle' on the province of Holland. Its importance for obstructing river commerce

1 Kronijk, XVI, 346-59; Res St G, VI, 485.

2 E.g. Vreede (ed), Buzanval, 165f, 168.

3 Res St G, IX, 422, 437; Reyd, 610; Bor (36), 536f; Carnero, 449f. The whole campaign has been exhaustively studied by Van Dam van Isselt in articles, esp. in Organ Krijgswetenschap, I, 1917/18, 1-102.

was obvious; more than that, as William Louis pointed out, it opened "einen freien einzug in Hollant".¹ Unfortunately for the Archduke, this excellent substitute for Zaltbommel had cost so much to build and provision that there was not enough money to pay the garrison, which sold the fort to Maurice for 125,000 gulden early in 1600. Thus the Dutch turned what had once been a serious threat to their survival into a significant reinforcement of their weakest frontier.² The strengthening of the man-made defences of the river line to the south by the republic was to ensure that the next major Spanish offensive was to be directed at the frontier further east.

Here, Nijmegen and Arnhem were the vital towns. The latter especially was a lynchpin of the defence of the eastern frontier of the republic, and additionally was almost invariably chosen by Maurice as the base, magazine and assembly point for his operations beyond the rivers. While the States held points above and below Nijmegen on the Waal, and towns on the Old Rhine north of it, that town was of less value to the Spanish than other entry points they possessed to the Dutch interior. Nijmegen and the fort erected opposite it, Knodsenburg, were important for the control they exercised over the Betuwe, one of the most prosperous areas of Gelderland.³ However, it is significant that Parma regarded the loss of Hulst as being more serious

1 Groen, II, 11.

2 Duyck, II, 600f; Le Petit, 760; Carnero, 469f; Meteren, 448; Van Dam van Isselt, art cit 63f.

3 As Maurice told Henry IV in 1590, KHA 13 XI B-17. cf. Coloma, 27, 51.

than that of Nijmegen, which he claimed was weak and could easily be retaken.¹ In this he was probably right at the time: after all, its capitulation to Maurice had been very rapid. However, when it was again attacked fifteen years later, it had been turned into a strong fortress.

Integral with the protection of this region was the defence of the line of the Yssel, a considerably weaker frontier which was nonetheless absolutely vital to Holland, Utrecht and that part of Gelderland which lay to the west of it. The main points d'appui on it were, from the south, Arnhem, Doesburg, Zutphen, Deventer, Zwolle and the fort of Zwartesluys on the Zuider Zee. Any one of these places in Spanish hands gave free access to the Veluwe and Utrecht, and at one stage no less than three of them were controlled by them. Leicester's first priority had been to clear the Yssel: Doesburg and Zutphen were his targets.² The news of the betrayal of Deventer in 1587 was a hammer blow which forced the States of Holland to reinforce Campen and Zwolle and call on the towns of Holland to take burgher waartgelders into service.³ Even though the potential strategic advantages of the Spanish position were not realised, they did serve another function: landward communication with Friesland was cut off, and Gelderland and Overijssel were completely

1 Lefèvre, III, 603.

2 CSPF, XX, 146; Bezold, Briefe des. Johann Casimir, II, 422.

3 CSPF, XX, 326; Res Holland 1587, 34-5; Deventer, I, 147-51.

reduced under Verdugo's control. That the deputies of these provinces should be strong advocates of military operations to redress the situation was only to be expected. But the threat to Utrecht ensured that that province would also support the call. The States of Utrecht spelt out plainly in 1588 that Gelderland was vital to their defence.¹ The following year, deputies from both provinces jointly demanded that the field army be sent to operate in Overijssel and the quarter of Zutphen, demands which were reiterated early the following year and were finally acted upon, as we have seen, in 1591.²

The continued recognition by the republic's leaders of the vital importance of its Yssel frontier is demonstrated by their concern to modernise and improve the fortifications of the places listed above. In 1597, expenditure on fortifications was devoted chiefly to Deventer, Zutphen and Doesburg.³ Even so, the following year, when the Admiral of Aragon invaded the eastern provinces, the weakness of the Dutch defences was apparent to all. Vere wrote in November, 1598, that the Spanish army was easily strong enough⁴

to pass into the Betuw or Veluw, and in short tyme so to disorder this state, that without a large forrayne assistance, itt shall nott be able to subsist.

1 Kronijk XVI, 160.
 2 Res St G VI, 340; VII, 16-17, 43.
 3 KB 73 C 33, 99; Res St G IX, 490-4; cf X, 146, 155.
 4 Cecil MSS 66/12; cf ibid 177/134, HMC Salis VIII, 399 for other expressions of the same view by English observers; Carnero, 441.

The final assault on this frontier in 1605-6, examined in detail later,¹ found the same plan in operation² and, despite the long breathing space the Dutch had had to rectify the weaknesses, caused no less a crisis than any previous invasion.

Thus it is again clear how far the defences of various regions of the United Provinces were interdependent. For the land mass of Holland - Utrecht - west Gelderland, the preservation of the river lines was crucial. For this to be possible, it was in their best interests to ensure the expulsion of the enemy from the adjacent territory and fortresses. Here however the first divergence appears: for while Holland's primary interest was in Brabant, Gelderland's was in Overijssel and any Spanish base over the Rhine. Perhaps the most significant⁹ question to be posed is: could Holland have continued to resist if the Spanish had accomplished their aim of establishing themselves in Utrecht?

Opinions as to the willingness of the people of the three major provinces to hold out once the pressure of an enemy offensive was reasserted after 1598 differed widely. Buzanval reported that the States General were resolved if necessary to defend Holland, Zeeland and Friesland for as long as was required, while on the other hand Gilpin, a similarly well-placed observer,

1 Chapter VIII.

2 KB 73 C 33, 1167-8.

thought that whether these provinces¹

will hold out and abyde all the burden of the warre is very doubtful, the most being generally given to their ease and gayns...

On this point it is only possible to hypothesize,² but it is somewhat easier to consider how these regions could have been defended once the outer defences had been pierced: more precisely, how viable was the concept of a water-line in the period 1598-1606 comparable to the inundations of the early days of the revolt or the war of 1672?

The major difference between these two examples is important: whereas the water-line of 1672 was a planned defence line, the inundations of 1572-5 were improvised responses to certain situations, often made at the behest of a single city. Despite the fact that Holland and Utrecht spent four months in detailed discussion of a joint water line in 1672, nothing came of it. The scheme to flood the country between the Lower Rhine at Rhenen and the Zuider Zee at Naarden, using the Grebbe and Vecht rivers, collapsed through a whole range of problems most of which would have also applied seventy years before. The hardest to solve in theory were the technical ones, especially the shallowness of the Lower Rhine and the Lek and the variations in ground level, which did not have to be very great to completely ruin a plan for inundations. This had

1 Vreede, *Buzanval..1598-9*, 136-44; cf. KB 73 C32, 226-7; Gilpin: Cecil MSS 174/140.

2 See Chapter VIII below.

been one of the largest problems for the Hollanders when they had flooded the country to relieve Leiden in 1574.¹ The hardest to solve in practice however were the questions of cost and interprovincial disputes. To merely flood a stretch of country could not guarantee to keep out a determined enemy. At the very least, there would be villages on dykes which would have to be fortified. In 1672, Utrecht claimed it was too poor to execute the necessary fortifications, and Holland refused to do more than fortify those parts that lay within its own frontiers. The city of Utrecht objected also to flooding the Grebbe valley although other Utrecht towns were strongly in favour. Schemes for the compensation of landowners also had to be drawn up beforehand. Thus, by the time of the French crossings of the Rhine and Yssel, nothing had been done and it remained for Holland alone to open its dykes in order to create a water line which ran from Gorinchem via Schoonhoven to the Zuider Zee between Muiden and Naarden.²

Could this have been done in the period under study? There is no evidence of any long-term plans to do so. Various individual towns could have created moats to protect themselves at short notice but the establishment of a complete line to defend the province was another

1 Fruin, The Siege and Relief of Leiden, 88f. G 't Hart, 'Rijnlands bestuur en waterstaat' in Leiden 74, 20f.

2 Bordes, (ed), 'Bijdrage...1672', Berigten HGU, III, 1, 1850, 188-228.

matter. There was the problem of time: from the warning of the country-people to the relief of Leiden had taken over 2 months. Would a determined invader have waited so long? Would a Spanish army which by then had had thirty years experience of the Netherlands have taken fright in the way it had in the 1570's? It is quite certain that the fortifications of towns which had once deterred attackers from assault would not have resisted the artillery available to the Admiral or Spinola. Would the population of Holland have been willing to make the sacrifices involved in flooding wide areas yet again? The recovery of the south Holland countryside from the inundation of the Delft-, Schie- and Rijnland in 1574 had been slow and expensive.¹ Widespread losses of land in parts of Flanders resulting from deliberate inundations in the 1580's had still not been repaired in 1607 - some areas remained flooded for 100 years.² In 1585, at a moment of great danger for Antwerp, the opposition of butchers had fatally delayed the inundations which might have saved the town.³ In 1672, the Holland water line was imperilled in places by the direct sabotage of the local inhabitants.⁴ It may be concluded that the

1 't Hart, 27-31.

2 Gottschalk, Historische Geografie van westelijk Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, II, 219-21; ibid Stormvloed, II, 766, 774.

3 Marnix, Ouevres, VII, 250; Terlinden, 'Siège d'Anvers'; Rev Gen 101, 1915, 324-5; Wanty, 'Siège d'Anvers', Bull Belge de Sciences Mil 1930, 254-5.

4 Roorda, Het Rampjaar 1672, 52.

establishment of a 'fortress Holland' was at the very least a highly problematical option, and certainly not a straightforward measure. The best defence of Holland clearly lay in the maintenance of a military frontier of which the main perimeter was the river lines and the outworks the fortresses of north Brabant and those which lay beyond the Yssel. In this light, it could be argued that the apparently greater selflessness of Holland in the strategic planning of the United Provinces was in reality a reflection of their understanding of the value of preserving other regions as a glacis, to keep the enemy distant. The total support offered to Utrecht in 1585 if that province were invaded¹ was not a purely altruistic gesture.

The strategic requirements of Zeeland, it has been shown, were not identical with those of the central area of the republic; the northern provinces were scarcely less different. The government of William Louis was dominated by the province of Friesland and it was the interest of Friesland with its small market towns and its prosperous farmers which dominated the whole question of the defence of the north and east. The less dense, more rural population of the region, and the geographical configuration of the countryside, dictated a different form of warfare, greater logistical problems, and different defensive needs. The relative absence of large waterways in itself ensured that the

1 Res Holland 1585, 428.

great mobility and ease of supply of which Maurice was assured when operating on or near the great rivers was not transferable.

The main features differentiating this region from the rest of the Netherlands war zone were therefore the following: a relative lack of large towns and strong fortresses, a less fertile soil which made the finding of supplies and forage more difficult, few navigable waterways, but in compensation substantial tracts of marshy ground, especially in the border region between Overijssel and Drenthe. The province of Friesland itself was rather more similar in topography to the other maritime provinces, with numerous small internal waterways, canals and dykes.¹ The war waged by William Louis and Verdugo was a precise reflection of the conditions: it was a war of small armies and it revolved around the possession of forts rather than towns, these forts giving (and denying) control of the countryside, communications and provisions. Ultimate control, of course, still depended on the possession of a few major fortresses, without which it was impossible to support an army, but the conditions sketched above did mean that operations were more difficult for both sides.

1 See e.g. Moryson, Itinerary, I, 89-91, IV, 51-2; Faber, Drie Eeuwen Friesland, I, passim; Vries, Dutch Rural Economy, xiv. The impassable nature of much of the terrain and the significance therefore of the few roads, and the forts controlling them, are well shown by the maps in Overdiep, De Groninger schansenkrijg, appendices.

Friesland itself possessed a type of natural frontier with a line of marshes and lakes. But large parts of the country were unprotected by any natural advantages, and despite all measures, the province could not be protected from raiding or invasion while the Spanish were implanted in Groningen and Overijssel. Once Groningen had been reincorporated into the United Provinces, the problems were lessened although not removed. The only way in which William Louis could be sure of the security of the provinces under his governorship was by driving the Spanish army from all the territory north of the Rhine.

The major impediment to achieving such a goal was the strategic weakness of the territory which served as a glacis for Friesland and Groningen. The Spanish forces maintained there were always the least well provided for of the whole army in the Low Countries. One reason was the lack of resources in general; but another and not unrelated cause was the general belief prevalent in Brussels that losses in that quarter could always be rapidly repaired. When Parma marched to France, he was ready to leave the bulk of his forces in Brabant and Flanders.¹ In 1597, the archduke resolved to concentrate on Amiens rather than the eastern provinces because he could always recapture any place lost there very easily.² There was a similar awareness on the

1 Essen (ed) 'Testament Politique' BCRH 86, 1922, 188-190.

2 Carnero, 420.

States' side, related on these occasions to the ease with which Overijssel and Gelderland could be freed from the Spanish. Towns such as Grol, Oldenzaal, Ootmarsum, Enschede and Lochem were incapable of resisting a determined attack. In 1593, William Louis claimed that the whole range of enemy posts in the Twente could be taken in a week.¹ If the States would meet the cost of bringing artillery and provisions overland, the complete enemy position beyond the Rhine could be swept away in two months.² The weakness of these towns was of course a two-edged weapon, which for the Dutch at least was compounded by the risk of disloyalty from heavily Catholic populations: Gilpin noted that there were "few good patriots" there.³ The extraordinary speed with which Maurice reconquered the whole region in 1597 was to be matched only by the speed with which several of the same places capitulated to Spinola in 1605. Virtually the only town in Overijssel of any strength was Bredevoort, where the marshy ground made approach difficult.

These factors made the possession of a few large fortresses especially crucial. These were, from west to east, Steenwijk, Coevorden and Lingen. The position

1 Groen, I, 245.

2 Groen, I, 251-3. The same position was put in 1594: Reyd, 381.

3 Cecil MSS 33/41.

of Steenwijk was such that it clearly commanded a direct route into the heart of Friesland itself. Raiders regularly penetrated deep into the province. Its capture in 1592 could not eliminate this danger entirely, but did so very largely - at least from this direction. At the time of its siege it was regarded as the strongest fortress of the region. With its fall, the Spanish were cut off from all contact with the Zuyder Zee, and direct land contact between the two sections of the United Provinces was made possible.¹

Of greater significance was Coevorden. Its garrison could exercise direct control over the Twente, Drenthe and the county of Bentheim. It lay on the rivers Vecht and Dinckel, and controlled one of the few practicable routes into Groningen from the south. Verdugo made desperate efforts to save it when Maurice besieged it in 1592: it was this blow that definitively sealed the fate of Spanish rule in Groningen two years later. It was clearly recognised that all the provinces of the region had an interest in its conservation, and detailed schemes were prepared to turn the town into a fortress of immense strength. Unfortunately for the Dutch, the parties involved - Friesland, Groningen, Drenthe and Overijssel - could not agree on the division of the costs or responsibilities for the garrison, and

1 Winsemius, 765; Coloma, 65; Reyd, 292.

consequently it was not until 1597 that work got under way.¹ The place would have been in no condition to resist Spinola in 1605 had the Marquis decided to attack it then - a clear enough illustration of the fact that interprovincial disputes could thwart even measures which were unanimously agreed to be necessary.²

Lingen was not formally part of the United Provinces but belonged to Maurice. Its importance derived from its position on the Ems, which made it a direct threat to the eastern frontier of Groningen: that province was never safe from deep raids until Lingen's recapture in 1597. It gave immediate access to the German hinterland, which meant that in Spanish hands it overcame the difficulties of obtaining supplies in Overijssel and Drenthe - there was nowhere in the latter territory capable of supporting any large number of troops, while even where it was possible (as at Meppel) there was no forage for cavalry.³ It was veritably "einen Schlüssel des Landts"⁴ and it was natural that Maurice should make a big effort to provide it with modern fortifications.⁵ Its rapid capitulation to Spinola in 1605 - a loss which turned William Louis provinces once more into frontier zones - was due to the incompleteness of the fortifications (there was no counterscarp

-
- 1 Winsemius, 766; Coloma, 66; Reyd, 444; ARA Sg 4883 II, William Louis to States General, 17 May 1596; Kabze, Handschriftliche Pläne von Daniel Specklin, 34.
 2 See Chapter VIII below.
 3 Winsemius, 831; Verdugo to Parma, 19/6/1591, ARA SG 4870 (intercepted).
 4 Ebeling, Urkundliche Beiträge, I, 62.
 5 KB 73 C 32, 160-1; KHA 13XI D2, Maurice to States of Friesland, 27 Dec 1601, where he reports expenditure from his own pocket.

to enable the ditch to be defended) but even more to the inadequacy of the garrison.

As with all other parts of the country, of course, protection could not be provided by large fortresses alone. The morasses which helped protect Groningen and Friesland could often be crossed by foot, and William Louis was compelled to order the fortification of churches and the arming of the population in the district of Sevenwolden (Friesland) and the Ommelanden. But even with the provision of regular troops, it was recognised that the only real solution was the complete expulsion of the Spanish from the neighbouring territories.¹ Thus the situation of the people of Flanders and Brabant, so different from that of the United Provinces behind the great rivers, was repeated in the north and east. Even after the victories of 1597, Maurice and the States General, perhaps anticipating the direction of the coming Spanish offensive, rejected a suggestion by William Louis that the forts in the Ommelanden be razed,² urging instead that they be kept in a state of readiness against any future invasion.³ The places concerned - Zoutcamp, Delfzijl and Reide⁴ - were all on the coast, suggesting a dual concern with maritime interests⁵ and a recognition that it was easier for the States to supply their garrisons by water.

1 Winsemius, 821, 831-3.

2 ARA SG 4888I, 6 Dec 1597.

3 ARA RdvST 16, 22 Jan 1598; Res St G X, 134.

4 Res St G X, 149.

5 Groen, I, 137.

Closely related to this aspect of the defence of the northern provinces was the danger presented by a possible enemy occupation of Emden, the other dangers of which have been discussed already. Obviously, a hostile presence at both Lingen and Emden directly threatened the frontier of Groningen. The forts at Bellingwolde and Boertange were vital in that they controlled passages across the marshes, and the latter itself was very strongly positioned.¹ It is indicative of the concern felt by the Frisians that it was they who held Boertange. During the rumours of a Spanish attack on Emden in 1601-2, hasty efforts were made to bring these forts into a suitable state of repair. These were to be repeated at each subsequent scare.²

Thus it is clear that the strategic interests of Friesland required a concentration of resources of fortifications, troops and money in an area in which Holland and Zeeland themselves had no interest (with the exception of the Emden aspect), but that all these provinces except Zeeland had an obvious interest in the region comprising Overijssel and Gelderland, the area which could provide the launching pad for Spanish attacks either northwards towards Friesland or eastwards across the Yssel.

1 Emmius, 94-5.

2 William Louis to States General 18 Feb 1601, ARA SG 4898; Groningen to States General 28 Jun 1602, ib. 4903II; States to Groningen 6 July, ib. 6699.

This survey of military geography will have made it apparent that there was a considerable overlapping in the means which each province thought were necessary for their own defence. For each area to conduct a separate war was at one level clearly suicidal in the face of a determined offensive by a strong enemy perfectly capable of exploiting divisions of forces thus entailed. But more than that, it was also not the best policy of defence. Whether the fear was of invasion or whether it was of disruption and loss from continual incursion, there was no better guarantee than the furthest possible distance of the enemy from the frontier and the interposing of a defensive zone strong enough to absorb the pressure. It was in the establishment of this barrier that interprovincial disputes arose during discussions of offensive action: that is, whose need was the more pressing. On the defensive, when an enemy could threaten several vital interests simultaneously, it was much easier for the members of the three main strategic areas of the United Provinces to insist on a "fair" division of defensive resources, a policy which of course played straight into the hands of the attacker.

Thus also the often expressed wish to close the "fences", to complete the "garden" of the state by driving the Spanish from all the territory of the provinces which made up the republic, was not always

identical with the need to establish viable military frontiers. Geertruidenberg in 1593 was a case where the two coincided precisely. So, on the face of it, should the reconquests of 1597 have been also. Certainly the great flood of panegyrics of that year tend to consider the expulsion of the Spanish from the soil of the republic as being identical with the strategic needs of the state.¹ In fact, the victories raised as many immediate problems as they had solved. The States were faced with securing their hold on a region of uncertain loyalties and ensuring the defence of a large number of very weak towns. Oldenbarnevelt at one point claimed that the effects were more dangerous than useful.² In addition to the towns - Lingen, Grol, Oldenzaal, Bredevoort, Enschede, Ootmarsum - there were a number of forts which also required attention.³ The costs were great and the work necessary to change these acquisitions from liabilities into assets had not been completed when the Spanish counter-offensive was launched the following year:⁴ nor indeed were the States ever able to find the resources to turn this zone into an area capable of defending itself. The greater strategic significance of 1597 was the driving of the Spanish army from the Rhine.⁵

-
- 1 E.g. Knuttel pamphlets 998-1001; cf. Fruin (ed), 'Gedenkschrift van Joris & e Bye', BeM XI, 1888, 441.
 2 KB 73 C 32, 166; cf. Cecil MSS 177/134.
 3 Res St G IX, 386, X, 146.
 4 Maurice's letter in Bor (35), 487-8.
 5 As some pamphleteers recognised: Knuttel 999, p. 36 & 1001.

Control of the Rhine through possession of the fortresses upon it was a strategic principle which may be seen in operation throughout the war. Even when under immense pressure in Brabant and Flanders, the States General had provided aid to the deposed elector of Cologne (1582-5). Great trouble was taken to satisfy the demands of Martin Schenk, the fickle condottiere who conducted his own war on the Netherlands' Rhine frontier, and who at one point held (or demanded) Wachtendonck, Rheinberg, Blienbeek, 's Gravensweert and Bonn as part of his contract.¹ Control of Neuss and Bonn by troops commanded by Schenk, in 1586 and 1588 respectively, on both occasions provoked Parma to the immediate despatch of an army for their recapture, and on neither occasion was the duke acting out of selfless loyalty to the elector of Cologne whose towns they were.² For to control the Rhine brought many advantages.

Not least of these was the commercial. Parma was well aware of the potential advantages of being able to close the river trade of the rebels, although the economic needs of the southern provinces were to make any such move counterproductive.³ But even without

1 Res St G, VI, 166-7; Res Holland 1588, 261, 279; Fontaine, Raad van State, 171-80. On Schenk's actions, Lau (ed), Buch Weinsburg, III; Khevenhiller, Annales Ferdinandei, II, 289f; Lossen, Kölnische Krieg, II, 603-35.

2 Piot, XII, 464f. Lefèvre, III, 85-6, 300; Essen, Farnese, V, 32f.

3 The loss of Licent revenue to the south during the 1599-1603 trade ban is eloquently shown by Gheret's figures, 'Le Produit des Licentes', Acta Hist Brux, II 1970, 62. Receipts at Antwerp, for example, fell from 132,000 livres in 1598 to 0 in 1601.

proceeding to such lengths it was possible to obtain substantial benefit from the levying of tolls. In one 14 month period, 94,000 gulden was collected in Licent and toll payments at Rheinberg.¹ Such a source of revenue was too important for either side to ignore it. On more than one occasion the paradoxical situation was to develop in which towns or provinces of the republic were to complain at the closing of the river trade which was required by Maurice during his operations against Spanish fortresses on the Rhine.²

However important this factor, and however much it was a cause of internal and international friction, it was far from being the only reason which made the Rhine strategically vital. Access to Germany for hiring troops, and also obtaining military supplies such as gunpowder,³ was of great importance although never in fact so vital that ~~its~~ loss could not be remedied by sea transport. Most important was that the Rhine represented the only military frontier which offered a shield to the whole of the United Provinces; and for the Dutch, there were two 'keys' which could keep the Rhine open or closed. These were Rheinberg and the fort built at 's Gravenweert by Schenk and named after him.

The Schenkenschans lay at the junction of the Waal and the Rhine in a well-nigh impregnable position.⁴

1 Reyd, 346.

2 Instances cited by Kernkamp, Handel op de Vijand, II 9, 44, 69, 314-15. Commerce on the Maas and Yssel of course caused similar problems at frequent intervals, the places losing the revenue being the most vocal.

3 Eg Vreede, Buzanval...1598-9, 152.

4 See Blaeu's plan in Toonneel der Steden, I.

Initially, through fears that the German adventurer planned to use the fort to collect his own river tolls, the States of Holland were unhappy at its construction (in 1586). In the following years, however, the value of the fort for the protection of the Betuwe, the small towns of Zutphen county, Arnhem, and control of the rivers, was demonstrated, and when the garrison mutinied following the death of Schenk, the Holland States immediately agreed to pay them 50,000 gulden.¹ Thereafter, Schenkenschans formed a lynchpin of the Dutch defensive barrier, and one which they resolutely refused to abandon when the German princes demanded the departure of foreign garrisons from German soil, in 1590² and again in 1599.³

Unlike the Schenkenschans, there was never any doubt that Rheinberg was a German town: it belonged to Cologne. Originally held by the States as a legacy of the Cologne war, it was to change hands another five times before the truce,⁴ as well as being the subject of one unsuccessful siege (in 1586) and many relief attempts. There could be no clearer testimony to its role as "la clef du Rhin".⁵ This was not just because of its commercial role, although that played its part in 1601,⁶ but because it represented the most secure

-
- 1 Res Holland, 1588, 456f; 1589, 746; 1590, 279; Res St G VI, 476, 513f.
 - 2 Tross, (ed), in Kronijk HGJ XV, 1859, 237-62.
 - 3 Boersma, 'Diplomatiek reis...1599', BeM 84, 1969, 33-6, 57-8.
 - 4 In 1590, 1597, 1598, 1601 and 1606.
 - 5 Croy, Memoires Guerriers, 20.
 - 6 Duyck, III, 57.

crossing point of the Rhine above Schenkenschans. Other towns, such as Rees and Orsoy, played this role sometimes, but it was always by necessity rather than choice, and often with the express purpose of permitting an attack on Rheinberg itself.¹ While the Spanish held it, even when they possessed no other foothold beyond the Rhine, they could still levy contributions on Gelderland, and no less importantly had the means which would enable them to launch a counter-offensive there.² It was commonly held that while Rheinberg remained in States hands, the enemy could not recross the Rhine - it required the boldness of a Spinola combined with exceptional conditions, permitting him to rely on local food supplies, to disprove this strategic tenet; and even he returned quite quickly to isolate the fortress in his rear.³

The role of the Rhine towns as a barrier for the whole of the United Provinces was understood well enough. Far-distant provinces were prepared to provide material aid without hesitation⁴ while the matter was always one of great concern to the Generality, as expressed through the States General.⁵ Even here, however, conflicts of interest arose. On two occasions, Ostend^o was directly

1 As in 1598, 'Cartas del Almirante', Col Doc 42, 531-6, 537.

2 Col Doc 42, 553; Coloma, 181-3; Carnero, 440-1; A True Report of all the Proceedings before.... Bercke (1601), p.1. Cf. 1587, Borchgrave, Notes... 157 (letter of Schenk).

3 See Chapter VIII below.

4 Notably Holland.

5 E.g. 1588: Res St G VI, 21, 42f, 135f; & 1607: Res St G XIV, 20-1.

counter-posed to Rheinberg as the highest priority for the republic's attention.¹ This was a conflict between on the one hand maritime and English influence and on the other the interests of the interior provinces.

Such conflicts arose from differences in strategic requirements which at one level were irreconcilable. However, at a higher level, the best defence of each individual province was the defence of the whole state. That there were a number of places control of which was crucial has been demonstrated, and to some extent therefore it can be said that other towns, even whole provinces, were expendable: their loss would not, and did not, entail the defeat of the United Provinces as a whole. The war had once been carried on by Holland and Zeeland alone. Whether it could be again was, for social, political and strategic reasons, very problematical. But this is not to say that contemporaries did not think in terms of an irreducible heartland of the state. The close inter-relationships between each part of so small an area, however, made the concept at the very least a highly elastic one. The 'domino theory' was valid: however peripheral a town might be in military terms, its loss would inevitably expose another stretch of countryside to enemy control, would inevitably turn a previously secure region into a frontier zone.

1 In 1589-90 (p.147,n.5 above) & in 1601 (see chapter VII below). English pressure was vital in both cases; Holland, concerned with the rivers, was torn both ways.

The decisive test lay in the willingness of Maurice to fight a battle to save a fortress from the enemy. On very few occasions was he to be willing to take that risk. He would have fought for Zaltbommel, or the line of the Yssel, but he refused to fight for Grol, or even for Rheinberg. This was in recognition of the principle that however important a particular fortress, it was sometimes more important to keep an army in the field. The military leaders of the United Provinces knew well enough what was indispensable, and that apart from that, by preserving their armed strength it was perfectly possible that

bien perdant des villes, le pays sera maintenu.¹

1 Groen, I, 401, William Louis to Maurice, 28 April 1598.

V

AIMS AND CONDUCT OF THE WAR:

THE CONSEQUENCES OF DECENTRALISATION

When the United Provinces embarked upon the negotiations which were to lead to the conclusion of the Twelve Year Truce, they insisted that they sought a peace which would be Godly, honest and secure.¹ In reality, the question of security - how far could the Spanish be trusted? - was the central issue. But the decision to negotiate at all represented in 1607 a very recent change of heart by Oldenbarnevelt and the States General.² What had happened in the meantime to William of Orange's dream of a united seventeen provinces? The long-term war aims of the Republic's leaders, in clear contrast to the often asserted intention of the Spanish to re-establish their "legitimate" authority over the rebels,³ remained for long periods unstated. Furthermore, on occasions when the intentions of the States General were clearly indicated, the actions that ensued were frequently a contradiction of those intentions. To study only the declared aims of the States cannot in fact explain their conduct of the war, for it was another factor altogether, decentralisation, which was critical in determining not just the conduct of the war, but also in dictating the war aims themselves: intentions, moreover, which often differed widely between the numerous repositories of power in the United Provinces.

1 Res Holland, 1607, 41; Verhooren van Oldenbarnevelt, 141.

2 Pater, Maurits en Oldenbarnevelt, 23-42; Eysinga, Wording van het 12 jarige Bestand, 67-94.

3 Although the means to this end were continually altered.

The rebel state was certainly capable of sustained and united military efforts despite many problems arising from provincial particularism, but its ability to pursue a consistent long-term policy through to its logical conclusion was seriously impaired. French envoy de Saldaigne stated a common feeling among neighbours and allies when he complained to Maurice in 1591,¹

Les choses se traictent avecq tant de longueur que je ne scay qu'en dire, estimant qu'il ne se peult f(air)e aultrement, estant le gouvernement composé comme il est.

It will be shown that there was a self-reinforcing tendency to pursue purely defensive objectives in practice, and very little effort or willingness to put into effect strategic policies demanded by the Republic's allies, or required by the stated intentions of the States General itself. The overriding concern of each province being the protection of its own immediate interests,² a generally defensive outlook by provincial leaders was inevitable. Similarly, clashes between differing local interests, and between those interests and the somewhat wider vision of Maurice, Oldenbarnevelt, and the English and French, could not be avoided, such that even when some consistent policy was discernible, as often as not it was the policy only of a part of the

1 KHA 13 XI C51, Saldaigne to Maurice, 3 August 1590.
2 As outlined in Chapter IV above.

ruling bodies in the United Provinces. It will be demonstrated that most of the offensive operations which did occur were the consequence of an originally defensive need, and had very limited objectives.

This is not to say, however, that the war aims of the northern provinces remained the same throughout the period under study. External as well as internal factors influenced the decisions taken in the Hague and by the provincial States, and for most of the war there was always an element determined that the conflict should be continued until the Spanish were expelled totally from the Netherlands: whether because they wished to see a reunited Low Countries, or because they felt that any Spanish presence would pose a continual threat, is irrelevant.¹ The desire for total victory, whatever its motivation, entailed wide-ranging operations which were in contradiction to merely defensive interests, although inseparable from them in that the security of the Republic could only be guaranteed by the removal of Spanish troops from the Netherlands. An additional element in the confused policies which the differing aims of Dutch leaders led to was the belief, itself far from commanding unanimous assent, that given the opportunity the southern cities would themselves throw

1 E.g. in the Triumph van den Oorloge (1608) cited by Pater, *op cit*, 9 ff, which combines both elements and is typical of the extreme Calvinist position which formed part of the "war party" during the truce negotiations.

off the "Spanish yoke".¹ This idea, always easy to belittle in hindsight, played an important part in directing the conduct of the war, sometimes by inspiring action, often as an excuse for inaction. The pressure exerted by foreign allies, whose support the States could not afford to lose, was of course significant, although more in influencing the States General's statements of intent than their actions. But possibly the most effective control on the ambitions of the Republic, acting alternately as spur or brake, was the amount of pressure being exerted at any particular moment by the Spanish army.

It is thus necessary to separate many elements in reaching an assessment of the war aims of the United Provinces: the long-term aims of various power-groups and the immediate strategic requirements of the provinces, the role of the structure of the state in determining both the ends and means of the war, the role of individuals capable of directly influencing the conduct of campaigns, such as Prince Maurice, and the weight of external pressures.

In examining the general defensive-mindedness of the majority of the civilian rulers in the Republic, the legacy of the long years of defeat and resistance to overwhelmingly superior forces cannot be overestimated.

1 The northerners no doubt underestimated the significant degree of autonomy retained by the southern towns and provinces: for a recent summary, Parker & Schepper, 'Formation of Government Policy', EHR, 91, 1976, 242-3, 251f.

The psychological effect of fighting the greatest monarchy in Europe was never eradicated, especially since the armed forces of that monarchy were always superior in number,¹ and until the last fifteen years superior also in fighting ability. Even when the growing wealth of the Dutch permitted them to narrow the gap in numbers, such that with the frequent Spanish mutinies the overall odds were often reversed, a defensive mentality born of old fears was pervasive in the Hague. In 1607, with both sides approaching bankruptcy, the Council of State was calling for massive new troop levies on a scale sufficient to give the States a substantial superiority - in order to defend.²

This factor had of course an entirely legitimate material basis. With the exception only of the period between the Pacification of Ghent and the Union of Arras, the setbacks and defeats of the rebels had been almost uninterrupted. The pace of catastrophe had indeed accelerated in the three or four years before the Armada and the diversion to France, the tide of reconquest scarcely stemmed by the open intervention of the English. It had reached the stage of nearly exact equations: a battle fought was a battle lost, a town besieged was a town captured by Parma.³ The war was continued through these years more in a spirit of desperate resistance than with any hope of victory. The great anxiety felt when the

1 See Table IV, for relative troops strengths.

2 Res Holland 1607, 45 & see Chapter VIII.

3 See Chapter II above.

French made peace in 1598 was apparent,¹ although the next few years represented a period of uncertainty in which a combination of circumstances, especially Spain's financial problems, offset the loss of the second front which had been so vital in the preceding period. Nonetheless, the siege mentality of the period before 1588/9, never far submerged in the ensuing decade of partial offensives, resurfaced after the failure of the 1600 operations. However vast their ambitions, no one in the United Provinces apart from the most determined calvinists can have been free from the depressing psychological effects of so many disasters, the demoralising consequences of defections and betrayals, and the failure to take advantage of the few opportunities that did occur. The offensive was a form of warfare quite outside the experience of most of the republic's leaders, not just in terms of the way to go about it, but also in terms of being able to conceptualise what such a form of warfare represented, and how even within the framework of a generally defensive policy it could yet be the best means of executing that policy.² The gap between any lofty ideal of securing the total expulsion of the Spanish forces from the Netherlands, and the execution of a policy aimed at obtaining that end, was thus more like an abyss. Between the ideal and the real there was for most of the war no contact whatever.

1 E.g. De Bye, 441, & see chapter VI below.

2 As analysed in Chapter II above. Of course, the reverse was true for the Spanish, whose lack of experience in fighting on the defensive greatly assisted Maurice's operations in the period 1590-94 and again in 1597.

There is however no reason to doubt that the ultimate reunification of the Netherlands remained in the minds of many, even if only because neither Maurice, Oldenbarnevelt nor the States General could envisage any security while southern Netherlands cities held Spanish garrisons. The consequence of this view, naturally, was that sooner or later the United Provinces would have to embark on a policy to remove them either by military means or by a peace settlement of a sort which would itself require major military successes for its enforcement. The alternative was a new revolt of the southern population, which was again dependent on continued military pressure by the United Provinces. There were at least five occasions during the period 1585-1607 when it can be argued that policies aimed at achieving total victory of this sort were intended, which will be examined in greater detail. But it is necessary to note that actual statements by Dutch leaders on this subject are rare. Nowhere is there a specific declaration which goes beyond vague platitudes, and in many cases anyway the words were intended for foreign consumption. It is not even clear normally whether the Netherlands which were to be freed were the whole seventeen provinces, or the signatories of the Union of Utrecht; or the provinces which ultimately formed the state in 1609. Further doubt is cast on this aspect by the apparent willingness of Oldenbarnevelt to break Groningen from Spanish rule by offering it to the duke of Brunswick, in 1592-3, at a time when he was not

confident of obtaining its reconquest by military means.¹ The all too vague words of the States General and Oldenbarnevelt must be examined in the light of the actions flowing from them rather than taken at a very indistinct face value.²

The only occasions when the achievement of a military victory was made even remotely possible - or at least, made to seem so - were in the period 1595-8, 1600 and 1602, times when the balance of forces appeared favourable. These campaigns witnessed operations or plans which were qualitatively different from others before or after. They represented attempts to move beyond previous offensives directed to the recapture of lost towns or the erection of a defensive barrier,³ and were intended to strike major blows at the power base of the Spanish military machine in the south, either through the medium of joint offensives with Henry IV, or by raising the native population in revolt, or by a combination of the two. In each case there were contradictory factors involved which distorted the course of events, quite apart from the serious miscalculations which were made by the planners every time.

-
- 1 Formsma, 'Aanbieding van de landsheerlijkheid van Groningen', BeM, 90, 1975, 1-13.
 - 2 See e.g. Tex, II, 324-5; Haak, 'Wording van het Conflict...' BVG0, 5, VI (1919), 129; Eysinga, 31-2, 67-8; Fruin, Tien Jaren, 342-4, for various assessments which tend to the same conclusion.
 - 3 As described in Chapters II & IV above.

The opportunity to consider genuinely offensive schemes as valid options arose with the close co-operation which was beginning to be established with Henry IV from late 1594 onwards.¹ The ideas had been expressed even earlier, at the end of 1592, by Maurice,² and were loudly trumpeted by Henry on every occasion, either directly or through his agent, Buzanval. The French urged the opportunity the States had to 'eslargir voz limites'³ but they also pressed far wider plans upon their allies, presumably on the assumption that they could expect to find a sympathetic echo among the States' leaders. That Henry was determined to wage war until he had achieved "un total dechassement des Hespaignolz des Pays Bas"⁴ became the constant refrain during the negotiations for the Triple Alliance, although even here there was ambiguity: in 1597, the talk was of freeing only the "provinces unies des pays bas".⁶ There is reason to believe that Maurice and William Louis were amenable to these offensive plans, as Maurice was to demonstrate in his actions. William Louis wrote as early as January, 1593, that his cousin⁷

avecq plus grande fondement peut penser à la delivrance du reste des provinces, que monseigneur votre père n'avoit au commencement d'estoffe d'entreprendre leur defense.

1 Examined in detail in Chapter VI below.

2 Bergh, Gedenkstukken, 333.

3 Vreede, Buzanval..1598-9, Appendix, 368-70.

4 Kernkamp & Heist (eds), 'Buzanval aan Van der Meulen', 192-4 (1596).

5 Eg. ARA SG 6750, 29/1/96 (cf Bor (33), F8) & ibid 19/4/96; Vreede, op cit 371.

6 KB 73 C 32, 21-2 (Proposition of 10/5/97).

7 Groen, I, 213-9.

It has been argued that the Triple Alliance was seen by Oldenbarnevelt and the States General as a weapon precisely to achieve this purpose.¹ It will be shown, however, that whatever the Advocate's personal views, the States were simply not prepared to make the effort that such a policy would have required,² and in fact justified William Louis' fear, expressed in the same letter, that they had

imagination non fondées et ayants leurs sens
occupez aux choses presentes....

It is quite probable, in fact, that Oldenbarnevelt was among the civilian rulers who shared this wider perspective: his thoughts in January 1598 certainly envisaged a joint Franco-Dutch offensive, with the possibility of besieging the Archduke in Brussels itself not excluded - from which, he judged, a general revolt against the Spanish would follow.³ The Council of State, strongly influenced by the Nassau princes and the views of the English through their representative on that body, also frequently urged the States General to take a more aggressive stance when presenting the annual Staat van Oorlog,⁴ if only sometimes to counter the defensive-minded inertia of the deputies.

1 E.g. Eysinga, 26, 31.

2 See Chapter VI below.

3 Deventer, II, 173-6.

4 E.g. ARA SG 4879, 26 Nov 1594: 'te beheren offensivelijck tot voordere extensie van der limiten en vervolginge van het goede succesende victorien'. Cf Res St G, X, 306 (1598).

Apart from the rare direct statements of war aims, it is possible to reach an assessment of the States' strategic thinking by studying those campaigns which were directed at the most sensitive areas of Spanish - controlled territory, areas which were either vital in a military sense, or which were crucial for the maintenance of Spanish authority, or both. Since operations involving high risks for the republic were normally so carefully avoided, it is reasonable to assume that when they did occur, the motive was to play for higher than usual stakes. These sensitive areas were Flanders and, in the east, the territory around the river Maas.

Operations along the Maas represented both the most direct way of co-operating directly with the forces of Henry IV and at the same time would serve to cut the 'Spanish road'. From Philip of Nassau's deep raid into Luxemburg in 1593, through Maurice's abortive attempts to take Maastricht by surprise, to the despatch of a major expedition to Luxemburg in 1594 and the seizure of Huy in 1595,¹ there is a common thread: the determination of Maurice to hit at the enemy's most vulnerable point, a vulnerability further enhanced by the weakness of most of the towns in the region. The sharp reaction of the Spanish commanders,

1 All examined in Chapter VI. It seems clear that Maurice played a leading role in this series of operations: KHA 13 XIA 10a, letter to Bouillon, 19 Feb 1595.

and the serious dangers involved in conducting campaigns so far from home,¹ point to the greater significance of these plans, in contrast with the operations previously conducted on the frontiers of the United Provinces. No less significant was the clearly-expressed reluctance of the States General to commit themselves² - until the French could be persuaded to come half way.³ It may also be no coincidence that the intended combined operations which should have occurred at a time when there was a strong call for peace from the States of the southern provinces, such that the Franco-Dutch alliance might have hoped to squeeze the Spanish between a major military invasion and the rebelliousness of their own subjects.⁴

The idea of conducting war along the Maas was resurrected by Oldenbarnevelt in his 1598 *mémoire*⁵ but the peace of Vervins effectively ended the possibility of any further attacks on this vital link in the chain of Spanish power. Operations in this region were aimed at strangling the Army of Flanders; they could not in themselves spark off the internal uprisings always hoped for, nor drive the southern provinces into

-
- 1 Kronijk, XXI, 362; Rodriguez Villa, Verdugo, 45-6. Cf. Knuttel 1298a/1299 for a continued South Netherland anxiety, in 1605 .
- 2 Bor (30), 678 (original letter in ARA SG 4880I, 23 Jan 1593).
- 3 HMC Salisbury, VII, 74-6.
- 4 Campan, Abrégé Historique, 20-1; Del Rio, 21-33.
- 5 Page 60. note 1, above.

such despair that the pressure for peace would become overwhelming, nor so seriously destroy the financial resources available to Brussels that it would be impossible for the enemy to continue the war. All these things could be done, however, by the conquest of the province of Flanders - or so it was commonly believed, which was the same thing from the point of view of strategic planning.

Flanders was, to the French, "^{le}la partage la plus sensible a vos ennemis",¹ the conquest of which was "necessaire pour finir votre guerre".² Flanders was certainly the province which contributed the most to the revenue of the loyal provinces, and was at least once the object of an attack planned, apparently, on that basis alone.³ During the years of the Triple Alliance there was a strong lobby, to which Oldenbarnevelt was sympathetic, which argued that the best offensive policy for the States was a joint invasion of Flanders by the armies of all three allies aimed initially at Dunkirk and Calais.⁴

Unlike the Maas option, Flanders presented major military problems which far outweighed in Maurice's mind at least the logistic difficulties which were met in the east. Precisely because of its importance, the Spanish ensured that Flanders was a dangerous

1 ARA SG 2632 V, Aerssen to Oldenbarnevelt 24 March 1602.
 2 Ibid 13 Aug 1602. Cf Res St G XI, 395 (1601).
 3 Meteren, 395. For figures and further comment on the importance of Flanders, see Chapter VII below.
 4 HMC Salisbury, VII, 164, 191, 205. Vere was an especially strong advocate of this policy, as the only one able to unite the three allies.

country for their enemies; and on this basis also it must be accepted that any decision by the Dutch to operate there represented a willingness to take high risks in order to obtain commensurate results. The difficulties were both geographical and strategic. So close to the centre of Spanish power was the province that a hostile army could be assembled in days to resist any invasion,¹ as indeed occurred in 1600. Any army of the States operating along the coast thus always ran the risk of being cut off by land by the rapid arrival of Spanish forces in their rear. The only way this could be prevented was by a step-by-step invasion which would first secure Bruges. But this was rendered almost impossible because of the vast size of the perimeter of that city which meant that a very large besieging force would be required, and also that there would be no time to dig in before a Spanish relief army could arrive. The terrain was also difficult: Maurice's attack on Bruges in 1593 was thwarted by inundations dating from ten years before.² The possibility of obtaining food and forage from a country continuously devastated from Ostend and Zeeland held Flanders was also very slight:

1 Vreede, Buzanval...1600, 238f; Emmius, 163.

2 Gottschalk, Stormvloeden II, 795; Duyck, I, 259f.

But these were only the problems to be faced once a States army had entered the Spanish-held portion of the province. This in itself was no easy task. To transport a major force by sea and to land it exactly where planned was a task which was to daunt many later commanders. A difficult shore and the direction of the prevailing winds meant that neither the time nor the place of a landing could be assured,¹ which in turn meant that there was little change^c of maintaining any secrecy, and further ensured that no reliance could be placed in the bringing of supplies or reinforcements by ship. This particular set of difficulties was to be met also in 1600, with hostile winds delaying the landings and forcing the Dutch to go ashore in a place different from that intended, with the consequence that they were forced to march through unknown country.²

The obstacles to a penetration of Flanders were not removed by the alternative method pursued in 1604, that of landing directly on the northern coast, on or near Cadsand. Not only was it a large-scale operation to cross from Cadsand to the mainland,³ it was an even larger problem to pass thence into Flanders

-
- 1 E.g. Buzanval's comments in 1603-4, KB 73C 33, 353, 559-60, which may have originated with Maurice.
- 2 There are numerous well-detailed accounts of the execution of the Flanders expedition. A good summary is provided by Fruin, 'De Slag van Nieuwpoort', Verspreide Geschriften, III, 225-48.
- 3 KB 73 C 33, 584.

proper, because of the very small number of passages, all of which were heavily fortified by the Spanish: thus the relief of beleaguered Ostend was from the outset problematical.¹ In other words, it was only for the most pressing possible reasons that a States invasion of Flanders could be considered a desirable option. In 1604, it was the imminent fall of Ostend and the urgent need to obtain a new foothold in the province which was responsible for the move. But in 1600, no such reason existed, and it is therefore necessary to examine more closely what the motivation was for the campaign which led in reality to victory at Nieuwpoort, but could just as easily have resulted in the annihilation of the entire field army, and most of the military leadership, of the United Provinces. It was awareness of the potential consequences of the serious miscalculations that were made which was above all responsible for the retrospective bitterness which developed between Oldenbarnevelt and the Nassaus, after the event.²

It is possible to distinguish several different elements in the great Flanders expedition which led the States General to embark upon this adventurous exploit, so much out of character. It was the combination of a particularly pressing strategic problem for the dominant maritime provinces with a temporary but still devastating

1 Groen, II, 279; KB 73 C 33, 597, 828; KHA 13 XIA 36 (William Louis to Maurice, 11 Sept 1604)
See Chapter VII.

2 Reyd, 676. The inaccuracy of this account of prior opposition by the Nassaus is conclusively demonstrated by Haak, art cit 158-75. Cf Groen, II, 12, 21, 40-1.

weakness of Spanish military power, and of an over-estimation of the States' own strength with a miscalculation of the readiness of the southern population to revolt against their masters.

The arrival of Spanish galleys in Flanders in 1599 had vastly increased the destructive potential of Spanish naval power based at Dunkirk and Nieuwpoort.¹ Early in 1600, the States of Zeeland presented their Holland counterparts with a gloomy picture of the strategic outlook and stressed that action against the galleys should be the highest priority. On the fall of fort San Andries, the Hollanders reached the unanimous decision to urge Maurice to transfer the war to Flanders, in order to besiege Dunkirk, an operation which would bring great contentment to the people of the United Provinces, especially the seamen, greatly reduce the burden of naval defence, and keep the war on enemy soil.² The States of Zeeland agreed to an extraordinary levy of money, because the attack would be so useful to their province.³ All informed accounts agree on the primacy of this motivation: there was a general feeling that to invade Flanders would be both necessary and profitable. When the interest of the republic's commercial class were directly threatened, the governments of Holland and Zeeland once again showed a willingness to undertake major and costly operations

1 See Chapter IV above, pp. 112.

2 Res Holland 1600, 110-112, 176-7; Res St G, XI, 29; cf. De Bye, 442, Duyck, II, 612.

3 Kemp, II, 249 (being Res Zeeland, 9 June 1600).

to protect them.

The opportunity to do so without running the enormous military risks outlined above was provided by the dissolution of most of the Archduke's forces into mutiny: the Holland resolution specifically noted the "groote confusie aen de zyde der Vyanden wesende.." ¹ Of course, Spanish armies had been crippled by mutines before, without the Dutch taking advantage of them. But there are good grounds for believing that there was indeed an atmosphere of somewhat unrealistic confidence among Dutch leaders that many things that were once impossible were now within their capabilities. Buzanval had already noted in the middle of the previous year:

j'ay peur qu'ils n'ayent les yeux plus grands
que la panse....²

and the successful resistance against a massive Spanish effort in 1599, in what had been widely proclaimed as "the crisis year" for the United Provinces³ following Vervins, gave the States every reason to take an optimistic view of the future. If the much-dreaded whole might of the enemy had been fought to a standstill, and driven into mutiny, what could the United Provinces not do?⁴ It is certainly highly likely that the

1 Res Holland 1600, 176; cf. Groen, II, 14, Duyck, II, 499f.

2 Vreede, Buzanval...1598-9, 198. The comment was applied specifically to the naval expedition of that year, which attacked the Canaries.

3 E.g. Vreede, Buzanval...1598/9, 135.

4 Vreede, Buzanval...1600, 234; Tex, II, 347. Reyd, 651, was less hopeful.

expensive, negative defensive campaign of 1599 should lead to a desire to make the enemy bear the burden of the defensive.¹

It can be argued, further, that this combination of factors gave rise to a far greater objective, the hope of delivering a definite, knockout blow to Spanish power in the southern Netherlands. The method would have been to use Maurice's expected military victories to provoke a major uprising, of the Flemings at least. There was nothing new in the concept. The French had expressed their hopes of a rising in Artois in 1595,² at the same time that similar hopes were being expressed throughout the alliance. In 1597, the Dutch believed that the Walloons would be ready "de secouer le joug" if the cession of the Netherlands to Albert and Isabelle took place.³ Every murmur could be interpreted as a sign of potential revolt, and was, regularly, by both sides. The States General reinforced their invasion with appeals to Ghent and Bruges to rise against the Spanish⁴ and attempts to sow sedition among the sailors and populations at Dunkirk and Nieuwpoort through their agent at Calais, Sailly.⁵ The Spanish themselves firmly believed that the invasion was an attempt to overthrow their authority completely:

1 Van Dam van Isselt, 'Voorbereiding...1599', BVGO, VI, 4, 1926, 97f.

2 ARA SG 6748II, 15 June 1595. Cf. Kronijk, XX, 326-7.

3 KB 73 C 32, 187, 14 Nov 1597.

4 Res St G, XI, 32.

5 Sailly's letters, 30 June, 2 July, ARA SG 6750. Buzanval had reported in 1597 that the Dutch had a low opinion of this agent: KB 73 C 32, 112.

Ils disoient qu'indubitablement, il y auroit
quelque revolte generale....

wrote one southerner.¹ It would be possible to dismiss such claims as efforts to make the year seem to be a victory for the Spanish if there were not evidence that they took the threat fairly seriously themselves, for example ordering that the citizens of Nieuwpoort be kept away from the ramparts.² The speed with which the archduke reassembled his army and appeased the mutineers is also indicative of the fright into which he had been thrown.³ That the objective of forcibly reuniting the whole of the Netherlands was in the minds of the States leaders is also shown by a number of Buzanval's letters, which suggest that Maurice found that he was having to oppose this idea.⁴ A few weeks after the victory, but before the final abandonment of the Flanders campaign, the French envoy wrote that it was clear that⁵

les peuples des Archiducs sont attachez a leurs
Princes de plus fermes liens que l'on n'avait
estime.

It may therefore reasonably be concluded that the Flanders invasion of 1600 represented a move from an initial plan based soundly on the strategic interests of the maritime provinces, to an opportunist attempt to achieve total victory, based on the hope conceived in

1 Knuttel 1138: the author was a Walloon. Cf. Croy, 9.
2 Sailly's letter of 2 July, ARA SG 6750.
3 Cf. Campan, 70; Collins, II, 202-4; Neomagus, Expedition, 60.
4 E.g. Vreede, Buzanval...1600, 248-50, 253-4.
5 Ibid 257.

the minds of already over-optimistic politicians that the population of the south would co-operate in their own 'liberation'. In the circumstances of the period, this should not be considered surprising. What is perhaps more surprising is the apparent survival of this belief after the total failure of even so brilliant a victory as Nieuwpoort to bring about the expected revolt.¹

The next occasion on which such considerations were clearly present was the attempted relief of Ostend by a march through Brabant and Flanders with a very large army in 1602. The march was accompanied by the issue of a proclamation² which called on the southern provinces to take advantage of the presence of Maurice's army to free themselves and expel the Spanish. It argued both that the Spanish were the enemies of the rights and liberties of the Netherlands, and that the United Provinces were much better off than the provinces loyal to Spain.³ There are enough indications that this was more than merely a conscious gesture. A contemporary wrote that the expedition to save Ostend had the further intent⁴

once wholly to free the Netherlandish Provinces from the bloudie yoke of the Tyrannical Spaniards and hypocriticall murderous Jesuits.....

-
- 1 The role of Calvinist exiles from the south in fostering this belief is a subject deserving more study.
- 2 Res St G, XII, 37-8; Knuttel 1192.
- 3 Knuttel 1192, pp. 2, 4.
- 4 A Short Report of the...Journey into Brabant (London 1602).

There is further, and more reliable, evidence in the report of one chronicler that that Nassau princes were opposed to the plan as far too risky,¹ and found the hope of a rising "wholly idle and weak". In explaining his objections, William Louis characterised the proposed operation as a war for 'liberation' which was not likely to succeed.² This suggests clearly that the civilian leaders retained high hopes of a full-scale victory at this stage. These hopes were carried into the following year, based this time on the opinion that Spanish power was on the brink of collapse anyway.³ The Council of State's Petitie to the States General stressed that if only the war could be kept on the enemy's soil, the population would be driven to free itself, and throw off the enemy's "hated yoke".⁴

Wishing that the southern population might rise did not in itself of course indicate a war aim of expelling the Spanish. But it did suggest that this thought was ever-present, and that on a certain number of occasions it was added to a more limited strategic intention, in an opportunist and unintegrated manner, without the whole-hearted backing of the commanders of the expeditions themselves. Why else should it have

-
- 1 Sande, 33. Maurice expressed his objections to Brown: Collins, II, 258-9. For further analysis, see Chapter VII.
 2 KHA A22 VIII-4, William Louis to Maurice, undated.
 3 Cecil MSS 96/8, Ogle to Cecil, 24 Oct 1602.
 4 Res St G, XIII, 581 ff.

been found necessary to have the entire States General accompany the Flanders invasion? Why else should that body have given its deputies on the 1602 operation specific authority to negotiate with cities or provinces in the south?¹

There is further evidence of the attitude of the republic's rulers in their attitude to the southerners. Whereas in previous abortive peace negotiations, the stumbling blocks had plainly been religion and the role of the Spanish,² the negotiations at Bergen op Zoom in July 1600 were marked by a new arrogance on the part of Oldenbarnevelt and the States representatives, based on a fundamental misreading of the situation and the relative strengths of the two sides.³ Buzanval noted that the approach adopted at Bergen had in fact reinforced the authority of the Archdukes and managed⁴

de rendre de plus en plus odieux ces Messieurs
aux peuples de dela.

But self-delusion and blindness to reality have afflicted far greater statesmen than the members of the States General, and it has been stressed already that the events considered above were notable exceptions to a rule of generalised defensive-mindedness. It is further evidence for the depth of this defensiveness that these

1 Res St G, XI, 30; XII, 38 Cf. Groen, II, 14.

2 Summarised by Eysinga, 9-21.

3 Res Holland 1600, 272; Gachard, Actes, 772;
Res St G, XI, 80-3; Campan, 70f.

4 Vreede, Buzanval...1600, 275.

offensive plans were so opportunist in nature, with so little awareness being shown of what means, of what scale of operations, the desired end actually entailed.

The one consistent link between the aims of the various power groups in the republic, and one which ran through the entire period, was the belief that the removal of the Spanish troops and direct Spanish power was essential if even the minimum demands of the rebels were to be met. The split between the so-called 'war' and 'peace' parties during the negotiations for the Truce was at the outset the result of Oldenbarnevelt's realisation that it was not going to be possible to remove the Spanish by military means alone,¹ and that negotiations would be necessary. They were not however in disagreement on the main points of necessary conditions for peace: recognition of the United Provinces as a sovereign state, which entailed, and was of course required for, the protection of the liberties, rights and privileges of the constituent members of the United Provinces.² It was these local rights which had been central to the revolt of the Netherlands, and it was for their protection that the provinces continued to fight. The formula occasionally varied slightly but the meaning was usually clear.

1 Eysinga, 67-9; Tex, II, 540f.

2 Res Holland 1607, 41,77, 80. Recognition as a 'free state' was the face-saving formula acceptable to the Spanish. Similar recognition by France & England had been obtained in the Triple Alliance.

In 1586, Zeeland characterised the aim of the republic as religion and "the freedom of the common Fatherland".¹ The term "fatherland" however is definitely ambiguous, since for the Frisians in 1592 it meant their province only, and was clearly distinguished from the generality,² as was to be expected with the proudly independent rulers of Friesland. The same series of rights and liberties were rolled out by the States General in answer to a Breton embassy in 1594, with the additional qualification that their protection was the only reason that the Republic fought Spain.³ The following year, the States of Utrecht instructed their deputy to oppose peace negotiations with the Spanish unless the Tercios were withdrawn from the whole Netherlands, to assure freedom for the reformed religion and the "freedom, welfare and prosperity of the Netherlands as a whole".⁴

Thus if it was clear that the privileges of each constituent part of the state were what the republic was fighting for throughout, it was still unclear precisely what each of the demands meant to each province, and even greater confusion reigned when the question arose of planning and executing the policies flowing

1 Heeringa, (ed) Notulen van Zeeland, V, 537.

2 Groot Placaat...boek van Friesland, IV, 799.

3 Bor (31), 836.

4 Kronijk, XXI, 527.

from this basic aim. Obviously, protection implied the defensive, but it has been shown that this in itself could entail significant offensive operations, while the whole issue of security was for long considered inseparable from that of removing the Spanish army. It may be concluded that the town and provincial governments of the republic had a very clear conception of what they would not surrender: their autonomy, notably in religion and taxation and the right to trade. They had also come to realise that to ensure this meant securing recognition of the whole state as autonomous. These were the minimum conditions for any negotiations by the time of the Truce. However, this level of agreement left almost boundless scope for differences of opinion on the conduct of the war itself, while the very decentralisation and preservation of local autonomy for which the Dutch fought not only impeded the execution of a properly conceived strategic plan, but indeed militated strongly against even the existence of such a plan.

Quite obviously, any aim of reconquest or expulsion required serious long-term planning. There is not the slightest doubt that Parma was operating on such a basis during the period of his great victories in the 1580's, when despite numerous fluctuations resulting from immediate tactical or logistical problems, it is possible to detect a conscious programme of reconquest in Brabant and Flanders, each step leading logically to

the next.¹ The existence of general plans for the defeat of the United Provinces themselves has also been indicated, which were to be consistently followed by Spinola.² While these schemes did include a hope for popular risings, they did not in any way rely on such possibilities, in clear contrast with the opportunist offensive operations of the republic. Moreover, Spanish offensive plans usually laid down a definite framework for their military operations, with a rather better awareness of reality than Dutch politicians who allowed wishful thinking to leapfrog them over the strategic or logistic difficulties raised by the military leaders, especially in 1602. The southern propagandist who wrote in 1600 that³

Ces bonnes gens des villes d'Holland & de Zeelande qui nont jamais humé d'autre air que la fumée de leurs foyers, esperoyent a ce coup de se rendre Monarques...de ces..... Provinces....

was not so far from the truth in his analysis. It was precisely this lack of serious long-term thinking which made it impossible for the Dutch to bridge the gap between desire and execution.

The change of policy by the States in 1589/90, on the urging of the Nassaus, was a switch from the pure

1 Essen, Farnese, III, 66-8; V, 21, 43, 242-50.
 2 Chapter IV above, p122, & Chapter VIII.
 3 Knuttel 1138.

defensive to an offensive with the aim of achieving greater security by restoring the strength of the frontiers of the provinces represented in the States General.¹ Even this limited aim was stated in terms showing that there was no specific strategic plan worked out. It is significant that Maurice's request to the States of Holland was more an appeal for unity than a scheme for an offensive:² for there could be neither long-term thinking nor even agreement on immediate military objectives without some form of central authority which would both determine the objectives and be able to ensure a realistic level of preparation. But central authority was, of course, one of the few things the States were united in opposing, whether that authority was in the hands of a Spanish governor, a French prince or the earl of Leicester. Decentralisation inevitably condemned the republic to a generally defensive war.

It equally seriously hindered the proper conduct of even this negative type of warfare, at all levels: the making of plans, the collection of money, the assembling of troops and munitions, the construction and repair of fortresses, and so on. Indeed, it was remarkable that the republic was able to fight a war at all, let alone entertain hopes of winning it.

1 Reyd, 253.

2 Kemp, I, 290-2; Res Holl 1589, 96-8.

The frustration caused by the provinces' pursuit of individual interests was of course especially great amongst their allies. The pleas of Elizabeth and Henry IV for unity were ceaseless, but of little more effect at the end than they had been at the beginning. The constant fear of Henry was that disunity would lead to irretrievable disasters for the United Provinces.¹ After the fighting had stopped, the King was afraid that the republic would fall apart during the truce negotiations and therefore strove to have authority given to Maurice.² For both monarchs, the immediate problem always seemed to be simply to persuade the States to make decisions or take action. Bodley's "eger and peremptorie Commission", it was reported in September 1595,³ would never succeed "with such Democraticall Estates". The Dutch politicians were themselves well aware of the situation and how it frustrated their allies. The States of Holland pointed out to an Elizabeth who must have found their comment as infuriating as it was obvious, that their state, "estans un corps composé de plusieurs membres subjects à passions", could not maintain "perpetuale union, qu'avec grande difficulté".⁴ At times, they were able

1 There are continual references in the letters of Henry IV and Buzanval, cited below in Chap VI-VIII. Cf. Marnix's fears at a time of prosperity (1593): Memoires..de Duplessis-Mornay, V, 414.

2 Negotiations...du President Jeannin, I, 80-6.

3 Collins, I, 344; Cf. *ibid* 341.

4 Res Holland 1597, 384f.

to use the existence of so many sources of authority to their own advantage, as when Oldenbarnevelt warded off Henry's "secret" demand for sovereignty by insisting that it would have to be debated by all the town and provincial governments.¹ The military successes of the Republic after 1589 had of course resulted in the proliferation of seats of power, even if the smaller provinces had very little real authority.

The establishment of the East India Company created yet another influential body, which some feared at the time might "prend racine...comme un second Etat",² a position at least partly justified by the role of trading interests in 1607-9, although of course the question of Indies trade was already close to the interests of the maritime provinces.³ Certainly, the East India Company represented the consummation of long-standing plans by Oldenbarnevelt and others to launch a diversionary offensive against the Hispano-Portuguese overseas empire which would directly mobilize commercial wealth without calling on any substantial state support. The Charter closely bound the company into the state structure, and represented a qualitative change in approach from that of the previous purely trading companies.⁴ But the motive of the participants was still primarily

-
- 1 JvO, II, 147-9, & See Chapter VIII, p. 306, ^{below} ~~above~~.
 2 KB 73C 33, 6, Buzanval to Villeroy, 13 April 1602.
 3 E.g. Sluiter, 'Dutch-Spanish rivalry', Hisp Am Hist Rev 28, 1948, 176f. Cf. Parker, 'Why Did the Dutch Revolt last 80 years?', TRHS (5), 26, 1976, 63f.; Res St G XIV, 377f.
 4 Van Dam, Beschryvinge, ed Stapel, 484-88; Glamann, Dutch Asiatic Trade, 1-9; Tex, Oldenbarnevelt, II, 384f.

the search for profit, and the directors did form another semi-autonomous force with interests which could and did diverge from those of political necessity¹.

It was natural for monarchs to distrust the ability of a republic dominated by a merchant bourgeoisie rather than a traditional, military aristocracy, to conduct a war. This distrust was however soundly based in the reality of the way the States frequently operated. The finding of money which was the prerequisite for any action at all was also one of the areas in which provincial particularism played an especially vicious role. If the finances of the southern provinces were continually in disorder, it was more because the demands so far exceeded the ability to pay than because there were many deliberate attempts to prevent the levying or collection of taxes. In the north, on the contrary, mobilization of the wealth created by prosperity and commercial dominance was impeded by the total lack of a centralised financial system. On the one hand, even by the end of the war no regular budgetary system had been devised, with neither the Staat van Oorlog nor the Petitie providing any clear indication of revenue or expenditure, so that the finances of the Generality remained deep in chaos.² On the other, modifications to the Union of Utrecht had established

1 Van Dam, 449, 488; Steensgard, Asiatic Trade Revolution, 133-41; Tex, II, 405.

2 Deurssen, 'Staat van Oorlog en Generale Petitie', BeM, 91, 1976, 44-55.

complete autonomy for each province in the way it raised its quota of the war costs, which immediately opened the way for some provinces to put the burden on others more willing to tax their inhabitants on everything they used.¹ Without certainty in the collection of money, it became impossible to organise effective offensives. This was particularly significant for the hard-headed States politicians who, unlike their Spanish opponents driven by necessity to every expedient, preferred to work with cash.² As Buzanval noted in 1602,³

il ne faut pas penser que la guerre se puisse faire par eux une semaine seulement sans avoir argent en main.

Time and again, the granting of Consents to the demands of the Council of State was hindered by provincial particularism. Gilpin fumed at the inactivity of the States in the Autumn of 1590 and attributed it to the fact of "each feering the charges".⁴ In 1590, Gelderland complained bitterly that Utrecht was using money destined for general use for improvements to its own defences.⁵ In the following year, Dordrecht refused its consent to the war costs because of a grievance over the wine staple at Amsterdam.⁶ In 1592, despite a tour of the provincial assemblies by Maurice,

1 Fruin, Tien Jaren, 42-53.

2 KB 73C 33, 28.

3 Ibid, 122.

4 Collins, I, 309.

5 Res St G, VII, 159

6 Res Holland 1591, 167. For a similar example in 1604, KB 73C 33, 776-7.

Utrecht and Gelderland raised major difficulties about their payments while they were in dispute over Zaltbommel.¹ In 1595, in the middle of the campaigning season, and with Henry IV begging for aid, the States General could not even begin to collect the quotas because of bitter disputes over their levels.² In 1598, the reasons given were the "irresolution" of the provinces and the refusal of Friesland and Groningen to pay their debts.³ The examples could be multiplied many times. The importance of this general phenomenon was that it precluded meaningful military co-operation with allies whose patience inevitably wore thin,⁴ and although such cases of obstruction were less frequent when the Republic was itself under heavy attack, the necessary agreement on Consents was rarely if ever obtained early enough to allow the States to seize the initiative against their enemies. Without this capture of the initiative, the opportunity to force the republic's will on the enemy could hardly be regained anyway, even if the desire had been there in the first place.

No less vital for the conduct of the war was the effect decentralisation had upon the use of troops who were paid not by the generality, but by the individual provinces. The control which it was possible for individual provinces to exert over strategy extended far beyond the walls of the Council of State and the

1 Bor (29), 613. Cf. Kronijk, XIX, 300-2.

2 Kronijk, XXI, 285, 304-5, 316-18.

3 Res Holland 1598, 227, 320.

4 Further examples are given in Chapter VI below.

States General. In the period 1591-3 there was, for example, a continual tension between Holland and Zeeland on the one hand, and Friesland on the other, over the area in which the field army should operate, the Frisians pressing hard for a major offensive in the north and east, while Holland was concerned to secure its open southern frontier and Zeeland wanted operations in Flanders. Although Maurice's campaign in 1591 must have satisfied all parties by its division of effort, the Friesland States were already serving notice that they regarded their position as critical and would not allow their troops to be taken far from their frontiers.¹ Holland, however, insisted on a siege of Geertruidenberg in 1592. The consequence was an extremely violent dispute in which Maurice, although wanting to support William Louis,² was reluctant to challenge Holland. In the end it was effectively blackmail by Friesland over the 3000 troops it would provide for a siege of Steenwijk, and nothing else, which tilted the decision.³ After its fall, the dispute reopened, with the Frisians once again achieving their wish (to attack Coevorden) by refusing to have their forces employed anywhere else.⁴ The decision then taken by the States of Holland, after the plan had been agreed, not to provide the 200 waggons which were vital to the

1 ARA SG 4871 II, 23 August 1591.

2 KHA A22 IXA 17, 16 May 1592.

3 Reyd, 276f.

4 Bor (29), 629-30, Reyd, 292.

movement of the army, can hardly have been caused by anything other than petulance, whatever official reasons were advanced about the lateness of the season and the difficulty of finding the money.¹ It took an outraged protest from the Princes and the Council of State to make them change their minds.² The Frisians almost immediately found themselves in dispute over the possession of the towns of Hasselt and Coevorden, the latter especially having serious consequences,³ and they deliberately refrained from demanding an attack on Groningen in the following year because they (not unreasonably) feared they would get no support from Holland.⁴ This dispute was unusual for the behaviour of Holland, which normally took a responsible attitude to such questions - but was also used to getting its own way, unlike the smaller provinces of the east, who were without the financial power to compel the Generality to give priority to their interests, even if on occasions their interests coincided with those of the whole republic.

At another level again, decentralisation affected the conduct of military operations, the provision of supplies and munitions being usually organised at a local level. Because gunpowder was manufactured on an entirely local basis,⁵ it was impossible to assess how

1 Res Holland 1592, 49-50.

2 Res Holland 1592, 53; ARA SG 4873 I, 14 July 1592; Kemp, I, 362-3.

3 Reyd, 316-7; Kronijk XIX, 433-4. See further, pp 138 and 299.

4 Reyd, 313, 329.

5 Kuijpers, Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Artillerie, II, 218-24; De Bruin, Buscruytmaekers, 10-16.

much was available at a given time, and the problems were to reach crisis proportions with the massive consumption of powder during the siege of Ostend, the States having to make emergency purchases in France and from the Baltic. There was equally little centralisation in the purchase of artillery. Apart from a foundry established in the Hague in 1589,¹ there was nowhere in the republic where artillery could be manufactured after the loss of the great centres of the south and access to the Liège iron industry.² The Dutch were therefore compelled to obtain guns from disparate sources: normally from either the English, or from foundries in Westphalia. Even this was not done through a regular state-based system very often, but either through private merchants or on the initiative of individual provinces, usually Holland and Zeeland because of the endless needs of their fleets.³ The consequences of such a lack of organisation in this area again hit hardest during the most difficult periods, the siege of Ostend and the crisis of 1605-6, when the States suddenly found themselves desperately short of artillery.⁴ In this context, the mounting of expeditions such as those of 1600 and 1602 must be seen as extraordinary achievements in themselves. Problems of

-
- 1 Kuijpers, II, 197f; Res Holland 1589, passim.
 2 Henrard, 'Fondeurs', Ann Acad Arch Belg 1889, 250f; Fairon, 'Notice sur la fabrication de canons', Bull Inst Arch Lieg 40, 1910, 47-58.
 3 Schubert, 'English..Canon', Jnl Iron & Steel Inst 1949, 85-6; ibid, Eisenwerke Wetzlar, I, 93-8; Cecil Mss 21/30, 133/122, 180/78 (1592, 1594, 1600 patents and commissions). Klein, De Trippen, 185-241, discuss the foundation of the armaments industry, and the government regulations on it.
 4 See p. 323 .

munitions and supplies naturally afflicted all warring states, but the Dutch republic placed an additional burden on itself through the existence of local autonomy as a hindrance on the exercise of central planning. It was fortunate for the States that the worst cases were indeed exceptions, although also significant in that they occurred during a period of offensive warfare. On the defensive it was easier to argue the common interest.

This state of affairs found probably its worst aspect in the organisation of the republic's naval power, where the three maritime provinces clung tenaciously to the control of their own admiralties. The States of Holland had manoeuvred to keep the admiralties out of the hands of Leicester, whose response had been the establishment of yet more separate bodies. The attempt to establish a college of Superintendence was thwarted by the particularism of Zeeland, and the final reform of 1597 left five independent admiralties, three in Holland, one each in Zeeland and Friesland.¹ Chaos, bankruptcy and bickering characterised the administration and also the conduct of naval war, especially on the Flanders blockade, where the lack of a centralised ~~supra~~provincial command allowed especially the Zeelanders repeatedly not to fulfil their obligations.²

1 Elias, *Schetsen*, I, 33-8; De Jong, 'Admiraliteit van de Maze', *Marine Blad* 58, 1948, 232-4, for summaries of the developments.

2 Res Holland, 1588, 340; 1602, 160, for two examples.

In reality, the worst effects of decentralisation were mitigated by a number of factors, in part fortuitous, in part an inevitable response to the needs of the situation. It has been posed as a paradox that Oldenbarnevelt and the States of Holland, prime movers in the resistance to Leicester's centralising attempts, should have emerged immediately afterwards as, effectively, a central authority.¹ In fact, it would be more accurate to say that it was inevitable that the wealthiest and most powerful of the provinces, contributing more than half the budget and paying for more than half the army, should have filled the power vacuum, especially when the state was under such immense external pressure. The most important point is that the power of Holland gave it a wide-ranging domination in reality, but that this domination was never translated into structural or constitutional terms. It remained as but one of seven politically equal provinces, and therefore was seen only as a province able to force the generality to execute policies designed for Holland's particular interest. Holland's pre-eminence, and the statesmanship of Oldenbarnevelt, certainly compelled the States to accept a far higher degree of responsibility for the whole state than had been in evidence under Leicester, but the other side of the coin was the consequent

1 Presser, Tachtigjarige Oorlog, 106

irresponsibility of other provinces angered by the priority usually given to Holland's special requirements. The dominance of one province was to prove a totally unsatisfactory substitute for a central authority in fighting the war.

There is no doubt that the maritime provinces in general, and Holland in particular, used their overwhelming influence in pursuit of policies which, even if in retrospect they could be seen as useful to the whole state, nonetheless aroused the anger of inland provinces. It was probably the way in which massive resources were committed to naval operations without serious consultation which most annoyed the deputies of Utrecht in 1596¹, and of course the States were anyway not free agents at this time, being bound by treaty obligations to heed requests for ships from Elizabeth. However, the massive ~~C~~anaries expedition of 1599², organised to attack Spanish trade at a time when a major Spanish offensive was expected on land, was a clear proof of the priorities imposed on the States General by their most powerful members. Again and again, in 1600, 1605, 1606³ and 1607, Holland was primarily responsible for the equipping and despatch of major naval expeditions whose relevance to the land war,

1 Dodt, II, 391-2. Cf. Kronijk XX, 315-17, for reactions in 1594.

2 Abendanon, 'Vlootaanval', BVGO, 5, VIII, 1921, 15-16, 20-28.

3 Graefe, 'Beitrag', BVGO, 7, III, 1933, 201-30.

which in all these years was at a critical level, was at the least tenuous. In 1607, in one and the same session, the States of Holland decided to send a fleet of 25 ships to the Spanish coast, and unanimously agreed that it was impossible to find the funds for the new levies demanded by the Council of State to meet what was expected to be an all-out attack by Spinola.¹

It is therefore not surprising that, as Gilpin wrote in 1600, there were those who "cannot digest the Hollanders Greatness",² or that animosity should grow against the "preeminerende auctoriteyt van den... advocaet",³ Oldenbarnevelt. When this resentment was expressed by deliberate obstruction, the entire war effort of the state was liable to be crippled. The smaller provinces could grumble but do little, and were indeed treated rather disdainfully as poor relations.⁴ But Zeeland and Friesland retained sufficient power to make the defence of their proud independence meaningful. Disputes with Friesland's States were frequent, often leading to direct obstruction by one side or the other of the war effort.⁵ But here at least there was the close co-operation between Maurice and William Louis, the Frisian stadhouder, to act as a unifying influence, and after 1597 (if not 1594) there was relatively little clash of immediate strategic interests.

1 Res Holland 1607, 5-12, 14.

2 Collins, II, 156-7.

3 De Bye, 444-5.

4 E.g. the tone of Holland's letter to Gelderland, Res Holl 1597, 588.

5 See above, 183, & cf. Reyd, 317f, 434, 444, 652.

The case of Zeeland was rather different. Middelburg was always ready to withhold payment of its quota until the Hague met its demands. This occurred for example in 1595¹ and again in 1602,² but the high point of conflict was reached in the dispute between the two provinces over Convooi and Licent collection in 1597, which completely halted the war preparations and brought intervention by both Elizabeth and Henry IV, so serious were the consequences of this internal conflict for the whole of the Triple Alliance.³

Whether the reaction of the other provinces to Holland's power was the result of envy, greed, resentment or fear, or whether Holland used its dominance to further its own interest to an unacceptable extent, may be disputed. Arguably, the point may already have been reached where what was best for Holland was best for the United Provinces. But even if this was the case, the other provinces' unwillingness to accept the position ensured that the plans and opinions of Oldenbarnevelt and the Holland States were not uncontested. Friesland and Zeeland in particular had not fought in defence of their autonomy for long years only to yield them up to the developing commercial colossus which lay between them.

1 Res Holland 1595, 207-9; Kernkamp, II, 154.

2 De Bye, 446; Duyck, III, 510.

3 Res Holland 1597, 220, 334f; For English anxiety, PRO SP 84/54/74-78, 167; Collins, II, 73; KB 73 C32, 87-9; Poel, 'Particularisme', Arch. Zeeuws Gen. Wet. 1929, 39-45.

The process of decentralisation which gave varying degrees of power to towns, provinces and quarters of provinces, and admiralty administrations, extended also to the military command. The control of the Stadhouders over the making of policy was theoretically negligible, but in practice the Nassau princes exerted a sufficiently important influence to make them another source of power. Their own aims, however, are almost impossible to establish. It has been stated, for example, that Maurice was not enthusiastic about Oldenbarnevelt's French policy.¹ Yet it would be more accurate to say that the prince was concerned far more with the strategic problems of implementing any given policy, and allowed the circumstances existing at a given moment to dictate his wider plans. Thus in 1589-94, he and William Louis were pursuing a consistent policy of making the republic a strategically viable state. In the period 1593-5, however, Maurice can be seen to have decided on a policy of direct military co-operation with France: not in a haphazard fashion, but by the establishment of a channel of communication along the Maas.² On the other hand, when an orientation towards France called for a deep invasion of Brabant or Flanders as a prior requirement for a French intervention,³ then Maurice's strategic sense warned him off. The two princes were not able to

1 Tex, II, 221.

2 See pp. 160 above & 215 below.

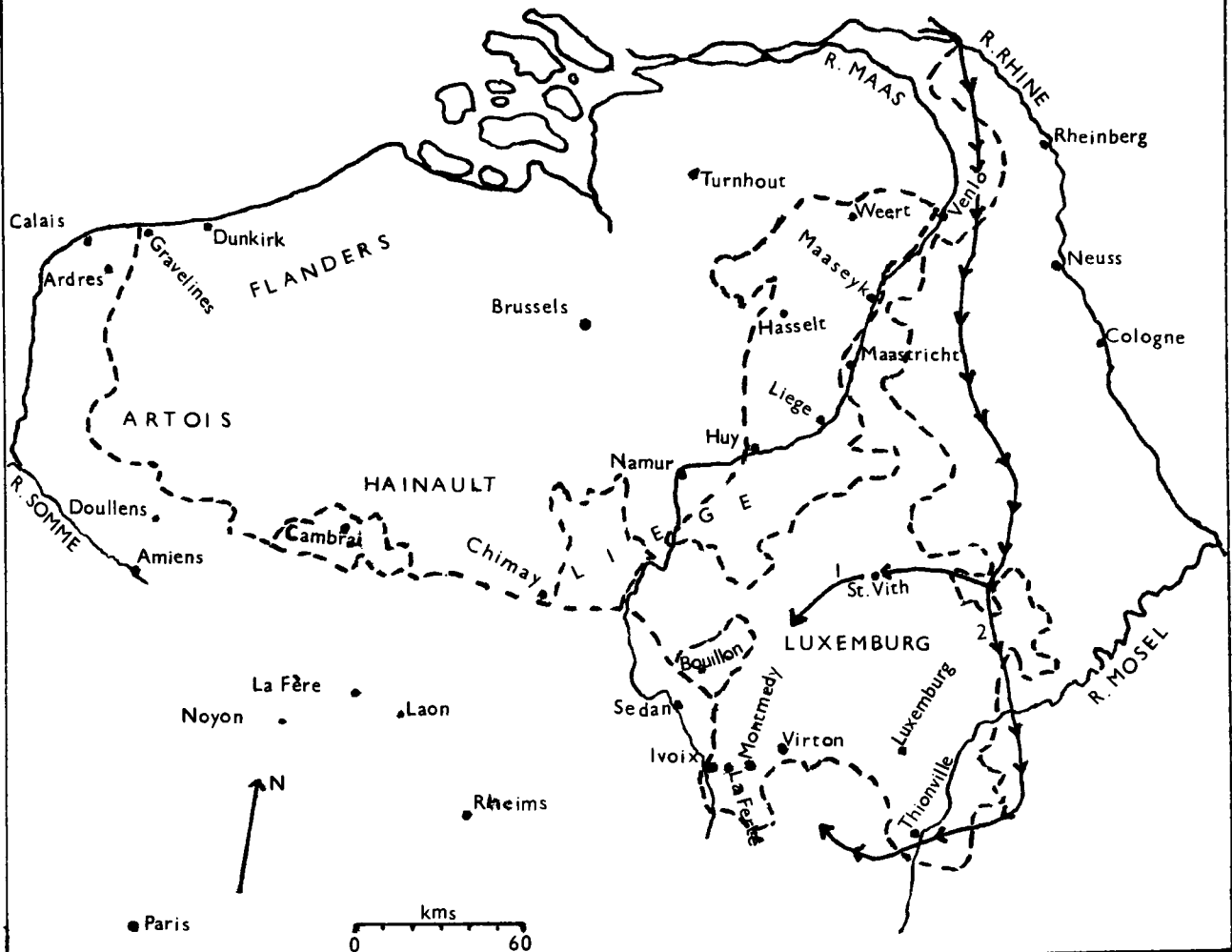
3 As in 1605-6.

make policy: but they were able, once in the field, to find many military reasons for the non-implementation of decisions that they did not like.¹ In this sense, it is not particularly important to establish what if any long-term ambitions they nourished. The princes were hard-headed, and, knowing that they were responsible for executing the strategic decisions of the States General, it is extremely unlikely that they retained any hopes of expelling the Spanish and reuniting the seventeen provinces once the French had made peace. The evidence for this is their continued refusal to take risks in the field, and the deduction that after twenty years of trying in vain, they can have had few illusions about the ability of the United Provinces to collect money and make decisions early enough to allow them to seize the initiative. The role of the princes must be seen as one of a lobby pressing for strong military action aimed primarily at securing the vital points for the defence of the country. In this, they only briefly moved away from the plans advanced in 1589/90, which had precisely the intention of securing the state.² If the Spanish were to be removed, Maurice and William Louis did not see it being done by a States army headed by themselves.

1 As in 1602 & 1604.

2 See pp.123f. above.

It is clear that the United Provinces presented no single war aim. It is also clear that whatever the aims of individuals or forces in the republic, there was a great gap between their statement and their execution, as a result not only of the frequently unfavourable balance of forces, but also of the decentralisation of the state. Provincial particularism not only ensured that those composing the States General would place the immediate interests of their province in front of the perhaps longer-term interests of the generality, insofar as anyone was ever in a position to determine them: it also guaranteed that the republic was organically incapable of executing a policy which would have been the converse of the Spanish designs. The Dutch not only never devised, but actively resisted, the establishment of the central authority necessary for the proper conduct of the war they were fighting. Only on a few occasions could the conservative, defensive-minded States, amongst whom the most powerful anyway tended to regard the land war as an unfortunate diversion from more profitable activities, see beyond the strategic defensive, and on these occasions they seized upon dubious opportunities or relied upon wishful thinking to launch extremely dangerous offensives. The expulsion of the Spanish "tyranny" and the "liberation" of the southern Netherlands were not concepts within the range of thought of the rulers of the Dutch republic - and when they did materialise, it was only as rare moments of wild, rash opportunism.

MAP IV.THE SOUTHERN NETHERLANDS AND THE FRENCH FRONTIER.

Count Philip's route, 1594, (1) as planned, (2) as occurred :



VI

NATIONAL INTEREST & INTERNATIONAL WAR:

THE UNITED PROVINCES & HENRY IV, 1589-1598

The decade between the defeat of the Spanish Armada and the conclusion of the Peace of Vervins has traditionally been seen as the period in which the United Provinces grew into a healthy, defensible and expanding state, with the main features of the 'Golden Age' already largely established.¹ The opportunity was paradoxically provided by a rapid increase in the wealth of the King of Spain following his call for an increased production of American bullion.² This was of such a scale that Philip was encouraged to so far exceed his resources by opening new fronts against England and France that his ultimate failure on all sides became inevitable.

In terms of direct military pressure, under which the resistance of the northern provinces had been steadily crumbling after the fall of Antwerp, it was the diversion of Parma's best troops to the support of the Catholic League which was of greatest significance. From 1589 to 1598, with only one exception,³ the greater part of Spanish strength was devoted to the war in France.⁴ Nonetheless, the military operations, strategic planning and political decisions of the insurgent leaders during this period cannot be understood except in relation to events in France. A study of these years can cast revealing light on a number of questions.

1 R Fruin, Tien Jaren uit den Tachtigjarigen Oorlog (1906), 2-3, 33lf.

2 Sketched by P Chaunu, 'Seville et la Belgique', Revue du Nord XIII, 1960, 276-7, 288-90, from his larger works; C Kroeber in EcHR, (2), X, 1957.

3 The attack on Hulst in 1596, see below 227.

4 Summarised well by G Parker, Army of Flanders (1972), 241-50.

The problem of military co-operation between territorially - separated allies was posed in an especially acute form, and found to be too inextricably bound up with internal financial and political matters to be of easy solution. The decisions and actions of the Netherlands leaders, further, provide evidence on their priorities and war aims, and on the extent to which they understood the long term position.

Similarly, this decade contains the only period of the war prior to 1609 in which it was possible to consider the expulsion of the Spanish from the Netherlands as even remotely conceivable,¹ and the clear failure of the Dutch to respond to the opportunities requires analysis. Finally, granted that the United Provinces were indeed much stronger in 1598 than they had been ten years before, it is nonetheless important to see why the necessary measures to be strong enough to resist without French aid were not taken.

There were two levels of co-operation between the Dutch and Henry IV. On the first was the gradually increasing provision of aid in the form of financial subsidies, munitions, and warships. On the other there was direct military co-operation with the despatch of troops and the mounting of diversionary operations.

1 Discounting, that is, the short period of 1576-79 when they removed themselves. The period in which the best opportunity arose was 1595-8, when it was theoretically possible for the nations of the Triple Alliance to co-operate towards a military victory.

The ultimate stage, of directly related offensive actions, was often proposed but never achieved, for reasons to be considered. But the continual pressure from Henry for assistance in every form exercised at all times a strong influence on the thinking and planning of the States General. The wars in France and the Netherlands had been linked from the outset, and it was generally accepted that, as Buzanval said in October 1592 of Philip II,¹

cest en France, ou il veult decider les querelles de la liberte ou de la servitude de la chrestienté.

However, there was no automatic response in the Netherlands to the changing situations in France, since the States General was influenced partly by considerations of long-term policy, but more often by immediate and local difficulties. The result, as will be shown, was an erratic shifting of priorities which ultimately cost Maurice a number of fine opportunities in the Netherlands, without persuading Henry that he could hope for much from continuing his war any longer than he had to.

That the victory of the anti-Spanish forces in France was of vital concern to all other opponents of Philip II obviously required no proof for the United Provinces. More materially, it was the diversionary

1 Kronijk, XIX, 443. The same point had been stressed in the previous proposals, Bor (29), 637-9. Elizabeth and Burghley were of the same opinion; cf. Lloyd, Rouen Campaign (1973), 28-30; R B Wernham, 'Elizabethan War Aims & Strategy', Essays for J E Neale, (1961) 351-55.

role of the French war which most attracted the Dutch leaders, still reeling from the devastating defeats of the 1580's. A succession of French envoys knew how to exploit this aspect. La Tuillerie used the argument when seeking money in August 1589, when the situation had so quickly changed with the accession of the Huguenot Henry of Navarre.¹ When Utrecht protested its inability to meet its quota of the subsidy, it was argued that it was to be hoped "dat dese landen eenmal van desen Crijch verlest sullen wordden", and that this justified the expenditure of 100,000 gulden in a subsidy.² In 1592 Buzanval, who soon discovered how to obtain a sympathetic response from the Dutch, stressed that the outcome of the war in France could reverse any small successes achieved by Maurice, and that therefore the States' aid was producing disproportionately favourable effects; and finally, that if Parma's army was still in the Netherlands,

certes pour des milles vous eussiez despender des millions. 3

Thus, and ironically, the policy pursued by the French to extract help from their allies reinforced a tendency

1 Kronijk, XVII, 50-5. Aid in the form of 4 Cannon had already been sent in 1588 for the joint army of Henry III & Henry of Navarre: ibid 50; Res St Gen VI, 55-6, but this was hardly a large commitment.

2 Res St G VI, 349; cf Res Holl 1589, 576; Kronijk XVIII, 67; Bor (26), 476. In the end Utrecht's share was paid by Holland (Res Holl 628). Also sent were munitions & victuals: Ib. 624, Res St G VI, 355. Holland and Zeeland paid for Utrecht again in 1590 (Res St G VII, 59; Res Holl 51-2).

3 Kronijk XIX, 110.

to relaxation in the United Provinces which in turn hindered the execution of the other forms of aid required by Henry, notably the undertaking of military operations of sufficient importance to reduce Spanish pressure on France.¹

In one area this difficulty did not arise. The establishment of Spanish power in Leaguer Brittany posed a direct threat which maritime powers such as England and the provinces of Holland and Zeeland could not afford to ignore,² and about which the navy-less French king could do nothing.³ The States General made no objections to the despatch of six warships and two pinnaces to the Breton coast,⁴ and renewed the commitment in 1591.⁵ Quite apart from the general strategic fears which motivated Elizabeth's aid for the Breton royalists, Holland and Zeeland had the direct economic interests represented by their western trade in general and the Brouage salt convoys in particular. Already overstretched as they were by the requirements of the Flanders blockade and the escorting of Baltic convoys, the maritime provinces still had no hesitation in accepting the additional burden,⁶

1 See below, 203f.

2 Don Juan d'Aguila arrived with 5000 men in October 1590 & began to fortify Blavet: De Thou, XI, 207-12. Bor (28), 543.

3 "Tout l'esperance y est a La Roynne d'Angleterre et a nos estats", wrote Marnix on 21 Apr 1590, cf, *ibid* 10 July: ARA SG 67471. CF his memo of 6 May Kronijk
4 Res St G VII, 60; Res Holl 1590, 72. XVIII, 193-6

5 Res St G VII, 347; Res Holl 1591, 29. Their answer to Bodley's proposal was favourable, except for the despatch of troops: ARA SG 5882 II, 4 June 1591.

6 Letters from Taffin, e.g. 24 Jan, 2 & 23 Feb 1591: ARA SG 67471. Res Holl 1592, 30; Res St G VII, 525. 1590 saw a notable Dutch success against a large Ligueur warship: Mollema, Geschiedenis van Nederland ter Zee, II, 90.

whereas on questions of other forms of assistance their response was to prove considerably cooler. The progress of the war in Brittany,¹ not resolved until the reconciliation of Mercoeur in 1598, was recounted in great detail by the Dutch agents Taffin and Calvart in their despatches. Henry IV seemed happy to leave the war in the Peninsula to his subordinates and English troops, while the States General also dealt with it as an affair in which they had as much interest as the king. The negotiations of 1593-4 were initiated by the Breton Estates, merely seconded by Henry,² and became a dialogue between Elizabeth and the United Provinces on the scale of assistance to be offered.

On this occasion also, there was no question of the motivation of the Dutch: the Spanish position in Brittany threatened the western trade, and was thus part of the plans of the Spanish,

qui a tousiours juge que le seul...moien pour
reduire ces pays...seroit s'il les pouvait
priver de leur trafficque...³

The States of Holland were ready to agree in principle to whatever aid was accorded,⁴ a rare event indeed, and

1 Recounted by de Thou, XI, 390f, 517f; XII, 56f, 443f.

2 Recueil, IV, 57-9: Henry IV to States General & Maurice, Nov 1593.

3 Kronijk XX, 224-8. An earlier Breton request for a subsidy was rejected on grounds of poverty: Bor (31), 823, 836, but Bodley sought only naval help.

4 Res Holl 1594, 157, 200, 236.

Heermale reported back to his masters, the States of Utrecht, that the safety of Holland's trade was "ten hoochsten gepondeert ende ter harten genomen" in the States General.¹ The pessimism of Duplessis-Mornay expressed at the time of the initial request no doubt derived from long experience of Dutch parsimony (as it must have appeared to the French), but it is indicative of the difference in reaction by the States General when Holland felt its own interest to be at stake.² Certainly, there was also strong English pressure brought to bear here,³ but it was only because it accorded with Holland's interests that action was taken without lengthy dispute. On the other hand, of course, major changes in the financial and strategic planning of the States were not required to meet the demands of this theatre of war. This could not be said of the more direct demands of Henry IV for money, men and diversions which had to be considered at the same time.

The first Dutch troops to be sent to serve in France went to participate in the Rouen campaign, at the beginning of 1592,⁴ but the first major withdrawal of fighting men had already occurred when Elizabeth had

1 Kronijk XX, 315; Dotd, VII, 262, 263-4.

2 Memoires & Correspondance de Duplessis-Mornay, VI, 10-13; cf. V, 458: letters to Buzanval, June 1593 & Feb 1594.

3 E.g. in 1594, ARA 3G 5882 II, letters of Bodley, (21 May) & Caron (24 June).

4 Munitions and artillery had already been provided: Res St G VII, 351; Kronijk XVIII, 448-52.

demanded that 3000 English be sent from the Netherlands to Brittany. Agreement could only be extracted from the States General when the Queen promised to provide a replacement for every man sent.¹ There can be no doubt that the States were motivated here by the simple fear of being denuded of good troops before Parma's intentions were accurately known.² The circumstances were different when the request for a Dutch regiment was made in December 1591. It was clear that Parma was about to enter France, with the siege of Rouen still in progress, and that its capture

importe infiniment à l'establissement de son estat, & aussi beaucoup d'utilité pour le vostre. 3

But the instant action with which the request was met owed much to the fact that the States General were not in session, and that Maurice was able to make immediate arrangements for the despatch of 20 companies under Count Philip of Nassau.⁴ He and Oldenbarnevelt were undoubtedly those whom Bodley was to describe as "exceedingly frenchified",⁵ although it would be more

-
- 1 For the demand & negotiations, Res St G VII, 352-63; Kronijk XVIII, 392-410. Cf. the summary in Lloyd, *op cit*, 54-5.
- 2 E.g. letters from Henry IV (17 Nov) & Taffin (20 Dec), ARA SG 6747I, cf. Sailly to Oldenbarnevelt (27 July), JvO I, 225.
- 3 Buzanval to States General, 23 June 1591, ARA SG 6747I.
- 4 Res Holl 1592, 14; Kronijk XVIII, 487f XIX, 21-6; Collins, I, 333; De Thou, XI, 475; Bor (29), 604; Duyck, I, 68.
- 5 Collins, I, 338; Tex, Oldenbarnevelt, II, 63-82, on the Advocate's role in these years and on his French policy.

reasonable to state that they appreciated the argument that if Parma could be kept on French soil, he could not harm the United Provinces, and that a sure way to keep him there was to do everything possible to assist the reconquest of Normandy by Henry.

Count Philip's residence in France produced no material results, save the gratitude of Henry¹ and an admiration for the order and discipline of Dutch-trained troops.² It also set a precedent for all other Dutch expeditions to France of the rapid diminution of the forces sent, through illness and desertion, which meant that Henry found less use than expected while the States General were still obliged to make full payment.³ Nonetheless, the opportunity and breathing space given to the States by Parma's absence had been well used by Maurice in 1591 and 1592 to secure the Waal and Yssel and, by the capture of Steenwijk and Coevorden, bring great pressure on the Spanish position in the north east.

It would have suited Henry IV and Elizabeth better, however, if the Dutch had related their campaigns more closely to the requirements of the war in France where, as they had all agreed, the issue should be resolved.

-
- 1 Letters of Henry (6 May) & Saldaigne (18 Jun), ARA SG 6747II; Bor (29), 637.
 - 2 De Thou, XI, 476; Grulart's Memoirs quoted by Poirson, Règne de Henri IV (1867), IV, 641.
 - 3 Letters of Henry (6 May) & Taffin (7 Jun), ARA SG 6747II; Recueil III, 653-6.

The attitude of the States on this was distinctly ambivalent. Elizabeth strongly urged offensive action in Flanders or Artois in September 1590,¹ promising assistance from English forces in Ostend and Bergen op Zoom, and additional native forces. Such an operation really was the only way that military pressure could be brought to bear on Parma sufficient to force him to react. The States' reply was enthusiastic, but the action resolved upon was an attack upon the forts of northern Brabant - which despite the self-satisfied words of the States General would not divert a single soldier from France.² The Dutch would not act in Flanders until additional English troops had arrived; finally, however, Maurice launched an abortive surprise attack of his own against Dunkirk, with no attempt at co-ordination,³ and surprising both friend and foe⁴ equally. Again, in 1591, the Dutch opposed the scheme whereby Turenne's German army raised for French service would be directed through the Netherlands towards the Channel coast. Maurice was very much in favour, seeing it as a means of directly co-ordinating the war against Parma, but the States rejected it on the advice of the Council of State that an ill-disciplined short-term mercenary army would do more harm than good.⁵

1 Kronijk XVIII, 284; HMC Salis IV, 54, 59.

2 Res St G VII, 46, 91; Kronijk XVIII, 301-3; Collins, I, 310f; Kemp, I, 323f; Lefèvre, III, 542.

3 Res Holl 1590, 445; cf. P Faulconnier, Description historique de Dunkerque (1730), I, 98.

4 As Sailly wrote from Calais on 6 Nov: Kronijk XVIII, 311.

5 Bor (28), 566. Cf. Lloyd, op cit 49-57. Past experience of the military inefficiency and high costs of such forces (eg Johann Casimir's and Schenk's) were good justification for the Council's decision.

In short, during the years of Parma's French involvement, the Dutch were happy to seize the opportunity to pursue urgent but local strategic tasks, and rely upon maintaining military activity in general to relieve the pressure on Henry IV, rather than undertake specific operations for that purpose. But for all that the States insisted that the policy they executed worked as a diversion,¹ the scope and purpose of the campaigns of 1591-3 were related directly and solely to internal considerations, and according to the plans agreed between Maurice, William Louis and Oldenbarnevelt. They were not free agents, of course, able to conceive their operations in the abstract. They were restricted by considerations of finance, of provincial self-interest, and, although to a lesser extent than before or after, by the operations of the Spanish forces left in the Netherlands. But nor were they diverted by the situation in France.

The plans proposed and adopted when the decision was made to go onto the offensive in 1590 did not consider external questions at all, but were concerned to close the alarming gaps in the frontiers of the United Provinces on the Rhine, the Yssel and in the north east.² At the time that these ideas were debated, in fact, there was every sign that Henry IV was on the

1 E.g. Bor (28), 552.

2 Kemp, I, 290; Res Holl 1589, 96-9; Reyd, 253-6.
See Chapters IV & V above.

verge of victory with the apparently imminent fall of Paris.¹ When Maurice took the field for the second time in 1591, it was because Parma was again marching for France²: but the attacks on Hulst and Nijmegen which followed occurred because of the chance of seizing these waterside towns by rapid action which reduced the risk of having to fight an enemy in the field to negligible proportions. The French, of course, would have been delighted had Maurice continued to operate in Flanders after taking Hulst, and Biron urged that this course should be followed.³ But by the time this request was received, Maurice and the Council of State had decided that to stay in Flanders meant taking risks against a well-fortified opponent, and had instead sped away to Nijmegen.⁴ When that town fell, it was determined that there should be no further operations that year: despite the uncertain situation in France, and not for financial reasons, but for straightforward strategic considerations which made any of the suggested options hazardous.⁵

-
- 1 Especially after the victory of Ivry. See Taffin's optimistic report; e.g. 20 March, 22 May, 9 August, 8 & 22 Dec 1590: ARA SG 6747I. Maurice was also confident of Henry's success: KHA 13 XI B-17, 24 April 1590.
 - 2 Res St G VII, 334. Collins, I, 327-9. Duyck, I, 49. Philip II considered this to be an attempted diversion: Lefèvre, III, 590.
 - 3 Taffin to States General 25 Sept ARA SG 6747I.
 - 4 Res St G VII, 336-7; Duyck I, 58-64; Bor (28), 574.
 - 5 Holland was interested in an attack on Den Bosch, Friesland on the resumption of the siege of Steenwijk abandoned when Parma marched to the Waal in July: Duyck I, 65-6. Bor (28), 577f., stresses that the decision, made in Oldenbarnevelt's absence, was wrong.

The following year, with Philip of Nassau with 2000 men of the "best available"¹ sent for the siege of Rouen, the Nassau princes were able to resume operations against Steenwijk and Coevorden, which could have no possible bearing on events in France. The States General were bound to respect the wishes - and the blackmail - of the States of Friesland, however, and even powerful Holland had to leave its own cherished wish, the recapture of Geertruidenberg, until the following year.² In the midst of the preparations, Elizabeth demanded the recall of Vere and 20 English companies for service in Brittany, which on this occasion produced an outcry from the Dutch, who obviously believed they had already done enough for the French, and feared that their extraordinary efforts this year might be wasted for shortage of troops.³ The dramatic events of the Normandy campaign of 1592 which threatened to be decisive could not be influenced from the northern Netherlands, however, and the Dutch had already provided ships, men and money. They could do no more than extend the service of the troops and ships beyond the specified dates.⁴ There is no evidence that Parma would or could

-
- 1 KHA A22 IXA-16, Maurice to William Louis, 4 February. The force represented between one-fifth and a quarter of Maurice's normal field army.
- 2 This striking example of provincial particularism is discussed in Chapter V. Maurice even had to reassure his cousin, KHA A22, IXA-17.
- 3 Res St G VII, 582-9; Collins, I, 339; HMC Salis IV, 224f; Letter from the Council of State, 21 July: ARA SG 4873I. Maurice threatened to abandon the campaign if the withdrawal occurred: ARA SG 4872, 5 Aug.
- 4 Reports & requests adopted an urgent tone: Recueil, III, 653; JvO, I, 225; Bor (29), 637; Kronijk XIX, 369f: Taffin on 24 Aug, ARA SG 6747II.

have done anything more than he did to help Verdugo in the north east had Maurice's army been operating against Mansfeld and Mondragon in Brabant or Flanders,¹ but neither did the Dutch consider this option. The only concession made was the decision not to break up the army immediately after the fall of Coevorden, but to march back to the Rhine, in the hope that this might prevent the enemy sending troops to France as quickly as might otherwise have occurred.² Buzanval complained in October that Maurice's successes were diverting the attention of the Dutch from the French war³, the result of which would determine what happened in the Netherlands anyway, and pressed for further aid for Henry. It was an analysis not without truth, and the States were to continue, for two further campaigns, to follow their own local priorities, with the siege of Geertruidenberg in 1593 and the conquest of Groningen in 1594.

Nonetheless, during these years there was a change in the nature of Franco-Dutch co-operation, with a shift towards co-ordinated military action which was to be sustained, from the French side at least, until the Peace of Vervins. In this shift of emphasis may be discerned two important factors. Firstly, there was

-
- 1 Coloma, 52-65; Carnero, 279. Parma's concern was reflected in the distribution of the forces he left behind (Essen, Farnese, V, 33lf) & the Dutch were aware that prompt action might have thwarted their plans anyway: Kronijk XX, 375; Duyck, I, 110f; Kemp, I, 370. Cf. Lefèvre, IV, 56, 61, 68f.
- 2 Kemp, I, 375. (Resolution of the Council of State, 26-7 Sept).
- 3 Quoted above, p. 197. The United Provinces also became embroiled in a fierce inter-provincial dispute over the possession of Coevorden which had serious long-term effects. See pp. 138.

the consolidation of Henry's position with his adoption of Catholicism and entry into Paris, which altered the French wars into a national conflict with Spain, rather than with the Ligue and its Spanish ally, and shifted the theatre of war up to the southern frontiers of the Netherlands.¹ This had the effect of making combined operations a serious possibility, in Flanders and Artois on one side, and along the line of the Maas on the other. The second factor was the relaxation of effort by the United Provinces and their willingness to see the seat and burden of the war transferred to other fields, a tendency made especially strong by the apparent security achieved in 1593 by the province of Holland, and the removal of Friesland from the status of frontier province with the victories of early 1594. The consequence was that two of the strongest and most influential provinces no longer felt immediately and directly threatened by the war on land, and were thus able to view with greater equanimity the growing relaxation of their own military effort, while salving their consciences with the provision of aid and troops designed to keep the war away from their frontiers.

Naturally, the most direct means to fight the Spanish in the Netherlands without having to make enormous exertions was to persuade Henry to wage offensive war against Artois and Hainault. On the

1 Remembering always that this was only one of the fronts on which Henry had to fight, the war continuing in Brittany, Burgundy & the south.

Dutch side, however, while Maurice was to show himself willing to consider operations on the Maas, he was markedly less willing to undertake the actions in Flanders which would have made sense of a French offensive in Artois.

Henry offered such an offensive in August 1592, in return for the States General undertaking to support a German regiment for French service,¹ and a promise to use the army in a "more general service" than hitherto:² a clear invitation to fight a campaign which would directly relieve pressure on France. The effect of the siege of Geertruidenberg on Spanish operations was to catch Parma's temporary successor Mansfeld totally off balance, the Count having expected an attack on Flanders,³ and to seriously disrupt his son Charles's operations in France.⁴ But this was, however, entirely fortuitous in that the siege had long been agreed upon and owed nothing to French pressure: it was the pressure of the States of Holland that told.⁵

The truce made by Henry with the Ligue,⁶ followed by his conversion to Catholicism, caused considerable

-
- 1 No doubt preferable to a Dutch force prone to desertion & recall.
- 2 Bor (29), 637-9 & Kronijk XIX, 389f.
- 3 Lanario, 101; Coloma, 70-9; Carnero, 294-6, & Fuentes (Lefèvre, IV, 160) were devastating about the incompetence of Peter Mansfeld, but that he should have feared an attack on Flanders is an interesting comment on the Dutch plans.
- 4 Letter of Taffin after the fall of Noyon, ARA SG 6747II (9 Apr 1593); Del Rio, 16-21.
- 5 Reyd, 312; Bor (30), 690; Elizabeth was nonetheless delighted by what appeared to be a 'diversion': Kronijk XX, 61, Bor (30), 690;
- 6 Reported to the States General on 26 June, Res St G. VIII, 35.

anxiety in the United Provinces initially¹ and motivated the tone of the Instructions given to Lieven Calvart, the new envoy to France, whereby he was to do all possible

pour induire Sadicte Maté à croire qu'il n'y
a meilleur moien pour s'asseurer..et a destourner
...les efforts..de ses ennemis, que en faisant..
la guerre en Haynault et Arthois...2

In fact, there was no need for fear: Henry was extremely enthusiastic about carrying the war into Spanish territory. After contemplating an attack on Dunkirk by joint forces in September, a scheme rejected by the English,³ then demanding powder to protect Calais, which the Dutch provided⁴, he finally presented firm proposals for action the following Spring. Promising to operate in Artois, he demanded a major diversionary siege from the States General, and stressed that this meant Dunkirk, the only useful objective where a combined operation was feasible.⁵ The States General replied with complete willingness to assist Henry with money and with a "notable" siege.⁶ The notable siege they had in mind, however, was that of Groningen, which could not have been further removed from the proposed scene of joint operations. But William Louis and the

1 Until explained at great length by Henry:

Bor (30), 719-26.

2 Res St G VIII, 37. The point was stressed again in November: ib 40. Taffin de la Pré died in May; Baudius reported (20 May) that he had had no consideration other than "l'unité inseparable de nostre cause avec celle de la France". ARA SG 6747II.

3 HMC Salis IV, 371-2

4 Res St G VIII, 41; Bor (30), 757; Res Holl 1593, 16.

5 Bor (30), 759-65. L van den Bergh, Gedenkstukken, (1842), 332-3.

6 Ibid 766; Res Holl 1593, 170.

States of Friesland would wait no longer for the consummation of a plan devised four years before,¹ and it was a matter of some importance that Henry should be encouraged to tie down Spanish forces in Artois: in other words, both allies wanted the other to provide a diversion.

The negotiations conducted by Calvart and Buzanval in 1594 produced ultimately a joint campaign in Luxemburg, with the Artois/Flanders scheme left on the sidelines. With the fine progress of Henry's affairs during the Spring and Summer, the securing of Lyon, Orleans, Bourges, and of course Paris, the urgency which often infected the negotiations was not found.² The French still hankered after a joint operation against Dunkirk but were not dissatisfied with the ready approval granted by the States General to a request to provide the money to support a levy of Swiss troops,³ although the promise predictably preceded the execution by months.

In May, with Maurice still besieging Groningen, the state of affairs was changed. Charles Mansfeld's foray into France had been no great success, but it had focussed attention once more on the frontier provinces.⁴

1 See above, chap. II.

2 Calvart on 21 Feb. ARA SG 6748I; on 22 March, JvO, I, 637f; Kronijk, XX, 145f.

3 JvO, I, 648f; Res St G VIII, 197; Kronijk, XX, 113f.

4 Coloma, 86f; Lanario, 104; HMC Salis IV, 500; Calvart on 15 Mar. ARA SG 6748I.

Bouillon was especially vocal in his demands for a campaign in these areas, both as a means of personal advancement and because it was a way of diverting Frenchmen from a civil into an international war.¹ In place of the money, Buzanval presented a demand for a corps of foot and horse to be made available within three weeks of being requested. They were required so that Henry could fight in Artois and Hainault. In order not to waste this opportunity to bring Henry into the Netherlands the States General agreed without hesitation, and without first informing Maurice. There is no doubt that their willingness sprang from Calvart's assurances that Henry was most unlikely to require the aid that year, and as such the agreement represented only a commitment for the future.²

In this, however, they were to be disappointed, with considerable disruption for their own plans as a result. When Groningen fell in July, Verdugo's army was dissolving in mutiny, and there seemed no better opportunity, with half the Summer still available, to sweep the Spanish out of the Twente and complete the liberation of Overijssel, as the deputies of that province and of the Betuwe most strongly urged.³

1 Calvart on 22 Apr, 1 May, 6 May: ARA SG 67481. Marsollier, Histoire de Henry de la Tour (1719), 174f. Bouillon married Maurice's sister Elizabeth in 1594. Henry was to justify his declaration of war in part by claiming that it would mean "un grand soulagement" for France: cf. Lettres du Cardinal d'Ossat, (1714), I, 305.

2 Bor (31), 844-6. There is also no doubt that Henry also feared that Archduke Ernest's peace offers might be accepted (JvO, I, 659), and wished to bind the States General more closely to France.

3 Kronijk, XX, 281, 321, 328; Res St G VIII, 181; Kemp, I, 395.

There were logistical reasons for inactivity, but Bor's assertion that nothing new was started precisely because of the promise made to Buzanval is borne out by the evidence.¹ A suggestion that the Dunkirk scheme be implemented produced no reaction,² and finally, reassured by Calvart's reports, the States General agreed to operate in Overijssel, and Maurice began to organise forces for a siege of Grol.³

No sooner had an army been assembled, however, than Buzanval presented a demand for the immediate despatch of the promised troops. Maurice, ordered to obey, refused to attempt Grol with the troops left under his command, and there was much bitterness that so fine a chance of an easy success had been thrown away, especially when it became clear that the auxiliary force, commanded again by Count Philip, arrived much too soon for Bouillon to use it.⁴ The annoyance of Maurice and the Council of State stemmed largely, however, from the fact that neither had been consulted in the decision.⁵ The prince applied himself at once to the not inconsiderable problems of moving a relatively small corps overland to join Bouillon at Sedan, skirting

-
- 1 Bor (31), 846; Maurice to William Louis, 4 Sep: KHA A22IX A 76; PRO/ SP84/49/129.
 - 2 Letters of 6 Aug from Calvart (ARA SG 6748I) & Saily (ibid) 6750). Vere supported a lobby led by the Zeelanders which wanted to see a Flanders campaign in 1595 to follow up the Twente operations: PRO SP 84/49/126, 134 (Vere's letters, 9 & 25 Sept OS).
 - 3 Bor (31), 847; Kronijk, XX, 428; Res St G VIII, 182f. Holland agreed only reluctantly, declaring that "de verlossinge vanden Crygh" lay in action in Artois; Letter of Maurice, KHA A22IX A 77; Kemp, I, 399f; Dodt, VII, 267.
 - 4 Bor (31), 847-50; Reyd, 381f; Kemp, I, 404f. Cecil MSS 171/21.
 - 5 Duyck, I, 483; Kemp, I, 407.

or crossing hostile territory for the whole route. The move was accomplished with remarkable skill and speed, the junction of forces occurring on 10 November, less than a month after the problems were first investigated.¹

But the scene of proposed action represented a change from the original plan to operate in Artois. It was to be war east of the Maas rather than war on the Channel coast. This was not Henry's preference at all, as appears from the negotiations he conducted with Calvart throughout the Summer. The changing moves of Mansfeld's army, the feared ill-effects of a sea journey on the battleworthiness of Philip's troops, and the incorporation of hitherto neutral Cambrai into Henry's war plans, all tended to shift the emphasis eastwards,² but perhaps especially important was the opposition of Elizabeth to war in Artois and the refusal of the English to provide any assistance.³

There is also evidence to suggest that Maurice preferred the idea of campaigning in Luxemburg to that of operating further west. Both in March 1592 and February 1594 he had organised abortive surprise attacks on Maastricht,⁴ the capture of which he had long desired.

- 1 Letters of Council of State, 9 & 12 Oct, ARA SG 4879; Instruction to Philip, 13 Oct. ARA SG 6750. One of the worst problems was ensuring that Bouillon learnt of the exact rendez-vous. Spanish reaction was rapid, & prevented the first proposed junction, at Bastogne; Lefèvre, IV, 262, 272.
- 2 JvO, I, 263f, cf. Deventer, II, 21f.
- 3 Reyd, 350. Operations in Brittany continued this year, and Elizabeth was deeply involved. De Thou, XII, 56 & above, p.4.
- 4 Bor (29), 613f, (31), 783; Kemp, I, 383; Duyck, I, 69f. & 367; De Maasgouw, I, 1879, 61-2: the operation was planned in conjunction with a local nobleman. See also the comments in Chapter V above.

In January 1593, Philip had led a raiding force into Luxemburg which attacked St Vith, laid the country under contribution - and provided distant support for Bouillon who invaded simultaneously from the south. Philip had urged that he be reinforced so that towns captured in Luxemburg could be held, with the purpose of cutting the 'Spanish Road' and obtaining secure communication with France.¹ At that time the States General were not prepared to fight so far from home. The logistical and strategic problems were such as to preclude meaningful joint operations in Luxemburg, especially as the Spanish were to show themselves extremely sensitive to pressure there. Where, then, lay the attraction? Franco-Dutch control of the eastern Netherlands would of course strangle the Army of Flanders by cutting the 'Spanish Road', and there was the added advantage that the towns of Luxemburg were small and weak.² These possibilities were nonetheless very remote, certainly not within the powers of the French and Dutch forces operating there in the Winter of 1594/95. Probably, the States General were pleased to be able to help Henry and keep the war distant simultaneously, while Maurice was glad to assist the ambitions of his Huguenot brother-in-law, whose aim, Calvart wrote, was to march so far that "de viant gantschelyck op zyn hoed ware".³ In the meantime the

1 Bor (30), 678; Reyd, 312. Cf. De Thou, XI, 651, Lefèvre, IV, 140, 143 for Spanish fears.
 2 Meerbeeck, 795. Rodriguez Villa (ed), Francisco Verdugo, 45-6.
 3 4 Dec 1594, ARA SG 67481. Cf. Marsollier, 177-8.

French operations in Picardy on the frontiers of Artois and Hainault had become merely diversionary.¹

The duke's dreams and hopes of Maurice were to come to nothing, through a combination of inadequate strength, the reaction of the Spanish, and abnormal weather conditions. The events of 1595 were not to suggest that Spanish power in the Netherlands, even though undermined by mutiny and intense hatred of the new temporary governor Fuentes, could be readily defeated by the joint efforts of France and the Dutch.²

Bouillon invaded Luxemburg in January and rapidly secured Ivoix, La Ferté and Chevancy, following up with successes against Montmédy and Virton. But the terrible Winter weather, the shortage of money with which to pay the French troops, and the speed of the Spanish reaction, halted Bouillon's and Philip's progress before Thionville.³ Verdugo was sent by Fuentes with a large force, 7000 men, to reinforce old Peter Mansfeld, Governor of Luxemburg, and was able to reverse the Spanish losses by mid-Summer.⁴ But already in January, the allied forces were aware that they must be substantially reinforced if they were to make further progress. Bouillon complained that Philip's troops were much below the promised number

-
- 1 Petitot (ed), Mémoires de.. Cheverny, 286-7. Henry declared war in January, & Calvart predicted a great burst of military activity: Deventer, II, 44-8.
- 2 On Fuentes, Del Rio, & more critically, Isacker, Annales Soc. d'Emul. de Bruges, LX, 1910.
- 3 Bor (32), 7; Le Petit, 650; Meerbeeck, 796; Coloma, 102; Del Rio, 38.
- 4 Bor (32), 27-8; Coloma, 106-7; Del Rio, 40-1; Marsollier, 179-81.

(3000 infantry, 500 cavalry) and Philip urged the importance of continuing the offensive in order to draw off the forces of the enemy.¹

By the time the Count's letter was received, a measure had already been taken which was intended to allow easy communications with Bouillon: the surprise of neutral Huy by Charles de Heraugière, governor of Breda, on the night of 4/5 February.² The town offered a good stone bridge over the Maas and a castle reputed to be impregnable. The capture represented the brilliant culmination of a plan developed by Heraugière and a Liégéois Protestant apparently dating back to the Winter of 1593/4.³ In authorising the exploit Maurice was aware of the immense strategic advantage which could be obtained by having a secure post on the Maas at this juncture; the additional advantage, of being able to place wide areas under contribution, was important but secondary.⁴

That the bishopric of Liège was neutral, and had been recognised as such by the Dutch in 1590,⁵ was important only in that it meant that the castle of Huy was poorly guarded. Bishop Ernest was an old

-
- 1 The muster, in Kronijk XX, 50lf, was very wrong; Deventer, II, 43; ARA SG 6748II (Letter of 16 Nov); Philip to States General, 23 January, ARA SG 48801. Desertion & disease also took their toll.
 - 2 Bor (32), 10; Reyd, 402; Grotius, 361; Meerbeeck, 797; Duyck, I, 545f; Foullon, Historia Leodiensis, III, 352f; Bouille, Histoire..de Liège, III, 60f; Freson, 'Prise..de Huy', Bull. Inst. Arch. Lieg., XXIII, 1893.
 - 3 Though Heraugière's plotting dated to 1591: Res St Gen VII, 388.
 - 4 Llorente, 17; Chapeauville, Gesta, III, 590; Kemp, II, 133; Liège (U), 632, f. 104-6.
 - 5 Res St G VII, 135-8. Meteren, 316. The Spanish saw this as aiding the rebels! Lefèvre, IV, 87.

enemy from the Cologne war, being the incumbent of that See and the bishopric of Munster also. Colognese towns still had Spanish garrisons. The persecution of Protestants in his diocese was seen by the States General, sincerely if without legal grounds, as an abuse of neutrality.¹ It was common opinion that he favoured the Spanish, and his foundries certainly provided them with artillery and munitions.² In fact, Liège soil was ravaged indiscriminately by both sides and there could be no legal justification for the attack on Huy. Maurice's reasoning rested on military necessity, and the opportunity which was offered by negotiations with the Sichein mutineers, the disbanding of troops in Liégeois service,³ and the completion of Heraugière's plans.

It was claimed⁴ that there was a concerted plan to seize Liège, Hasselt and Maaseyk as well as Huy, through 'coups de main' organised with the Protestant communities in these towns. Fears were certainly expressed that this might occur,⁵ while Ernest's drastic punitive measures in Huy after its recapture indicate at the least a feeling of unease.⁶ It was also true that during the

-
- 1 E.g. letters 11/1/93, 19/7/94 (ARA SG 6029). Even after Huy they maintained this stance: 12/10/96, ARA SG 6030; Bax, Protestantisme in Luik; 338f.
- 2 De Thou, XII, 371; Polain, 'Ernest de Bavière', Bull Inst Arch Lieg, LIII, 1929; Fairon, *ibid*, XL, 1910. Supply of arms made Liège fair prey according to Grotius, De Lure Praedae, 115-6.
- 3 Letter of Heraugière, 22/11/94, ARA SG 4879.
- 4 Del Rio, 21-33, followed by Meerbeeck, 798; cf. Fruin, 149 & Bax, 352. The Spanish warned the elector in June that there were plots to seize Maaseyk: Lefèvre, IV, 311.
- 5 Del Rio, 32; Foullon, 354f; Freson, 76. But cf. Groen, I, 336-8.
- 6 Polain, Recueil des Ordonnances, 2, II, 154, 165; ~~Bax, 354-5.~~

Franco-Dutch negotiations of 1594 it had been suggested that the union of the allied troops should occur on Liégeois territory, but there was no sign that this meant an effort to overrun the country.¹ Plots were limited to a single anti-clerical pamphlet in Huy, and it was accepted finally that the attack itself had had but a "seul auteur".² A town like Hasselt was anyway too weakly fortified to serve a useful military purpose, even as a staging post.³

Huy, too, proved untenable, the "impregnable" castle crumbling before La Motte's cannon by 20 March.⁴ Maurice was prevented from moving to its relief by a thaw which led to massive flooding in the north; and the Sichem mutineers proved unwilling to assist.⁵

The most extraordinary aspect of the affair, however, was that no effort had been made to inform the French of Maurice's intentions, even though the States General had gone to the expense of appointing an agent in Liège specifically for the purpose of forwarding correspondence.⁶

-
- 1 Deventer, II, 21-9.
 - 2 Liège (U) 632, f. 108. Liège (V), 898, f. 202; 904, f. 374; 897, f. 305.
 - 3 Hemelrijk, Vlaamse Krijgsbouwkunde, 298
 - 4 Del Rio, 34-41, & Llorente, 17f, stress the importance to the Spanish of recapturing Huy; Reyd, 405; Heraugière's account, 24/3, ARA SG 48801.
 - 5 The mutiny was useful in other ways, see above, P41. Heraugière had been involved in the negotiations: 22/12, ARA SG 4879. Bodley reported a plan to attack a town half way to Huy, and stressed that by cutting the communications of the Spanish with Italy the attack would bring major changes in the situation: Cecil MSS 171/81. However, his main emphasis was on the potentially large revenue to be gained from contributions.
 - 6 Res St G VIII, 494. Secrecy must have prevented warning, although Liégeois chroniclers alleged collusion: Liège (V), 898, f. 200; 904, f. 374.

It was only after the event that Maurice wrote from the Hague, asking Bouillon to take responsibility for the security of Heraugière's small garrison, at a time when, of course, the message could not go via Liège.¹ The same weather conditions made this hope illusory, even if the duke could have arrived in time.² The joy of the States General at so easy a success, and their detailed preparations for the collection of contributions,³ were rendered nugatory by the inability of either ally to ensure that the town could be held.

The Luxemburg operations, and the Huy episode which arose from them, had consumed most of the attention of the Dutch, but represented only a small fraction of the plans of Henry IV, who entered upon the year with great hopes which were to be frustrated by the determination of Fuentes, the inadequacy of the King's own strength, and the refusal of the States General to share these ambitions.

Henry still believed that the most effective means of waging war was by joint operations against Flanders and Hainault,⁴ and in January he threatened that unless the Dutch reinforced their aid he would abandon his offensive plans, to the detriment of both.⁵ In February,

1 KHA 13XI A.10a.

2 Deventer, II, 49, 64, 69 (Calvart letters).

3 Res St G VIII, 380-4, 495; ARA Rdv.St 13, 25/2 & 3/3; Collins, I, 342; letters of Vere & Bodley, HMC Salis V, 101-112, & Gilpin, 163.

4 Kronijk, XX, 495.

5 Kronijk XXI, 53.

he was demanding a "notable exploit" from the States General as near as possible to the French frontier, and promising to assemble his army at Calais.¹ In April he was still promising to assist in a siege of Dunkirk.²

In reality, the chance of seizing the initiative had slipped from the hands of the allies. The French were having to support large armies to fight the war in Savoy,³ and Franche-Comté. This totally absorbed Henry's attention in the early Summer, having been driven by Dutch dilatoriness to remain on the defensive on his northern frontier.⁴ Nor had the Spanish wasted the long period of inaction granted them. Taking measures for the defence of Flanders and Brabant, Fuentes marched to the French frontier, relieved Chimay, stormed Catelet and then besieged Doullens, all as part of a plan to isolate Cambrai. The local French forces were entirely on the defensive, and an ill-disciplined French attempt to relieve Doullens was defeated with great loss on July 24.⁵ The town fell soon after and it became possible for the Spanish to make a serious attack on Cambrai, an event which Henry had been fearing since the winter.

1 ARA SG 6748II, Calvart 14 February.

2 Ibid 9 April

3 Ibid, Thomas Edmondes to Calvart, 25 January.

4 Mémoires de Cheverny, 293-5; ARA SG 6748II (31 May). This was the campaign which led to Mayenne's capitulation: Drouot, Mayenne et la Bourgogne, II, 391-422.

5 Del Rio, 43-79; Llorente, 29-81; Lanario, 110f; Gachard, Analectes Historiques, (1856), 30.

Beleaguered by his enemies on all sides, Henry could feel with justification that the Dutch were not making a comparable contribution to the war effort. The Council of State had urged the Provinces to recognise that with the concentration of the enemy on French affairs, there could be no better chance "te beheren offensivelijk tot voirdere extensie vander limiten en vervolginge van het goede succes" of 1594.¹ The determination of Maurice to get into the field early was also obvious.²

This enthusiasm was most markedly not shared by the States General. The immediate cause of inaction was the slowness of various provinces in granting money for the year. The absence of Philip's troops in France, the eruption of the dispute in East Friesland, and the conflict between Holland and Zeeland over excise duties, all explained the situation, but the real reason was the relaxation of enemy pressure and the completion of the frontiers of the most important provinces.³

These difficulties were not accepted by the French as reasonable excuses. The failure to send reinforcements for Philip, and his return to the Netherlands (by sea), with his cavalry in mutiny,⁴ at a crucial stage

1 Proposal of 26 November 1594, ARA SG 4879.

2 Collins, I, 342; HMC Salis V, 212; Maurice to Bouillon, 23 Jun KHA13XIA-10a.

3 Reyd, 407-9; Bor (32), 30; HMC Salis V, 182, 212; Kronijk, XXI, 215-29, 285, 316; Duyck, I, 561-85.

4 The States General had already resisted a call for the return of certain English forces on the grounds they were needed for defence against a Spanish invasion - ARA SG 5882 II, 21 Dec.

4 Kronijk XXI, 214, 230, 234. The compensation of money to raise a Gascon regiment (Res St G VIII, 415f, Res Holl 1595, 160) was of no immediate use. Maurice was angry: Letter of 23 June, no. 2 above.

during Verdugo's counter-offensive in Luxemburg, not surprisingly angered Henry who complained to Buzanval that

il z semblent quilz ayent voulu embarquer
contre le Roy d'Espagne pour en estre spectateurs
et acquerir une oisivité. 1

Even when it was agreed in principle to do something to help Henry, it was necessary to convince Holland and Zeeland that a small, cheap corps in Brabant would do nothing to relieve Fuentes's pressure on France, whatever it might do to salve those provinces' collective consciences. The resolution was taken to try once more to take Grol, and complete the task abandoned the previous Summer.² It was probably the pressure of William Louis, anxious about Emden, which tilted the decision this way and against the proposal to attack 's Hertogenbosch in Brabant. Neither option really pleased the French, who saw an invasion of Flanders as the only way to divert Fuentes.³

In the event, the army which marched on Grol in the middle of July proved inadequate for the task, Maurice being thwarted by the speed and boldness of the 95-year-old Mondragon, whose chief advantage over his opponent was his willingness to fight a battle.⁴

1 Kronijk, XXI, 251-4; Bor (32), 30; ARA SG 6748II, 8 & 31 May.

2 Reyd, 408; Bor (32), 41; Kemp, I, 136; Duyck, I, 581, 603.

3 ARA SG 6748II, 13 July. This letter is misdated by Deventer, II, 70.

4 Res St G VIII, 394f; Kemp, I, 138f; Groen, I, 340; Duyck, I, 619f. An earlier start could have ensured success: cf. Dotd, VII, 271.

The Prince's decision, quite in line with his policy of taking no unnecessary risks, especially in a region where both the loyalty and strength of the local towns was in doubt,¹ produced disappointment and frustration amongst those who had expected better things,² including the French. Ironically, far from being able to divert Fuentes from Doullens and Cambrai, the States army had to be maintained fruitlessly in the field to prevent Mondragon sending his troops to the French frontier. The small size of the force, weakened still further by a cavalry defeat in which Philip was killed, meant that the costs of a defensive war were incurred and no benefit obtained.³ The successful campaign of Mondragon, on the other hand, caused jubilation in the Spanish camp,⁴ representing as it did the first defeat of any consequence suffered by Maurice.

One consequence was that Henry decided that Cambrai could be relieved only by direct action from his side. He wrote demanding another expeditionary force, stressing once more the common interest.⁵ Once again, the States General made no difficulties at all about sending two regiments, under Justin of Nassau, and, since they arrived too late to save Cambrai, allowed them to stay for Henry's siege of La Fère. It must have been obvious

1 Cecil MSS, 33/41.

2 Cecil MSS, 33/46; 'Brieven van Buzanval', BeM, 1962, 187, Duplessis-Mornay, VI, 296. HMC Salis V, 529.

3 6200 Foot, 1000 horse in October, Bor (32), 47.

4 Kronijk, XXI, 363; Del Rio, 84-9. Cf. Havré's intercepted letter, 4 August: ARA SG 7472.

5 Recueil, IV, 403; Deventer, II, 73f; Kronijk, XXI, 378.

that there was no chance of them arriving in time for Cambrai but it was an opportunity to assist without making too great an exertion, and also of keeping the war in France. There was also some fear that Henry might make a separate peace unless he received more positive co-operation.¹

Henry, his high hopes of the preceding Winter lying in ruins, but at last more secure in his own kingdom, was still optimistic about the chance of victory in 159~~4~~⁶,² claiming that he would not rest until the Spanish were driven from the Netherlands, and denying rumours of peace negotiations.³ The States General were to prove willing once again to meet most of his demands, save that for an active campaign by Maurice. The maritime provinces showed no such reluctance, however, in providing a fleet and releasing Vere with 2000 English troops for the Cadiz expedition, which promised more tangible rewards than an expensive field army.⁴ Of any urgency in finding the money for such an army there was no sign.

But while the Dutch dithered, and the French fumbled and frittered away their strength at La Fère,⁵ the Spanish acted with determination. The Archduke Albert

1 HMC Salis V, 373; Kronijk, XXI, 527; Collins, I, 351; Letters of Justin, 29 Oct, 2, 13 & 29 Nov ARA SG 6750.

2 Bor (32), 48; JvO, I, 330.

3 Bor (33), 151; Recueil, IV, 485, 494.

4 Res St G IX, 91-4; Res Holl 1596, 69; HMC Salis VI, 25, 39; Collins, I, 367f.

5 ARA SG 6748II, 8 Jan, 18 Feb, 12 Mar. ARA SG 6750, 26 Mar: letters from Calvart & Justin charting the siege's slow progress, & enemy plans to relieve the town. Fuentes hoped to exploit the slowness of the siege: Lefèvre, IV, 330.

had come equipped with money and reinforcements, and with an army of some 18,000 fell on Calais, storming both town and castle within two weeks, at the end of April.¹ This, and the fall of Ardres a few days later, was a shattering blow to Henry's plans. Yet there had been warnings of a plan to attack Calais from the previous Winter, and it is extraordinary that no better measures for its defence had been taken.² True though it was that control of Calais meant much also to the Dutch and English, it was remarkable that Henry should have relied upon his allies for the security of the town.³ Maurice was at sea with troops within days but was even so too late.⁴ Elizabeth's role, with her demand for the handing over of the town, was more shameful, but totally academic.⁵ Meanwhile, with the French exhausted by the siege of La Fère and his frontiers secured, the Archduke turned his attention to the Dutch. Without a field army, Maurice could not do more than react to Albert's moves. After threatening both Ostend and Breda, the Spanish attacked Hulst in July, the Governor, Solms, capitulating on 20 August.⁶

1 Llorente, 134-153; Coloma, 128-131; Lefèvre, IV, 355f.

2 Eg. ARA SG 6748II, 25 Nov; Collins, I, 378; Reyd, 436; Le Petit, 662.

3 ARA SG 6748II, 12 April; Ibid 6750, 19 April.

4 Kemp, 157-9; Res St G IX, 65f; HMC Salis VI, 132, 140, RA Zeeland 902, 10 April.

5 Recueil, IV, 571-5; Deventer, II, 104; Essex's letters in Devereux, Lives & Letters, 335-7; the English arrangements in Acts of Privy Council, NS, XXV, 338-40, 351. The garrison itself fought badly: ARA SG 6750, 7 June. Cf. Lennel, 'Siège de Calais', Annales de l'Est et du Nord, I, 1905, 554f.

6 Llorente, 162-94; Coloma, 128-46; Le Petit, 664-9; Bor (36), 220f; Reyd, 446f; Res Holl 1596, 275, 322; Groen, I, 371; Duyck, II, 76-129; Grotius, 428f. Von Solms-Laubach Geschichte des Hauses Solms (1865), 196f.

The German Count was blamed by many for surrendering too soon, and the States of Zeeland dismissed him from their service.¹ But he was really just a convenient scapegoat, as more informed opinion saw. No town could resist a determined attacker indefinitely, and Hulst could only have been saved had Maurice been able to place a substantial field army in its vicinity before the Spanish attack was developed.² It had been Zeeland's slowness in paying its quota which was in large measure responsible both for the inadequate state of the fortifications of the town, and the inability of the States to field an army.³ The parsimony or shortsightedness which had left the United Provinces without an army in the field led thus to a more substantial loss: munitions and provisions valued at 400,000 gulden, and control over much of Flanders.⁴ The Dutch found themselves making requests for troops (from England) and diversions (from France) of the type they had been receiving for the previous seven years. Elizabeth had been unable to assist, deeply involved in Ireland and in naval operations.⁵ Henry had mounted a small operation to raid Artois and Hainault,⁶ too late to save Hulst, but sufficient to restrain an already exhausted and weakened enemy from further attacks, which

-
- 1 HMC Salis VI, 343, 353; Collins, II, 2, 3; Dodt, VII, 274.
 2 Reyd, 447; Bor (33), 227-8; HMC Salis VI, 258, 74; Buzanval, 208, Duyck, II, 5.
 3 R A Zeeland 902, 12 July, 13 Aug. It was estimated that necessary repairs for all frontier fortresses would cost fl 680,000: ARA SG 4883I, 10 Feb.
 4 Bor (33), 227; Duyck, II, 123. ARA SG 5883I, 2 & 22 Aug.
 5 Reported by Caron, Deventer, II, 125f.
 6 An action already planned; ARA SG 6750, 7 July; Res St G IX, 76f; Deventer, II, 128. Frangipani, I, 197, 211, 228. Lefèvre, IV, 382.

the United Provinces were still in no condition to resist.¹ The United Provinces had become so confident in the diversionary power of the French war that they had neglected their own defences, and they were fortunate to escape as lightly as they did.

The Hulst campaign coincided with negotiations instituted by the French for the formation of a regular Triple Alliance between the English, French and Dutch. The keenness of the States General stemmed from a desire to embroil Henry more deeply in war and minimise the risk of a separate peace.² The French king was concerned that if he was to continue the war his allies should accept firm military commitments of the sort they had hitherto been reluctant to put into practise. A desire for combined operations in the western provinces underlay the whole of the negotiations conducted by Bouillon in London and The Hague.³ The Dutch undertook to establish a field army of 9,000 specifically to co-operate with a French army based in Picardy which would comprise 12,500 men, in addition to troops supported by the Dutch subsidy, volunteer noble cavalry, and English forces.⁴ Urgency was added to the discussions

1 Groen, I, 374; Reyd, 454. Zeeland was exposed by the loss of Hulst. Cf. Gilpin's prediction, HMC De Lisle, II, 215.

2 Res St G IX, 75-9; Res Holl 1596, 408-14, 418-28.

3 ARA SG 6750, 7 June, 17 Nov.; Ibid 6748II, 12 Sept. Cf. Frangipani, I, 270, 278.

4 Res St G IX, 84; Bor (33), 226; Kemp, I, 163-7; Duyck, II, 172-84; Llorente, 195; reports of Bax & Sedlnisky, ARA SG 4885II, 10 & 11 November.

by the knowledge that Albert was making large new levies of troops, and the news of the equipment of a new Spanish Armada, thought to be destined for Ireland.

The willingness of the Dutch to assist was tested during the negotiations by a French request for a diversion in November. Maurice decided on a large raid into Brabant but was prevented by weather conditions, and enemy defensive precautions.¹ What was to be tested during the 1597 campaign, however, was more than willingness. The pattern of the war was not much changed by the conclusion of the Triple Alliance.

Henry wrote to the States General on 11 January urging that the initiative be seized and the war carried onto enemy soil²; entirely coincidentally, two weeks later Maurice won a great opportunist victory at Turnhout, destroying an exposed Spanish force of four veteran regiments, and thereby causing immense disruption to the Archduke's plans,³ already hopelessly compromised by the bankruptcy of Spain. In theory, there could be no better situation in which the Triple Alliance could

1 Res St G IX, 84; Bor (33), 226; Kemp, I, 163-7; Duyck, II, 172-84; Llorente, 195; reports of Bax & Sedlnisky, ARA SG 4885II, 10 & 11 November.

2 Recueil, IV, 670.

3 Bor (34), 304; Reyd, 476; Duyck, II, 211f.; Grotius, 481; Le Petit, 612-6; Coloma, 147-9; Carnero, 401-3 Discourse..of the late overthrowe (1597); Vere, Commentaries, 72-80; HMC Salis VII, 26-70. Henry was delighted: ARA SG 12550/17, 2 Feb., and used the opportunity to demand that the joint plans be advanced. CF. Recueil, IV, 682.

come into play. The common action held most likely was a combined siege of Calais,¹ which Vere was to be found urging. In reality, many difficulties were made: Maurice was reluctant to operate deep in Flanders,² and Henry was suspicious of English long-term ambitions for the town.³ Elizabeth's deep involvement in Ireland was also to interfere with the joint plans, bringing a large reduction in the number of English troops promised. Acute uncertainty characterised the whole negotiation from the beginning, and there was little sign of any agreement when that uncertainty was finally ended.⁴

The event which transformed the situation was the surprise of Amiens by Portocarrero, governor of Doullens, in March.⁵ The fall of the city was a serious blow to the prestige of Henry, and in material terms involved the loss of all the munitions and supplies collected there for the Spring campaign. All Henry's plans had to be abandoned, and the whole strength of France poured into an effort to recapture the city - an exhausting siege which did not achieve its object until the end of September. Albert's desperate attempts to relieve Amiens were of no avail, with his forces unpaid and mutinous. How he could have managed against

-
- 1 The Spanish certainly expected it. See Frangipani, I, 229, 272; Lefèvre, IV, 406.
 - 2 HMC Salis VII, 1-2; Cecil MSS 37/54; Reyd, 491-2.
 - 3 ARA SG 12550/17, 27 February. CF. KB 73C32, 3-5.
 - 4 HMC Salis VII, 74-6; Deventer, II, 141f.; Res St G IX 403f.
 - 5 Llorente, 209-377, for the surprise & siege of Amiens.

an allied offensive without conceding substantial territory is difficult to see; truly Portocarrero's coup had a deep impact.¹

Shortage of money and internal disputes were also the reason advanced by the Dutch for their failure to take the field to divert the Archduke's relief efforts.² Both Buzanval and the English forcefully indicated that the dispute between Holland and Zeeland over Licents was pernicious to the working of the alliance,³ while the quarters of Gelderland were also withholding their quota because of internal disputes.⁴ In addition, and arguably nearly as significantly, a "great ardour" for the defensive was observed, and there was even a sense of relief that the war would again be fought on French soil.⁵ The Nassau princes however wanted action, William Louis fearing that if they did not take the field, Henry would call for the despatch of troops, "a quoy les Estats, a cause d'espargner les deniers, consentiront facilement", but which would represent a false economy.⁶ Henry, certainly, made the predictable demands for Dutch action to reduce pressure on him,

-
- 1 ARA SG 12550/17, 25 March. Memoires..de Cheverny, 321-30; HMC Salis VII, 88, 97, 127; Recueil, VIII, 641; JvO, I, 358; Frangipani, II, 71: Amiens "sara causa tal successo o d'un a buonaguerra o d'una buona pace". KB 73C32, 34-7.
 - 2 Bor (34), 324; Reyd, 492; Van den Hoek, Veldtocht ... van 1597 (1914), 49.
 - 3 KB 73C32 90-2; ARA Holl 2629e, 12 April; PRO SP 84/54/74, 76, 78, 167.
 - 4 ARA SG 4886II, 5 April
 - 5 HMC Salis VII, 119, letter of Norris. It would give Maurice "a fair field to walk", he rightly predicted. KB 73C32, 96-9. HMC De Lisle, II, 242 (letter of Vere).
 - 6 KHA A22IXA-87. Maurice agreed, *ibid* 88. Cf. KB73C32, 103.

suggesting that if they planned a mere "Petite parade d'armée" they would do better to send him 4000 men.¹

By then, the States General had resolved on a campaign of their own, leaving its details to the Princes.² There was little doubt where they would decide to act. After capturing Rheinberg and Meurs by early September, in order to guard his rear, Maurice completed the reconquest of the Twente, Overijssel and Lingon, taking altogether nine fortresses and five castles.³ Part of the responsibility lay with his opponent Frederick van den Berg, who in trying to hold all the towns with few troops lost them all.⁴ Henry would have preferred the Dutch to bring their army back to Brabant or Flanders after Rheinberg, claiming that the expulsion of the Spanish from the Netherlands was still a strong possibility.⁵

Maurice's campaign lasted well into November, costs and problems notwithstanding. Perhaps he was resolved to impress Henry with his determination, to show what the United Provinces could achieve. But

1 Res St G, IX, 408, 415, 418; KB 73C32, 39-48; Bor (34), 327f. Buzanval, 22; Recueil, IV, 796; cf. HMC Salis VIII, 243.

2 KB 73C32, 106.

3 Maurice's letters, Kemp, II, 177-91; Dodt, VII, 278-83; Groen, I, 381-6; Collins, II, 56-60; Duyck, II, 307-437; Grotius, 505-23; Le Petit, 676-80. Maurice was fulfilling a promise made to the states of Gelderland in Nov 1595: RA Geld, III, 1 (16). Zeeland still pressed for an operation to retake Hulst: KB 73C32, & 58, a proposal urged by Buzanval also: Ibid. 162-3, although he recognized it as improbable.

4 Coloma, 171-4. Cf. Frangipani, II, 174, 183, 235.

5 Recueil, IV, 838.

more likely he was aware that opportunities did not recur, and that the rumours of peace negotiations between France and Spain meant that the defences of the state might soon be under new pressure, pressure which in the east at least they were not in a condition to resist.¹

The events of 1597 sounded the knell of the Triple Alliance. In November Buzanval gave a firm warning of Henry's intention to end a war which for him had been expensive and fruitless.² Ever hopeful, the States General agreed to provide aid for a campaign in Brittany, the siege of Nantes.³ Oldenbarnevelt presented a detailed programme of joint military operations recommending combined campaigns either in the east, which Maurice preferred, or in Flanders, in which Henry would be assisted by a large Dutch field army.⁴ The States readiness to promise 'vigorous' actions wherever Henry chose, their sudden stressing of the possibility that the Walloons might rise against the Spanish,⁵ and the immediate grant of more aid for Brittany,⁶ are all indicative of the sudden awareness that the situation of the United Provinces was about to undergo a dramatic change for the worse: But neither

1 Groen, I, 389; Collins, II, 73; Negotiations were reported in July: JvO, I, 356; ARA SG 6750 (9 July). They began seriously in October: Nouaillac, Villeroy,, 366-72.

2 Bor (34), 398, 400; KB 73C32, 48-50.

3 Ibid 399; Res St G XI, 47, 51; Res Holl 1598, 131-2.

4 Deventer, II, 173-6; Cf. Bor (35), 433.

5 KB 73C32, 168-72, 181.

6 KB 73C32, 183.

the new offers nor the high-powered embassy of Oldenbarnevelt and Justin of Nassau could deter Henry from making the peace of Vervins in May, 1598.¹ The king preferred peace and the restitution of his lost towns to promises which he had heard before.

Since 1589, the greater proportion of Spanish resources had been committed to war against Henry of Navarre. The aid granted him by Elizabeth and the Dutch had been substantial² if not unstinting, and Henry was certainly grateful for help without which he might not have succeeded in winning his own kingdom. It was not, however, a question of altruism for the United Provinces to assist France. As has been seen, from the very beginning of Parma's diversion, the States General recognised the advantage that accrued to them thereby. They accepted, apparently without hesitation, the view that the outcome of the war in France, if it were to be victory for either side, would determine the result of their own struggle. It is in the light of these considerations that the actions of the Dutch should be judged.

What is remarkable from a study of these ten years is the almost total independence of the States General in all but the most basic issue, the need to prevent the defeat of Henry. Willingness to co-operate in

1 Res St G X, 44f, 53f; Deventer, II, 176f; Den Tex, Oldenbarnevelt, II, 294f.

2 See Table III.

combined military operations was never transformed into practical measures on a scale which would have been militarily valuable. Part of the responsibility for this lies with Maurice's own strategic preferences,¹ the rest with the independent strategy pursued in the years 1590 to 1594. The events of this period represent a seizing of the opportunity to secure the frontiers of Zeeland, Holland, Utrecht and Friesland, and insofar that an army was maintained in the field, the Dutch could - and did - claim that they were assisting their ally with diversions.

It was after Groningen that a change set in. The opportunities to clear the Spanish from the whole of the Netherlands north of the Rhine were present for three years before they were finally exploited. The advantages of such an action were pressing and material: the extension of territory and revenue, and the reinforcement of the country's weakest frontier.² Indeed, Oldenbarnevelt complained that with France out of the war, the weak new conquests would be a greater liability than an asset.³ Brought sooner under control, those weaknesses could have been remedied. Maurice's attention could then have been turned southward towards

1 See above, 215.

2 See Maurice's complaints in 1598, ARA SG 4889I (11 Nov); Bor (35), 487; Cf. ARA RdvSt 16 (22 Jan) & Cecil MSS 177/134.

3 KB 73C32, 166.

Brabant or Flanders, moves which alone were capable of seriously hurting Spanish power or of meeting Henry IV's wishes.

Financial weakness played its part, of course, in the relaxation of effort, but the slowness and inactivity which prevented the Dutch seizing the military initiative did not in the end save the United Provinces any money.¹ It was not so much shortage of money,² from which all the combatants suffered, but provincial separatism and independence to the point of simple bloody-mindedness,³ as it struck some observers, which stood in the way of decisive action, however much the Nassau princes and the Council of State urged military necessity. It is also partly true that, as Gilpin noted,⁴ the maritime provinces had become "generally given to their ease and gaynes", an attitude which, for example, allowed them to dismiss the disasters of 1596 as a mere change in the fortune of war,⁵ to be treated fatalistically. Crucial though the ten years were for the survival of the United Provinces, the opportunity to secure the frontiers of the state was allowed to slip before the task was completed, and the opportunity to drive the Spanish from

-
- 1 War costs rose from 3m gulden in 1588/9 to 5m in 1597/8. (Table V).
 - 2 1590-98 was a period of rapidly increasing trade: Becht, Statistische Gegevens, Table I; Christensen, Dutch Trade to Baltic, 446-7.
 - 3 Gilpin on Zeeland in October 1597, Collins, II, 73. Cf. Poel 'Particularisme van Zeeland', Archief Zeeuw sch Gen. Wet. (1929), esp 40-5.
 - 4 Cecil MSS 174/140 (February 1598).
 - 5 Res St G IX, 53.

the Netherlands was never seriously considered, the crippling mutinies which periodically paralysed Spanish efforts especially after 1595 being employed merely as further excuse for inactivity.

That this much larger aim was a practical possibility is anyway very dubious. Spanish power was often very shaky, but Henry IV alone was not capable of overthrowing it, admitting to Buzanval in 1594¹

que mes moyens ne sont encores telz que seroit
necessaire pour bien accompagner ma volonte.

The French king's financial weakness was crippling, although with foreign loans he managed a remarkably sustained military effort. But even when able to maintain a large army, inherent structural weaknesses in his military strength held up his plans. Numerically and qualitatively strong in his cavalry arm, although even here cursed by the complete insouciance with which his nobility drifted in and out of the army, Henry was so short of reliable infantry that a successful campaign in the highly urbanised Netherlands was beyond his powers.² In the critical campaign of 1592 Henry was in desperate need of a Dutch infantry force to provide a core for his army.³ In 1595, Calvart wrote, the Dutch auxiliaries represented the only reliable element, the Swiss being mutinous for pay and the French "going and coming".⁴

1 Kronijk, XX, 495.

2 Poirson, IV, 635-8. Cf. Kronijk XIX, 91.

3 Kronijk, XIX, 23, 60, 70.

4 ARA SG 6750, 16 September.

Related to this weakness was a comparable incompetence in siege warfare, the lessons of the siege of Rouen¹ remaining largely unlearnt five years later at the siege of Amiens.² The weakness of the French in these vital elements of contemporary warfare precluded any decisive success against the Spanish Netherlands in the absence of a simultaneous sustained effort by Henry's allies.

That effort, it has been shown, was not made. While prepared to respond to Henry's cries for help, Elizabeth and the States General were unwilling to take the steps which would have transformed this defensive aid into positive measures for joint offensives. There were of course many reasons for this. The difficulty for the sixteenth century state of gathering money and troops according to a precise timetable was great if not insuperable. The problems of communications between territorially separated allies, so vitally important for combined operations in the face of a united enemy, were again enormous: but they were overcome effectively enough in 1594/5 in Luxemburg, and during the efforts to save Calais in 1596. The inevitable mutual suspicion between England and France, however, was not part of the Dutch situation.

1 Lloyd, 163f.

2 HMC Salis VII, 360-1; cf. Poirson, 646-8, quoting Henry, "Que nous avions plus combattu que les Holandais, et eux mieux fait la guerre que nous".

The conclusion, therefore, must be that short-term provincial interests clouded the clear appreciation that

it is the French warres must serve the turn & find thennemy occupied or else these men must retourn to theyr defensyve. 1

It is only because this principle was so well recognised in the United Provinces that it is possible to criticise their actions, especially after 1594. Plain self-interest dictated that the ten years grace ought to have been better used.² Periodic alarms at rumours of Franco-Spanish peace negotiations prove that the States General were aware that Henry would not fight on without the full co-operation of his allies. When they woke up to the fact in 1598 it was too late. Supported now only by the ageing and ever more pacifically inclined Elizabeth,³ the years of the offensive in which options freely available had not been taken up were to be followed by years of at times desperate defence in which the ability to dictate events was largely in the hands of the enemy.

1 Gilpin to Essex, 23 July 1595; Cecil MSS 172/5.

2 The point was made again by a pamphleteer during the crisis of 1605: Knuttel 1309.

3 For fears that the Queen would make peace, KB 73C32, 166-7.

TABLE III

DUTCH AID TO HENRY IV, 1588-1598.

YEAR.	SUBSIDY in Fl.	AS % OF BUDGET.	MUNITIONS sold or loan	SHIPS	EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.
1588	-	-	40,000lb. pdr 4 cannon ¹	-	-
1589	90,000 pd in '90	c.3	10,000lb. pdr 10,000lb. match 200 arquebuses	-	-
1590			40,000lb. pdr	6	-
1591	100,000	c.3	60,000lb. pdr 8 cannon, ² misc. munitions	6	-
1592	200,000 ³	c.6	2 cannon (Dec.)	12	Count Philip & 20 companies, March- August.
1593	100,000 ⁴	c.3	30,000lb. pdr for Calais, Boul- ogne & Ardres	-	-
1594	200,000 ⁵	c.6	20,000lb. pdr for frontier 20,000lb. pdr for Brittany	10	Count Philip & 22 companies foot, ⁵ horse, November - May '95. ⁶
1595	200,000 ⁷	c.5	30,000lb. pdr in August, 50,000lb. pdr in December	-	Justin & 20 com- panies, October - June '96. ⁸
1596	200,000 ⁹	c.5	20,000lb. pdr for Calais	-	-
1597	450,000 ¹⁰	c.8.5	50,000lb. pdr for Brittany 10,000lb. ball ¹¹	-	-
1598	450,000	c.9	-	12 ¹²	-
Total					
	1,990,000		370,000lb. pdr ¹³		

Sources : Res. St. Gen. ; Res. Holland ; Kronijk ; Raa & Bas, II, 374-5.

- Aid offered to Henry as King of Navarre.
- For the siege of Rouen.
- The cost of aid for Rouen, 1591-2, was fl. 183,288 (Kronijk, XIX, 549-60).
- For a German regiment of foot.
- For a Swiss regiment and 500 horse.
- Operations in Luxemburg.
- For a Gascon regiment of foot.
- For the relief of Cambrai then the siege of La Fère.
- For 2 French regiments.
- Under the terms of the Triple Alliance, for 4,000 infantry.
- These were ordered by Henry IV through the agency of Balthasar de Moucheron, but the King approached the States General to try to get the Licent remitted : KB 73 C 32, 47.
- For operations against Nantes and Blavet.
- In 1594, gunpowder cost fl. 42 per 100 lbs at Amsterdam : at this rate the value of the powder was 155400 gulden. (Res. Holland).

VII

THE SIEGE OF OSTEND AND

ITS PLACE IN THE WAR,

1601 - 1604

The province of Flanders, which with Brabant formed the core of the Spanish-controlled Netherlands, was of great importance to all the parties which had an interest in the wars of the Low Countries. In 1600, it had been the scene of Maurice's great victory in the dunes at Nieuwpoort, and the courts of anti-Hapsburg Europe had rejoiced at the first defeat suffered by a Spanish army in the open field for more than thirty years. The victory had had no fruits, however. The avowed aim of Maurice's invasion of Flanders had not been fulfilled. From the Flemish ports of Dunkirk and Sluis pirates and privateers, and the galleys of Frederick Spinola, wrought havoc amongst Dutch shipping in the Channel, on the North Sea fishing banks, and in the estuaries of Zeeland. These attacks, which posed a real threat to the crucial trading lifeline of the United Provinces, remained unaffected, and ensured that the attention of the leaders of Holland and Zeeland would remain focussed on Flanders.¹

However, while Flanders thus threatened the vital interest of the rebellious provinces, it was itself continually threatened by the garrison of Ostend. From behind its ramparts raiders and freebooters had for years devastated the province far and wide, and levied contributions.² Parma had rejected Flemish pleas

1 See Graefe in Marine Rundschau, 27, 1922, 365-9 & Blok in BeM, 1898, 1-67. For further analysis, see Chapters IV & V above.

2 See Chap III, above.

to attack Ostend in 1587, taking Sluis instead.¹ Ever since, those pleas had been regularly repeated, along with offers of special subsidies. Albert had turned them down again in 1596,² but the attempts to contain the garrison were proving futile and, with the construction of forts in 1599, very expensive.³ Pressure was building up from many quarters, and it may be assumed that the events of 1600, where Ostend had permitted even the cautious Maurice to invade Flanders, were decisive in persuading the archduke to accept an offer of 600,000 ducats to pay for a siege of the town.⁴

With the benefit of strategic hindsight, this decision may be seen as critical in determining the course of events over the next four years. The epic siege was to capture the imagination of contemporary and later historians alike, but at a more material level it can be seen as a vast and ultimately decisive diversion which cost the Spanish government their not unjustified hope of a victory over the northern provinces. The treaty of Vervins and the obvious war-weariness of England had permitted the first major Spanish offensives against the United Provinces for ten years in

-
- 1 Lefèvre, III, 225, & cf. 365, for another refusal in 1588, when he claimed Ostend was too strong to attack.
 2 Grimston, 3-6; Carnero, 301.
 3 Van Dam van Isselt in BVG0, 1918.
 4 Gachard, Actes des Etats-Generaux de 1600, 149, 536, 772; Carnero, 481-3; Lanario, 157; Croy, 21-3; Frangipani, III, 65-7; the "Avis" of 1598, ed Brants, in Bull CRH 81 (1912), 349, & 83 (1912), 272.

1598-9, and these against the most vital and vulnerable frontiers, on the river line and beyond the Rhine respectively. When this last route of attack was used again in 1605-6, the sweeping successes of Spinola despite a crippling shortage of money may lead to justifiable speculation that the course of the war might have been very different had Ostend, the one attackable Dutch town which could not be starved out, been left alone, and the seat of war transferred to the Rhine. It is true that until Spinola's arrival in 1602/3 the Spanish army was rendered nearly impotent by mutinies for pay:¹ but it cost more to maintain the army on friendly soil in Flanders than it would have done on neutral or enemy territory.²

Of course, Ostend was important to the United Provinces as an outpost of Zeeland's defences and as a weapon which continually disputed the Spanish control of Flanders, and its rapid loss might have been disastrous.³ The high value attached to its retention by Elizabeth and Henry IV was to make the siege a focal point of international diplomacy, despite the involvement of Elizabeth in Ireland and of Henry with Savoy, the

1 G Parker, 247-51, 291-2, 294, gives the figures for financial receipts and the continuous state of mutiny.

2 Grimston, *op cit*, 4. See Chapter II, p24f. above.

3 E.g. Wigmore's comments, Cecil MSS 182/147.

Biron conspiracy and other preoccupations. The question of relieving Ostend was to dominate the strategic thinking of the Republic, and to reveal the close relationship between that strategy and wider political and diplomatic issues.

The principal concern of Elizabeth, of course, was to maintain a foothold in Flanders and deny the use of its harbours to an enemy. She was to prove far more generous in contributing to the defence of the town than she would have been in reinforcing a States army on the Rhine. For Henry IV, the siege became an integral part of his cold war with the Habsburg empire,¹ and Ostend rapidly assumed the role of a pawn in the intricate game of diplomatic chess played between the old partners of the Triple Alliance as they all tried to achieve their own ends with someone else bearing as much of the cost and the fighting as possible. Throughout, the States General and Oldenbarnevelt tried to persuade Henry to re-enter the war, but they were to be thwarted by the reluctance of the French king and the unwillingness of Maurice to fulfil the military preconditions demanded by Henry for his intervention.

At the outset, in the Spring of 1601, there was fear and uncertainty on both sides. The States General were expecting an attack on Ostend at almost any moment,²

1 Poirson, Histoire de règne de Henri IV, IV, 1-75, & Philippson, Heinrich IV und Philipp III, I, 53-4, 234-9, give good summaries of the aims of French policies. For a reassessment, J Hayden in JMH, 45, 1973.

2 KB 73C32, 833. Duyck, III, 15-45; Res Holl 1601, 66.

but the Archduke was himself complaining that he had far too little money and far too few troops to resist the Dutch, let alone take the offensive against them.¹ A subsidy from Spain arrived in due course, but external factors dictated when he would receive reinforcements. Troops destined for the Netherlands had been detained in Milan during the war between Henry IV and the duke of Savoy, and it was the conclusion of peace between them, to the intense disappointment of the United Provinces,² which allowed the forces so desperately needed by Albert to continue their march. At this stage, Henry viewed the consequences of his actions dispassionately, believing the Republic to be very strong,³ but the Spanish saw the arrival of the new units as betokening great hardships for the northern provinces.⁴ It was generally accepted that the archduke would attack Ostend once he was ready,⁵ but in the meantime the initiative lay with the States General, if they should prove themselves willing or able to use it. Two factors, as always, would determine the result: firstly and most essentially, the granting of the necessary Consents by the provinces to the demands of the Council of State and then, secondly, some level of agreement among civilian and

1 Col Doc 42, 390; Parker, loc cit.

2 Nouaillac, Aerssen to Valcke, 17 Feb, 14 Mar, 11 Apr, 99-104.

3 Recueil, V, 394 (17 Mar); cf. V, 383-5 (23 Feb) & Winwood, I, 309, to Cecil, 23 March.

4 KB 73C32, 865; an interview with the captive admiral of Aragon.

5 Winwood, I, 314, reported that Albert was ready on April 15, but he was still begging for money in May and June, Col Doc 42, 397-402, without which he could do nothing at all.

military leaders over the strategy to be followed during the year. In almost every campaign of this long war, the side seizing the initiative had been able to force the enemy to conform or take the consequences.¹ The four campaigns which revolved around the siege of Ostend, however, departed a long way from this accepted maxim. It was also to be a period when established principles of the offensive and defensive were to be overturned. The Archduke, taking the offensive against Ostend, found himself bearing the costs and consequences of a defensive war, while the Republic, motivating all its campaigns with the desire to save Ostend, found itself in a position to do as much as it pleased without ultimately being able to force its will upon the enemy.²

The financial question, as normal, caused the longest delays. Many debts remained from previous years and the troops not allocated to the payroll of a particular province, who had grown in number in 1600 with the desertion to the States of the garrisons of St Andries and Crevecoeur forts, were owed several months' back pay. Zealand, Friesland and Overijssel were proving especially slow, and great confusion was reported in the financial affairs of the Republic.³

-
- 1 As Buzanval predicted for 1606 also - KB 73C32, 857.
 2 The defensive was known to consume native resources, and demoralise the population, as success could only be negative. See Chap. II, above.
 3 Collins, II, 221, 223 (Gilpin letters). Dodt IV, 283, 285.

Responsibility did not lie solely with material reasons. Gerard van Renesse reported back to his masters, the States of Utrecht, as late as 21 May¹ complaining of the "slappichueyden ende nonchalance" of the country and urging the despatch of Utrecht's share of the 500,000 gulden for the field army, without which it was feared there would be mutinies. With all these delays - the first instalment of the French subsidy, worth 150,000 gulden, was not ready for despatch via Dieppe until the end of May² - the States lost the initial advantage of several months that they might have had over their impotent opponent. But they could still precede the Archduke into the field. Where, then, were they to operate?

Measures had already been taken to ensure Ostend against surprise attack: a new governor had been sent, along with reinforcements, and sums of money for the improvement of the fortifications,³ weakened by storm damage. On the positive side, Oldenbarnevelt and the States General were showing great interest in a new campaign in Flanders, ^{with} which Hulst - lost in 1596 - as the most likely objective. Negotiations between Elizabeth and the States envoy, Noel de Cañon, had

1 Dodt, IV, 287-8. The Staat van Oorlog was the same as in 1600, but a massive subsidy was granted to the Admiralties (900,000 fl).

2 Recueil V, 419, Henry to Rosny. Nouaillac, 111, Aerssen to Valcke, 26 May.

3 Res Holl 1601, 66, Res St G XI, 382, Duyck, IM, 40-44. Dodt, IV, 288-90 (29 May).

produced an English promise of some 4,000 extra troops in return for naval assistance.¹ The news that the Spanish garrison of Fort Isabella outside Ostend was in mutiny must have influenced these plans,² and produced one optional plan, to secure these forts with an English corps to be sent into Ostend, such as would make the town totally secure.³ The scheme, as outlined by Maurice to his cousin William, was to assemble 8000 men - the new English, the Zeeland regiment, and ten companies from Ostend - to attack Hulst. The rest of the army was to attack Rheinberg. This immense separation of forces produced a predictable critical reaction from the Frisian Stadhouder, who found the States's thinking "fort estrange".⁴ As usual taking his cousin's advice, Maurice proposed (May 30) that with the means available the best course was to attack Rheinberg: and if the Archduke left Flanders in order to protect that town, then it would be possible to bring the army rapidly back by water to attack Hulst.⁵ Maurice's plan was based on his awareness that the Spanish could assemble an army within 24 hours in Flanders. The speed of the Spanish reaction in 1600 and its nearly disastrous consequences must have been

-
- 1 Res Holl 1601, 173 (10 Apr) Kemp II, 311-14
Res St G, 20 Apr. Collins, II, 223.
2 Dodt IV, 290. Grimston, 6.
3 KB 73C32, 913
4 Groen, II, 80 (Maurice to William); 81-4,
(Williams's reply).
5 Res St G XI, 395.

fresh in his mind. Rheinberg was a safer option, and a worthwhile prize in its own right. The side holding it could control traffic on the Rhine, and seriously impede communication with the recruiting grounds of Germany.¹ For the States it was an additional bulwark for their weak eastern flank. At the beginning of June, therefore, orders were issued for the assembly of an army of 102 companies of foot and 33 of cavalry at Arnhem, with shipping to carry supplies and the artillery train. Sir Francis Vere was in England, organising the promised reinforcements. The town was invested by June 20, but progress was slowed by contrary winds which delayed the artillery, and the strength of the garrison.²

Reaction to the operation was not what the States must have hoped for. Elizabeth was angry that there was to be no campaign in Flanders, and the States had good reason to fear her temper. Worse still, the Archduke, now daily expecting the arrival of reinforcements from Italy, was showing no sign of leaving Flanders himself. No sooner had Maurice begun his siege than the States General began to have doubts.³

In fact, the Archduke remained inactive through both necessity and indecision. At a council of war, a number of his officers opposed his Ostend plan on the

1 Recueil V, 445. Lanario, 158-9. Croy, 19-20.
On Maurice's fears in Flanders, Cecil MSS, 182/104.

2 Kemp II, 314-5; Duyck III, 60-9; Collins, II, 224; Grotius, 696; Vervou, 105-6.

3 Kemp II, 315-9; Duyck III, 75. (Sec. Res St. G. 23 Jun)

ground that the enemy would be free to take towns in Brabant or Flanders "con que esta provincia rescivio mas daño que el que le hazia Ostende".¹ It was finally decided that it was possible to attack Ostend and relieve Rheinberg simultaneously. Carnero claims that this was due to Albert's desire to do something "digna de su valor" but it is surely more likely that the imminent arrival of the Italian forces, estimated at 9000, influenced this decision.² Count Hermann van den Berg set off for Rheinberg, and Albert went to Bruges. The States General and Maurice came to different conclusions about the significance of these moves. Maurice apparently took the view that Albert was either going to reduce his mutinous garrison in Fort Isabella, or was trying to draw the States forces away from Rheinberg, in the traditional way of relief by diversion.³ Both these events would ensue as much from a diversion as from a serious attack, and it was the States General, rather closer to the action in Flanders, who interpreted the Spanish move for what it was. A hectic flurry of defensive measures followed: the rushing in of all spare troops, the appointment of Francis Vere as governor on his own terms and the (unsuccessful) offer of 50,000 gulden to the Isabella men to change sides.⁴ They resolved to defend the

1 Carnero, 481.

2 Ibid 482.

3 A view widely shared: Duyck, IV, 83; Vervou 106; Brown at Flushing, Collins, II, 224; William Louis, Groen II, 96; Henry IV, Nouaillac, 114.

4 Res St G XI, 402f.; Duyck, III 89; Grimston, 7; Collins, II, 225.

town "by way of an army" and on July 7 wrote to Maurice demanding that he send 20 English companies to Ostend from his army.¹ This represented a reversion to an earlier plan, whereby the Spanish would be permitted to encamp before Ostend, and then assailed by an army of 9-10,000 which would be shipped to the town.² This scheme had been superseded long since, however. The prince was no doubt weary of the numerous changes of plan and determined to carry through the operation on which he was embarked.³

A dispute ensued in which the prince pleaded weakness, sickness, and the proximity of the enemy's new levies, now estimated at 7000. He sent off only 8 companies, claiming that Ostend would then be amply defended. The States General replied with alarmist and exaggerated reports that Ostend's defences were in bad repair, that Albert had 30,000 men and 80 artillery pieces, that Vere would not go unless he had all 20 companies.⁴ Maurice obeyed, still insisting that an attempt to relieve Rheinberg was imminent, and demanding that the gap in his army be filled with troops from garrisons, to be replaced by burghers.⁵ He was right - van den Berg was on the way - but Rheinberg surrendered rather than face assault, on August 1.⁶

1 Res St G XI, 407; Duyck III 91.

2 KB 73C32, 870.

3 Ibid, 907-9, 931-5.
4 Kemp; II 320-29; Duyck III 91-119. Bonours, 99, lists the Spanish army.

5 Kemp II, 330-31.

6 Albert, furious, banished the governor, rather unjustly: Lanario 160; Anon, True Report of all the proceedings before..Bercke (1601).

Leaving an ample garrison there, and in other nearby towns (Wachtendonck, Meurs), Maurice then broke up the field army, sending more troops to Ostend, which left him too weak to try another diversion anyway.¹

At this point, with Maurice contemplating a small operation against the weak town of Lier, and with Zeeland still reporting its inability to pay its normal quota,² there was a sudden burst of diplomatic activity, Henry IV dabbling but Elizabeth coming up with a vast scheme of common action. Both had been provoked by the siege of Ostend and the danger which Oldenbarnevelt's envoys claimed it was in.

Henry was subject to continual pressure from Francois Aerssen to increase the level of his aid to the Republic, and preferably to make open war. The king, however, was not inclined to break the peace of Vervins for numerous reasons relating to the internal state of his kingdom, a fact which Aerssen recognised.³ In general, Henry did not incline to the view that Ostend was in any danger, given the ease with which it could be reinforced. He wrote to the Constable that it would be "un siege fort long et de grande despense".⁴

-
- 1 As he would have preferred: Duyck III, 123-30. He wanted to attack either Hulst or Grave, but was ordered to break up on August 16. Zeeland had exerted strong pressure for a siege of Hulst or Sluis. (KB 73C32, 981, 985, 988), and the prince had inclined to the former. (Ibid 999).
- 2 Kemp II, 340-43; Duyck III 133-147. An attack on Lier by Tympel on Sep 4/5 was aborted when it was clear it had been betrayed.
- 3 JvQ II, 600-2, Jul 22. Barendrecht, 119-124.
- 4 Recueil V, 447 & 451, 4 & 13 Aug. But cf. his fears, 5 Aug. ARA SH 2632 II.

Aerssen reported that the King had indeed taken a rather phlegmatic position at first:

Ostende sauvé, que l'Archiduc sera ruiné...
perdu aussy, que l'echec ne sera sy notable
parmy vous pour la première victoire de
Bercq. . 1

Then, to all outward appearances, his view changed, and he travelled to Calais at the beginning of September where he conferred with Sir Thomas Edmonds, while Caron was simultaneously despatched from London to the Hague.² Where the Frenchman was obviously looking for easy gains - perhaps, the French court dreamed, the Flemings would beg French protection if the Archduke was forced to abandon the siege³ - Elizabeth was fully serious. It seems that Henry was being caught in a trap of his own devising. Through his envoy Boissise he had been pressing the English to relieve Ostend,⁴ and in blatant contradiction to his opinion expressed to Aerssen on the same day had suggested that its fall could not be far off. All reports in fact indicated that it was the besiegers who were in despair and liable to abandon the siege

1 JvO II, 604-8, Aug 18. Deventer^r II, 294-5, Aerssen to Valcke Aug 31.

2 Deventer, II, 293.

3 Dev. II, 295; JvO II, 612.

4 Laffleur, 234-242, Aug 8, 15 & 18.

quite soon.¹ Henry wanted the English to send a major force to Flanders to hasten this, while he prepared to walk in and take over the shattered and dispirited province. Caron and Edmonds, however, proposed an invasion of Flanders by 10,000 French, 6,000 (additional) English, and 8,000 of the States' troops.² For a short time, Dutch hopes were raised that the triple alliance was about to be reborn, and Maurice's contemplated move to the island of Cadsand took on a new significance.³ Henry, on the other hand, was taken aback and immediately denied his earlier suggestions in an effort to extricate himself from a position where he would have to declare war on Spain.⁴ He explained that it was impossible for him to go to war, that he had no troops assembled, that his intentions had been misintepreted and, coyly, that Ostend was not in danger after all. The English naturally resented this volte-face, as it appeared to them, and Aerssen wrote with some bitterness, although it was also a fair statement of Henry's aims, that "il peut veoir ruiner ses ennemis ...sans s'en mesler".⁵ The Spanish watched the whole procedure with some bemusement, but their assessment of Henry's likely course of action proved more accurate than the English.⁶

1 Collins II, 232; Grimston 23-7. Albert did not agree: Col Doc 42, 403.

2 Kemp II, 344-6; cf. JvO II, 609, 612; Res Holl 324ff.

3 KB 73C32 1000-1011; Duyck, III, 149-55. On Cadsand, p,257 below.

4 Laffleur 243-6 (Sep 4); Recueil V, 458, 469 (Sep 2 & 9)

5 JvO II, 616-8 (Sep 27) Cf Deventer II, 298; Duyck III, 155. Aerssen wrote on Oct 4 that with a spate of tax revolts, all hopes of French intervention must be abandoned. (JvO II, 619-21).

6 Col Doc 42, 406; Lon & Cuv 75-8 (Consulta of Sep 26)

Objectively, and by all the established military tenets of the time, the siege of Ostend should have been abandoned during the Autumn of 1601. Continually reinforced and replenished by sea,¹ the garrison became nearly half as strong as the besieging force. The terrible consequences of fighting and living in this exposed and waterlogged terrain, so familiar from the 1914-18 war, were already taking a high toll of Albert's army, especially of the unhappy Italians, used to warmer climes. By September he was already said to have 7000 sick in all the hospitals of Flanders, Brabant and Lille.² But having begun, the Archduke stubbornly refused to give up. He was prepared to accept that he would have to fight a war of attrition for this particular objective and, like most commanders involved in such a war, it was all too easy to believe that the next attack would be the decisive one. When his determination wavered, a bevy of Flemish bishops came from the States to persuade him to carry on, with an offer of additional sums of money.³ The results, in terms of sheer cost, in loss of life, and in exhaustion, were profound.

1 See, for example, Res Holl 1601, 292, 306, 316, 319, 343, 366, 378, 44.
 2 Grimston, 31.
 3 Ibid 38-9. For detailed accounts of the whole siege see Bonours (1628), P Fleming (1621) & all the chronicles. For good later accounts see Henrard (1890) & Bellerocche (1892); and for 1601-2, the fine work by C Markham, The Fighting Veres (1888).

But an immediate consequence of the Archduke's stubbornness was that the States began to feel the cost of attrition themselves. The defence of Ostend was to cost as much as whole campaigns in previous years - and this was now only half of their necessary military effort. The English governor, Vere, in the midst of castigating the States' lack of foresight in putting the town at risk by authorising the siege of Rheinberg, recognised that "itt wylbe the uttre ruyne of thennemy if he be obstynat..."¹ This meant equally that the defence must be as stubborn as the attack. As the siege was maintained regardless of the cost, the States gradually became aware of what they would have to face. With the onset of Winter weather, the replenishment of the town from the sea became more problematical. At best, access would be irregular, and always dangerous. Cecil wrote in October that Ostend was hit by sickness and the "boyl", and could be cut off for two months at a time in Winter.² Vere went to the Hague and demanded an urgent diversion to reduce enemy pressure.³

In answer to Vere's pleading, a small force was landed in the island of Cadsand to attack the Spanish galleys which operated out of Sluis. Finding nothing they re-embarked.⁴ Clearly, something on a larger scale

1 Dalton, I, 69-71. Vere had personal reasons for blaming the States General for setbacks, but Duyck (127-30) went too far.

2 Winwood, I, 350-1.

3 Duyck, III, 156-7.

4 Kemp, II, 347 (Res St G Oct 10); Duyck III, 166-71; Anon Historie van het Leven..van..Oldenbarnevelt (1648), 36. Croy, 24.

was going to be necessary. Equally clearly, the States would have to execute whatever plan they agreed entirely from their own resources. From the English came news of a Spanish fleet and army landing in Ireland, at Kinsale.¹ The ramparts of England were under the fiercest pressure they had borne since 1588, and additional aid was plainly out of the question. On the contrary, in fact, Gilpin was asking for the despatch of provisions and money to the Queen. From France, hopes of more assistance were at this stage no better. Aerssen had continued to press Henry, apparently with the support of Rosny but the opposition of Villeroy. The French were vacillating, he wrote on November 3 "ou vous secourir ou seulement vous nourrir", and while Henry was convinced that the fall of Ostend would be the ruin of the Republic, he remained to be convinced that there was any danger of the town being taken by the Archduke's weakened, demoralised and mutinous army. Aerssen had to limit himself to a hard struggle to secure prompt payment of the subsidies, and an initially vain effort to persuade the French to sell some gunpowder - the quantity consumed at Ostend having dangerously reduced the supplies in the United Provinces. Of firm proposals for joint military action there were none, as yet.²

1 Dodt IV, 292-3 (Oct 20).

2 JvO II, 622-4, 625, 626-30: Dev. II, 299-300; Nouaillac, Aerssen, 132; Winwood I, 352. Cf. Barendreht, 125-9: Winwood can have found few grounds for English fears of Franco-Dutch intimacy at this time. Nouaillac, Villeroy, 444-50. These points were made by Aerssen on 12 Nov, ARA SH 263II. On powder, Duyck, 155; Res Holl, 407.

Following the Cadsand fiasco, Maurice suggested to Vere that the garrison of Ostend be changed for fresh troops, but the latter insisted that a major diversion was necessary.¹ Financially, the situation was grim, with all the money for the year spent, and military expenditure at an even higher level wanted for 1602.² Nonetheless, it was decided on November 1, apparently without opposition, that Maurice should undertake a siege of 's Hertogenbosch.³ In military terms, the idea appeared absurd. The total force available - 73 companies of foot and 33 of horse - was far too small to hold the perimeter of the siege lines necessary to invest the city. The weather was appalling, and the waterways which protected the town for most of the year froze over, permitting the Spanish to send reinforcements right through the States' lines.⁴ On the other hand, the garrison, commanded by Grobbendonck, was also absurdly small, and Maurice had obtained assurances from the mutineers at Weert that they would not intervene on either side.⁵ These factors meant that if the sole purpose of the operation was to reduce pressure on Ostend, it succeeded. There was confusion at Albert's headquarters, and Frederick van den Berg was sent off with 6,000 foot and 1500 horse to ensure the

1 Duyck, 172.

2 Ibid 176. Res Holl 1601, 393-4, 427-8.

3 States General to the princes, Nov 1 KHA A 22-VIII-4.

4 Res St G XI, 446f. Kemp II, 348-60; Duyck III, 185-213; Vervou, 113-6; Meteren, 470f. Sande, 32.

5 Cecil MSS 89/90, with a map. Grotius, 706. Parker, 189, for the mutineers, who broke their word.

relief of the city which was considered of great importance. As we have seen, that was not difficult. Nearly 1000 men were successfully sent into 's Hertogenbosch, while van den Berg increased his force to 8,000 from neighbouring garrisons.¹

From then on Maurice was just going through the motions. The only hope of success would have been an immediate 'coup de main', which might paradoxically have defeated the primary purpose of the expedition. Apart from that, only a thaw would allow the siege to progress. As usual, divergent opinions were pressed upon the prince. The States General urged the continuation of the siege, but until the very end they sent more in the way of exhortation than reinforcements.² From the other side, William Louis urged that the enterprise be given up. They had already achieved "tout ce qu'on peu pour divertir l'ennemy d'Ostende". He went on, touching on his cousin's fear for his reputation, "j'aimerois mieux que l'honneur demeurat à Dieu, et la faute à la gelée...."³ It was no surprise, therefore, when the siege was abandoned on November 27, and the army disbanded, an operation of considerable

1 Grotius, loc cit; Vervou, 115; Duyck III, 200-205; Carnero, 495; Croy, 47.

2 Kemp II, 354-61; Res St Gen XI, 451-5. Only on 26 Nov. did they agree to raise 2000 Waartgelders to release regulars from garrisons.

3 Groen, II, 109-110.

difficulty. The annoyance of the States General, that the troops had been dispersed at a time when the heavy frost had frozen the country's water barriers, was considerable, and only appeased with the thaw, which finally set in on December 6.¹

A crisis was developing meanwhile at Ostend. A Spanish assault on December 4 was repelled, but the terrible weather, as had been feared, prevented supplies and reinforcements getting into the town, and Vere found himself with only 2000 fit men, far too few to hold the extensive outworks. He turned in despair to a ruse, making a truce which led Albert to believe that he might surrender. In fact, he was gaining time during which 1000 reinforcements, half of them sailors, were got into the town. Furious, the Archduke launched a ferocious assault on January 7, 1602, which was decisively repelled, the besiegers losing perhaps 2000 men.² The morale of the Spanish reached a record low,³ and the States were given the opportunity to change the garrison completely. The 81 companies of the old garrison mustered a mere 3365 fit men.⁴

-
- 1 Kemp II, 363-5; Duyck III, 219-32; Collins, II, 237. Vervou, 117, records that numbers of soldiers froze to death during the 27 day siege. Aerssen explained the siege as a diversion, ARA SH 2632II, 8 Dec.
 - 2 Grimston, 99-110; Dodt IV, 295; Duyck III, 273-84; Collins, 238-9; Vere, Commentaries, 118f. The Spanish saw his act as perfidy: Gerlo & Vervliet, 133-6.
 - 3 Grimston, 111-12, quoting captured letters.
 - 4 Ibid 114; Duyck 285; Res Holl, 444.

Vere's trick also deceived the French court. Aerssen reported the alarm caused by rumours that the English had betrayed the town.¹ No doubt the possibility that this rumour might have been true helped focus Henry's mind on his cold war with Spain. The evidence of Spanish plotting ~~against~~ him seemed overwhelming, and was to be more so as the strands of the Biron conspiracy were unravelled; incidents such as the outrage committed against his ambassador in Madrid, and a trade war between the two countries, gave Aerssen and Oldenbarnevelt hope - even if it were only the faintest glimmer - that Henry could be inveigled into war if all the obstacles were removed from this path. In the first instance, however, Henry had to be persuaded that the States deserved an increased subsidy, and would use it for an offensive to relieve Ostend. The King further demanded that the States reveal to him their plans and forces.² At the same time, he was urging Elizabeth that Ostend could easily be saved by means of an English army in Flanders,³ and dropping loud hints about his intentions:

Il est certain qu'il sera difficile que moy et le roy d'Espagne demourions longtemps en paix...⁴

-
- 1 JvO 631-3; Winwood 371-3; Aerssen reported (5 Jan): "SM confessa qu'après la perte d'Amiens il n'en avoit point de plus sensible". ARA SH 2632 V.
- 2 Deventer II, 307-10; Aerssen's letters, 11 Jan, 61 6, 13 Feb. ARA SH 2632 V. Nouaillac, 136-42; the subsidy was raised to 300,000 écus. Nouaillac, Villeroy, 446-9.
- 3 Laffleur (2), 12-15, 16-20. ARA SH 2632V, 1 March.
- 4 Ibid 29-32 (Apr 11).

The English responded (via Winwood) with suggestions for joint action comparable to those which had so scared Henry a year before, and Buzanval reported that both Maurice and Oldenbarnevelt were willing to offer parts of Flanders to France. But even before the Biron conspiracy erupted, Aerssen was able to report "que ceste negociation n'aura nul fruict."¹

The States had long since learnt that foreign aid was not to be relied on, and they must achieve what they could with their own army. After the fierce Winter actions, the Spring was quiet. Desperately short of men and chronically short of money, the Archduke was demanding both from Madrid. As fresh supplies and men poured into the garrison - 108 ships entered in February alone² - the weak besieging army could do no more than erect another line of forts and block-houses to keep the garrison in and any relieving force out.³ Baltasar de Zuñiga told King Philip that Albert despaired of success; Madrid told the Archduke that to abandon the siege would make the enemy so proud that any reasonable peace would be impossible.⁴ More practically,, they accepted the offer from the Genoese Ambrogio Spinola to raise an army for the Spanish, for use preferably against England, but operating from Flanders.

1 Deventer II, 310. (ARA SH 2632V, 6 & 25 May).
Barendrecht 129-31. Winwood, 381-8.

2 Dodt IV, 297.

3 Grimston, 122.

4 Col Doc 42, 415; Lon. & Cuv. 93, 95, 96.

Spinola's Italian troops were to arrive in the Netherlands just in time to save the Archduke from potential disaster.¹

The States General had already decided to make a major effort. They called for an advance on the French subsidy, and that it should be sent in specie rather than by 'lettres de change', to avoid delays.² Since Ostend itself consumed a large proportion of the States' army, new, temporary troop levies would be necessary. On 12 February, the States of Holland decided that notwithstanding the irresolution of the other provinces, the new levies should be made.³ The preparations were on an unprecedented scale for the Republic. Vere was withdrawn from Ostend, leaving a garrison of 3,400, and new English levies obtained for the field army. The French regiment was increased, negotiations were started for Swiss troops, Count Solms was sent to raise 2000 or more German cavalry, and the establishment of the States companies was raised. By these means, an army of around 19,000 foot and 5400 horse was gathered by the middle of June.⁴ "If, with all this preparation" wrote Brown to Cecil,

Nothing of great moment be performed, itt will much shake the good estate of the Government of these Provinces.....5

-
- 1 Lon. & Cuv. 96-100. Fuentes refused to send 2000 Spanish from Milan. On Spinola, Rodriguez Villa.
 2 KB 73C33, 14, 28.
 3 Res Holl 1602, 40-1; Kemp II, 365; Duyck III, 293-319. Cf. Res St G XII, 13.
 4 Duyck 312-90; Vervou 124-7. The English were untrained recruits.
 5 Sidney 251-3; Cf. KB 73C33, 25.

The exploit to be performed by this host, in fact, had been decided by the civilian leaders with only the most reluctant acceptance from the military. The usual problems had intervened to delay the final readiness of a force gathered from such disparate quarters; and it had been found necessary to send troops to assist Emden in a new revolt against the pro-Spanish Count of East Friesland.¹ As a result, the Italian column was much nearer now, and the assembled troops had eaten up much of the collected supplies. The States General wanted a massive sweep into Brabant, laying the province under contribution, followed by an advance into Flanders from the rear to relieve Ostend with some vague hopes of a popular rising to help them.² William Louis voiced his objections loudly and clearly. In long letters to Maurice and Oldenbarnevelt³ he argued against deep penetrations into enemy territory, weighing the very small probability of success against the greater one of defeat. He pointed out how easily the march could be halted, how quickly the obtaining of supplies would become impossible. In general, as he told his cousin,⁴ he warned against

-
- 1 Vervou 104, 140; Cf. Groen II, 122. Hagedorn, 387-92; Schmelzings report, 20 May, ARA SG 4903I. Spanish plotting was blamed: KB 73C33, 20.
- 2 Sande, 33; for the proclamation calling for the rising, Knuttel 1192. See Chap. V above.
- 3 JvO II, 5-10; KHA A22-VIII-4, & Prouninck's opposition, *ibid*; Meteren, 482.
- 4 Groen, 121. Cf. *ibid* 122, 131-8, 142-4 for later warnings. Buzanval wrote that Maurice "se forme ... en la conduite de laquelle ... plus porté par les mouvemens et appetits d'autrui que par son propre jugemen....": KB 73C 33, 45.

"d'entreprendre chose qu'elle ne trouve fonde en raison de guere (sic) et du succes duquel elle mesme desespere".

He was stating quite plainly that the expedition was based on purely political grounds, and was militarily unsound. He was right, but his pleas fell on deaf ears, for Oldenbarnevelt had to convince two jealous monarchs that the States were going to relieve Ostend. After a number of debates, it was firmly resolved in June that the original plan was to be followed, and the campaign was to begin as soon as possible.¹ There may have been another motive. Henry IV had raised troops as conspiracies were uncovered all around him, and Dutch hopes for his intervention were momentarily reborn. However, Aerssen soon had to report that war² "dura trois jours au bureau et cerveau du Roy plus par necessité que d'inclination....."

So, as William Louis maintained his stream of warnings and doubts, the army moved along the Maas then plunged into Brabant.³ Lumbered would be a better description, since there were no fewer than 3000 waggons in train. The Archduke scraped together an army under the Admiral of Aragon, calling up the old 'Bandes d'Ordonnance', and receiving Spinola's forces just in time. The Admiral dug in near Tienen, blocking Maurice's route, and refused to come out and fight a

1 Kemp 367-71; Duyck 336, 375-90. Res St G XII, 39, KB 73C33, 22-4, 45.

2 Nouaillac, 149-53; Cf. Groen, 130.

3 The campaign is best followed in: Duyck, 395-410; Kemp, 373-5; Dodt, 200-306; Res Holl 1602, 160-219; Vervou, 124-134; Jv0 II, 18-21; the various chronicles; Carnero, 487-8; Lanario, 161-2; Anon, A Short Report of the....Journey into Brabant(1602).

battle. Too weak to attack a fortified post, but unable to maintain himself in open country with the enemy able to cut his supply lines, and with the cumbrous apparatus of the train taking costs towards an astronomical 100,000 gulden a day,¹ Maurice decided to turn back to the Maas, and lay siege to Grave.² The withdrawal was skilfully executed, but even so only the incompetence and irresolution of the Admiral, weaker by only a few thousand, allowed him to get away with it without loss.³ Maurice and his cousin had been forced to bow to the wishes of the States General in making the plans; but in there execution the princes were able to show that the right political decision could be military suicide.

Grave was an important town, and a very strong one. In the hands of the States it could lay wide areas of Brabant under contribution. Maurice's siege of it was to be one of the finest examples of the fine art to which he had brought siege warfare. The siege began on July 20 and the town surrendered on September 19.⁴ During it, the Admiral dithered and dallied outside the vast fortifications which Maurice was so good at building. While he tried various ways of

1 According to Vervou, 130.

2 Duyck, 417-20; Kemp 374-5; Groen 142-4; Meteren 483. KB 73C33, 72.

3 The Admiral is castigated by Carnero, 488-9 & Croy, 55-62. He emerges in a poor light from his letters to Albert, Col Doc 42, 88-137. To the last, he persisted in the view that Maurice would attack 's Hertogenbosch.

4 See the works cited, p. 16 n 5, and: Emmius, Guilhelmus Lodovicus, 170f; Hondius, Description... de la fortification, 82-5 (with a plan); Anon, various reports from the camp, London, 1602.

forcing the Dutch away from Grave, his army dissolved about him, thousands becoming sick or deserting - especially Spinola's Italians - and about the time the town capitulated, following an abortive relief attempt, it mutinied for pay, some 3000 men marching off and seizing Hoogstraten.¹

In many ways, then, Grave was a major victory for the States. But it had not contributed to the relief of Ostend, its sole original purpose. Oldenbarnevelt had had to agree to the decision, with a vague rider about looking for 'opportunities' to pursue the first objective.² The costs had been so high that no option remained but to end the campaign and pay off the new levies,³ after concluding a truce with the Spanish mutineers. At Ostend, things remained much as they were. Morale in the garrison had risen with the news of Maurice's march, but once Albert was certain that the prince was going to spend the campaigning season burrowing his way into Grave, he turned his attention to maintaining pressure on Ostend, and trying to drive his lines close enough to block the use of either of the town's harbours.⁴

1 Col Doc 42, 137-210; Lon & Cuv, III; Gerlo & Vervliet, 176-7.

2 KB 73C33, 80; Duyck, III, 425-8; Kemp 376-7. Res St G XII, 52-55.

3 Kemp, 387-8, 389.

4 Grimston, 142-6; Res Holl 1602, 251-2: Albert was unable to advance the approaches to Ostend, and failed also to block the harbour.

The massive works erected by the Spanish must have already told a man as experienced as Maurice in such matters that the relief of Ostend from the landward was already impossible unless it be by a massively superior force, a view he had already expressed privately in August 1601.¹ In October 1602 he confided to Buzanval that he did not think it worthwhile to risk the whole state by attempting a direct relief of Ostend. A more cautious, step-by-step approach would never achieve this aim, however.² States' policy remained firmly and unanimously that Ostend was to be saved. But Maurice had already shown, and would show again, through his military operations, that he could see no way of executing this policy.³

The year's operations proved annoying and frustrating for the States' allies. Elizabeth was naturally angered that the massive reinforcements had not been used in Flanders, and rather unfairly blamed Maurice for putting personal interest first - Grave belonged to the Orange-Nassaus.⁴ But her displeasure was removed when separate English and Dutch squadrons successfully destroyed a reinforcement of galleys coming to Flanders, only Frederick Spinola's own galley

1 Cecil MSS 183/21.

2 KB 73C33, 149, 164.

3 Collins, II, 258: Maurice would fight in Flanders but only "foote by foote", not "rashly" as in 1600.

4 Collins, II, 230. Brown to Sidney on interview with Elizabeth, 12 Aug.

getting through.¹ This victory took much of the pressure off the States fleet and the shipping lanes.

From France Aerssen could report no progress, although some hope of intervention was maintained until the late Summer. At the end of August the envoy wrote² that "Icy nous ne parlons rien que d'amours et de la chasse". A reconciliation over the affair of the ambassadors was achieved about this time,³ which put an end to Dutch hopes. Even so Henry and the French court continued to press for a Dutch invasion of Flanders,⁴ with a relentlessness that must have become both monotonous and frustrating, because Oldenbarnevelt must have realised very soon that there would be no Flanders campaign in 1602. Maurice's siege of Grave gave Henry the opportunity to claim that he would have assisted if his own plan had been followed. Aerssen reported⁵ in late September how he had repeated his request that Henry at least make up his mind. The King had responded with the opinion that he would stay at peace only as long "qu'a luy jugée utile". He repeated constantly his promise: "...y descendez premierement en Flandre, et sy vous prosperez, je ne tarderay gueres....". And again, three days later: "conquerez les ports de Flandre; je verrai apres".

1 Grötius, 127; Grimston, 147-50; Triumphs of Nassau, 353-7. Res Holl 1602, 294 (Oct 9); Mollema, II, 100.
 2 Nouaillac, Aerssen, 178-9.
 3 Nouaillac, Villeroy, 150.
 4 ARA SH 2632 V, 31 Oct. Nouaillac, Aerssen, 118 194 (Aug 13 - Nov 15); Deventer II, 323, 326.
 5 Deventer II, 330-6; cf. Winwood, 434-5. Cf. ARA SH 2632V, 7 Sep.

In fact, Henry was playing with his allies. To Aerssen he complained bitterly about the change in plans and the diversion to Grave,¹ which, Winwood noted,²

doth give occasion of Discours.. that Count Maurice doth know well how to make the best use of his Friends for his owne particular good...

This was extraordinary hypocrisy from a man who was letting the Dutch Republic fight his war for him! Skilfully, he kept the carrot dangling before the States General and also before Elizabeth from whom new proposals for joint action had come,³ but, apart from a deep-seated fear that if he re-entered the war Elizabeth would promptly leave it, he had "raisons et considerations domestiques qui doibvent me faire cheminer la bride en main..."⁴ and these were without doubt genuine. He would continue to resist Spanish power, which was a course of action "ce que je recognois pouvoir mieux pratiquer en paix qu'en guerre.....": that is, by subsidising the Republic.⁵ The time for his resumption of open war was obviously far more distant than he was prepared to admit to those who were bearing

1 Letters quoted above, & Laffleur (2), 53-7. He had agreed with Maurice that the plan of the States General was far too risky. ARA SH 2632 V, 17 Jul, 13 Aug.

2 Winwood, 427.

3 Laffleur (2), 63-5; ARA SH 2632 V, 13 & 23 Sep.

4 ARA SH 2632 V, 12/10, 24/11, 27/12; Laffleur (2), 57. Villeroy fed fears of English bad faith: *ibid* 41-4; Nouaillac, *Villeroy*, 448.

5 Letter to Beaumont, Nov 6, quoted by Poirson, IV, 31.

the burden of the war. To Oldenbarnevelt and the States General it must have seemed infuriatingly obvious¹ that with the Archduke scarcely able to hold off Maurice, the Spanish army half in mutiny, the Dutch able to go where they pleased - a force raided Luxemburg and stormed St Vith over the Winter² - the advent of a French army from the south must spell ~~the~~ the end for Spanish rule in the Netherlands. It must have been equally clear to Henry, with his kingdom surrounded by Habsburg lands, his frontiers weak, and a large element of sedition among his subjects, that

je doibs bien aultant craindre que esperer
de la rupture presente....³

Typically, while accusing the Dutch of doing everything wrong and complaining that they had not told him their plans, Henry was really delighted at the course of events during the year, and the general discomfiture of the Spanish cause in the Netherlands.⁴

By the end of 1602, he felt that the Spanish position was such that any fear of further interference from that

1 E.g. Ogle to Cecil, Cecil MSS 96/8.

2 Grotius, 724-5; Count Louis led 5000 men and seized much booty. Croy, 86-9 & Carnero, 492. The Spanish mutineers also ravaged the country.

3 Laffleur (2), 63. See also his clear statement, Lettres...d'Ossat, V, 261-2.

4 Recueil, V, 664, 674, 687; Halphen, (1), 32, 40, 84.

quarter in his domestic affairs was almost removed. Yet all the time he justified his inactivity because of his fear of internal rebellions.¹

This refusal to be drawn into open war did not extend to granting subsidies and giving advice, however. Over the Winter he urgently pressed the States to take prompt action before the Spinolas returned to the Netherlands with fresh levies from Italy. He believed that with Albert's army in the condition it was, the relief of Ostend was perfectly practicable. His seriousness is proven by the despatch of the first instalment of 100,000 écus at the end of January 1603, and he allowed the States to recruit secretly in France.² He tried to convince everyone that Albert had decided to stand on the defensive - "un très mauvais conseil",³ and hoped that his troop movements in eastern France, relating to his dispute with Bouillon, would impede the passage of the Spanish reinforcements.⁴ And for the first time, as he contemplated the consequences of Dutch success in the Indies and the founding of the East India Company, Henry voiced a few doubts, to Rosny's brother:⁵

-
- 1 Laffleur (2), 84: "Considerez si, ayant encores de telz sujets, je ferois sagement de m'embarasser en une guerre étrangère...."
- 2 Ibid 93-6; Recueil, VI, ll 17, 42; Halphen (2), 20-4, 50. Aerssen said the subsidy was conditional on a Flanders invasion: Nouaillac, 197, letter of Jan 19. There were already French troops with the States in contravention of Vervins. Cf. Henry to Bethune, 16 Dec, in Lajeunie, Mem. et Doc. pub. par la Soc. d'hist...de Genève, 38, (1952), 324-9.
- 3 Recueil VI, 17; Laffleur (2), 93-6 (Feb 2)
- 4 Laffleur (2), 101-4. Spain imposed a 30% import duty to shut out the Dutch trade via France, and caused a Franco-Spanish trade war.
- 5 Halphen (2), 51 & 64-5. Béthune was ambassador to Venice.

...il est a craindre qu'ils deviennent si
opulens et poussans qu'ils se rendront
formidables... à tous leurs voisins...

Henry's enthusiastic optimism in the early months of 1603 - so soon to be shattered anyway by the death of Elizabeth - was not shared at the Hague. This was not through any failure to recognise the strategic advantages within the grasp of the States. Maurice, the Council of State and the States General were in agreement that the enemy was weak and in confusion because all the fighting was taking place on his own territory, and he must be forced to continue thus.¹ Ostend had already cost Albert 18,000 men, and, as Grimston says,²

is a stoppe for his forces, the which for these
three years space have taken cold before this
heape of sande, the which hath already cost...
Flanders neere three millions of goulde.....

But attrition affects both sides. On April 13 the besiegers made their first significant gains when they stormed four outworks on the south and west of the town, and they succeeded in sinking more and more of the ships trying to enter the harbours.³ Further, the unprecedented level of activity over the past five years had produced a serious financial situation in the republic. For the second successive year, a military budget in excess of

1 Duyck, III, 500-1.

2 Grimston, 161-2.

3 This came like "un éclat de tonnerre" to the States:
KB 73C33, 315.

eight million florins had been agreed, but was increasingly difficult to find, and loan and interest payments were already around 1.2 millions.¹ As an additional distraction, it had been found necessary to send more troops to Emden to prevent the Count building forts along the river Ems.² There is no doubt that the States General wanted to take the field in April, as Henry IV had been promised. But through shortage of money it proved quite impossible. The death of Elizabeth and the hectic diplomatic activity which followed as both France and the Republic tried to ensure continued support for the United Provinces from James I during the early Summer³ further temporarily froze the implementation of any plans: anxiety for the Cautionary towns held by the English was the immediate concern at the Hague.⁴ This gave the Archduke time to gather reinforcements, although he ~~to~~ was desperately short of cash.⁵ Spain's temporary solution was the new contract with Spinola whereby the latter put up vast sums of his own in return for command at Ostend.⁶

-
- 1 Duyck, III, 499-501; Res Holl 02, 370-9, 1603, 37-9, 57; Dot IV, 310-12. For the immense day-to-day costs of the defence, Meteren, 475. Holland's debt stood at 4 millions: KB 73C33, 314.
 - 2 Vervou, 140-47; Groen, 172-4; Hagedorn, 392-8. Henry IV was anxious about complications: ARA SH 2632 V, 24 Nov.
 - 3 JvO II, esp. 44-6. The Anglo-French treaty to support the U.P. was signed in July but James's pacific intentions were already known. Henry feared the Republic would collapse: Laffleur (2), 146-7, 151-3.
 - 4 KB 73C33, 295-9.
 - 5 Col Doc 42, 451-3 (30 Apr).
 - 6 Lon. & Cuv, 177-8; Rodriguez-Villa, Spinola, esp 67-70.

The campaign of 1603 achieved nothing for either side, save at Ostend where Spinola brought new energy to the siege, so that by the end of the year the Spanish could at last see prospects of victory in the near future.¹ In Brabant, the States were presented with the fascinating spectacle of a war in which they played no part: the Hoogstraten mutineers had been declared enemies by the Archduke, and were now under siege by an army led by Frederick van den Berg.² In despair, the 'Escadron', as they became known, appealed to the States for help, through the governor of nearby Breċa. Clearly, this provided an opportunity for action without unacceptable risks or costs, and after negotiations Maurice led an army of 10,000³ to relieve Hoogstraten. The Spanish retired precipitately and Maurice's claim that his foot could not get up in time to give battle cannot be settled: some people certainly believed that an opportunity of a decisive victory was lost.⁴

Anyway, with the two armies encamped a few miles apart, a double debate ensued between Maurice and the States General. The 'Escadron' represented a major

1 Grimston, 164-90. Henry IV agreed: Recueil VI, 91; Halphen (3), 39-40.

2 L Kooperberg, 'Een muiterij in den Spaanscher Tijd', BVG, 1918, 119-50. Vervou, 149, says there were 4000 mutineers, and Berg had 13,000 men.

3 Ostend consumed so much artillery that Maurice had to beg the Frisians to lend some guns: Groen, 193. The strategic decision was made on July 27: Kemp, II, 400-1; Res Holl, 1602, 184-5. Earlier, there was speculation that a siege of Hulst was planned: Collins, 271-2.

4 Like Edward Vere: Collins, 278. Grotius, 760-4. Lanario, 166-7.

reinforcement of good troops, but they demanded to be given a States town from which to maintain themselves. Despite obvious doubts about loyalty, it was finally resolved to give them Grave.¹ The other part of the dispute concerned what should be done as the next step in the campaign. The States General and the States of Holland were agreed that the costs of even the short campaign so far were exceptionally high, and that it would be a good thing to pay off the waggons and supply ships, and send extra troops to Ostend, where a raging sickness had much reduced the garrison.² Taking an unusual position, Maurice argued that it was foolish to keep his army sitting idle, still consuming money, and that with the aid of the 'Escadron' he could try another siege of 's Hertogenbosch.³ He must have had little more hope of success than in 1601, but at least he meant to keep the war on enemy soil.⁴ There was an enemy army, soon to be reinforced to 15,000, and to be joined by the Archduke in person, in very close proximity, and it was already late in the year - September 13 - when the siege began. There had been persuasive rumours, however, that the garrison was disaffected.⁵

1 Res St G XII, 376f, 384f.; Res Holl 03, 266-7. The Escadron handed back the town when it was reconciled with Albert in 1604. Maurice, as owner, had opposed the use of Grave, but bowed to the common need.

2 Kemp II, 403-7; Dotd IV, 316. The English expected no further action, Winwood II, 2-3.

3 Kemp II, 408-10; Res Holl, 193; Vervou, 149-59; Grotius, 761-5; Lanario, 167; Gerlo & Vervliet, 207; HMC Salis XV, 255. Zeeland opposed the decision as detrimental to Ostend, but Maurice was given a free hand.

4 Sande, 34; KB 73C33, 353.

5 ARA SH 2634a, intercepted letter of Mexia; Res Holl, 197; Croy, 102f.

The siege followed a predictable course. The proximity of the Spanish army prevented Maurice completing the investment of the city, despite a number of fierce and victorious combats. When the weather turned bad, the operation was abandoned on October 20, Maurice's recommendation being taken up with some alacrity by the States General. A compromise scheme proposed by the Council of State which would have kept the army in being was rejected as impracticable, and costly.¹

The year had been characterised by financial and strategic bankruptcy. Such was the level of expenditure required simply to preserve Ostend, especially after Spinola had taken over with his apparently inexhaustible funds, that the States General was quite unable to find the money for a campaign designed to relieve the town altogether. In 1603 they had accepted that they could do no more than try to ease the pressure. At sea, they had been blessed with success when Frederick Spinola was killed in May off Sluis and his squadron of galleys shattered by Zeeland warships.² States cavalry and the Escadron laid large parts of the Archduke's territory under contribution.³ But nothing

1 Kemp, II, 411; Res Holl 218, 276f; Res St G XII, 392f.

2 See Grotius, 750-1; Grimston, 170-1; Triumphs of Nassau', 357-9; Mollema 101-3; E Swalue, 'Joos de Moor', Nederlandsch Magasijn 39 (1860), 305-7.

3 Grotius 766; Res Holl 1603, 323; Kemp II, 421. Among other Winter actions was an abortive surprise attack on Maastricht: Kemp II, 422.

achieved during the year compensated for the fact that direct English support was about to be withdrawn, and that for the first time in twenty years the Republic would be fighting the might of Spain without an ally.

Naturally distrusting a system of government so different from his own, and, more correctly, fearing for the consequences of provincial disunity in the Republic, Henry IV was fearful that the conclusion of an Anglo-Spanish peace would mean the end of hopes for Ostend and that the fall of the latter, which he predicted, would lead the Dutch into "des nécessités très grandes...ou elles s'accorderont avec les Espagnolzou elles succomberont et se desuniront bientost..." If this occurred, his policy would be in ruins.¹ Particularly important of course were the Cautionary towns, and it was known that the Spanish were demanding that James turn them over. The French king went so far as to claim, in June,²

si j'eusse cru pouvoir divertir ledict roy...
de la paix, en luy offrant de faire la guerre
avec luy pour chasser les Espagnols des Pays
Bas, je n'eusse pas faict difficulté de m'y
engager.

Ultimately the peace treaty was quite favourable to the States, but at the time it was concluded the great military dramas of 1604 were still unresolved.

1 Laffleur (2), 210, 201, 231; Recueil VI, 217, 247 (continued in Laffleur, 219.)

2 Recueil VI, 256-8; cf. Laffleur (2), 232-4. Henry reports a Dutch offer for Anglo-French action "d'assaillir et partager avec les Pays Bas". This followed a realisation by the States General of what the Spanish demands involved. JvO, II, 98-100.

The rapid progress of Spinola at Ostend made an urgent attempt at relief essential if it was to be done at all.¹ Spurred on by Henry and by hopes that James might respond to positive action, the States General resolved to put an army in Flanders for the first time since 1600, having to overcome Maurice's reluctance first.² With about 12,000 men, the prince landed in the isle of Cadsand and occupied it, at the end of April. The States General and Council of State were constantly with him, which led to friction when it was found that an enemy force had assembled to prevent a debouchment onto the Flanders mainland. The problem was resolved by landing on the other side of Sluis³ and thereafter the campaign gives evidence of being one of Maurice's finest. A line of Spanish forts was swept away by May 11 and it was decided to lay siege to Sluis, fulfilling the long-held Zeeland wish to neutralise the galleys for good, and admitting Maurice's viewpoint that his army was not strong enough to fight its way through to Ostend - which it certainly was not. The politicians retired to recruit more troops as more money became available, and Maurice settled down to starve out the town - the first time he

1 The Dutch knew of his hopes from intercepted letters, ARA SG 7472.

2 Kemp II, 423-5; Res Holl 1604, 60-9; Dalton, 107; Collins, 282-3, HMC Salis XVI, 41, 53; Cecil MSS 105/1. KB 73033, 321, 548, 559.

3 See the plan in J Blaeu, Toonneel der Steden, I. Numerous intercepted letters show the whole garrison was confident it was impregnable to normal siege methods - ARA SG 4742.

had employed such a method.¹ Military reasons entirely justified the decision, however: Sluis itself was weak, but as Parma had found out in 1587, it was extremely difficult to approach. Informed military opinion supported the prince but Oldenbarnevelt and the Estates were frustrated by his slowness. They were determined that Ostend would be relieved.² But all the evidence suggests most strongly that Maurice and William Louis had long since decided that Ostend was now a lost cause and that they would do best to seize whatever compensation in Flanders that they could.³ William Louis stated this quite clearly as early as May 22:⁴

...sofern der feindt je nicht wollte Ostend verlaszen, man diese statt von den Sluis... in allen fhal vor recompens herjegen erubern moge, welche jegen dasz verlusz von Ostend ... nicht zu vergleichen ist.

The principle of a foothold in Flanders, to levy contributions and "den krieg uf de feindts bodem selber zu fuhren" was better served by Sluis than by Ostend, and Maurice's recent captures in Flanders provided better harbours and also gave Zeeland a protective rampart.

-
- 1 For the siege: Kemp, 199-210; Groen, 262-90; Dodt IV, 324-7; Vervou, 163-178; Grotius, 767-80; Carnero, 503-15; Grimston, 199-210; HMC Salis XVI, 59-306, letters of Ogle, Brown, Winwood. Anon, Warachtig Verhael hoedat..een..Armada..ghetoghen sijn..na Casand (1604).
- 2 Res St G, XIII, 45f. Kemp, 445-6; Res Holl 217 (31 Aug); Collins, 284. Brown feared that "the States Importunacy" for Ostend would drive Maurice to a rash move, and the imminent fall of the town was certainly feared: KB 73C33, 584.
- 3 Cecil MSS, 105/54, 96; KHA 13 IXA-36, William to Maurice, 11 Sept. By mid-Summer, Ostend was desperate: JvO, II, 90, 100; Collins 290-301.
- 4 Groen 279-81; HMC Sal XVI, 82, 85 (from Ogle & Winwood, 12-13 May).

The French understood this well enough,¹ but the Spanish grasped it too late - Spinola's relief attempt being bloodily repulsed because he allowed Maurice to fortify himself.²

Maurice, reinforced to 14,000, marched on Ostend after Sluis fell, but with no intention of fighting his way through Spanish forts and defences. His proximity undoubtedly contributed to the generous terms of surrender granted by Spinola to the Ostend garrison, clinging desperately to the last line of fortification, on September 20, after a siege of three years and ten weeks. The statistics of the epic conflict, its perhaps 120,000 dead,³ its endless consumption of money,⁴ gripped the imagination of the contemporary world. But what, in material terms, were the consequences?

There were, firstly, the experts who were proven wrong. Henry's oft-repeated belief that with the loss of Ostend the Republic would collapse had been shown to be false, despite the fact that it was coupled with the end of the Anglo-Spanish war. The United Provinces had found a new unity and determination especially in the last campaign, and the province of Holland had led the way in finding the ever vaster sums of money declared

1 Laffleur (2), 257-9; Recueil, VI, 324-5; KB 73C33, cf. 669 & 687 for Buzanval's growing optimism.

2 Lon. & Cuv. 195-201. Spinola was unjustly blamed (Rodríguez Villa, 77, 80). The loss of Sluis was seen as a disaster: Carnero, 504; Brants, 'Mission de Croy', Bull CRH 77 (1908), 194. On Flanders contributions, Chap III above; Correspondance.. de Frangipani, III, 466, 475, 486.

3 Henrard, ch. 16, summarises the statistics. The casualty figure is based on more reliable evidence than most for this period.

4 The Spanish spent 30 million ducats (Bonours), the Dutch 4 million florins (Meteren, 511). Dutch debts for the army & Ostend still totalled 1.4 millions in 1605: ARA SG 4910 I.

to be necessary for the defence of the country.¹ Nonetheless, there was a strong awareness of the perilous precariousness of the republic's position, especially if financial weakness should prevent them seizing the initiative to pre-empt Spinola in 1605. Buzanval predicted that if Henry remained at peace,

je suis contraint de vous dire que je ne vois point comment nous puissions échapper de voir bientôt la ruine et subversion de cet Etat....²

That is, while Ostend's siege had provided moments of crisis, the worst was still to come.

The next error was immediately serious at a strategic level. Henry believed 1605 would see Spinola campaigning to regain Sluis,³ and Maurice remained in Flanders for half of the next year before he was convinced that the Marquis would operate over the Rhine. By doing so, Spinola was admitting that the siege of Ostend itself had been a disastrous diversion. The same reasons which had originally led the Archduke to attack Ostend applied with equal vigour to Sluis, but the Genoese and the court of Madrid understood now, as perhaps they had not fully realised hitherto, the cost of fighting on one's own soil; and they knew that the Republic had a weak frontier, in the east, which had been left undisturbed for too long.⁴

1 Holland's readiness to bear the burden is evident throughout the Res Holl & in the Utrecht States letters in Dodt.

2 KB 73C33, 728; cf. *ibid* 725, 759, 776f.

3 Recueil VI, 325.

4 Lon. & Cuv. 207-8; Rodriguez-Villa, Spinola, 90-106.

However, to exploit this situation, the Spanish needed two armies, leaving one to defend Flanders and Brabant. For two campaigns, Spinola managed to have them: and they were the most dangerous and successful Spanish campaigns in the Netherlands since the great days of Parma. But the cauldron of Ostend had consumed the resources in money, in veteran soldiers, in the willingness of the Archduke's provinces to fight, which would have been necessary for the Marquis to win the war. The siege of Ostend appreciably shortened the period before the Truce. It showed the Dutch how fortunate they had been in the Archduke's stubbornness, and it prevented Spinola from taking advantage of the isolation of the States which dated from 1598, but did not take full effect until 1605. It ensured a far more favourable situation for the States than might have been envisaged after Vervins and the failure to exploit the victory of Nieuwpoort.

The operations which centred on the siege of Ostend also reveal clearly the injustice of the statement that there was no conception of strategy in this period.¹ As much as in any other period the Clausewitzian doctrine holds true, that politics must dictate the ends of the war, but that the war must be fought out by military reasoning. The siege of Ostend was begun by the archduke for sound strategic reasons, and while

1 See Chap. II, above.

its continuation against adverse circumstance owed much to questions of prestige, this very same element was closely related to the standing of the Spanish regime in the Netherlands. To abandon the operation after so much effort would have a devastating moral effect, and represent the greatest setback to Spanish arms in recent history.¹ The political objective, of compelling the Republic to make a reasonable peace, would in Spanish eyes have been retarded immeasurably² by an abandonment.

For the States, Ostend represented the focus of their diplomatic activities abroad, and a unifying factor at home. The defence of the town was important for strategic reasons, but these became so debased that in 1604 they no longer mattered. Through the fate of the town, nonetheless, Oldenbarnevelt managed to convince the monarchs of France and England of the need for direct and tangible support. The maintenance of the defence was crucial in showing allies that the States were a serious and viable proposition, not a lost cause for whom it was not worth making any sacrifices.³ The relief of Ostend would have been a political victory of the first order, and it was for this reason that this question dominated their strategic thinking.

1 Given that Nieuwpoort had no material consequences.
 2 Lon. & Cuv, 96, 'Consulta' of 18 Feb 1602. Cf. Frangipani, III, 257, 290.
 3 This was the view of some at the French court, especially in 1605-06. Nouaillac, Villeroy, 458; Barendrecht, 151-3. Henry was never likely to abandon the Republic but the Dutch were not party to all the intricacies of his foreign policy and had to consider it.

For the military leaders, however, valid military reasons tempered the demands of the civilians. Maurice knew well enough that a town well invested was a town taken, especially if time was no object. Not until 1604 did he admit openly there was no hope for Ostend - but in his campaigns he showed that he considered relief impossible with the forces at his disposal. These campaigns were used wisely, too, to strengthen the frontiers of the state. The element of over-rashness in the military thinking of the States General was compensated for by the over-caution frequently displayed by Maurice and William Louis. But their strategy was soundly based on the primary political aim of the war, which was simply to survive: no more could be hoped for without foreign intervention.

"The memorable siege of Ostend"¹ ended without appearing to observers to be the epoch-making event it had sometimes threatened to be.² The war was to go on. But the events of the years 1601-1604, centred on Ostend, meant that the course of the war was markedly different than could have been envisaged before the Archduke took the fateful decision to rest the reputation of his arms upon the capture of the one town which the Republic could replenish by sea, in the one province in which both Elizabeth and Henry IV believed they had vital interests to protect or ambitions to nurture.

1 Winwood, II, 29-30, Winwood to Lord Cranborne, 12 Sep 1604.

2 As in 1601/02: KB 73C33, 7.

VIII

THE IMPACT OF DEFEAT:

THE CRISIS YEARS 1605-6

When the armies of Maurice and Spinola withdrew into Winter quarters in 1604, with honours even, there was nothing to indicate to contemporaries that the war which had already lasted thirty six years was about to enter its final phase, nor indeed that if there were to be a decision, that it would be the United Provinces which would emerge as the effective victors.¹ For the finances of the Spanish crown had been exhausted before, notably in 1575/6 and 1597, and serious though this problem was, there had been an up-turn in receipts of American bullion, which, combined with the personal resources of Spinola, enabled the marquis to conceive plans aimed at nothing less than the military defeat of the northern provinces.²

The scheme devised during Spinola's visit to Madrid in the Winter of 1604/5 called for two armies, one of which would have the function of pinning down the Dutch, while the other would invade the eastern provinces, weakly defended and rumoured to contain large disaffected elements. The strategic benefits were potentially enormous. Such an operation would transfer the burden of the war onto hostile soil, cut all land communications with Germany, bring direct pressure to bear on Friesland and Groningen which would cause them to look to their own defence, and finally, but most crucially, provide

1 E.g. letter of Buzanval, KB 73C33, 845. 26 Feb.
 2 Chaunu, 'Seville et la Belgique', Revue du Nord, 42, (1960), 290.

the base for a drive across the Yssel.¹ This plan made it possible to avoid the heavy southern defences of Holland and march directly into the urban heartland of the Dutch Republic, forcing Maurice into battle against odds, a contest the loss of which would mean the capitulation of Holland.² The campaign of 1607 would have witnessed this effort, had financial exhaustion and Netherlands war-weariness not led to the truce negotiations.

The leaders of the United Provinces certainly feared defeat more than they hoped for victory. Although English troops continued to serve in large numbers,³ the growing friendliness between London and Madrid boded ill for the future, and relations with James I were to suffer a serious trial when Dutch ships pursued a Spanish convoy into Dover harbour in June 1605.⁴ As for France, there can have been few illusions left in the Republic on the chances of Henry IV re-entering the war, and the subsidy from Paris was to assume the role of an absolutely indispensable source of cash for carrying on the war.⁵ With debts growing, trade falling away, and the income from the Convooi and Licent duties on which the admiralties depended being cut by Spanish measures against Dutch trade, there was little enough cause for optimism.⁶

1 Lonchay & Cuvalier, I, 207-11; Rodriguez-Villa, Spinola, 96-104. There were to be 11, 500 in the first, and 24,500 in the second army.

2 On the origins of this plan with Parma and Verdugo, see Chap IV.

3 46 companies in the regiments of Edward Cecil, Horace Vere, Ogle and Sutton.

4 See esp Winwood, II, 81-9; Res St Gen XIII, 345.

5 See Table V.

6 Christensen, Dutch Trade to the Baltic, 446-7; Becht, Statistische Gegevens, Tab.I.

Henry IV made yet another of his tantalising proposals to the Dutch in February, himself tempted by Spinola's absence and the then weakness of the Spanish forces.¹ But his scheme, which involved an attack on Gravelines, Dunkirk and Nieuwpoort by Maurice, only after which would Henry declare war, was quite beyond the resources of his would-be allies, and was certainly an operation of such far greater boldness than any Maurice had ever attempted that it is difficult to believe that Henry really expected the prince to take it seriously.²

The plans of the States General, in fact, were based on a realistic appreciation of the dangers they were facing. Oldenbarnevelt and Maurice were aware that the enemy planned to operate with two armies,³ and that therefore it was vitally important to seize the initiative and take the field first. Winwood reported their desire to pre-empt Spinola and disrupt his schemes by starting operations in April,⁴ despite the great shortage of money only alleviated by the despatch of a French subsidy of 600,000 gulden in March.⁵ Quite apart from these difficulties, there was little agreement about where to operate. The States of Zeeland

- 1 Deventer, III, 14-24 (orig. ARA SG LA523, 11 Feb); Barendrecht, 149.
- 2 Aerssen reported Henry's passive intent on 3 March, ARA SG LA523.
- 3 KHA A22 IXA-302, Maurice to William Louis, 13 January 1605. As early as Dec 1604 Maurice was insisting the States would have to be very strong in the field, and was proposing a garrison of only 16 companies for Groningen and Emden. KHA 22IXAI 301.
- 4 HMC Sal XVIII, 17; cf. KHA A22 IXA-306; Res Holland 1605, 17,,50.
- 5 Res Holland, 50; a list of the French subsidies with dates of arrival is in ARA SH 2631 (b).

certainly wished operations to continue in Flanders, if only because they expected a Spanish attack on Sluis, and this seems to have been the commonly accepted view.¹ Maurice was to spend much of the Summer making his conquests of the previous year secure, especially Isendyke, which suggests most strongly that he had bowed to powerful pressure from the Zeelanders, who had an immediate interest in the erection of a solid barrier between themselves and Spanish Flanders.² The massive sums of money expended on fortifications in States Flanders - nearly a million gulden - indicate what high priority was given to this totally defensive consideration. This is clear evidence of the defensive mentality of the northern provinces, for the expenditure of such a sum on additional troop levies would have provided a substantial offensive capacity which was apparently not even envisaged.

The offensive action ultimately launched by Maurice, the attack on Antwerp, was thus an attack with its origins in defensive concepts. The precise motives are difficult to ascertain but it would seem that the plan had been drawn up during the abortive negotiations with the French for a Flanders invasion. During these discussions Maurice had rejected Bruges as a possible target, and finally settled on an attempt to retake Ostend. Once it became clear that there would be no aid from Henry, the prince reverted to the Antwerp

1 HMC Sal XVIII, 156; Recueil, VI, 324; Ebeling, 21.
2 Kemp, II, 113; Grotius, 780f.

scheme,¹ but his intention to enter the field very early was frustrated by the late arrival of new German levies in the army: Buzanval wrote in April that he needed 'longer arms' to attack the city.² At one level, of course, the successful reversal of Parma's greatest victory would have had a devastating psychological effect in the south, and possibly also on Henry IV. The strategic advantages would have been very great, too. The whole of Brabant would have become subject to unstoppable incursions, and the Dutch would also have obtained a central position between Brabant and Flanders. But it is possible that the main purpose of the operation was not more than to fix the seat of war in enemy territory, divert Spinola from whatever other plans he had, and - according to some sources - disrupt his financial preparations which were transacted through Antwerp.³

Bold in conception, the operation failed in execution. The city was of course far too large for a regular siege by investment, approach and assault, and it seems that Maurice intended to isolate it from relief by cutting the surrounding dykes, then force his way in with a powerful army.⁴ But Count Ernest was driven off when he tried to land on the Flanders shore of the

- 1 KB 73C33, 827-30 (13 Feb), 840-2 (26 Feb), 847-8. (9 Mar).
- 2 KB 73C33, 871 (19 Apr), 880 (28 Apr).
- 3 Historie van het Leven van .. Oldenbarnevelt (1648), 47, Guistiniano, 155; for the other views of Maurice's intentions, Carnero, 520; Sande, 39.
- 4 Groen, II, 329; Cecil MSS 227 p6. 18,000 men were used according to Meerbeeck, 1068. The States General told Henry IV they had assembled some 25,000 men & 1000 ships & boats. (Res St Gen XIII, 334). There would have been a good chance of success if the initial stage had worked.

Scheldt, so the necessary initial encirclement became impossible, and Maurice had to content himself with the rather insignificant consolation prize of the castle of Wouw.¹ It had been Spinola's precautions and the skilful placing of his small forces, through prior knowledge of Maurice's scheme, which had prevented success. This lack of secrecy was hardly surprising, and there is no need to believe the allegation that the plan was leaked by Oldenbarnevelt.² Rumours that Antwerp might be the target had been circulating since January,³ and apparently discussed openly, since Winwood reported that Amsterdam was opposed to any restoration of the city's commerce.⁴ William Louis complained at the total lack of concern with security,⁵ but even though the decision on the exact nature of the offensive was not finally taken until May 10 at the earliest, one week before the attack,⁶ the assembly of troops and ships could not be concealed from the Spanish and the possible targets were very few.⁷ The casual disregard for the element of surprise characterising what was to be Maurice's last important offensive

-
- 1 KHA A22 IXA-309; Groen, II, 332f; Meerbeeck, 1068; Croy, 181-3; Sande, 39; Grotius, 187; Gerlo & Vervliet, 229f; Rodriguez-Villa, Spinola, 105; Ebeling, 35-7.
- 2 Discussed by Den Tex, II, 524.
- 3 HMC Sal XVII, 17.
- 4 Winwood, II, 53-5.
- 5 Groen, loc cit.
- 6 ARA RdvSt 23 (10/5); Res St Gen XIII, 259; Ebeling, 30.
- 7 Carnero, 521; Croy, 187; Lanario, 176. Even the French knew of the army's position: ARA SH 2632 VI, 23 May, Aerssen to Oldenbarnevelt. Cf. HMC Lisle, III, 155-7, for Brown's views on the suitability of the plan.

contrasts strongly with the secrecy surrounding Spinola's far-ranging plans at this stage.

Still determined to use their temporary superiority, and aware of the need to impose their will on the enemy, the States General urged Maurice to move into Flanders and take Sas van Ghent or Bruges. Spinola however constructed a bridge of boats across the Scheldt and was able to concentrate his forces fast enough to prevent any such attack,¹ while avoiding at the same time being drawn into battle on unfavourable terms.²

With a stalemate position in Flanders, the two large armies being entrenched at Watervliet and Bochout respectively, the Dutch took the fateful decision to remain on the defensive. The high costs of providing the materials of offensive warfare presumably dictated this course, but the flow of reinforcements which soon permitted Spinola to establish two substantial armies must have told them that the beginning of a Spanish offensive was imminent. The failure of the Dutch to capitalise on the advantages of being first in the field ensured that the opportunity would not now return; and the refusal of Maurice to leave Flanders with the bulk of his army, while Spinola was crossing the Rhine, meant inevitably that the war was to be waged

1 Res St Gen XIII, 262f; Sande 40; HMC Sal XVII, 220f; Carnero, 522.

2 There is evidence of Maurice's desire for battle on this occasion: HMC Sal XVII, 207.

inside the territory of the United Provinces.¹

The prince has been blamed for allowing this situation to develop,² but his analysis, though wrong, was perfectly rational. He was convinced that the assembly of Spanish forces on the Rhine (at Kaiserwerth) was no more than an attempt to divert him from Flanders, probably by a siege of Rheinberg. As early as May 25 Maurice was demanding that immediate repairs be made to the defences of Bredevort, Grol, Doesburg and Deutecom as a precaution.³ Count Ernest was at Rheinberg with the significant force of 37 companies by the start of July, at which point Spinola and most of his best troops were still in Flanders.⁴ The States General, in the midst of urging the despatch of reinforcements to their weakest frontier, were nonetheless considering that the troops at Rheinberg were strong enough to take offensive action, as late as July 19.⁵

Spinola did not reveal his intentions to his subordinates until reaching the Rhine, and even there encountered opposition to his intended deep penetration, the objective being Lingen.⁶ In all other quarters -

-
- 1 Buzanval wrote of dismay and despair among Dutch leaders (unnamed) who had seen the Antwerp attack as the only hope of salvation - KB 73C33, 906 (20 June).
 - 2 Den Tex, II, 525; calls it incomprehensible.
 - 3 Kemp, II, 472: the original, ARA SG 4910 II, 25 May.
 - 4 Kemp, II, 479, 483.
 - 5 Res St Gen XIII, 281f. Cf. the rumours reported in Ebeling, 51.
 - 6 Carnero, 525f; Rodriguez-Villa, 106.

at Maurice's headquarters, in Brussels, in Paris - it was considered inconceivable that the Genoese, yet to direct an army in the open field, would envisage marching into Overijssel while there was a States army at Rheinberg, in his rear.¹ The generally held opinion was that a siege of Rheinberg was intended, in order to divert Maurice from Flanders. Very short of waggons, and with a contrary wind preventing any move by water, the Prince was anyway in no position to rapidly shift to the eastern frontier. He moved as soon as the genuine target of the Spanish army became clear,² and was at Arnhem by August 8, and Deventer two days later, still without artillery.³ Oldenzaal, with a small garrison and ill-provisioned, had already capitulated, and Spinola's army was heading for Lingon. Despite the lavish care taken to provide the town with modern fortifications, the garrison left inside was too small to hold the perimeter, and capitulation duly followed, on August 19,⁴ to the great anger of the prince,⁵ although this undoubtedly

-
- 1 ARA SG IA523 (26 July); HMC Sal XVII, 266, 279; Collins, II, 313; JvO, II, 119f (24 July); Meerbeeck, 1071-2; Historie, 47.
 - 2 Ernest reported Spinola's strength as 18,000 (ARA SG 4911 I, 5 Aug); in Flanders there were 6,500; Bucquoy remained on the Rhine with part of the main army.
 - 3 Kemp, II, 491-4.
 - 4 Intercepted letters in ARA SH 2634 (a); KB 73C33, 939 (4 Aug), 947 (13 Aug). Carnero, 526-7; Grotius, 795; Sande, 40; HMC Sal XVII, 369; Rodriguez-Villa, 107f.
 - 5 The reasons for surrender were "bien maigres": KHA A22 IXA-315.

stemmed from pique at having been so totally out-manoevred by a man still regarded in military circles as an upstart. An English officer commented ruefully that¹

the enemy hath not only tacken us out a newe lesson of warr but all soe an unaccustomed bouldness.

The consequences of this misjudgement, itself a consequence of the decision to abandon the offensive, now presented a serious strategic problem for the United Provinces, because the capture of Lingen offered a series of options to the Spanish all of which Maurice had to guard against; and even sitting still was detrimental to the United Provinces since both armies were encamp~~ed~~ed on their soil. Once the decision was taken that to give battle was an unwise course - a defeat would have entailed catastrophic losses of towns² - the capacity even to attempt an offensive move was lost, for it became necessary to reinforce the garrisons of every town within the reach of an enemy army, from Brabant to the Ems.

1 HMC De Lisle, III, 195.

2 The Princes & Council to the States General, 15 Aug, ARA SG 4911 I. Buzanval wrote: "...il y en a qui aimeront mieux perir avec repy et loisir que vue precipitée ruine de la perte d'une bataille". KB 73C33, 951.

Ignorant of Spinola's further plans, the Nassau princes were particularly anxious about the weakness of the northern provinces. On August 9 there were only 9 companies in the province of Groningen,¹ and the possibility that Spinola might be planning an attack on Emden was seriously considered. This of course was an area of great sensitivity to the Dutch. The eventuality that the Spanish might be able to establish a naval base on the Ems to attack the Baltic trade route was not one that could be faced with equanimity, nor was the fear entirely without foundation.² The continuing dispute between the town of Emden and Count Enno III, and the presence of his brother Count Christopher as a colonel in Spinola's army,³ were more than sufficient to make an operation against the weakly-fortified and garrisoned town an all too likely option. As early as July 6 the Emden city government was warning the States General that the Spanish planned to attack them by land, and also with an army and fleet from Spain itself;⁴ intercepted letters seemed to verify at least the first risk, and orders already given to bring out States supplies and munitions in Emden were countermanded.⁵ The loss of

1 William Lous to States General, 9 August. ARA SG 4911 I.

2 Franz, 'Deutsche Reichsflottenpläne,' Marine Rundschau, 1907, 1039f.

3 Hagedorn, 423-5; ARA SG 6702I, Council to St Gen 28 July; on Emden's weakness, its letter to Maurice, Aug 20, *ibid*.

4 ARA SG 6702 I, 26 Jun (OS). Cf. HMC De Lisle, III, 224-5, 283.

5 ARA SG 6702, I, 26 & 28 July, I, 13 & 15 August.

Lingen which freed the Spanish army made the danger more urgent still, but until it made a definite move, it was not possible to deploy large numbers of States troops at any particular point.¹ A force of some 20 companies was sent to Groningen, but had to wait there until it was known whether Spinola would attempt Emden, or Boertange, or Coevorden.²

The Dutch were paralysed because the other options which had been available by the enemy's campaign were also very dangerous. The weakness of Groningen has already been mentioned. What made it especially alarming was that its vital frontier fortresses, Bellingwolde and Boertange in the north, Coevorden in the south, were in a state of ill-repair. The latter in particular, despite its crucial importance as the key point in the defence of the whole region, was in a totally indefensible condition. Having been the centre of a bitter inter-provincial dispute ever since its capture (1592) ~~and~~ the improvement and modernization of its fortifications had as a consequence never taken place. There is little doubt that Spinola missed an opportunity when he did not continue his northward drive from Lingen to seize the gateway to Groningen and Friesland at very little cost.³ William Louis was convinced that the fall of

1 ARA SG 6702, I, 20 Aug.

2 Ibid 25 Aug, letters of William Louis & Condors; on the princes' uncertainty, letters of William Louis, 12 Aug, KHA A22 IXE-245/245a, and Maurice, 20 Aug. Ibid IXA-315a. Cf. Res St Gen XIII, 284, 290. Plans to pay off troops were scrapped: Res Holl 1605, 180f.

3 Meteren, 538; Sande, 41; Grotius, 804.

the city could not be prevented unless Maurice sent substantial forces to his aid, or preferably came with his whole army.¹

Maurice was perfectly willing to take such action, but could not do so before Spinola made the first move, which might have meant that he would have been too late.² For the disadvantages of the defensive were making themselves apparent in a direct manner. Reinforcements had been summoned from Flanders, but reports had come from Isendike that the Spanish had assembled troops for an offensive there, or against Bergen op Zoom, so that all exposed towns in that area required reinforcement themselves.³ Additionally, of course, Maurice was compelled to ensure the defence of the Yssel and of the small towns beyond it, none of which could resist Spinola unaided. For the protection of Gelderland against incursions and devastation, a crash programme of building redoubts was instituted; for the defence of the region against a major invasion, it was necessary to improve the fortifications of town like Zwolle and Hasselt, and it was especially important that Maurice's army, based on Deventer, should not move far away.⁴

1 KHA A22 IXE 246, 249, 24 & 27 August.

2 KHA A22 IXA 317, 318, 318a, 23 & 25 August.

3 ARA SG 4911 I, Van der Noot, 27 Aug; Maurice, 29 Aug; Res St Gen, XIII, 293f. For failed 'coups' against Bergen & other towns, Kemp, II, 496f.; Grotius, 805; Winwood, II, 111; HMC Sal XVII, 369, 400, 424. According to Buzanval, there was panic after Bergen, with people threatening to flee if not sent garrisons: KB 73C33, 992.

4 ARA SG 4911 I, 29 August. Cf. Res St Gen XIII, 298; Res Holl 1605, 223; Kemp, II, 500.

Maurice could not know at this stage what his opponent's ultimate intention was, but nor could he afford to minimise the risks which the weakness of the Yssel defences entailed for the rest of the country, even though this meant leaving the northern provinces dangerously exposed and very vulnerable to attack. A fear of disaffection amongst the population of the eastern provinces, most recently incorporated, Catholic and rural, must have caused further anxiety, although as so often before events proved it exaggerated.¹ With so many defensive commitments, the chance of establishing a field army large enough to challenge Spinola's was slender.

The Genoese decided in fact to return to the Rhine, leaving the large force of 4000 men to hold Lingen and Oldenzaal. With Rheinberg in his rear and Maurice over the Yssel, he feared for his communications and, given the lateness of the season, he decided to postpone the next major advance until the following year and in the meantime secure a base of operations astride the Rhine.² Bucquoy was instructed to besiege Wachtendonck, which he did, capturing it in October and following up with a successful attack on Cracau castle, all of which contributed towards the isolation of Rheinberg. Maurice, attempting to retrieve his

1 Winwood, II, 131-3.

2 Col Doc 42, 544-7; Carnero, 529; Rodriguez-Villa, II4-7.

reputation, launched a surprise attack on Spinola which resulted in an inconclusive but bloody combat near Mulheim, on October 8-9, which effectively ended the States efforts to save Wachtendonck and left them with nothing to do save reinforce every frontier town. The campaign of 1605 ended, on Spinola's decision, in November, the quartering of the Spanish forces on the Maas and Rhine leaving no doubt where operations would be resumed in 1606.¹

The events of the 1605 campaign constituted a serious setback for the United Provinces; defeat proved to be costly in every way. The loss of three towns and the failure of Maurice to make any real effort to save them had a demoralizing effect.² In military terms, it meant that Spinola had succeeded in transferring the war to Dutch territory for the first time in seven years - and even in Flanders his forces had made ground, and were successfully containing the States forces there.³ He now possessed a strong foothold for future operations of greater scope and penetration. In the meantime, the troops stationed at Lingen and Oldenzaal could lay most of Overijssel and Gelderland under contribution, returning the whole region to the chaotic instability and insecurity it had known before 1597. As early as August the deputies of Overijssel were pleading that they had become too impoverished, and that too many of their people were fleeing their homes, to permit them to make any payment of their

1 Kemp, II, 501-14; KHA A22 IXA-325; Winwood, II, 144f; HMC Sal XVII, 410, 424, 496; Lonchay & Cuvalier, I, 220; Lanario, 180; Carnero, 531f.

2 Especially in Friesland - Winsemius, 882.

3 Croy, 196-206; Carnero, 531f; HMC De Lisle III, 245.

Consents, or to the troops of their quota, while the county of Zutphen was similarly wanting to be excused payment.¹ To be sure, these areas paid only a minute part of the state's income anyway, but the cost of defensive war did not stop at this loss of revenue.

To prevent incursions, and keep the Veluwe and Utrecht free from enemy contributions, it was necessary to start the series of redoubts which were eventually to line the Yssel and Waal, and the cost of which was very large.² Further to that was the expenditure necessary to make defensible all the towns exposed by the invasion. On Coevorden alone, 134,000 gulden was to be spent in the years 1605-7; the forts at Boertange and Bellingwolde consumed nearly 50,000 gulden in the same period,³ and over 20,000 gulden was spent at Doesburg in 1606.⁴

The financial difficulties of the republic were thus exacerbated, while those of the Archduke were lightened, by the removal of the Spanish army from its own territory. At the same time as pressing for further levies of new troops to defend the state, the Council of State reported a deficit of seven million gulden since 1599, which was rapidly destroying the credit of the United Provinces.⁵ The States of Holland

-
- 1 Res St Gen XIII, 457-8; RA Geld. III, 1 (18), 11-18 Dec, on diverting funds to local defence. CF. Ibid, (94), 14 Nov.
- 2 See Chapter II above. The initial cost of the Veluwe redoubts alone was put at fl. 100,000: Res St Gen XIII, 312.
- 3 ARA SG 12548/142: report on the fortifications in Groningen.
- 4 ARA SG 4914 II, report of 18 December 1606.
- 5 Res St Gen XIII, 461-8.

in particular had raised loan after loan on their own account to meet costs of the war - 600,000 gulden in the period June - December 1605.¹ The position was such that the French subsidy was absolutely vital now, even for the conduct of a purely defensive war: it had reached the level of two million gulden in 1605, without providing the additional offensive capacity which Henry IV expected of the States.

Indeed, the situation of the United Provinces by the end of 1605 was widely regarded as grim. The German Protestant princes, whom Henry IV had persuaded to provide to the republic a subsidy of 100,000 gulden, were especially concerned with Spinola's successes on the Rhine and Ems.² In Spain, Cornwallis reported,

This Yeare are expected great Events of those Warrs.....³

while in the Low Countries the Archduke was confident that the tide had been turned and that the rebels would be forced to make peace.⁴ In the north, Maurice's prediction that the coming year would be yet harder than the one they had just experienced can have

1 Res Holl 1605, 126, 182, 271, 309. Some of the loans were merely in anticipation of revenue or the French subsidy, but many were to pay long-standing debts.

2 JvO, II, 128-9. Cf. Baudrillart, 'Politique d'Henri IV en Allemagne', in Rev Quest Hist 37 (1885), 414f, & Den Tex, II, 523-4: Fl. 140,073 were received in 1605, the major parts from Brandenburg: ARA SH 2592 (bl). The elector also sent troops - his interest was in Dutch support over the Cleves - Julich succession. See Siccama, Schets van de diplomatieke betrekkingen tusschen Nederland en Brandenburg, 38-40.

3 Winwood, II, 202.

4 Correspondance...de Frangipani, III, 553f.

reassured no one.¹ From the king of France came the opinion that the need of the Dutch was "plus grand encore que jamais"² and the demand that James I should assist them, with the preceptive comment that if he did not,³

j'infererois...qu'il aurait dessein de les voir tomber et de conniver à leur ruine...

Determined to establish the truth of his ally's situation, Henry despatched St Aubin to report back with first hand evidence. The States General informed him of their determination to continue the war "nonobstant toute leur adversité",⁴ but stressed that the subsidy, and the despatch of more troops raised in France, were essential.⁵ Partly in order to convince opposition from his own council, and partly because he knew it was strategically the best course, Henry urged the republic to take the offensive, preferably in Flanders,⁶ but Oldenbarnevelt replied that without further aid even the defensive was problematical,⁷ pointing out that the republic was being attacked at its weakest point.

1 KB 73C33, 1108.

2 Recueil VI, 519f, cf. 530-4, & Aerssen on 20 Nov, ARA SG LA523, cf. KB 73C33, 1051.

3 Recueil VI, 539-45.

4 Memo of 6 Dec. ARA SG 6751; cf. Barendrecht, 152f: Deventer, III, 66.

5 Dutch recruiting raised fears in France of a rupture with Spain: ARA SG LA523, 2 & 9 December.

6 Deventer, III, 51f, 56; ARA SG LA523, 7 Dec. The points were repeated on 28 January, ARA SG LA524.

7 JvO, II, 131f. Buzanval confirmed this: KB 73C33, 1021-2; cf. HMC De Lisle, III, 258.

Relations between the two states took on a different aspect with the eruption of the armed dispute between Henry and Bouillon, and the first suggestions that the French king might be interested in the sovereignty of the Netherlands in return for his assistance.

The dispute with Bouillon, culminating in Henry's advance with an army on Sedan, was viewed with some anxiety in the Spanish Netherlands where the whole process was thought of as a plot to allow Henry to divert Spanish pressure from the republic.¹ What it in fact assured was the diversion of French resources such that no increase in the subsidy was possible, and the recruitment of additional troops for the French regiments in Dutch service was delayed.² The great apprehension felt in the republic was noted by Buzanval, who reported that

j'en vois le corps foible, et j'en sens le
pouls languide. 3

The affair of the demand for sovereignty, carried by Aerssen to the Hague at the end of February at the same time as bringing Henry's explanations about Bouillon, remains shrouded in considerable mystery.⁴ By the time

1 E.g. Frangipani, III, 580.

2 ARA SG LA524, 12 & 24 April; KB 73C33, 1138-9 (22 June); Res St Gen XIII, 609; Deventer III, 73; Winwood, II, 207; Rogge, Diplomatiek beleid van.. Aerssen, 106.

3 Correspondance de..Duplessis-Mornay, X, 160.

4 ARA SG LA524, 24 Apr; Deventer, III, 71f; Res St Gen XIII, 607; Rogge, 106-111; Barendrecht, 162-4; Den Tex, II, 534-6.

Aerssen returned with Oldenbarnevelt's highly ambiguous replies, the king was no longer interested in plunging his realm back into international war. But on the other side, the States General should have been warned by the episode that Henry might not be content simply to hand over vast sums of money with no regard^w and without even enabling the republic to conduct offensive war.¹

It was fortunate indeed for the Dutch that another great shortage of money kept Spinola in Spain and Italy during the Spring raising loans for the financing of his coming campaign,² although reports of his difficulties took the urgency out of the planning of the northern provinces, and may have had something to do with the delays encountered by Aerssen in obtaining the Summer subsidy and the 200,000 lbs of gunpowder desperately wanted by the republic.³ The lack of action demonstrated by Maurice and the States rapidly came to annoy the French king, and the dispute which arose when Rohan joined the States army without Henry's permission temporarily threatened the subsidy agreement, and induced Aerssen to recommend that Oldenbarnevelt himself should visit France.⁴ Despite the absence of Spinola until June, however, not even a hint of offensive action came from the Dutch.

-
- 1 Nouaillac, Villeroy, 459; Philippson, IV, 78f.
 2 Rodriguez-Villa, 119ff.
 3 ARA SG LA524, 5, 8, 17 & 26 May, 10 June, Cf. Recueil, VI, 588.
 4 ARA SG LA524, 26 May, 12, 16, 22 June. On 7 July Aerssen wrote "qu'on n'entend pas de contribuer pour une defensive". On Rohan, ib. 13 July, 3 August.

For Maurice found himself deeply committed to the defensive. The attention of the States was directed almost exclusively to the completion of the various defensive preparations begun in the previous year, such that the raising of additional troops was rejected as too costly.¹ The urgings of Maurice, that with 150 companies for a field army he could attack the enemy,² were ignored. In fact, he was caught in a strategic dilemma. The decision to remain on the defensive meant that every threatened town must be strongly-held. Of the 359 companies of foot in States service, no less than 258 were in garrisons - 60 in Flanders, 80 along the Brabant frontiers, 25 in Groningen and Emden, and 75 on or beyond the Yssel.³ There were thus only 101 for a field army, far too few to contemplate an attack on an enemy-held town which might win back the initiative. The narrow escapes from the petard attacks of the Spanish on Bredevoort and Sluis⁴ - the loss of which might not have ended the war, as Frangipani suggested,⁵ but would certainly have been a shattering blow - probably served only to confirm the States in their negative thinking. They were content to await Spinola's blows, wherever they might fall, and hoped they would prove strong enough to resist them.

1 Res St Gen XIII, 531, 657, 671 for the small levies made; Kemp, II, 516f.

2 KHA A22 IXA-327, 328a.

3 List in Ibid 327. The rest were in Zeeland (19), Amsterdam (4).

4 Grotius, 830-4; Lanario, 182f; Winwood, II, 233f; True Copy of a letter..from Sluce, 12 June 1606.

5 Correspondance..de Frangipani, III, 600. The high confidence in the Spanish camp was revealed by an intercepted letter of Count Christopher of East Friesland, April 1606 - ARA SG 7472.

The Genoese was determined on victory this time, and had worked out precisely how he intended to achieve it. He possessed the men, for the time being at least the money, and his enemy's passiveness gave him the opportunity. Dutch chroniclers suggest that he meant to continue his invasion of Friesland and was thwarted by marshes and heavy rain.¹ But in reality his aim was more grandiose. His army was to force a crossing of the Yssel and occupy the Veluwe; Bucquoy's smaller force was to cross into Betuwe to take Nijmegen, the two armies operating simultaneously. This achieved, there was no obstacle which could have prevented them marching rapidly into southern Holland, cutting off numerous towns and forts without a hope of relief and forcing the enemy into a disadvantageous battle in his own heartland. Success would inevitably have entailed the defeat of the United Provinces, for few of the cities of Holland could have resisted such a powerful army for long.² The forces with which he intended to operate in person can be estimated at around 14,000, with a substantial provision of boats, pontoons, waggons and a siege train. Bucquoy was provided with some 11-12,000 men. The field army available to Maurice in July was not more than 12,000,³ an

-
- 1 Grotius, 843; Sande, 43, Winsemius, 882.
 2 Carnero, 538-9; Meerbeeck, 1099; Col Doc 42, 569, 72. Henry IV expected attacks on Grave or Nijmegen, and claimed to have information from Albert's Council of War: ARA SG IA524, 27 June & 7 July: Philibert du Bois reported that it was said that "Spinola wollte nocte gerne die Ostersladen zu Utrecht essen": Ebeling, 95.
 3 Figures from Rodriguez Villa, 135; Grotius, 834; Lanario, 184.

inferiority of such proportions that Spinola must have rated high his chances of success.

Initially, as the Spanish armies gathered and then moved back into Gelderland, there was uncertainty as to their objectives, Maurice first believing that Rheinberg was the target,¹ then fearing for Coevorden or Emden.² Only gradually did he become aware that the Yssel was the primary target,³ but even then he found that he had to press hard before William Louis and the States of Friesland would send him any of the forces guarding the northern quarters.⁴ At the same time, the growing threat from Bucquoy compelled the prince to maintain a powerful force in the Nijmegen area, thus leaving him dangerously stretched on the Yssel.⁵

In fact, Spinola's grand design was thwarted, partly by Dutch resistance and partly by ill fortune. Bucquoy was repelled by Dubois near Nijmegen, and retired discomfited, although it was the speed of reaction of the States commander rather than the military obstacle of the Waal by itself which was the cause.⁶ Spinola himself found that torrential rain had turned the Yssel into an uncrossable barrier at many

-
- 1 KHA A22 IXA-352 (11 July); Kemp, II, 521.
 - 2 KHA A22 IXA-354, 5 (13, 14 July); Res St Gen XIII, 349ff; on Emden, KB73C33, 1140-1.
 - 3 KHA A22 IXA-356, 7 (15, 16 July).
 - 4 Ibid 357, 8, 360, 362, 364; A13 XI-D-3; ARA SG 4913 III, 1 August.
 - 5 Ibid 360-62 (19-22 July); copies encl. with 364; Kemp, II, 522-7; Res St Gen XIII, 560.
 - 6 Carnero, 540; Grotius, 836; Sande, 43; Lanario, 186; Res St Gen XIII, 565. Bucquoy refused to attempt a siege of Nijmegen on the grounds it could be easily reinforced, obviously not understanding that this was what Spinola wanted, to draw troops from Maurice!

points. A further attempt to cross at Zwolle led by the Count of Solre, while the Marquis seized Lochem to try to divert Maurice, also failed. On this occasion the responsibility may be divided between the resolute opposition of the local States forces, and the failure to provide artillery ammunition of the correct calibre for Solre's guns.¹ But the deciding factor in Spinola's repulse from the Yssel was undoubtedly the abnormal flood conditions.² Maurice's redoubts and field fortifications could compensate for his numerical inferiority only as long as he had his troops concentrated opposite an intended attack. But the Yssel ran for over 60 miles, and even allowing that many parts were impracticable for crossings, and others covered by fortresses such as Deventer and Zutphen, this was vastly too much for the prince's strength, down at one point to a mere 39 companies in the field;³ the peasants of the Betuwe had to be armed.⁴ In normal conditions it must have been quite impossible to prevent Spinola establishing a bridgehead in the Veluwe. Well indeed might Carnero lament that providence was not on their side.⁵

With no immediate prospect of an improvement in conditions, and with reinforcements from various quarters flowing into Maurice's army, Spinola resolved to attack

1 KHA A22 IXA-366, 7, 9, 70 (28 July, 2 & 3 Aug); Carnero, 540-2; Grotius, 837; Sande, 43.
 2 Col Doc 43, 5; Kemp, II, 528; Rodriguez Villa, 136-7.
 3 KHA A22 IXA-366.
 4 Ebeling, 145-9.
 5 Carnero. 539. The Dutch agreed: Ebeling, 156.

Grol and thus secure control of the Twente region. The siege began on August 5 and the defence lasted only nine days,¹ to the great annoyance of Maurice, who had been urging the formation of a relieving army, which he reckoned would have been adequate for the task, from all the nearby garrisons.² If there was thus misfortune involved in the failure of this unusual piece of aggressiveness from Maurice, the early surrender of towns - in this case, at least partly through the pressure of the civilian population³ - was more to be expected when the entire state was on the defensive, and many previous losses had been accepted without attempts at relief.

The last significant military events of the year were now at hand. Having failed to accomplish his primary design, for which he blamed the weather and Bucquoy's incompetence rather than enemy resistance,⁴ Spinola sought consolation in an attack on Rheinberg, the success of which would guarantee communications with his conquests beyond the Rhine and make a future operation in the same region considerably more straightforward. It was no easy operation, for the town, which had been expecting attack for two years, had been

1 The garrison of 1200 could have held longer: Sande, 43; Grotius, 838; Ianario, 186; Res St Gen XIII, 578; HMC De Lisle, III, 305.

2 KHA A22 IXA-372, 374 (7, 11 August).

3 Grotius, 838; the States General called for an investigation by the Council of State: Res St Gen XIII, 579. Henry IV also thought the surrender disgraceful: ARA SG LA524, 30 August: KB 73C33, 1188, 1199.

4 Letter in Rodriguez-Villa, 141-4.

extensively refortified, and Maurice succeeded in reinforcing the garrison to a strength of some 4000. Weakened by detachments, sickness and desertion, Spinola had to combine his forces with Bucquoy's in order to make the siege. After a month's fierce fighting, in which the garrison exhausted their powder, terms of capitulation were agreed (October 2):¹ the city changed hands for the sixth and last time.

Despite the urging of the States General that Maurice should try to relieve Rheinberg, the prince, who had followed as far as Wesel, found, not surprisingly, that the besiegers were too well entrenched. An abortive attempt to seize Venlo by surprise was thus the only effort to prevent yet another Spanish victory unimpeded by the States army.² It is possible that Maurice was waiting on an event which in fact occurred as Rheinberg fell: the mutiny of large parts of Spinola's army, which had fought hard and for a long time in very bad conditions without ever receiving more than portions of their pay. The scale of the mutiny forced the Genoese to end the campaign³ and break up his army.

1 Grotius 839f; Lanario, 186; Sande, 43-4; Col Doc 43, 7-10; Kemp, II, 532-4; Rodriguez-Villa, 137-9. Dodt, V, 123-4; Dalton, 137-9.

2 Kemp, II, 534-40; Res St Gen XIII, 581-4; Res Holland 1606, 259-62, a report by Oldenbarnevelt on military operations at Rheinberg and the reasons why Maurice found relief to be impossible. Cf. Deventer, III, 97-9.

3 Parker, Army of Flanders, 250, for summary of the mutiny.

Maurice was determined not to miss this opportunity to retrieve his much battered reputation, and at the same time restore the States' strategic position beyond the Yssel. With Spinola at Neuss, and little likelihood of his army being reconstituted, the States General agreed to a counter attack aimed at Lochem and Grol.¹ The former fell immediately to Count Ernest (October 29) but greater problems accompanied the transfer of Maurice's army to Grol, especially difficulties of transport. The Yssel, which had been too fast to allow Spinola to cross in August, was by now too low to allow any movement by boat.² The greatest shock, though, was that Spinola managed to put together an ad hoc army and come racing northwards to relieve Grol. Rather than face battle, the prince abandoned the siege, and the campaign of 1606 ended.³

The relief of Grol was hailed as a great victory for Spinola, who was probably much weaker in numbers at that time.⁴ Maurice certainly was widely blamed for what was considered shameful faintheartedness, both at home and abroad, where Henry IV was furious and Rohan commented that Spinola could go anywhere,

1 Res St Gen XIII, 581-92; there was strong pressure from Gelderland and Utrecht for the operation. Kemp, II, 541-5.

2 Kemp, II, 545.

3 Kemp, II, 547-9; Sande, 44; Res St Gen XIII, 594-7; Grotius, 840; Lanario, 188; Rodriguez-Villa, 140.

4 E.g. Col Doc 43, 23; Croy, 220; Rodriguez-Villa, 140-1.

Sachant que M. le Prince Maurice ne l'osera attendre ni combattre....1

Maurice's superiority had been illusory, however, since large numbers of his troops had fallen sick; he had had no time to fortify a position; and he was too weak to drive off the Spanish and maintain a siege simultaneously.²

Almost simultaneous with the relief of Grol came news of the defeat of Haultain's fleet³ by a Spanish squadron, this time genuinely more disgraceful than of great material consequence.⁴ This set the seal firmly on a year of uninterrupted setbacks and defeats for the Dutch. Their only consolation could be that Spinola had also failed to achieve his plans, the full extent of which they probably had not guessed, just as they could not yet know of the complete if temporary collapse of the financial position of the Marquis and Madrid which was to make the truce inevitable.

For those ignorant of the problems of the Spanish, the position of the United Provinces by the end of 1606 seemed desperate. Ogle told Salisbury in September that⁵

these men had need pray for a good year of the next, for if they should remayne upon theyr defensive condicion still, all the Callenders on this syde say theyr estate is desperate.

-
- 1 ARA SG LA524, 4 December. Cf Cecil MSS 118/46; HMC Sal XVIII, 270; HMC De Lisle, III, 323.
- 2 Sande, 44, exculpates the prince; cf. Kemp, II, 548. The level of criticism increased with the distance from the scene of the event. Cf. also Lettres..à.. Boderie, I, 83, 106.
- 3 A fleet sent by Holland or Zeeland to the coasts of Spain with the hope of intercepting the silver fleet.
- 4 Res Holland 1606, 272; HMC Sal XVIII, 398; Jonge, Zeewesen, I, 204; Mollema, 105; Graefe, 'Beitrag zur Geschichte der See - expeditionen 1606-7', BVGO, 1933. 204-10. PRO SP Holland). 4 September.

Just as serious, the apparently endless run of setbacks had had an alarming effect on the attitude of the French. At the beginning of August, Henry had been "perplexed" by events in the Netherlands.¹ The loss of towns without relief angered the French, and Henry IV accused the Dutch of waging war²

comme M. de Mayenne...qui se contentoit de perdre deux ou trois villes par an....

Aerssen was soon reporting anxiously that a growing part of the French court was urging Henry that his subsidies to the Dutch were merely a waste of money.³ The question of sovereignty arose again, as the Dutch demanded an even larger subsidy for 1607. Aerssen indicated in September, however, that opposed although Henry was to the idea of a peace or truce which would free the king of Spain's hands, that would be preferable to the war which must ensue from any extension of his authority over the Netherlands.⁴ He continually urged Oldenbarnevelt to come to France and endeavour to secure greater assistance himself, pointing out that demands concerning sovereignty could be sidestepped as in February by pointing out the need to refer such questions

-
- 1 ARA SG LA524, 10 August, cf. *ibid* 18 August.
 - 2 *Ibid* 24 August. Henry urged that "pour bien faire la guerre il faut quelquefois tenter un hazard": *ibid* 30 August.
 - 3 Deventer, III, 80 (orig LA524, fol 196-204); ARA SG LA524, 24 Sept.
 - 4 ARA SG LA524, 16 September.

to every province and council in the republic: something which Henry, fearful of a possible Anglo-Spanish alliance against him if his aims became public, could not accept,¹ especially as he was interested in obtaining direct control of Flanders.

As far as the French were concerned, much turned on the answer to a crucial question: whether the United Provinces could be maintained against Spain solely by means of the subsidy.² There were signs towards the end of 1606 that some of Henry's Council were coming round to the view that subsidies alone would not be sufficient, and that Henry must consider recommencing war against Spain if the Dutch were not to be forced into peace.³ Oldenbarnevelt, however, was not prepared to surrender any of the States' hard-won independence, and was holding out for an increased subsidy by itself, rather than war with strings attached. The only question, resolved by the time the first tentative steps towards a truce had been made in the Netherlands was that the subsidy would continue. The exaggeration or understatement employed in the negotiations meanwhile served to obscure the real position of the United Provinces.

- 1 ARA SG LA524 24 Sept, 7 Oct (in Deventer, III, 87f), 19 Oct; JvO, II, 147f; cf. Barendrecht, 166-70; Philippson, IV, 79f.
- 2 ARA SG LA524, 3 November.
- 3 Oldenbarnevelt's interview with Buzanval, 10 October: JvO, II, 147; Deventer, III, 99; ARA SG LA524 23 November; Nouaillac, Villeroy, 461-3.

The republic was both absolutely and relatively vastly stronger at this point than it had been after the fall of Antwerp two decades earlier. Commercial prosperity, growing industry and population, a large army under an experienced group of generals, a navy which was to destroy a Spanish fleet in Gibraltar bay in April 1607; in government, more united under the authoritative guidance of Oldenbarnevelt, and the leading role of Holland firmly established; most of the frontiers well-drawn and strongly fortified; and abroad, allied to the king of France and a number of German princes: all this is well attested. But at the same time it can be demonstrated that the republic was perhaps as close to being defeated as it ever was, if this is defined as being compelled to accept the enemy's terms, and this consideration will make it possible to reach some conclusions about the way that the war, and the state, had changed their nature during this period.

Internationally, the Dutch were isolated, and their old English allies were distinctly hostile. This factor in itself made it very unlikely that any offer of genuine military protection would come from Paris, continuously distrustful of James' intentions and his friendship with Spain.¹ By the beginning of

1 E.g. Lettres...à Boderie, 111-15, 116-21

1607 it was plain that Henry would not make war in order to save the Dutch but would merely continue the subsidy:¹ and that, too, at the old level, far short of the million écus demanded by the Dutch as necessary even for a defensive war. The international balance of power was no longer the same, and the Dutch were finding themselves squeezed between the great powers of western Europe.² It was at least partly because of their total dependance on France that the Dutch embarked upon negotiations in 1607, knowing that Henry was opposed to a Netherlands peace and hoping thereby to drive him to increase his assistance.³ But the main reason why a powerful party in the republic decided to seek peace was a realisation of the dangers of continuing the war in the same pattern as had been established in 1605-6.

Even at sea, the position of the Dutch was far from happy. Despite a number of occasional successes against individual privateers,⁴ and the scattering of Cubiera's squadron in 1605, the efforts to blockade Dunkirk and Nieuwpoort had proven expensive and ineffective; and since 1604 Ostend had been brought into use as a haven for raiders. If anything, the evidence suggests that the strength of hostile naval power was on the increase.⁵

1 Deventer, III, 101; Rogge, 124-30, Nouaillac, 463.

2 Cf. Pater, Maurits en Oldenbarnevelt in den strijd om het 12 jarige bestand, 23-36.

3 Pater, 32-4; Eysinga, Wording van het 12 jarig bestand, 68-76; cf. Negotiations..de Jeannin, I, esp 70-1.

4 Faulconnier, I, 113-4.

5 Malo, Corsaires Dunkerquois, I, 246f; Debrock, 'Kaapvaart'; MMA, IX, 1955 263-4; Faulconnier, I, 115; Moer, 'Gebruik van..Machtter Zee', Marine Blad, 65, (1955), 898. The almost unchanging blockade arrangements are in Res Holland for each year.

The equipment of major fleets to carry the war to Spain which was to be gloriously justified with the victory of Gibraltar had failed thus far to bring any worthwhile returns. The admiralties, which were meant to finance themselves out of the Convooi and Licent duties, were having to be subsidised heavily; the Gibraltar expedition itself was only possible because of the assistance of the East India Company.¹ The devotion of resources by the maritime provinces to their vital interests at sea was naturally reducing the financial foundation of the war on land, without notably advancing the former.

But it was by land that the military position of the United Provinces looked weakest. The towns lost to the enemy had not represented in themselves a catastrophic setback, but the consequences of their loss were more serious. The weakest part of the Republic's frontier had been ripped open; Gelderland and Overysssel lay unprotected against incursions. The Spanish had obtained the advantage of a central position which had previously largely been the prerogative of the Dutch: they could equally threaten either Utrecht and Holland to the west, or Groningen and Friesland to the north. They thus enforced a separation of forces, and, importantly enough if one considers the role of William Louis in advising his cousin, ensured the separation of

1 Res Holland 1607, 14; Graefe, 'Beitrag', 211ff; Boldingh, 'Slag van Gibraltar', Marine Blad, 22, 1907.

the two Stadhouders. It has already been seen how it suddenly became necessary to repair and extend much-neglected defences over a very wide area. The strength of the garrisons left in places like Lingen meant that even in mid-Winter, William Louis had to find money from his own pocket for improving the defences of the city of Groningen, against which he feared a surprise attack.¹ The interposition of Spanish power between the republic and Germany also greatly complicated the business of obtaining German levies: in 1606 they had to be brought by sea, from Bremen to Delfzijl.² Control of the Rhine had returned to the Archduke, and Spinola's captures in that area offered a long-absent security to Spanish Gelderland and Limburg.³ The psychological effect of an uninterrupted period of defeat after so long a period of success, although not quantifiable, must have been considerable.⁴ The other side of the coin of determined resistance was a certain desperation and a fear of popular discontent which events were to prove not entirely misplaced. The fierce nature of inter-provincial jealousy and a growing dislike of the dominance of Holland and Oldenbarnevelt which had characterised the years of success did not abate in the years of crisis and the

-
- 1 ARA SG 4914 II, 30 November, William Louis to States General. This followed warnings from Maurice: KHA A22 IXA1 - 376, 380. New measures were also necessary in case of front - *ibid.* 382.
- 2 Res St Gen XIII, 678.
- 3 Correspondance...de Frangipani, III, 556.
- 4 E.g. Cecil MSS 118/46. Cf. HMC De Lisle, III, 314, 323, 331.

disintegration of the state, so much hoped for by the Spanish as a result of continuous pressure, was again no mere fantasy paraded by optimistic "ultras" in Brussels and Madrid.¹ The civil strife in the republic during the truce was no sudden happening, but the product of deep-seated conflicts. The possibility of defections in the very areas which had become the seat of war was, it has been shown, taken seriously.

Seen from the viewpoint of the Hague and Paris, the prospects for 1607 seemed worse still than those of 1606. It was widely expected that Spinola would follow up his successes with another attempt on the Yssel.² The purely defensive war fought by Maurice for so long now had been demonstrated to be a process of accepting losses for the sake of holding onto vital points. Those vital points themselves had been challenged once already, and only freak conditions had thwarted Spinola. By 1607, certainly, the defences of the river lines and of the most exposed towns were much improved, but there still remained much to be done.³ Most important, perhaps, was the difficulty of finding adequate forces to hold these positions. The Council of State had called for an increase in troop strength to over 50,000, and that merely to defend.⁴ The type

1 'Gedenkschrift van Joris de Bye', BeM, XI, (1888), esp 445f; Res Holland, 1607, 6 on plots, & Den Tex, II, 541, on Spanish bribes.

2 ARA SG 6751 (Aerssen, 7 Nov); *ibid* LA524, 4 Dec; Deventer, III, 101f Res St Gen XIII, 772-7; Res Holland 1607, 6.

3 Res Holland 1607, 13.

4 *Ibid*, 45.

of war envisaged was thus still negative, in no way representing the change "de stile et d'ordre" which Villeroy stressed was necessary for the Dutch, "si nous ne voulons les voir périr..."¹ Maurice complained to his cousin, on learning that Friesland would provide only 10 companies for the field, that²

si chascune province veult retenir les siennes pour la defence particuliere...il ne sera possible de dresser un camp.

The escalation of costs had reached an unsupportable level. The States of Holland, while accepting the necessity of increasing their military strength, pointed out that these levies could not be made until the Consents were in, but that the introduction of new financial measures was not conceivable.³ The shortages of military means - it was reported in December 1606 that the Generality then possessed only 29 servicable artillery pieces suitable for the field⁴ - must have caused great apprehension among the Dutch leaders. The position was such that a genuine fear of defeat must not be ruled out from Oldenbarnevelt's motives in seeking a truce.

1 Lettres...à...Boderie, 113.

2 KHA A22 IXAI - 389, 17 Feb.

3 Res Holland 1607, 6, 10, 45, 52, 64. Cf. Res St Gen XIV, 20.

4 ARA SG 4914, II, report of Council of State & Kessel, 29 December.

The root cause, of course, was the financial exhaustion of the state, comparable to, and fortunately for the Dutch coinciding with, that which compelled the Spanish to abandon their military efforts.¹ The point of crisis had long been foreseeable, but had now been reached. Gelderland, Zutphen and Overijssel reported again that enemy devastation had impoverished them, while Groningen spent all its resources on its own defence: but they were as yet small problems.² The deficits of the provinces on their consents totalled 1.3 millions, and debts stood at a level which consumed enormous amounts of revenue in interest payments;³ between 1598 and 1606, expenditure had exceeded income by 26 million gulden,⁴ and at least 7 million was still owed.⁵ There would be a deficit of at least another million on the 1607 Consents which would have to be made up by borrowing, but the credit of the republic was becoming shaky, and, as Aerssen had written, "L'Etat tombera aven son credit".⁶

-
- 1 Lonchay & Cuvalier, I, 237 (Consulta of 14 December), 243, 245.
 2 Res St Gen XIII, 728; RA Geld III, I (18) Landdag, 15-19 Dec 1606; ARA SG 4913 I, 7 June.
 3 Ibid 744, 772f. The admiralty subsidy & repayments to England were significant unavoidable extra burdens.
 4 Historie, 52.
 5 Den Tex, II, 129; Deventer, III, 83-7.
 6 ARA SG IA524, Mémoire of 15 August 1606 for the prince of Anhalt. Zeeland borrowed c. fl 250,000 between 1604 and 1608: (R A Zeeland 1891). In Holland, the burden of charges grew to Fl. 3.3 millions in the year 1606-7 alone (ARA SH 2599 & 10)

This was, of course, something of a paradox. There is no question that at this stage the total wealth in the United Provinces was larger than ever, and still growing rapidly. After a slump during the period between 1598 and 1604 the Baltic trade was recovering strongly. The profits in this trade were extremely high, especially from the export of Dutch coinage.¹ Investment by urban capitalists, particularly in speculative land drainage schemes, had been increasing steadily since the 1590's, unhindered by the demands of war. On the contrary, in fact, the States of Holland offered tax exemption for such ventures.² The East India Company's capital of 6.5 million gulden had been subscribed very quickly. In the same year, the state had struggled to find 8.7 millions for the war effort.

The difficulty was in the conversion of all this accumulated capital, which was being thrown around in search of profitable employment, into a weapon of the state at war. It was an insoluble difficulty for a state where the government operated first and foremost in the interests of commercial capital. The conflicting priorities of the war and of profit had been resolved to the advantage of the war only in the case of the

-
- 1 Attman, Russian & Polish Markets, 182r. Different exchange rates for the Zloty also gave an additional premium, of nearly 10%, on top of profits which in the grain trade sometimes reached 140%: Bogucka, 'Merchants' profits in Gdansk foreign trade', Acta Pol Hist 23, 1971, 74-5, 89f. Cf. Van Houtte, Economische en Social Geschiedenis, 163.
- 2 Vries, Rural Economy, 192-99; Wagret, Polderlands, 75-84. 1.5 million gulden were invested in draining the Beemstermeer from 1607 onwards.

East India Company.¹ No further harnessing of entrepreneurial investment to the distinctly unprofitable business of military conflict was possible.

Since the strings attached by Henry IV to increasing his aid were unacceptable, the only course remaining, therefore, was to raise yet further an already very high rate of taxation.² The measure decided upon was the introduction of a chimney tax of 30 stuivers, and increases in the Licent tariffs. The consequence of the new tax was a popular rising in Utrecht on August 7, 1606 which brought home forcibly the fact that there were limits of patience.³ The event itself was violent but brief. However, the ^{ambivalent} role of the armed burgher companies and the speed with which the city council made large concessions demonstrated the shaky basis of the magistrates' authority.⁴ There were real fears that similar troubles could be expected in other towns, such as Amersfoort, which would have been encouraged by the example of Utrecht.⁵ The danger that peace would be imposed by internal disruption was one which had worried Dutch leaders for a number of years. In 1605, Aerssen warned Henry IV that it would be impossible to maintain the defensive for another two years

sans que le peuple nous violentast à la paix.⁶

-
- 1 See above, chap V. pp. 179,
 - 2 See e.g. Moryson, Itinerary, IV, 463ff.
 - 3 Felix, Oproer te Utrecht in 1610, 16. Deventer, III.
 - 4 G A Utrecht, 121, (1606), fol 62-3; KB 73C33, 1199. The riot was led by "strangers, vagabonds, country-folk and other restless spirits" according to the Council.
 - 5 HMC De Lisle III, 307-08.
 - 6 Deventer, III, 59. Cf. Ebeling, 12-14.

There is evidence that these were more than hypothetical dangers designed to persuade Henry into granting more aid. Oldenbarnevelt informed Aerssen in January 1606 that he had received reports that half the population of the countryside wanted peace, and that higher taxes would provoke a revolt.¹ The events in Utrecht confirmed all these fears. What was particularly alarming was that they coincided with Bucquoy's attack on the Waal. That the country and many of the small towns of the province were strongly Catholic, and that many Catholics naturally supported the other side, and were involved in the disturbances, pointed to the extreme gravity of the situation, had the Spanish once penetrated the great river line.² To impose yet more financial demands on the common people of the provinces, with a powerful enemy battering at the last defences which even pretended to shield the whole Generality, was a risk which Oldenbarnevelt considered too great.

The possibility that the United Provinces might be militarily defeated was thus as great in 1607 as it had been at any other point, although in terms of wealth, military strength and naval power the state had grown

1 JvO, II, 131f. Cf. Aerssen's memo of 15 August, n. 6 of previous page.

2 Felix, loc cit; Fruin, 'Wederopluijing van het Katholicisme', Verspreide Geschriften, III, 249, 76, 317, 43; Verhooren van Oldenbarnevelt, 141-2. On the strength of Catholicism, Knuttel Toestand der...Katholieken, I, 15, 30-9; generally criticized by G Brom in De Katholiek, 101 (1892). In the NE, fears for the loyalty of the Catholics in Groningen had been expressed by William Louis: ARA SG 4913, I, 16 June 1606. He had insisted on their expulsion if the Spanish came near the city.

to the position where it was at least on a par with the Spanish in the Netherlands. Yet the reluctance of Maurice to take the risk of fighting a battle in order to rescue a beleaguered town, coupled with an ineradicable defensive-mindedness in the civilian leaders, ensured that no effort would be made to break out of the vicious circle of the self-consuming defensive by some bold military stroke, once the attack on Antwerp had failed.

The reasons for Maurice's reluctance are well established, but since they should have applied with equal vigour to the other side, although Spinola never demonstrated any fear of combat, they are worth re-examining to see what light they cast on the nature of the United Provinces.¹ The prince argued that the state was too small to suffer the consequences of a defeat without putting the whole country at risk, or at the very least expose the countryside to devastation,² before the losses could be made good: most of the troops having to come from abroad. The southern provinces were almost continually exposed to raids, of course, without the entire fabric of the archduke's state ever being threated by these alone. What Maurice feared must have been of a different scale. In the cramped, densely-urbanised north, especially Holland,

1 De Bye, 458-9; Groen, II, 378, for William Louis' position.

2 De Bye, 459.

Zeeland, and Utrecht, unimpeded enemy incursions could rapidly cripple internal trade and industry, completely impoverish the peasantry and thus reduce the revenue of the state, destroy foreign confidence, and perhaps also destroy the willingness of the Dutch to resist.¹

For one feature of the war in the north was its increasing professionalization. In the south, of course, the Spanish had relied almost continually upon the arms of their trained forces, the one experiment in arming the country people in Parma's day being rapidly abandoned.² Maurice's army, until the end fairly small, long-term and highly-trained, carried the burden of the war where once, in the early days, citizen had fought with soldier as at Haarlem, Alkmaar and Leiden. The burgher Waartgelders were still called upon, and to the number of several thousand at a time, but their sole function now was to release regular troops from the garrisons of interior fortresses. The moment there was any chance of their becoming involved in any fighting, they were pulled out at once.³ The citizen of the Dutch republic no longer defended his country in person, but with his wealth. When in the last two years before the truce the chance that he might again have to take up arms became stronger, there was obviously serious doubt about his ability or willingness to do so.

1 This was Buzanval's analysis: KB73C33, 1204 (1 Sept).

2 See Chapter III. There were burgher garrisons in Antwerp, Den Bosch, Venlo and other cities, normally where the city governments refused to allow entry to foreign garrisons.

3 Res St Gen XIII, 288 (9 August 1605).

Had Spinola defeated his opponent's field army, and cut off large parts of it in inaccessible frontier fortresses, as he planned, might not town and city governments have bought security from destruction at the cost of independence? Maurice's method of warfare suggests that he at least suspected that some of them might have, and the events which had led to the rapid fall of Grol lent weight to this fear. The United Provinces had developed into a state with a separation of functions, and as such was more vulnerable and brittle than during earlier years.

Vulnerability as a stable structure was coupled in these last campaigns with war-weariness and demoralisation which were the results of setbacks. These setbacks, which originated in the defensive posture adopted by the Dutch, were in some ways an inevitable product of the nature of the state, the decentralised form of which militated against offensive thought and action and reinforced Maurice's own limitations as a general and his dependence on the waterways.¹ Pinned back now, and with the enemy imbedded inside the frontiers, the republic faced 1607 with ~~no~~ no prospect of victory but every chance of further defeat.

The war in the Netherlands, as Chaunu has said,² was a conflict which pushed to the limit the means of

1 De Bye, loc cit; see also Chapter II.

2 Chaunu, art cit, 265-7.

fighting a war in this period. In this struggle for the control of the wealthiest and most densely populated corner of Europe, both sides reached the stage of exhaustion simultaneously. The great commercial prosperity of the Dutch could not be translated directly into military terms; the wealthy bourgeoisie of Holland could still be envisaged having to submit to the starving and ragged tercios of Spinola. With their eyes fixed on trading opportunities, significant numbers of the ruling elite had come to see that peace was preferable to and more profitable than the uncertain and unsuccessful war waged in 1605-6.¹

The traveller Moryson wrote² of the Dutch that they

are somewhat at ods among themselves, & many times jarre, so as it seemed no difficult thing to breake their concord, had not the common Enemy...together with the sweetnesse of freedome once tasted, forced them to constant unity.

But even this enforced unity was under too much pressure in the final crisis before the truce. The United Provinces had been exhausted by the relentless escalation in the cost of war since 1598. While the Spanish had devoted their attention to operations which enabled the Dutch to put the burden of the war on enemy territory, they had coped well enough. But when for just two campaigns Spinola had carried his sword into the

1 Buzanval to Villeroy, 9 September 1606, Deventer, III, 83ff; cf. Verhooren, 141.

2 Moryson, Itinerary, IV, 463.

territory of the republic, the issue was transformed once more into one of sheer survival, although as Oldenbarnevelt pointed out in June 1607, the burden of conducting a vigorous defence now exceeded the capabilities of the state to support it.¹ The means by which the Dutch had fought the war had of course contributed to the similar exhaustion of the enemy, but so finely divided were defeat and victory by 1607 that the element of fortune which stopped Spinola's army must not be underrated.

1 JvO, II, 166-7.

IX

POLITICS, WAR & THE STATE:

SOME CONCLUSIONS

The signing of the Twelve Years truce in Antwerp on April 9, 1609 represented unquestionably a triumph for the United Provinces and a recognition of defeat by Spain and the Archdukes. Few of the Sea Beggars of 1568-72 could have envisaged such a scene. Few of the burghers of Holland and Zeeland, heroically defending their own homes while the Spanish armies were encamped in the heart of Holland, readily scattering with not the slightest difficulty every force the rebels put in the field during the period 1572-76, could have foreseen that the King of Spain would negotiate with them as equals. A decade later, as Parma's armies, Philip II's ducats and irreconcilable internal antagonisms tore apart William the Silent's precarious all Netherlands Generality and threatened the complete annihilation of the Dutch revolt, very few indeed in the insurgent provinces can have been optimistic about their prospects. Calvinist faith may have allowed some of the rebels to believe in their ultimate victory, but undoubtedly more effective was the rapid expansion of the conflict into an international war, involving the French and English, in securing the nascent Dutch state from defeat.

In the course of the ten years in which the war remained on an international level, 1588-1598, the united Provinces grew rapidly in prosperity. The crucial inner defences of the core of the state, the Rhine and Yssel fortresses, were captured one after the

other. The eastern provinces were reconquered with disarming ease after the controlling points of Steenwijk and Coevorden had been wrested from a weakened and demoralized opponent. The authority of Oldenbarnevelt in the States of Holland and in the States General was widely recognised, the skill of Maurice and William Louis in the field widely acclaimed. Dutch leaders no longer looked to foreign princes to come and rule over them, but were confident in their own strength. Wealth flowed in, and crises were few and localised (as in 1596), during the famous 'ten years'. Spanish mutinies and bankruptcies seemed to render impotent the fearsome power of the Habsburg monarchy. The difference between the vibrant, expansive republic of 1598 and the shrinking, defeated state of ten years earlier was clear to all observers. The alternate bouts of pessimism and optimism in Madrid seemed to bear little relation to the reality of the struggle in the Netherlands itself,¹ but appeared rather as the reflection of an attitude of unrealistic wishful-thinking or an obstinate refusal to accept the de facto existence of a rebel state..

1 See e.g. Parker, 'Why did the Dutch Revolt last 80 years?' TRHS (5), 26, 1976, 61-2, where the stubborn refusal of the Spanish to accept the impossibility of reconquest which was often urged on them by local representatives is considered. However, it would be absurd to argue from these cases that the aim of reconquest was chimerical.

Nonetheless, the history of the period following the peace of Vervins shows that it is unhistorical and mechanistic to see these years as an inconclusive and indecisive tail-end of a war of which the result was already determined.¹ The rapid expansion of trade coincided with, but was not necessarily caused by, the relaxation of military pressure. The search for a sovereign had already ended with the departure of Leicester: the republic had decided to stand as an independent state before the diversion of Parma's strength to other targets. The long breathing space this diversion offered was certainly vital for the survival of the United Provinces: but as we have shown, it was not until Spinola persuaded his masters to seek an armistice that that survival was assured. The ten year respite was used well by the Dutch, but not well enough to be sure of resisting the renewed onslaught which followed the end of France-Spanish hostilities. The glaring weaknesses in the defences of the republic, especially in the east, have been indicated.² The strategy of the Spanish commanders was directed specifically at exploiting these weaknesses, and represented a clearly workable plan for the defeat

1 E.g. Geyl, Revolt of the Netherlands, 249; Parker, Army of Flanders, 247; Clark, 'Birth of the Dutch Republic', Proc BA, 32, 1946, 194.

2 See pp. 135f above.

of the Dutch by military action. On the two occasions that this strategy was attempted, it was the development of freak weather conditions rather than the defensive capabilities of Maurice's armies which thwarted the invaders' intentions - 1598 and 1606.¹ It has been demonstrated that in 1605-6 the possibility that the republic might be defeated was at least as great as the possibility that the Spanish would abandon their victorious offensives.

If there was a turning point, it must be sought in the period which saw the greatest weakening in the material and moral resources of Spain and the southern provinces, combined with a failure to impose a similar rate of attrition on the Dutch. This period, we have argued, was the three year siege of Ostend. The burden of this vast operation was enormous for both attackers and defenders, but there were two crucial distinctions which meant that effects on the two sides were far from equal.

Firstly, Maurice's Flanders expedition of 1600 and victory at Nieuwpoort could not conceal the fact that the republic was once more isolated, recovering from the shock of the disappearance of the French front and the narrow escape of 1599. The campaigns of 1598 and 1599 had indeed suggested that a resumption of direct pressure on the Dutch frontiers comparable to the attacks

1 PP. 47 & 300 above.

of Parma in the 1580's was to be expected, and although the intervening period had allowed the Dutch to improve and extend their limits, a grinding down of their defences by a superior enemy was still to be anticipated. There were of course valid reasons for the Archduke's decision to attack Ostend rather than resume a direct offensive against the rebel provinces. But this decision did much to mitigate the effects of the republic's isolation by ensuring the continued and material involvement of both the English and the French in the struggle, and at the same time permitted Maurice and William Louis to gain further strong points on the Maas, the Rhine and in Flanders itself. Although every circumstance dictated that the Dutch should be on the defensive, the direction of Albert's offensive in reality took off much of the pressure, and enable the Dutch to undertake offensive action themselves. The loss of Ostend was a serious blow to the States, but more in terms of prestige than actual consequences. The cost of the defence had been very high: but if a balance sheet is drawn of the total cost of the operation to both sides, there is no doubt that in every respect other than immediate (and strategically valueless) prestige, it was the archduke and his hopes of final victory which emerged as the losers.

The primary reason for this was a factor~~y~~ closely related to these considerations. The Ostend diversion meant that for three years the war was fought out

exclusively in Albert's lands. The immense significance of this factor need not be stressed again. On this occasion, it played an inestimable part in destroying the ability of the southern provinces to continue to support a war effort of the scale necessary to defeat the Dutch. It forced a further widening of the gap between the prosperity of the rebels and of their former compatriots, a gap which always ensured that the paper superiority of Spanish armed strength was not able to express itself in determined, uninterrupted long term offensive action. In forcing a disproportionate consumption of resources by the Spanish, therefore, the siege of Ostend was decisive in determining that the first admissions of defeat should come from Brussels rather than The Hague.

The wide-ranging ramifications of remaining on the defensive have been examined.¹ The consequences have been found to be an increased financial loss and burden on both the state and the population, incomparably greater devastation in the countryside, dislocation of internal trade and administration, and demoralisation,² quite apart from the strategic problems which followed the loss or abandonment of the initiative. In short, the issue was one of control: the authority and viability of the state was ultimately dependent on this and this alone.

1 See chapter II, pp. 21f.

2 See chapter III, passim.

From the outset, the Dutch rebels had been obsessed with the legality or otherwise of their actions, and the need to produce constitutional, moral or legal justifications for their actions, culminating in the renunciation of Philip II's sovereignty on the grounds of his "tyranny" in 1581, and the assertion of provincial sovereignty in its place, in 1587.¹ Clearly, it was important for the United Provinces to establish their legitimacy in a world where rebellion was "evil" and all monarchs shared a common fear of revolt. Nonetheless, the Dutch were always 'rebels' to the Spanish, only with great difficulty convinced Elizabeth of their status, and failed to obtain acceptance from James I. It is equally obvious that, for all their rhetoric and pious assertions, considerations of legitimacy did not prevent the monarchs of western Europe pursuing whatever policies best suited their interest.

For the same reason, the state in the Netherlands - whether it was the 'legitimate' rule of Spanish governors, or the 'rebels' - was recognised once it obtained 'de facto' control. The State depended not on legality but on force. Local jurisdictions in the Netherlands continued unchanged: when a city changed hands, control of the region which was dominated by that

1 Vranck's 'Deduction', re-examined by Geyl in: 'Renaissance to Counter-Reformation', ed. Carter, 230-45; parts printed in English by Rowen, Low Countries in Early Modern Times, 105-8.

city also changed hands. Taxes went into different coffers, under different names. When one side could not protect an area against incursions, the effective control of that region passed into the hands of the other side, regardless of formal jurisdiction or formal frontiers. The rural population of the Netherlands for the most part recognised the authority of the side whose troops were in residence. This has been demonstrated already with regard to parts of Flanders and Brabant especially.¹ The United Provinces became 'legitimate' when they proved themselves a viable state, able to control the territory and the population which made up the state, just as Henry IV became the legitimate King of France when he had shown himself capable of winning control of that kingdom.²

The Dutch state was, however, more than this. As with all states it represented a specific set of interests and rested upon a specific social class. But the republic contained far more than the commercial and urban bourgeoisie of the maritime provinces in whose interest, primarily, it existed. The preservation of the heartland of the state³ required a strong perimeter, placed sufficiently far away from the centre to ensure the freedom of that centre from incursions and disruption. Incursion could come only from outside, but disruption could be caused by internal, social

1 See chapter III, passim.

2 Cf. Lloyd, Rouen Campaign, 191-7.

3 See pp 104 & 148 for a discussion of this concept.

disorder, such as might be caused by opposition to the state's financial policies or administrative measures made necessary by the demands of the war effort.¹ These various elements - the conduct of the war, the preservation of the interests of the dominant classes, the security of the state against internal or external threat, the legitimacy of the state itself - are thus inseparably related to each other, and inter-acted continually in the process of the evolution of the Dutch republic. Several of these interactions have been considered already; some of the others will now be considered.

It has been demonstrated that the most important determinant of the conduct of the war in the Netherlands was the need to control territory and resources, wherever possible protecting one's own by denying the enemy access to them, and endeavouring to expropriate or destroy the other side's. This was the strategic concept which underlay most of the war policy of both sides. Concepts of legality or neutrality were never allowed to stand in the way of what was regarded as military necessity, even though this gave the opponent the opportunity for self-righteous and totally hypocritical cries of indignation when troops operated in Liège, Cologne, Munster, and the Rhineland principalities.²

1 Considered in more detail below, p 348 & cf. p 326f above.
 2 In some cases (Cologne 1581-86, Liège 1595) the guilty parties created legal justifications. In others (e.g. the Admiral in Germany, 1598-9) no pretence was possible, no serious justification offered.

Despite the international nature of much of the war, it is clear also that while diplomatic pressures played some part in determining strategy, the need for territorial control remained crucial, and as often as not overrode even this external consideration in the planning of the United Provinces.¹ The demands of royal allies could not be ignored, but the situation in which the republic found itself, with so much jealousy and mutual distrust between its English and French allies, meant that the States General could establish a remarkable degree of independence. This has made it possible to discern the main strategic conceptions on which they worked.² The conduct of the war cannot be explained without recognising the centrality of this aspect. Control of the resources and loyalty of the population, for which the first requirement was adequate protection, were fundamental to strategic thinking, the ability of the state to continue its war effort, and the continued survival of the state itself. No legal apparatus, civil administration or traditions, or religious beliefs would retain the loyalty of a region once the state's ability to defend it by force of arms was lost.

From this position it is possible to look at the social bases of the contending powers in the Netherlands in the context of the war. There is an immediate

1 See chapters VI & VII for examples.
2 See Chap. II.

contrast between the attitudes of the Spanish and of the Dutch states towards their own populations. The reluctance of the Brussels governments to arm the south Netherlands people for their own protection, even when the regular forces were unable to provide a defence, is clearly indicative of their fears for the authority of the state. Despite the effectiveness which might have been expected of a stated based on 'legitimate' grounds and backed by the Catholic Church, Brussels would trust almost none of its subjects. An upper-class fear for social order was obviously behind the revulsion at the thought of arming the peasantry, as well as the experience which showed that armed peasants were indiscriminate in their attacks on soldiers.¹ They were no less anxious about the forcible preservation of their rule in the big cities. The proof of this is the maintenance of large garrisons in detached citadels in cities such as Antwerp and Ghent. The largely Walloon nobility formed the social base of Spanish rule, - along with the clergy and the urban patriciate -, the people who had brought about the reconciliation of the Walloon provinces with Parma. But this body, although rewarded with governorships and military posts for its loyalty, was excluded from real power at the centre as the king of Spain's deputies strove to impose an absolutist and centralised authority. It was perfectly

1 As in 1592: Lefèvre, IV, 63, 78, 87, 103, & see pp. 70f.
 2 Lefèvre, III, 551. Mémoires de..Champagney, ed Soumoy, 274.

logical, therefore, for the demand raised by the nobility for a 'national militia' to be vigorously and unhesitatingly squashed by the commanders of the Tercios.¹

In the rebel provinces, of course, the situation had been very different from the outset. The armed burghers had borne the brunt of the resistance to the Spanish counter-offensives after 1572, and continued to serve as relief garrisons to release regular troops for front line operations throughout the war, often in very substantial numbers. The social base of the Dutch state was thus clearly indicated. There would not and could not be citadels held by foreign troops in the cities of Holland, Zeeland and Friesland.

But a number of further qualifications need to be made. The citizens of the towns of the rebel provinces had fought in defence of their ancient liberties and privileges, in defence of their economic and social power. They fought for a system which seemed to guarantee their position and against one which threatened it. The Flemish cities of the reconquered south had done the same - and continued to defend what was left of their liberties after the re-conquest. For most of them, however, resistance to Spanish authority was certainly not to be equated with support for the United Provinces, however much the Spanish feared this consequence.

1 LeFèvre, III, 551. Cf. Mémoires de...Champagney, ed. Soumoy, 274.

Thus Venlo expelled its garrison in 1590 - without inviting in a States one to replace it.¹ Thus 's Hertogenbosch, although within only a few miles of several Dutch garrisons and twice besieged, showed always the greatest reluctance to take in a regular garrison. In Groningen, in the period prior to its reconquest, the effects of the blockade drove pro-Spanish burghers to ally with their opponents on various issues.² The willingness of the citizenry to defend their property and rights against any threat, wherever it originated, was even more convincingly demonstrated in 1595. When the town of Lier was taken by surprise by Dutch troops, large numbers of the burghers of Antwerp, Mechlin and Brussels enthusiastically joined in the (successful) counterattack³ to recapture the place. One contemporary recorded the surprise of the Hollanders that the Brabanders had so willingly followed the Spanish flag.⁴

There were by this time substantial differences between the cities of the north and the cities of the south which partially explain the perhaps surprising degree of loyalty demonstrated by the latter, despite the misfortunes caused by the war, and the continued distrust shown by their rulers. The expulsion of the

1 Lefèvre, III, 550.

2 Rutgers, 'Voor en na de Reductie', in Gedenkboek der Reductie van Groningen, ed Blok etc. 125.

3 Comentarios, ed Llorente, 118-20; Le Petit, 660; Grotius, 396f.

4 Del Rio, 108.

small but dynamic Calvinist communities and the voluntary exile of many members of the commercial class left control in the hands of pro-Spanish, pro-Catholic factions which could only lose by a reunification carried out by the rebels. The destruction and poverty caused largely by the war efforts of the Dutch can hardly have endeared them to their former colleagues in Flanders and Brabant. The substantial degree of local autonomy, which extended as far as provincial estates, allowed for a limited airing of grievances, while the policies of the Archduke were far more conciliatory than those of his predecessors.¹ The ideological hold of the Roman Catholic church was also more deeply rooted, and unchallenged now for many years.

For all these differences, nonetheless, it can be argued that there remained a certain similarity between the primary motives of the town dwellers of both sides. This was a maintenance of basic interests which made for a willingness to resist any threat. Quite clearly, this attitude could not be construed as being identical with support for the state, whether in the loyal or the rebel provinces, because the interests of the burghers, their rights, liberties and prosperity, could be as much threatened by government

1 Brants, Belgique, 43-51, 62, 68; Schepper & Parker, 'Formation of Government Policy', EHR, 91, 1976, 242, 254.

measures as by the enemy. Thus Dutch leaders themselves urged the English to keep a strong garrison in their 'cautionary' town, Flushing, since if it should be expelled in some dispute,¹

all the meanes the States cold make cold not
gett Flushing again into her Majesties hands.

It is in the light of this consideration that the development of the Dutch republic must also be viewed. In examining the transformation of the insurgent towns and provinces into a recognised and relatively cohesive state, it is only too easy to overlook the substantial internal tensions which went deeper still than the inter-provincial and inter-city disputes and jealousies which have already been examined.² Fractiousness and rebelliousness had a long history in the Netherlands which did not suddenly stop when the remnants of the Union of Utrecht decided to declare themselves sovereign. The Dutch state proved itself capable of holding together despite clashes of interest between centres of power. But general questions of social order and of frank disloyalty to the state itself posed greater problems which, we have seen, played a major if unquantifiable part in the decision of Oldenbarnevelt to begin the search for peace in 1606³. The second

1 HMC De Lisle, II, 209 (1596).

2 In Chapter V.

3 See pp. 326f.

significant point is that most of the eastern part of the United Provinces did not willingly accept the rule of the republic but was conquered by force of arms from the Spanish and their local supporters.

This created a vulnerability which was particularly noticeable in the north east, in the city of Groningen, and in Utrecht, though far from restricted only to these places. A few examples will illustrate the point.

There was a period of considerable unrest in 1589, at a time of military difficulties brought about by the mutiny of Geertruidenberg's garrison. Simultaneously, there were rumours of plots and discontent in Utrecht, which was in fact the aftermath of the factional warfare there in which Leicester had become so embroiled. But the Council of neighbouring Gelderland wrote in alarm to their Stadhouder that the enemy considered that the town was almost held for them, so strong was the 'Catholic conspiracy'.¹ In October there was a popular tumult, which the Count of Meurs repressed, and took the opportunity to change the city government, a move which ended this particular strife - for the time being.² At the same time, William Louis was sending warnings that parts of Friesland were talking of defection while the enemy was raiding the countryside.³

1 Kronijk, XVI, 364-5.

2 Summarized in Tex, II, 2-4. Cf. Le Petit 564-5.

3 Groen, I, 83, letter of 20 June 1588.

Added to fears of further mutinies by unpaid garrisons, especially in vital towns on the Yssel,¹ it is possible to see how serious a threat to the state was posed.

The next period of dangerous discontent coincided, although certainly not coincidentally, with the end of the Franco-Spanish war and the threat of military isolation for the United Provinces, in the Spring of 1598. In Groningen a long-running dispute involving the city, the Ommelanden surrounding it, the States General and William Louis over a whole range of issues including the distribution of taxes and of authority, reached such a dangerous level that the prince voiced his fears for 'justice and public authority',² then announced that it would be too risky to send away the fifteen companies of troops which Maurice was demanding for the army.³ This reasoning was accepted by the latter, thus recognising the problems faced in Groningen.⁴

The problem for the republic's leaders was made much worse because of the simultaneous outbreak of troubles in Utrecht. The reason here was financial. Strong objections to the increased level of taxation had been made from 1597⁵ onwards but the distribution of the burden had been agreed nonetheless in March by the States of Utrecht.⁶ There followed in April a period

1 Res St Gen VI, 26, 150; Winsemius, 800.

2 KHA A22 IXE-89 (13 March)

3 Ibid IXE-90 (29 March)

4 KHA A22 XIA-98 (13 April)

5 E.g. Amersfoort's, RA Utrecht 279-9, 16 June 1597.

6 RA Utrecht 231-6, Resolutien, fol. ccxliii-ccxlvi.

of major disorders in the town which led to anxious deliberations by the city council¹ and prompted Maurice to write again to his cousin to ask for troops from Groningen in case they were needed to restore order in Utrecht.² Buzanval was probably not alone when he suspected foreign involvement in these "accidens",³ and it is quite certain that more than financial factors were involved: the burgher-democrat party had not forgotten its power prior to 1588 while the large Catholic population had no special reason to be loyal to the magistrates either. The readiness of the citizens of Utrecht to challenge authority which we have seen culminate in the rising of August 1606⁴ thus had its origins in political, economic and religious grievances among different groups. These grievances were sufficient to unite Catholics and Calvinist-democrats in an "unholy" alliance against the Utrecht city government and the Hollanders who had imposed it.⁵

The reaction to popular discontent of those who directed affairs of state suggests strongly that they had little understanding of the causes, but very real fears of the possible consequences. Indicative of

-
- 1 G A Utrecht 121 (25), fol 195; R A Utrecht 264-18, 6-8 April.
 - 2 KHA A22 XIA-99 (15 April).
 - 3 Correspondance de Duplessis-Mornay, VIII, 502-3.
 - 4 See p. 326.
 - 5 A brief but useful summary in Felix, Oproer te Utrecht, 1-16.

this is the growing readiness to use force, or at least a military presence, to keep order. This process reached a climax in 1600, when the States General authorised the construction of a citadel, the imposition of a garrison, and the total disarming of the population in the city of Groningen.¹ The immediate cause was again financial: the town refused to pay its quota until its dispute with Ommelanden² was resolved. But the violence of the measure, comparable to the attacks of the Spanish on urban independence, surely suggests that there were deeper anxieties in the States General than the collection of Groningen's small contribution to the war costs. Gilpin hoped that the measures would be an example to "others than neede the lyke brydle."³ Six year later, when the possibility that the town might be attacked by Spinola could not be ignored, William Louis wrote that

although I trust these burghers as much as any others in the United Provinces

it might be necessary to expel the leading "papists" in order to preserve the town.⁴ These were the sentiments of someone trying to hold onto a factious city which

1 Reyd, 653ff; Grotius 661; Vervou, 92.

2 Formsma, Ommelander Strijd voor Zelfstandigheid, 146-52.

3 HMC De Lisle, II, 460.

4 ARA SG 4913 I, 16 June 1606, letter to States General.

had once willingly defected to the enemy, which had been recovered by force, and which still contained a large hostile element.

Other examples have been given of recurrent fears of defection and betrayals, especially in the eastern provinces.¹ The surrender of Grol under popular pressure in 1606 was the clearest case of this actually happening.² One must be careful not to overestimate this aspect. To counter these cases there are numerous examples of the arming of the population, either in the towns as has been seen, or the country. William Louis had no hesitation in arming the population in Friesland and the Ommelanden in 1594,³ while the peasantry of the Betuwe were placed in the front line in 1606.⁴ But the general point remains. Far from being stable, social order in the United Provinces was often disturbed, and was a major consideration for the leaders of the republic in their planning and actions. In some areas the main threat was from directly disloyal elements in the population. In others, as we shall now examine, the development of the state saw a separation of functions which destroyed the original identity of interest between the social base of the revolt and its leaders.

The concentration of power in the hands of an oligarchy and the consequent separation of interests between these people and the burghers had already occurred in Utrecht with the results we have seen. The same

1 See p . 327.
 2 See p . 312f.
 3 Winsemius, 821-2.
 4 See p . 324.

process had been necessary in numbers of cities where the old regimes had been pro-Spanish, such as Nijmegen in 1591¹ and Groningen in 1594. The growth of a distinct regent layer out of the bourgeoisie was also proceeding in Holland, but the dividing line was as yet too blurred for this to have any immediate repercussions. Nonetheless, the wielding of power was limited to a very small number of men. Provincial deputies to the States General tended to be the same people year after year. Measures such as the establishment of the East India Company were not obviously in the direct interests of the merchants² - and indeed provoked substantial opposition and protests from that quarter.² The ever higher level and extent of taxation could only provoke resentment, until in 1606/7 the States of Holland, ever the first to undertake new burdens, indicated that the limited had been reached.³

Increasingly isolated from the making of policy, although still representing the social base and the foundation of the republic, the urban bourgeoisie also rapidly distanced itself from the conduct of the war, tending to regard the land conflict more and more as an expensive diversion. Numerous examples of cheese-paring and efforts to take short-cuts in military expenditure have been noted. This was partly through

1 Kolman, Reductie van Nijmegen, 57-67, points out that only in Nijmegen, Groningen, Grol and Bredevoort did the Dutch override urban privilege and leave the appointment of magistrates in the hands of the Stadhouders for the duration of the war.

2 See p. 179.

3 See p. 324.

annoyance at Maurice's extraordinarily cautious and expensive methods, but more than that it resulted from a failure to understand basic strategic principles. The States of the provinces, then the States General, argued out their priorities, the council of State examined the means, and the princes executed the plans. To combat the professional troops of their enemies, to ensure discipline, to allow the people of the maritime provinces to return to their fishing, industry and profit-seeking - for all these reasons a regular army was necessary, and the professionalisation of the war therefore became both necessary and in line with the concepts of sound management and strict financial control dear to the new dominant class.¹ The distinctions between the military techniques of Maurice and those of his opponents have undoubtedly been overplayed. The most important difference lay in the relationship of the armed forces with the state and the society which it was employed to defend. Maurice's army was the hired servant of a state with no military tradition, dominated by a class which regarded the military as an expensive but unfortunately necessary burden. Many of those employed by the republic undoubtedly thought otherwise, but their appetite for glory, fame and fortune was not allowed to influence the conduct of the

1 Feld, 'Middle Class Society & Military Professionalism', Armed Forces & Society, I, 1975, 420f. also makes these points, but his wider generalisations about the role of drill and firearms, by overemphasizing their effect, are sometimes wide of the mark.

war once civilian control had become firmly established after the departure of Leicester. It was in this sense that Brussels and the Hague were poles apart, reflecting the deeper conflict of social systems.

The contrasting bases of the rival powers in the Netherlands were further mirrored in their attitudes to the problems of ends and means. Whereas the Spanish consistently determined first their intent, and then sought the means to accomplish it,¹ the Dutch republic very frequently tailored its plans to available resources. For the one, the result was the frequent failure of excellent schemes through the mutiny of unpaid troops. For the other, it was a question partly of many lost opportunities, but perhaps more significantly of an inherent tendency to a permanent defensive, with all the deleterious consequences which were entailed by this form of warfare. Decentralisation, local rights, civilian control ultimately dependent on a class with its eyes firmly fixed on trading opportunities: these were the interlinked determinants of how the United Provinces would conduct their war for survival. As we have seen, this combination led to a general policy which was remarkably ill-suited to resist the centralised

1 Parker, 'Spain, Her Enemies & the Revolt of the Netherlands', P&P 49, 1970, 93-4.

military power of Spain.

It will have become obvious that although figures like Parma, Albert and Spinola, Oldenbarnevelt, Maurice and William Louis tower over the scene, their actual impact on the course of events was not particularly significant. At the tactical level, of course, good or bad leadership could influence the result of a specific operation. The victories of Maurice at Turnhout and Nieuwpoort come under this heading, as also his most difficult siege operations, Geertruidenberg, Grave and Sluis. It is worth stressing the infrequency of such cases in such a prolonged period of conflict. Similarly, at a strategic level, the bad generalship of Parma's deputies and successors in 1590-94 and of Albert's in 1597 contributed much to the republic's successes in those years. These victories were in a sense the converse of the Spanish victories of the 1580's, which had been rendered possible by the total incompetence of the rebel armies in the field.

But further than that, the views and actions of these leading personalities were not conceived in the abstract. Their range of thought and their limitations were the result of the conditions in which they lived. They developed their ideas in relation to their experiences, at every level. Although Maurice was a master in his style of warfare, that style was evolved in the specific conditions of the Netherlands and the limited^s established by political, social and economic factors were not transcended by the Nassau princes. Similarly, Oldenbarnevelt,

far from being a man who moulded and altered the course of events, was very much the expression of a particular interest group. He possessed the political acumen and capacity to remain on top, but was in fact no more than the most astute advocate for the class which considered its interests to be identical with those of the state as a whole, at a time when the growing separation of the ruling Holland oligarchy had not yet become clear. The events in the Netherlands were basically a clash of enormous, contradictory forces which led to the establishment of a new socio-economic order in the United Provinces. Individuals were unable to separate themselves from these processes, let alone alter the course of events.

The survival of the Dutch republic, it is generally agreed, was secured by the Truce of 1609, and was never seriously threatened again even during the major Spanish offensives of the 1620's. The United Provinces stood recognised as a significant power in European politics and by its aggressive, expansionist commercial policies was challenging the Spanish empire on a global scale. The republic represented a new and then unique development, a state where ultimate power lay with a merchant-capitalist class.

The reasons for this have to be sought in the last quarter of the sixteenth century and the first decade of the seventeenth. There is no single, simple explanation for the outcome of the struggle which had occurred. The ultimate failure of the Spanish monarchy to overcome the gigantic problems involved in fighting for so long and at such great distance is of course significant. So also are the factors which contributed to this failure, the ambitions and fears of Philip II which led to the Armada and the crucial involvement in France, the specific conditions of warfare in the Netherlands, the stubborn refusal to compromise of Madrid, and not least the resistance of the Dutch themselves. But even within this framework it has become clear that this failure of Spain to reconquer the rebel provinces was not inevitable after the ten year diversion. The victory of the republic was until the end entirely unpredictable, and was more delicately balanced at the end than at any time in the preceding fifteen years. The reasons for this have been found in the structure of the Dutch state and the links between it and the war itself. It is not possible to understand the course of the war without reference to the development of the state during these years. But equally, these developments and the survival of the Dutch republic have to be seen in the light of the course and methods of the war waged between burgher Holland and imperial Spain in the Netherlands. It is a connection which still requires further investigation.

APPENDIX ONE

THE EDWARD NORRIS AFFAIR,

1591-92

The years 1591-2 witnessed the first startling gains registered by the counteroffensive of the United Provinces. But during this period much of the attention of the Dutch state was focussed on a long-running dispute with the English governor of Ostend, Sir Edward Norris. Although the cause of the dispute was the right to levy contributions, and the matter was much complicated by the opposition of the States of Zeeland to the policy of the generality, the central issue was recognised to be that of sovereignty. The validity of the independence of the young state was at stake, and the fragility of that sovereignty was to be demonstrated by the length and form of the conflict.

This was not the first time that Norris had been involved in controversy. His arrogance and lack of judgement had been noted before and Leicester, whose own record was hardly unblemished, thought that his behaviour was likely to endanger Anglo-Dutch relations. Nonetheless, his service record was excellent, and he was made deputy-governor of Ostend in 1586¹. In July, 1590 he was appointed full governor by the States General with a salary of 400 gulden a month to be paid out of the contribution of Flanders.² It must have been assumed that his aggressiveness would make him ideally suited to this post of danger and responsibility.

1 Dictionary of National Biography, Vol 41, 117, where full references are given.

2 Res St Gen VII, 184.

The success of Norris's attack on Blankenberg in February 1591 must have appeared to justify the appointment. By then, however, the first warning shots had already been fired in what was to prove a long and bitter paper war.

In January 1591, the States of Zeeland took strong exception to the granting of sauvegardes to Flanders villages by the Ostend garrison on the grounds that any measures allowing the resumption of agriculture in the province would pose a serious threat to Zeeland's well-being and enable the Spanish to provision their garrisons.¹ The Council of State replied that the grants had been made with the authority of that body, and that they wished them to continue.² At this stage Norris was still a spectator,³ and the Dutch correspondence referred only to the States official responsible, Joris Matruyt. But the governor made it clear that he regarded it as essential that the contributions be continued because they were needed for the fortifications of Ostend. Throughout March, he urged on all who would listen the danger that he believed the town to be in from enemy preparations.⁴ While the position remained confused, with the Zeelanders prohibiting contributions⁵ while the States General acted on the Council's advice to continue them for a six-month period,⁶ Norris was able to continue unhindered

1 Notulen van Zeeland, 1591, 7, 10, 21-3.
 2 R A Zeeland, 897, 13 Feb, Council to States of Zeeland.
 3 E.g. letter to Burghley, PRO SP 84/41/60.
 4 PRO SP 84/41/159, 192, 215, 239.
 5 PRO SP 84/41/161; Notulen van Zeeland 1591, 76-84.
 6 R A Zeeland, 897, 9 Mar. (Council to Zeeland);
Res St Gen VII, 309-10.

in raising them from the Flemings, whose own preference was naturally for the system to continue. They were, however, in the unhappy position that sauvegardes issued from Ostend were being ignored by raiders from Zeeland.

This conflict between provincial and central authority obscured for a time what was really going on at Ostend, but reports gradually filtered back to the Hague. It became clear that far from being a loyal servant to the republic and respecting their wishes, Norris was in fact infringing their authority in a totally arbitrary fashion. The financial role of the States officials, Matruyt and Gaspar de Zoutere was being usurped by Norris as if contributions, taxes and the revenue from licents and sauvegardes were his to dispose of as he found appropriate. This represented a direct attack on the sovereignty of the republic, for which there could be no excuse.¹ The Dutch had only recently been rid of their last condottiere, Schenk, who had seen himself as an ally rather than a servant of the States, and were determined that there should be no more individual fiefs in the United Provinces. To compound the offence, Norris went so far as to usurp the Council's authority by the

1 Meteren, 319; Le Petit, 594.

unauthorized movement of companies of foot into Ostend from the English-commanded garrisons of Flushing and Bergen op Zoom. Although Bodley, the English representative on the Council, recognised some validity in Norris's desire to be reinforced, he could not in the end justify the action taken.¹ As he wrote to Sir Robert Sidney,²

the Counsell here is trobled more that they cannot commaund in a towne of their owne.

Nevertheless, whether for fear of harming Anglo-Dutch relations or because of Bodley's influence, the Council sent only a mild reprimand and an exhortation to obey to Norris.³ The governor responded by exculpating himself completely, saying that he was concerned only with the preservation of Ostend from the enemy,⁴ and claiming that his contributions arrangements had been made in fact by the States officials.⁵ This arrogant answer led inevitably to the next stage of the dispute and an increasing number of people becoming involved. The Zeelanders assembled a list of Norris's alleged misdeeds based on information from the officials at Ostend, including accusations of taking bribes from the enemy.⁶ Peremptory orders were sent to the governor to obey by the States General and the

1 HMC De Lisle, II, 115-117.

2 Ibid 115.

3 PRO SP 84/41/266.

4 PRO SP 84/41/311.

5 Ibid 84/41/320.

6 R A Zeeland, 897, memo of 6 June; ARA SG 4870, 9 June, Council to States General. On the alleged bribes, cf. Res St Gen VII, 415.

Council, and, the six-month period in which the sauvegardes were valid having elapsed, to cease collecting contributions and to wage war instead.¹ In addition, it was resolved to write to Elizabeth with details of the dispute to see if she could restrain her disobedient subject, and failing that, to remove him. The immediate response of the English was guarded. The Privy Council instructed Bodley to say that Norris had denied the charges and that if not satisfied they should send a commission to investigate, indicating quite clearly that they believed the root of the problem was in fact Zeeland's jealousy of Ostend's prosperity.² The governor however, was determined to pursue his own inclinations regardless of the orders from the Hague and Middelburg. There is no doubt that he did nothing whatever to meet the requirements of his masters.³ The Dutch grew increasingly exasperated during the late Summer and Autumn of 1591, but remained within the framework of an enquiry procedure rather than provoke any English backlash by removing Norris.⁴ But the question was far from an academic exercise in jurisdictions. The conduct of the war in Flanders was not proceeding as the States General had ordained. The contractions were highlighted when a man in Norris's service was seized by Zeeland troops who refused to

1 Res St Gen VII, 405-7; ARA SG 487II, 11 July, Council to Norris.

2 Acts of Privy Council, New Ser XXI, 273-4; 11 July OS. The PC merely repeated the claim that the money was used for fortifications, which of course missed the point altogether.

3 ARA SG 5882I, Norris's demand to the States of Flanders, 15 July; Notulen van Zeeland, 1591, 135.

4 further reports & depositions from Matruyt & the Council, Res St Gen VII, 414-15; PRO SP 84/43/12, 153; ARA SG 5882I (exhibited 14 Oct) Notulen van Zeeland, 1591, 157-8.

recognise the sauvegardes issued from Ostend. In this instance, again, fear of annoying Elizabeth led the Zeelanders to release him and other prisoners without demanding a ransom, their correct but in the circumstances absurd entitlement.¹

The investigations made by members of the Council of State continued inexorably, and new lists of charges were submitted via envoy Noel de Caron to the English government. Norris's continued denials carried increasingly less weight,² and the accounts he submitted³ did nothing to counter the substance of the accusations against him. His compatriots in the United Provinces lost patience with him, both Bodley and Gilpin expressing fears that Anglo-Dutch relations would be severely strained.⁴ But most significant was the change in attitude at the English court. The intransigence of Norris roused the fury of both Burghley and the queen.⁵ The governor lost the support he had been relying on to defy the States General and was immediately forced into a more conciliatory attitude; indeed, he decided to mend his affairs in England and also thus distance himself from the fury of the States. After the issue

-
- 1 R A Zeeland, 897, 29 August, 1 Sept; Notulen van Zeeland, 1591, 157-8.
 - 2 PRO SP 84/43/165; ARA SG 5882I, 6 Oct. Norris was summoned to appear before the Council, Res St Gen VII, 417-8.
 - 3 PRO SP 84/43/156, 158.
 - 4 Collins, I, 327-9.
 - 5 Collins, I, 331; ARA SG 5882I, 6 October.

had been debated by the Privy Council in December, even so loyal a friend as Bodley told Norris¹

hold me excused, that I refuse to make or meddle in the causes depending between you and the States.....

The issue of the levying of contributions in Flanders had by now been partially by-passed by the reluctant agreement of Zeeland to allow a system of sauvegardes for the Vrije of Bruges and the land of Waes. The capture of Hulst by Maurice in September 1591 had altered the situation, and the collection of contributions had been placed firmly in the hands of States officials,² although the negotiations with the Zeelanders took months to be resolved.

The Norris case thus became directly a matter of enforcing discipline. The Council wrote direct to the queen to state that it regarded the offences as usurpations,³ and the governor continued to sabotage his own cause by always finding new excuses for not going to meet the Council in person.⁴ Finally, the Privy Council resolved to order him to obey the summons, and informed the Council of State that Elizabeth was willing to remove him from his post if that was the wish of the States.⁵ This final threat was apparently sufficient

1 PRO SP 84/43/280. Acts of Privy Council, NS, XXII, 109-111, 127.

2 Notulen van Zeeland 1591, 198, 222-3, 316; Res St Gen VII, 449, 680.

3 PRO SP 84/44/25 (23 Jan).

4 Ibid 84/44/128.

5 Acts of Privy Council, NS XXII, 362-4.

to bring him into line at last. As Bodley noted, although Norris was trying hard to play for support from any quarter, ultimately he derived too much profit from his governorship to be able to afford its loss.¹ The States General closed the matter with a remarkably mild instruction that Norris should not again meddle in the question of contributions, in May 1592,² although it was clear that some were not satisfie~~d~~ that the matter should end thus, with Norris completely unpunished for his disobedience.³

It was certainly extraordinary that for more than a year an officer serving the United Provinces was able to flagrantly defy their orders and massively exceed his authority without in the end suffering any penalty for it. It is fairly clear that any Dutch garrison commander would have been brought to order or dismissed very rapidly for a comparable offence. As the Council and States General repeatedly stressed, the levy of contributions, the negotiations with the enemy that this involved, and the expenditure of state funds, were all attributes of sovereignty.

Various special features explained why the conflict took the form it did. The importance of Ostend to both Dutch and English, and the lack of any territorial link with it, meant that Norris could not only exercise

1 Collins, I, 337.

2 Res St Gen VII, 624-5.

3 E.g. PRO SP 84/44/147; Sidney, I, 337-8.

greater freedom of initiative than any other fortress governor, but could also get away with it for longer, and know that a certain weight would be attached to his pleas of necessity. But the vital factor was obviously the English connection. Apart from the additional time consumed once the Privy Council became involved, Norris also benefitted from the protection of his friends and the continued distrust of the English for the Dutch politicians. Conversely, the influence of Bodley and Gilpin with the States General and the Dutch fear of alienating their allies undoubtedly accounted for the duration of the dispute and its quiet ending. The critical factor was the attitude of Elizabeth and her closest advisers. It was her threat to remove Norris which forced him into obedience - it was apparently Burghley who persuaded her against dismissing him.¹ Significant too was the effective paralysis of action caused by the disagreement between Zeeland and the States General over contributions policy in Flanders. The hostility of the Zeelanders was aimed at both Norris and the Hague. The episode demonstrated the many practical limits that operated to restrict the real power, as opposed to the theoretical authority, of the late sixteenth century state.

1 PRO SP 84/44/147, Norris to Burghley 12 May 1592 OS.

APPENDIX TWO

TABLES

TABLE IV	Relative Military Strength 1582 - 1607
TABLE V	The Growing Burden of War in the United Provinces
TABLE VI	'Convooi' and 'Licent' income at three admiralties, 1587 - 1609
TABLE VII	Total Dutch passages through the Sound, 1587 - 1609

STRENGTH IN '000's

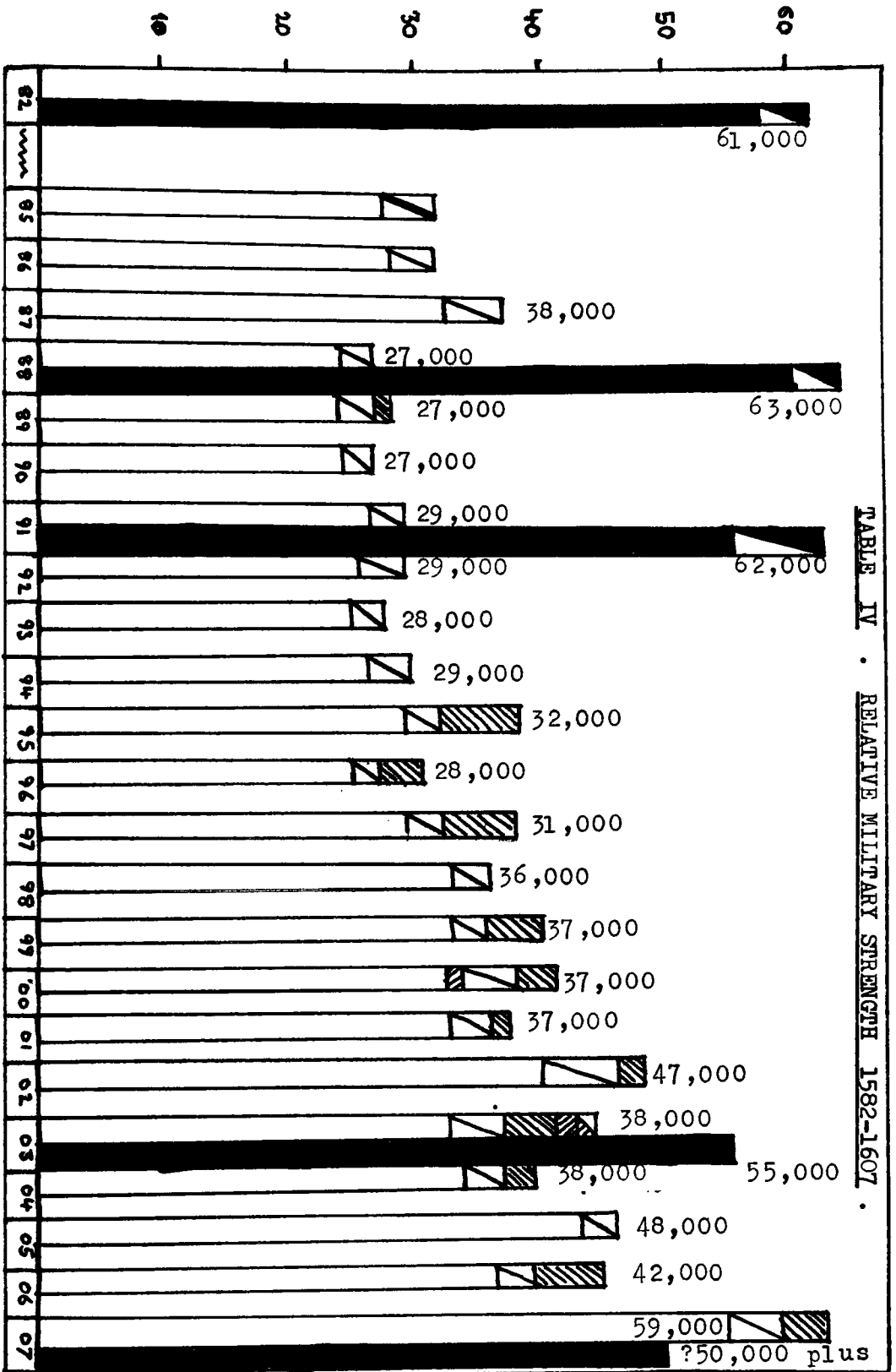
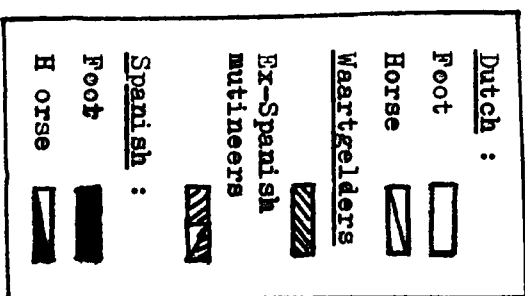


TABLE IV • RELATIVE MILITARY STRENGTH 1582-1607.



NOTES. Figures give the maximum muster strength. There were no Spanish musters 1591-1607. Spanish figures for 1603 and 1607 are incomplete. The Dutch figure for 1607 is that demanded by the Council of State and not implemented. The stated totals are of regular troops only, with burgher Waartgelders excluded.

SOURCES. Raas & Bas, Het Staatse Leger ; Res. Holland ; Duyck, Journal ; Wijn, Krijgswezen ; Parker, Army of Flanders ; Essan, Farnese.

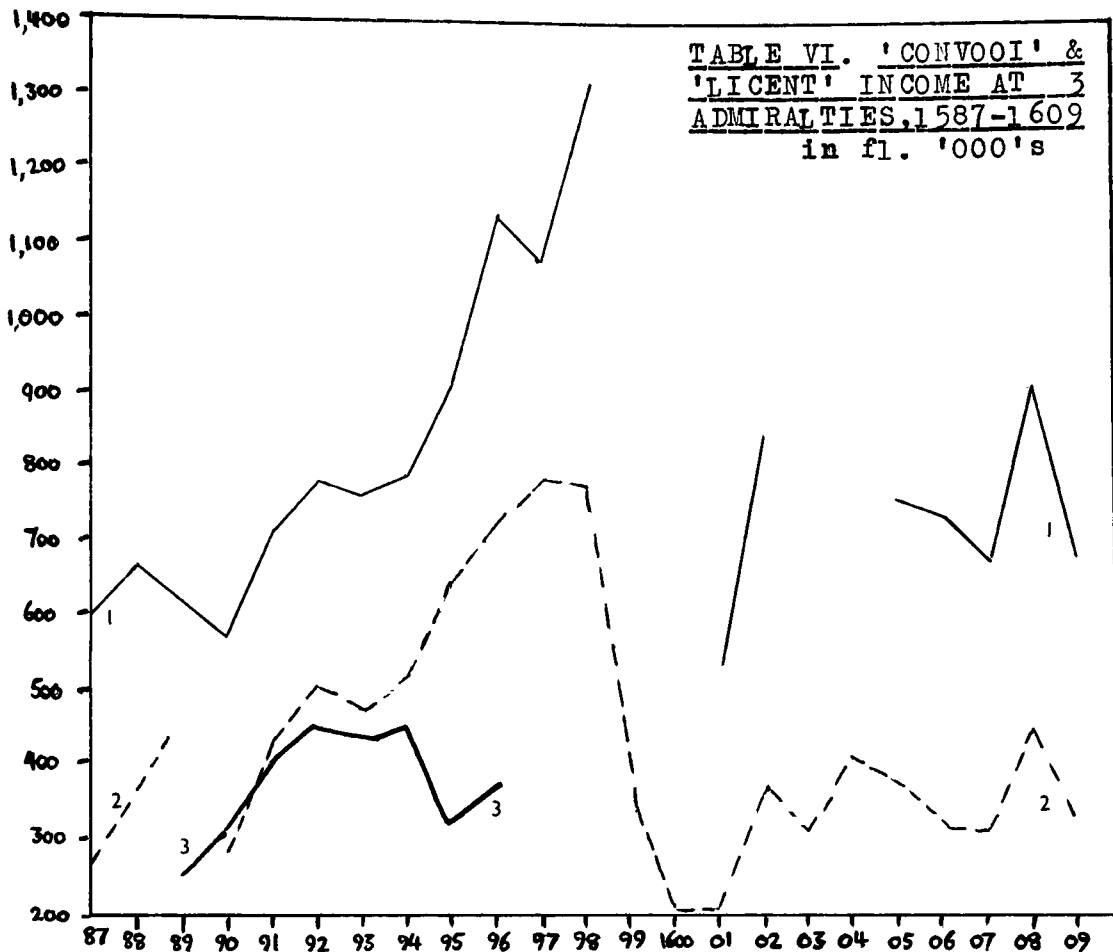
TABLE V.

THE GROWING BURDEN OF WAR IN THE UNITEDPROVINCES

YEAR	TOTAL WAR COSTS in million Fl. ¹	BORROWING BY ST.GEN. in Fl. ²	SUBSIDY FROM FRANCE in millions ³	SUBSIDY FROM GERMAN PRINCES in Fl. ⁴
1588	3.0			
1589	3.0			
1590	2.9			
1591	3.2			
1592	3.3			
1593	3.4			
1594	3.8			
1595	4.1			
1596	4.4	92,000		
1597	5.4	90,000		
1598	4.9	120,000	0.3	
1599	7.6		0.3	
1600	7.9	91,000	0.45	100,000
1601	8.0	376,000	0.45	
1602	8.7	413,000	0.9	178,000
1603	8.7	1,053,000	1.05	113,000
1604	10.2	1,287,000	1.65	
1605	9.8	55,000	1.95	140,000
1606	9.1	230,000	1.95	
1607	9.1	188,000	1.95	22,000

Notes :

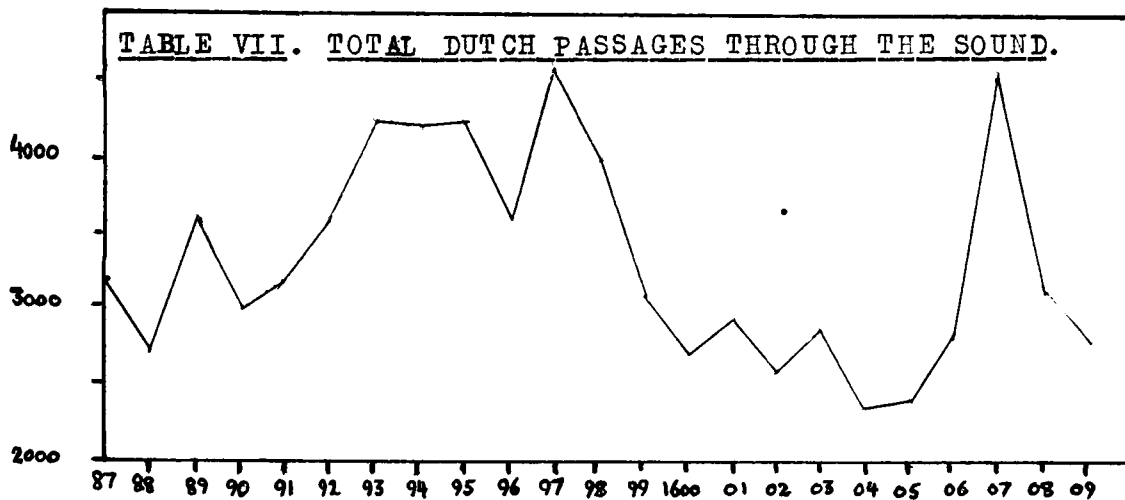
1. This figure represents the sums voted by the deputies to the States General, including additional sums voted during the year, subsidies to France (See Table III) and the Admiralties and from 1598, repayment of the debt to Elizabeth, which the Dutch estimated at £818,408, 8.2m gulden (ARA SH 2631 b.) Sources : Raa & Bas, Staatse Leger; Militaire repartitie boeken ; Res. St. Gen. & Res. Holland.
2. ARA SG 12548/188 & 194, checked with ARA SH 2592 bl. For estimates of Holland's own debt, see chapter VIII above.
3. List of receipts from France in ARA SH 2631(b). Cf. Buissere & Sully, 82.
4. 'Staat van penningen uuyt Duijtsland gecomen..' in ARA SH 2592 (bl). The money came from Johan of Nassau, Count Solms, Brederode, the Pfalzgraf and the rulers of Brandenburg, Ansbach, Anhalt and Brunswick.



Line 1 : Zeeland & The Maas combined ; 2 : Zeeland alone ;
3 : Amsterdam.

Source : Becht, Statistische Gegevens, Table I.

Tables VI & VII demonstrate the slump in trade at the turn of the century following the Spanish trade ban of 1598 which reversed the dramatic increases of the 1590's, and the serious consequences for the Admiralties.



Source : Christensen, Dutch Trade to the Baltic, 446-7.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Because of the international ramifications of the war in the Netherlands, source material is to be found in all the archives of western Europe. The main primary sources for this study have been the Rijksarchief in the Hague, and other Dutch archives, most notably the correspondence of the Nassau princes preserved in the Koninklijke Huisarchief. No less indispensable were the vast collections of printed documents from all the major archives published over the last century or more : Groen van Prinsterer, Dodt van Flensburg, Gachard, Lefèvre, Lonchay & Cuvalier, the Oldenbarnevelt correspondence, the resolutions of the States General, the States of Holland etc, the collections of Spanish and English state papers, and so on. Their scores of thousands of pages still offer much virgin territory.

The chronicle histories by contemporaries were still invaluable mines of information : Bor, Meteren, Reyd, Le Petit, Carneero, Coloma and many others. No detailed study of the war can ignore the writings of leading figures in it, such as Vere, Verdugo, Vervou and Duyck.

The secondary sources fall into a number of categories. Much was written at the end of the last century by Dutch and Belgian historians, and Motley. The last forty years has witnessed a number of significant reinterpretations, many of the outstanding issues being contained within the Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden. Two major biographical studies stand out : Van der Essen's of Parma, and den Tex's of Oldenbarnevelt. Some aspects have been studied in depth : the expansion of the Dutch economy and the establishment of naval supremacy, the nature of the "military revolution", the constitutional developments within the United Provinces. The Anglo-Dutch connection has been studied largely from the English side. Parker has recently offered a series of stimulating reinterpretations focussed primarily on the Spanish side of the struggle. Notably lacking is any serious modern work

on the developments of the last decade of the war, especially on the connections between the republic and France, and on the financial system operating within the republic. Nor has there been a serious attempt since Geyl to draw the various features of this period together into a coherent analysis of the revolution in the Netherlands and the underlying dynamic of the establishment of the Dutch state.

Note : In the bibliography, the same abbreviations for periodicals are employed as in the text. These are listed on p. iv.

BIBLIOGRAPHY .I. MANUSCRIPT SOURCES.

- Algemeen Rijksarchief (Den Haag).
 Sections : Staten Generaal
 Staten van Holland
 Raad van State
- Rijksarchief in Noordbrabant ('s Hertogenbosch).
 Sections : Kwartier Peelland
 Kwartier Maasland
 Kwartier Kempenland
 Kwartier Oisterwijk
- Rijksarchief in Gelderland (Arnhem).
 Sections : Kwartier Nijmegen
 Kwartier Zutphen
- Rijksarchief in Utrecht (Utrecht).
 Section : Staten
- Rijksarchief in Zeeland (Middelburg).
 Section : Staten van Zeeland
- Gemeente Archief, Waalre ('s Hertogenbosch).
- Gemeente Archief, St. Oedenrode.
- Gemeente Archief, Den Haag.
- Gemeente Archief, Utrecht.
- Koninklijke Huisarchief (Den Haag).
 Sections : Inventaris Prins Maurits
 Inventaris Graaf Willem Lodewijk
- Koninklijke Bibliotheek (Den Haag).
 Section : 73 C 32-3, Propositions de..Buzanval
- Archives Generales du Royaume (Brussels).
 Section : Chambre de Comptes.
- Bibliothèque Centrale, Liège.
 Section : MSS De Theux.
- Bibliothèque Générale, Université de Liège.
 MSS 632.
- Public Record Office (London).
 Section : State Papers, Holland.
- Cecil Papers, Hatfield House.

II. PRIMARY SOURCES.

- Aubery du Maurier, L, Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Hollande et des autres Provinces Unies. Paris 1680.
- Balau, S & Fairon, E, Chroniques Liégeoises! CRH, II, Brussels 1931.
- Barbiche, B (ed), Correspondance du Nonce en France Innocenzo del Bufalo, évêque de Camerino, Paris/Rome 1964.
- Baselius, J, De obsidione Berg op Zomii, Bergen op Zoom 1603.
- Basta, G, Il Maestro di Campo Generale, Venice 1606.
- " Governo de la Cavalleria Ligera, Brussels 1624.
- Battle fought between Count Maurice.. & Albertus.. nere Newport, London 1600.
- Baudart, G, Les Guerres de Nassau, 1616.
- Beckering Vinckers, H (ed.), 'Het beleg van Bommel in 1599!' Gelre, XII, 1909.
- Bergh, L van den, Gedenkstukken tot opheldering der Nederlandsche Geschiedenis (uit de archieven te Rijssel), Leiden 1842.
- Bernard, J, Recueil des Traitez de Paix, 3 vols, Hague 1700.
- Bertius, P, Illustrium et clarorum virorum Epistolae selectiores, Leiden 1617.
- Besson, J, Theatrum instrumentarum et machinorum, Paris 1852 edition.
- Bethania Xenodochium Wulpense, postea S. Joseph Furnensis, Chronique, Soc. d'Em. Bruges, Bruges 1849.
- Bezold, F von, Briefe des Pfalzgrafen Johann Casimir, 2 vols, Munich 1882-4.
- Billon, J, Principes de l'Art de Guerre, 1613.
- Bingham, J, The Taktiks of Aelian, 1616.
- Blaeu, J, Tonneel der Steden van de Vereenigde Nederlanden, 1649.
- Blok, P, (ed), 'Een merkwaardig aanvalsplan', BeM XIX, 1898.
- Bonours, C de, Le Mémorable siège d'Ostende, 1628.
- Bor, P, Oorsprongh en Vervolgh der Nederlantsche Oorloghen, Amsterdam, 1679, 4 vols.
- Borchgrave, E, Notes Historiques et Généalogiques, Ghent 1898.
- Bordes, J, (ed), 'Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van het jaar 1672!' Berigten HGU, III, 1, 1850.
- Brants, V, (ed), 'Avis sur les affaires des Pays Bas.. par Philippe de Croy!' Bull. CRH, LXXXIII, 1914.
- Brants, V, (ed), 'Une Mission à Madrid de Philippe de Croy!' Bull. CRH, LXXVII, 1908.
- Brants, V, (ed), 'Avis sur les remèdes à la situation de la Flandre!' Bull. CRH LXXXI, 1912.
- Breefe declaration of that which is happended as well within as without Ostende..., London 1602.
- Broers, H, Bijdragen tot de Gesciedenis van het Nederlandsche Zeewesen, 4 vols, Utrecht 1869.
- Bruce, T, (ed), Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. Correspondance during his Government of the Netherlands, 1844.
- Calendar of State Papers, Foreign, Elizabeth, XIX - XXII, & List & Analysis, I, London 1916-64.
- Campan, A, (ed), Abrégé Historique du règne d'Albert et Isabelle. 1592 - 1602, Brussels 1867.
- Carnero, A, Historia de las Guerras Civiles, Brussels 1625.
- Chapeauville, J, Qui Gesta Pontificum Leodiensium scripserunt auctores praecipui, 3 vols, Liège 1616.
- Chappuys, G, Histoire Générale de la Guerre de Flandre, 2 vols, 1611.
- Chronicon Abbatiae Warnestoniensis, Chronique, Soc. d'Em. Bruges, Bruges 1852.
- Clachte onsoet die Albertus doet tot zynder schanden, Leiden 1597, (Knüttel pamphlet 1001).
- Coleccion de Documentos : See Spain, state letters.

- Collins, A, Letters & Memorials of State, 2 vols, London 1746.
- Collins, D, (ed), Battle fought between Count Maurice & Albertus, and A true Relation of the famous..Victorie latelie achieved by the Counte Maurice, London 1610/1935.
- Coloma, C, Las Guerras de los Estados Bajos, 1625, in Madrid edition, 1853.
- Commelyn, I, Histoire de Frederic Henri de Nassau, 1656.
- Copie of a letter..from the Camp before Grave..dated 23 day of August, London 1602.
- Copie of a letter..touching a victory achieved by Prince Maurits, London 1599.
- Cornelissen, J, (ed), 'Relationes Status van het bisdom Roermond', Pub. Soc.Hist.Arch. Limburg, LXIV, 1928.
- Cornelissen, J, (ed), 'Relationes Status van het bisdom 's Hertogenbosch', Bosche Bijdragen IX, 1928-9.
- Croy, C de, Mémoires Guerriers 1600-1606, Antwerp 1642.
- Dalton, C, (ed), Life & Times of General Sir Edward Cecil, 2 vols, London 1885 (containing original letters).
- Dam, P van, Beschryvinge van de Oostindische Compagnie, ed. Stapel, F, RGP 68, Hague 1929.
- Delprat, G, 'Lettres inedites de Juste Lipse', Verhand.KAW,I, 1858.
- Description of the Two Campes lying before..Grave, London 1602.
- Deventer, M van, Gedenkstukken van Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, 3 vols, Hague 1860-65.
- Devereux, W, Lives & Letters of the Devereux, Earls of Essex, 2 vols, London 1853,
- Diegerick, I, Inventaire analytique et chronologique des Chartes et ..de la Ville d'Ypres, vols 6 & 7, Bruges 1864-68.
- Diegerick, I, Inventaire analytique et chronologique des Chartes et documents.. de l'ancienne abbaye de Messines, Bruges 1876.
- Discourse . of the late overthrowe..at Tournhout, London 1597.
- Dotd van Flensburg, J, Archief voor kerkelijke en wereldsche Geschiedenissen, inzonderheid van Utrecht, 7 vols, Utrecht 1839-48.
- Doorman, G, (ed), Octrooien voor uitvindingen, Hague 1940.
- Doorninck, J van, & Manninga Uitterdijk, J, Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis van Overijssel, 14 vols, Zwolle 1874-1907.
- Doorninck, P van, & Mulhuysen, P, Brieven van en aan Pontanus, 1595-1639, Haarlem 1909.
- Duplessis Mornay, P, Memoires et correspondance de Duplessis-Mornay, 12 vols, Paris 1824-5.
- Duyck, A, Journael, see Mulder, L.
- Ebeling, F, Urkundliche Beiträge zur Geschichte und Politik, Part I, Vol. I, Leipzig 1856.
- Emmius, U, Guilhelmus Ludovicus, comes Nassovius, Groningen 1621.
- Essen, L van der, (ed), 'Le Testament Politique d'Alexandre Farnese', Bull. CRH LXXXV, 1923.
- Essen, L van der, (ed), 'Correspondances d'Alexandre Farnese avec le comte de Henin et de l'archiduc Albert avec Pierre-Ernest de Mansfelt..', Bull. CRH, LXXXII, 1913.
- Essen, L van der & Lovant, A (eds), Correspondance d'Ottavio Mitto Frangipani, 3 vols, Rome/Brussels/Paris 1924-42.
- Feith, H, Brieven van en aan Adolf Graaf van Nieuwenaar; Codex Diplomaticus Neerl. HGU, ser. 2, II, 2, 1853.
- Flandre conservée...en l'année 1600, Arras 1600 (Knuttel pamphlet 1138).
- Foullon, R, (ed), Historia Leodensis, Liège, Vol. III, 1736.
- Foullon, S, Chronique de Servan Foullon, Abbé de St. Trond, ed. Simonon, G, Liège 1910.
- Fritach, A, L'Architecture militaire, Leiden 1635.

- Fruin, R, (ed), 'Journael van Splinter Helmich! Kronijk HGU, 31, 1875.
 Fruin, R, (ed), 'Gedenkschrift van Joris de Bye! BeM HGU, XI, 1888.
- Gachard, M, Analectes Historiques, Series I - IV, Brussels 1856.
 Gachard, L P, Actes des Etats Generaux de 1600, Brussels 1849.
 Gerbrand, B, Bellum Salicum trimestre provinciarum foederaturō anni 1597, Franeker 1597 (Knuttel pamphlet 999).
 Gerlo, A & Vervliet, H, (eds), La Correspondance de Juste Lipse conservée au musée Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp 1967.
 Gheyn, J de, Maniement d'Armes, Zutphen 1619.
 Giustiniano, P, Delle Guerre di Fianara, Antwerp 1609.
 Gramaye, J, Antiquitates illustrissimi Ducatus Brabantiae, Brussels, 1610.
 Grimston, E, Generall Historie of the Netherlands, 1609.
 Grimston, E, A true History of the Memorable Siege of Ostend, London 1604.
 Groen van Prinsterer, G, Archives, ou correspondance inédite de la Maison d'Orange-Nassau, 2nd Series, Vols 1 & 2, 1857-8.
 Grotius, H, De Rebus Belgicus, English edition, 1665.
 Grotius, H, De Iure Praedae Commentarius (1604), ed. Williams, G & Zeydel, W, Oxford 1950.
 Grotius, H, De Jure Belli ac Pacis Libri Tres (1646 ed.), ed. Kelsey, F, Oxford 1925.
 Guadet, J : See Xivrey.
 Guicciardini, L, Description of the Low Countries, London 1593.
- Haestens, H, La Nouvelle Troye, ou memorable siège d'Ostende, 1615.
 Hahlweg, W, (ed), Die Heeresreform der Oranier : Das Kriegsbuch des Grafen Johann von Nassau-Siegen, Wiesbaden 1973.
 Halphen, E, (ed), Lettres inédites du roi Henri IV à m. de Villiers, ambassadeur à Venise, 1599, Paris 1885.
 Halphen, E, (ed), Lettres inédites du roi Henri IV à m. de Bethune,
 (1), 18 oct - 24 dec. 1601, Paris 1889
 (2), 2 jan - 25 fev. 1602, Paris 1890
 (3), 9 mar - 31 juil. 1602, Paris 1892
 (4), 15 jan - 22 mars 1603, Paris 1895
 (5), 8 avr - 29 dec. 1603, Paris 1897.
- Henri IV, Lettres de Henri IV, et de messieurs de Villeroy et de Puisieux, à m. .. de la Boderie, 2 vols Amsterdam 1733.
 Hermelghem, A van, Nederlandsche Historien, ed. Putte, F, 2 vols, Ghent 1864.
 Hexham, H, The principles of the Art Military, 1642.
 Historical Manuscripts Commission, Calendar of the MSS of the most hon. The Marquess of Salisbury, Vols IV - XVIII, 1892 - 1940.
 Historical Manuscripts Commission, Report on the MSS of Lord De L'Isle & Dudley, vols II, III, 1934-6.
Historicall discourse, or rather tragicall Historie of Antwerp, London 1586.
 Hühlbaum, K, Lau, P & Stein, J (eds), Das Buch Weinsburg: Kölner Denkwürdigkeiten aus dem 16. Jahrhundert, Leipzig/Bonn 1886-1926, 5 vols.
 Hoevel, L Van, 'Plaatsbeschrijving van Oisterwijk met kroniek! ed. Pinkhoff, M, BeM HGU XL, 1919.
 Hondius, H, Description et breve declaration de la fortification, 1625. Honourable victorie obtained by Grave Mauris.. against.. Rhyneberg, London 1597.
- Jager, H de, 'Brieven van Prins Maurits! Kronijk HGU, ser. 6, 6, 1875/6.
 Jeannin, P, Négociations Diplomatiques et politiques du Président Jeannin, 3 vols Paris 1819.
 Jonge, J de, Verhandelingen en onuitgegeven stukken betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden, 3 vols, Delft 1825.

- Kemp, C van der, Maurits van Nassau, Prins van Oranje, 4 vols, Rotterdam, 1843.
- Kernkamp, J & Heijst, J van, (eds), 'De brieven van Buzanval aan Daniel van der Meulen! BeM 76, 1962.
- Kort Discours op de ghelegenheydt vanden ieghenwoordighen..crijch.., 1587.
- Laffleur de Kermaingant, P, L'Ambassade de France en Angleterre sous Henri IV : Mission de Jean de Thumery, sieur de Boissise, 2 vols, Paris 1886.
- Laffleur de Kermaingant, P, L'Ambassade de France en Angleterre sous Henri IV : Mission de Christophe de Harlay, comte de Beaumont, 2 vols, Paris 1895.
- Lajeunie, J, 'Correspondance entre Henri IV et Béthune, 1602-4! Mémoires et documents, Soc. D'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Genève, 38, 1952.
- Lanario, F, Histoire des Guerres de Flandres, French ed, Paris 1618.
- Lefèvre, J, Correspondance de Philippe II sur les affaires des Pays Bas, part 2, vols III-IV, Brussels 1956-60.
- Le Petit, J, La Grande Chronique..de Hollande, Zelande.., 2 vols, Dordt 1601.
- Le Petit, J, The Low Country Commonwealth, Eng. ed, London 1609.
- Llorente, A, (ed), Comentarios de las Cosas sucedidas en las Países Baxos..de 1594 hasta 1598..por Don Diego de Villalobos y Benavides, Madrid 1876 ed.
- Lonchay, H & Cuvalier, J, Correspondance de la Cour d'Espagne sur les affaires des Pays Bas, Vol.I, Brussels 1923.
- Loon, W van, Groot Gelders Placaet-boeck 1577-1700, Vol.II, Nijmegen, 1703.
- L.S., 'Correspondance des Comtes de Mansfelt! Messenger des Sciences Historiques, 1877.
- Machiavelli, N, The Art of War, trans. Wood, N, New York 1965.
- Marnix de Ste. Aldegonde, P, Oeuvres, Vols IV, VII, ed. Lacroix, Brussels 1859.
- Marolais, S, Artis Muniendi, sive Fortificationis, Amsterdam 1633.
- Mauriciados. Des durchleuchtigen..fürsten Mauritzen..dapferre Kriegsthaten... 1595.
- Meerbeek, A van, Chronicke vande Gantsche Werelt, Antwerp 1620.
- Meestre, G de, Chronicon Monasterii Evershamensis (1629), Chroniques, Soc. d'Em. Bruges, Bruges 1852.
- Meestre, G de, Historia Episcopatus Iprensis, Chroniques, Soc. d'Em. Bruges, Bruges 1849.
- Meijer, G, (ed), 'Chronicon Abbatum Conventus Mosae Trajectensis, auctore P. Vincentio Huntjens! Pub. Soc. Hist. et Archeol. Limbourg, XLVI, 1910.
- Mendoza, B de, Commentaires sur les evenements de la Guerre des Pays Bas, Brussels 1860 ed.
- Mendoza, B de, Theorique and Practise of Warre, trans. Hoby, E, Middelburg 1597.
- Meteren, E van, Historie der Nederlandscher ende haerder Naburen Oorlogen, Hague 1635.
- Moryson, F, An Itinerary (1617), 4 vols, Glasgow 1907 ; extra chapters ed. Hughes, C, Shakespeare's Europe, London 1903.
- Mulder, L, (ed.), Journael van Anthonis Duyck, 3 vols, Hague 1862.
- Neomagus, A, Expeditio Mauritiana Flandrica..anno 1600, Leiden 1617.
- Newes from Flaunders. A new Ballad of the Great Overthrowe that... Grave Maurice..gave to the Archduke.., London 1600.
- Nieuwenaar, A von, 'Letters', Kronijk HGU 8, 1852.
- Nouaillac, J, (ed), Lettres inedites de Francois d'Aerssen a Jacques Valcke..1599-1603, Paris 1908.

- Noe, F de la, Discours Politiques et Militaires, 2 vols, 1596.
- Ogle, J, 'An account of the last Charge at Newport-battle', Vere's Commentaries (1672), 106-111.
- Oldenbarnevelt, J, Bescheiden betreffende zijn staatkundig beleid en zijn familie, Vol. I ed. Haak, S, (RGP 80, 1934), vol. II ed. Veenendeel, A, (RGP 108, 1962).
- Oldenbarnevelt, J : Historie van het Leven en Sterven.., 1648.
- Oldenbarnevelt, J, 'Verhooren! Berigten HGU II, 2, 1849.
- Orlers, J, The Triumphs of Nassau, trans. Shute, W, 1613.
- Ossat, A d', Lettres du Cardinal d'Ossat, 5 vols, Amsterdam 1714.
- Oudenhoven, J van, Beschryvinge der Stadt ende Meyerye van 's Hertogenbosch, Amsterdam 1649.
- Overbury, T, 'Observations in his travels upon the State of the 17 Provinces..1609', An English Garner, ed. Arber, E, vol. IV, London 1895.
- Patrizi, F, Paralleli Militari, 2 parts, Rome 1594-5.
- Petitot, M, (ed), 'Mémoires de Messire Philippe Hurault, comte de Chevreny', Coll. des mém. relatifs à l'hist. de France, 36, 1823.
- Petitot, M, (ed), 'Mémoires des Choses.. depuis 1560 jusques en..1596 par Messire Guillaume de Saulx, Seigneur de Tavannes! (1625), Coll. des mém. relatifs à l'hist. de France, 35, 1823.
- Phebbens, E, 'Chronicon Rerum in Phrisia et praecipue circa Groningam gestarum..1565 - 1594,' ed. Feith, H, Werken HGU, new ser, 7, 1867.
- Piot, C, (ed), Correspondance du Cardinal de Granvelle, vol. XII, Brussels 1896.
- Pise, J de la, Tableau d'histoire des Princes.. d'Orange, Hague 1639.
- Polain, M, (ed), Recueil des Ordonnances de..Liège, ser. 2, Brussels 1871.
- Pottre, J de, 'Dagboek..1549-1602! ed. St. Genois, Maetschappij der Vlaemsche Bibliophilen, ser. 3, 5, Ghent 1861.
- Privy Council, Acts of, New Series, XXI-II, London 1900-01.
- Register der Resolutiën van..de Heerenstaten van Friesland, 2 vols, Campen 1784.
- 'Relacion..del dinero remitido á Flandes, 598 - 609! Col.Doc. 36, 1860.
- Renon de France, Histoire des Troubles des Pays Bas, 3 vols, Paris 1886-91 ed.
- Resolutiën van der Heerenstaten van Holland en Westfriesland, 269 vols, 1544-1793.
- Resolutiën der Staten Generaal, 1579-1609 , ed. Japikse, M & Rijperman, H, RGP 47, 51, 55, 57, 62, 71, 85, 92, 101, 131, Hague 1915-70.
- Reyd, E van, Vornaemste Geschiedenissen inde Nederlanden ende elders, Arnhem 1626.
- Rio, M del, Mémoires sur les troubles des Pays Bas durant l'administration de Comte de Fuentes 1592-96, trans. Delvigne, A, Brussels 1892.
- Roboulx de Soumoy, A, (ed), 'Mémoires de Frederic Perrenot, sieur de Champagny, 1573-90', Coll. des mém. relatifs à l'hist. de Belgique, Brussels 1860.
- Rodriguez Villa, A, (ed), El Coronel Francisco Verdugo, Madrid 1890.
- Rogge, H, (ed), 'Brieven en onuitgegeven stukken van Johannes Wtenbogaert', Werken HGU, new ser, 11, 1868.
- Ronse, E, (ed), Jaerboeken van Veurne en Veurnambacht, deur Pauwel Heinderycx, 4 vols, Veurne 1853-4.
- Sande, J van den, Nederlantsche Historie, Leeuwarden 1650.
- Sasse van Ysselt, A van, 'Slechte financiële toestand van het voormalig nonnenklooster te Hoiidonck in 1607! Bossche Bijdragen, I, 1917/18.

- Sawyer, E, Memorials of Affairs of State in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James I, collected (chiefly) from the original papers of..sir Ralph Winwood, 3 vols, London 1725.
- Schueren, van der, (ed), 'Brieven en onuitgegeven stukken van jonkheer Arend van Dorp', Werken HGU, new ser. 44, 1887, 50, 1888.
- Schwartzenburg en Hohenlansberg, G, Groot Placaat en Charterboek van Vriesland, 5 vols, Leeuwarden 1768-93.
- Short Report of the..journey into Brabant by..Grave Mauris..1602, London 1602.
- Smet, J de, (ed), Descriptio de Origine Conventus, postea Abbatiae, Trunchiansis, Coll. des Chroniques Belges : Flandre, I, Brussels 1837.
- Spain : State Letters :
- 'Cartas del Archiduque Alberto a don Francisco Gomez de Sandoval y Rojas..duque de Lerma, 1598-1611', Col.Doc. 42, 43, Madrid 1863.
- 'Cartas del Almirante de Aragon.. al Archiduque Alberto, 1596-1602', Col. Doc. 41, 42, Madrid 1862-3.
- 'Cartas del duque de Parma', Col. Doc. 75, Madrid 1880.
- Specklin, D, Architectura von Vestungen, Strassburg 1599.
- States General, Recueil der Militaire ordonnantiën, Hague 1720.
- States General, Repartitie Boeckjen, aenwijsende den staet des Oorlogs der Geunieerde Provinciën, Gouda, n. d.
- States General, Placcaet.. daerby de Spaignaerts ende all heure goederen voor goede prinse verclaert worden, Hague 1599.
- States General, Aende ...Prelaten, Graven, Heeren, Edelen ende Steden van Brabant, Vlaenderen..(etc), Hague 1602 (knuttel pamphlet 1192).
- Staten van Zeeland, Notulen, ed. Heeringa, K, 5 vols, Hague 1919.
- Staten van Zeeland, Notulen, vol. per year, n. d.
- Stevin, S, La Castrametation de..Prince Maurice, Leyden 1618.
- Stevin, S, Materiae Politicae. Burgherlijke stoffen, Leiden 1649.
- Strada, F, De Bello Belgico, trans. Stapleton, R, 1650.
- Straten, G, De illustrissimi fortissimique principis..Mauricii.., Utrecht 1598 (Knuttel pamphlet 1000).
- 'Stukken voor de geschiedenis van de jaren 1588-1595', Kronijk HGU, ser. 4, XVI - XXI, 1860-65.
- T, V & Guilhelmi, S, Oda Triumphalis..anno 1597, Leiden 1597, (Knuttel pamphlet 998).
- Thou, J de, Histoire Universelle, 16 vols, London 1734 ed.
- Tot de Staten, steden en ingheschekenen der Verenighde Nederlanden : Teghens de Onghereltheden..der Hopluyden.., Leeuwarden 1605/7, (Knuttel pamphlet 1309).
- Tross, L, (ed), 'geschiedkundige bescheiden, 1583-90', Kronijk HGU, XV, 1859.
- True Copie of a letter..from the Leaguer by Arnhem, London 1591.
- True Copsy of a ..letter written from Sluce the 12 of June 1606, Flushing/London 1606.
- True Discourse of all the Sallyes..of the Citie of Grave, London 1602.
- True Discourse of that which is happned in..Ostend.., London 1602.
- True Relation of the Famous & Renowned Victorie..nere Newport, London 1600.
- True Report of all the proceedings of..Maurice before..Bercke, 1601.
- True Report of a..victorie..achieved by..the blacke Galley of Dorcht, London 1600.
- Ufano, D, Artillerie c'est à dire Vraye Instruction de l'artillerie, Frankfort 1614.
- V, F & C, C, (eds), Chronicon Vormeselense, Chroniques, Soc. d'Em. Bruges, Bruges 1847.

- V, F & C, C, (eds), Chronicon et Cartularium Abbatiae Sancti Nicolai Furnensis, Chroniques, Soc. d'Em. Bruges, Bruges 1849.
- Veen, J van, (ed), 'Zalt-Bommel in den zomer van het Jaar 1572', Gelre IX, 1906.
- Verdugo, F, Commentario..de la Guerra de Frisia (1610), ed. Lonchay, H, 1899.
- Vere, F, Commentaries, 1672 ed.
- Verhael vanden staet der overheerde Nederlantscher Provincien, 1605, (Knuttel pamphlet 1298a, 1299).
- Vervou, F van, Enige Gedenckwerdige Geschiedenissen, 1568-1609, Leeuwarden 1841.
- Vivere, J van den, Chronijcke van Ghendt, ed. Potter, F de, Ghent 1885.
- Vlaenderen. Placaet-boeck, book 2, Ghent 1629.
- Vlietinck, E, (ed), 'Documents inédits concernant l'occupation de la ville d'Ostende par les troupes des Provinces Unies et de la Reine d'Angleterre 1584-1604', Bull. CRH 70, 1901.
- Vreede, G, (ed), Lettres et Négociations de Paul Choart, Seigneur de Buzanval, et de Francois Aerssen, 1598-9, Leiden 1846.
- Vreede, G, (ed), 'Lettres et Négociations de Paul Choart, Seigneur de Buzanval, Ambassadeur..en Hollande, annee 1600', Codex diplom. HGU, ser. 2, 2, 1852.
- Vyerighe Colom : Klaer vertoonende in..Caarten de XVII Nederlantsche Provincien.. Amsterdam, n.d.
- Wallhausen, J de, Art Militaire à Cheval, Frankfort 1616.
- Wallhausen, J de, Art Militaire pour l'infanterie, Oppenheim 1615.
- Wallhausen, J de, De la Milice Romaine(Vegetius), Frankfort 1616.
- Warachtich verhael hoedat ...een..schips armade van Zeelandt ghetog-zijn..na..Casant, Middelburg 1604.
- Wijn, J, (ed), 'Krijgskundige aantekeningen van Johan den Middelse van Nassau', Werken HGU, ser.3, 76, 1947.
- Williams, R, The Actions of the Low Countries, London 1618.
- Williams, R, A Particulier of the yeelding up of..Zutphen.., London, 1591.
- Winsemius, P, Chronique ofte historische geschiedenis van Vrieslant, Franeker 1622.
- Wright, T, (ed), Queen Elizabeth and her Times. A series of Original Letters, 2 vols London 1838.
- Xivrey, M Berger de, & Guadet, J, Recueil des Lettres Missives de Henri IV, 9 vols, Paris 1843-58.
- Zuijlen, R van, Inventaris der Archieven van de stad 's Hertogenbosch (stadsrekeningen van het jaar 1399-1800), 2 vols, 's Hertogenbosch 1863.

III. SECONDARY SOURCES.

- 'Aanslag van Prins Maurits op Maastricht in 1594', De Maasgouw 1,16, 1879.
- Abendanon, J, 'De Vlootanval...op de Canarische Eilanden..in 1599', BVGO, 5, VIII, 1921.
- Alderwerelt, J de Roo van, De Vestingoorlog en de Vestingbouw, Hague, 1862.
- Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie, 1891.
- Andriesson et al, Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden, see under separate authors.
- Attman, A, The Russian and Polish Markets in international trade 1500-1650, Gothenburg 1973.
- Avermaete, R, Les Gueux de Mer et la Naissance d'une nation, 1944.

- Baasch, E, Holländische Wirtschaftsgeschichte, Jena 1927.
- Baasch, E, 'Der Verkehr mit Kriegsmaterialien aus und nach den Hansestädten', Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik, 137, III Folge, 4, 1932.
- Barbour, V, Capitalism in Amsterdam in the seventeenth century, 1950.
- Barendrecht, S, Francois van Aerssen, Dissertation, Leiden 1965.
- Baudrillart, A, 'La Politique d'Henri IV en Allemagne', Revue des Questions Historiques, 37, 1885.
- Bax, W, Het Protestantisme in het bisdom Luik. 1557-1612, Hague 1941.
- Becht, H, Statistische gegevens betreffende den handelsoverzet van de republiek der Vereenigde Nederlanden, 1579-1715, Hague 1908.
- Belleruche, E, The Siege of Ostend, or, The New Troy 1601-4, 1892.
- Beylen, J van, Schepen van de Nederlanden, Amsterdam 1970.
- Biographische Woordenboek der Nederlanden, 21 vols Haarlem 1853-78.
- Blink, H, Geschiedenis van den Boerenstand en den Landbouw in Nederland, 2 vols, Groningen 1904.
- Blok, P, et al, Gedenkboek der Reductie van Groningen in 1594, Groningen 1894.
- Blok, P, 'De Handel op Spanje en het begin der groote Vaart', BVG0, 5, I, 1913.
- Blok, P, 'Prins Maurits', BVG0, 6, IX, 1930.
- Boeree, T, De Kroniek van het Geslacht Backx, Wageningen 1943.
- Boersma, F, 'De diplomatieke Reis van Daniel van der Meulen en Nicolaes Bruyninck naar het Duitse leger bij Emmerik, 1599', BeM, 84, 1969.
- Bogucka, M, 'Merchants' profits in Gdansk foreign trade', Acta Poloniarum Historica, 23, 1971.
- Boldingh, H, 'De Slag van Gibraltar', Marine Blad 22, 1907-8.
- Bordes, J van, 'Maurits, prins van Oranje, de hervormer van het krijgswezen', Het Vaandel, VI, 1856/7.
- Bosscha, J, Nederlands Heldendaden te Land, vol. I, Leeuwarden 1846.
- Bouille, R, Histoire de la ville et Pays de Liège, 3 vols, Liège 1725 - 32.
- Boynton, L, The Elizabethan Militia 1558-1638, Newton Abbot 1967.
- Brandsma, T, 'Stichting, Verwoesting en wederopbouw van het Franciscanessenklooster 'Bethleen' te Haren bij Megen', Bosche Bijdragen, I, 1917/18.
- Brants, V, La Belgique au XVII Siècle : Albert et Isabelle, Louvain & Paris 1910.
- Brants, V, 'Ambroise Spinola (1569-1630)', Revue Generale, 101, 1915.
- Brom, G, 'De Toestand der Nederlandsche Katholieken ten tijde der republiek', De Katholiek, 101, 1892.
- Brugmans, H, Opkomst en Bloei van Amsterdam, Amsterdam 1944.
- Bruijn, C de & Reinders, H, Nederlandse Vestingen, Bussum 1967.
- Bruin, G de, Buscruytmaeckers, Amsterdam 1952.
- Brulez, W, 'De Wisselkoersen te Antwerpen in het laatste kwart van de 16e eeuw', BGN, XI, 1956.
- Brulez, W, 'De Firma Della Faille en de international handel van Vlaamse Firma's in de 16e eeuw', Verhand. KNAW, 35, 1959.
- Brünner, E, 'De Ontwikkeling van het handelsverkeer van Holland met Oosteuropa tot het Einde der 16e eeuw', TvG, 41, 1926.
- Buisseret, D, Sully and the Growth of centralised government in France 1598-1610, London 1968.
- Carman, W, (ed), Louis Napoleon on Artillery, 1967.
- Chaunu, P, 'Seville et la Belgique 1555-1648', Revue du Nord XLII, 1960.
- Christensen, Dutch Trade to the Baltic about 1600, Copenhagen 1941.
- Clark, G, 'The Birth of the Dutch Republic', Proc. BA, XXXII, 1946.
- Clayton, L, 'Ships & Empire: The Case of Spain', Mariners Mirror, 62, 1976.
- Cocheteux, C, 'Notice sur les monnaies des Archiducs', Revue Belge de Numismatique, 33, 1877.

- Custis, C, Jaerboecken der Stadt Brugge, 3 vols, Bruges 1765.
- Debrock, W, 'De Kaapvaart op de Belgische Kust', MMA, IX, 1955.
- Delbruck, H, Geschiede der Kriegskunst in Rahmen der Politischen Geschichte, vol. IV, Berlin 1920.
- Denuce, J, 'De Admiraliteiten van Vlaanderen en Antwerpen', MMA, I, 1936.
- Deursen, A van, 'De Raad van State en de Generaliteit 1590-1616', BvG, 19, 1964.
- Deursen, A van, 'Staat van Oorlog en generale petitie in de jonge republiek', BeM, 91, 1976.
- Dhondt, J, 'Bijdrage tot de kennis van het financiewesen der Staten van Vlaanderen', Nederlandsche Historiebladen, 3, 2, 1941.
- Dictionary of National Biography, vol. 41.
- Dillen, J van, 'De Opstand en het Amerikaanse zilver', TvG, 73, 1960.
- Doutrepont, A, 'L'Archiduc Ernest d'Autriche, gouverneur-general des Pays Bas', Miscellanea Historica in honorem Leonis van der Essen, vol. II, Paris/Brussels 1947.
- Druout, H, Mayenne et la Bourgogne, vol. II, Paris 1937.
- Elias, J, Schetsen uit de Geschiedenis van ons Zeewesen, vol. I, 1916.
- Elias, J, De Vlootbouw in Nederland. 1596-1655, Amsterdam 1933.
- Elias, J, De Vroedschap van Amsterdam 1578-1795, 2 vols, Haarlem 1903.
- Embe, G van, 'Krijgsbedrijven en levensbijzonderheden van de Gebroeders Bacx', Kronijk HGU, XV, 1859.
- Enno van Gelder, H, 'Nederlandse Dorpen in de 16e eeuw', Verhand. KNAW New series, LIX, 1953.
- Essen, L van der, Alexandre Farnèse, Prince de Parme, 5 vols, Brussels 1933-7.
- Essen, L van der, 'Politieke Geschiedenis van het Zuiden', Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden, V.
- Eysinga, W, 'De Wording van het Twaalfjarig Bestand', Verhand. KNAW, New Series, 66, 1959.
- Faber, J, 'Drie Eeuwen Friesland', Afdeling Agrarische Geschiedenis, 2 vols, Wageningen 1972.
- Fairon, E, 'Notice sur la fabrication des Canons à Liege au XVI siècle', Bull. Institut Archéologique Liégeois, XL, 1910.
- Faulconnier, P, Description historique de Dunkerque, vol. I, Bruges, 1730.
- Feith, J, 'De Rijkdom der kloosters van Stad en Lande', Groningsche Volksalmanak voor 1902, Groningen 1901.
- Feld, M, 'Middle Class Society and the Rise of Military Professionalism: the Dutch army 1589-1609', Armed Forces & Society, I, 1975.
- Felix, D, Het Oproer te Utrecht in 1610, dissertation Utrecht 1919.
- Ffoulkes, C, The Gunfounders of England, London 1969.
- Fontaine, P, De Raad van State; zijn taak, organisatie en werkzaamheden in de jaren 1588-90, Groningen/Djakarta 1955.
- Formsma, J, De Ommelander Strijd voor Zelfstandigheid in de 16e eeuw, Assen 1938.
- Formsma, W, 'De aanbieding van de landsheerlijkheid over Groningen aan de hertog van Brunswijk in de jaren 1592-4' BeM, 90, 1975.
- Frang, A, 'Deutsche Reichsflottenpläne aus der Zeit der Gegenreformation', Marine Rundschau, 80, II, 1907.
- Frauenholz, E von, Das Heerwesen des Reiches in der Landsknechtzeit, Munich 1937.
- Fréson, J, 'Prise du Chateau de Huy en 1595', Bull. Institut Archéologique Liégeois, XXIII, 1893.
- Fruin, R, Verspreide Geschriften, 11 vols, Hague 1900-05.
- Fruin, R, 'Het Beleg en Ontzet der Stad Leiden in 1574', Versp. Gesch. II.
- Fruin, R, 'De Slag bij Nieuwoort', Versp. Gesch. III.
- Fruin, R, 'De Wederopluiking van het Katholicisme in Noord Nederland', Versp. Gesch. III.

- Fruin, R, Tien Jaren uit den Tachtigjarigen Oorlog, Hague, 1899.
- Gerrits, E, Fastes de la Marine Hollandaise, 2 vols 1835.
- Geyl, P, The Revolt of the Netherlands, London 1958.
- Gheret, D, 'Le produit des Licentes et autres impots sur le commerce exterieur dans les Pays Bas espagnols 1585-1621', Acta Hist. Brux., II, 1970.
- Glamann, K, Dutch-Asiatic Trade 1620-1740, Copenhagen/Hague 1958.
- Gottschalk, M, Historische Geografie van westelijk Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, vol. II, Assen, 1958.
- Gottschalk, M, Stormvloed en rivieroverstromingen in Nederland, vol. II, Assen 1975.
- Graefe, F, 'Beitrage zur Geschichte der See-expeditionen von 1606 und 1607', BVG0, 7, III, 1933.
- Graefe, F, 'Die Flandrische Kuste in den Machtkampfen des 17. Jahrhunderts', Marine Rundschau 27, 1922.
- Griffiths, G, 'The revolutionary character of the Revolt of the Netherlands', Comp. Studies in Society & History, 1960.
- Guilmartin, J, Gunpowder and Galleys : Changing Technology and Mediterranean warfare at sea in the 16th Century, Cambridge 1974.
- Haak, S, 'Het Aandeel van Willem Lodewijk aan het offensief van 1590', BVG0, 5, VII, 1920.
- Haak, S, 'De Wording van het conflict tusschen Maurits en Oldenbarneveldt', BVG0, 5, VI, 1919.
- Hagedorn, B, Ostfrieslands Handel und Schiffahrt vom Ausgang des 16. Jahrhunderts bis zum Westfälischen Frieden, Berlin 1912.
- Hahlweg, W, 'Aspekte und Probleme der Reform des Niederlandischen Kriegswesens unter Prinz Moritz van Oranien', BeM, 1971.
- Hahlweg, W, 'Die Oranische Heeresreform, ihr Weiterwirken und die Befreiung der Niederlanden', Nassauische Annalen, LXXX, 1969.
- Hahlweg, W, 'Wilhelm Ludwig von Nassau und das Cannae Problem', Nassauische Annalen, LXXI, 1960.
- Hall, A, 'Military Technology', A History of Technology, ed. Singer et al., vol. III, Oxford 1957.
- Hammen, J van der, 'Het Klooster Nazareth te Waalwijk', Bossche Bijdragen, II, 1918/19.
- Harsin, P, 'Etudes sur l'histoire économique de la Principauté de Liège', Bull. Institut archéologique Liégeois, LII, 1927.
- Hart, G 't, 'Rijnlands bestuur en waterstaat rondom het beleg en ontzet van Leiden', Leiden 74 : Leven in oorlogstijd, Leiden 1974.
- Hausser, H, Francois de la Noue 1531- 91, 1892.
- Hayden, J, 'Continuity in the France of Henry IV and Louis XIII : French foreign policy 1598-1615', JMH, 45, 1973.
- Hemelrijk, M van, De Vlaamse Krijgsbouwkunde, Tiel 1950.
- Henrard, P, 'Les Fondateurs d'Artillerie', Ann. Ac. Arch. Belg. XLIV, 1888.
- Henrard, P, 'Histoire du Siege d'Ostende', Revue Militaire Belge, 15, 1890.
- Henrard, P, 'Notes pour servir a l'histoire de l'artillerie', Revue Militaire Belge, 13, 1888.
- Henrard, P, 'Poudre et Salpêtre', Bull. Ac. Arch. Belg. 4, 2, 1890-7.
- Heurn, J van, Historie der Stad en Meyerye van 's Hertogenbosch, 2 vols, Utrecht 1776.
- Heylen, A, Historische Verhandeling over de Kempen, Turnhout 1837.
- Histoire d'Alexandre Farnese, 1692.
- Hoek, J van den, De Veldtocht van Prins Maurits in 1597, 1914.
- Hoeven, G van der, Geschiedenis der Vesting Breda, Breda 1868.
- Houtte, J van, Economische en Sociale Geschiedenis van de Lage Landen, Antwerp 1964.
- Ijzerman, J, 'Amsterdamsche bevrachtingscontracten 1591-1602', Econ. Historisch. Jaarboek, XVII, 1931.

- Isacker, P van, 'Pedro Enriquez de Acevedo, graaf van Fuentes, en de Nederlanden 1592-6', Ann.Soc.Em.Br. LX, 1910.
- Isselt, W van Dam van, 'Het Voorspel van Oostende's Val, 1599', BVGO, 5, VI, 1919.
- Isselt, W van Dam van, 'De Voorbereiding van de Veldtocht van 1599', BVGO, 6, IV, 1926.
- Isselt, W van Dam van, 'De Geldmiddelen onzer Republiek voor den Veldtocht van 1599', BVGO, 5, VIII, 1921.
- Isselt, W van Dam van, 'Prins Maurits' Veldtocht van 1599', Orgaan Krijgswetenschap, 1917/18.
- Jaehns, M, Handbuch einer Geschichte des Kriegswesen van den Urzeit bis zur Renaissance, Leipzig 1880.
- Japikse, N, 'De instructie van den Raad van State van 1588', BVGO, 5, IX, 1922.
- Jong, H de, 'De Admiraliteit van de Maze te Rotterdam', Marine Blad, 58, 1948.
- Jonge, J de, Geschiedenis van het Nederlandsche Zeewesen, 5 vols, 1869.
- Juste, T, La révolution des Pays Bas sous Philippe II, 4 vols, 1860-3.
- Kabza, A, Handschriftliche Pläne von Daniel Specklin, 1911.
- Kellenbenz, H, 'Spanien, die nördlichen Niederlande und der Skandinavisch-baltische Raum in der Wirtschaft und Politik um 1600; Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte', 41, 1954.
- Kernkamp, J, De Handel op de Vijand 1572-1609, 2 vols, Utrecht 1931-1936.
- Kernkamp, J, 'De Handel van de Republiek in betrekking tot de diplomatie der grote mogendheden in het jaar 1596', BVGO, 7, IV, 1934.
- Kernkamp, J, 'Scheepvaart- en handelsbetrekkingen met Italië tijdens de opkomst der Republiek', Mededeelingen, Ned. Hist. Inst. te Rome, 2, VI, 1936.
- Keuning, J, 'XVI Century cartography in the Netherlands', Imago Mundi, IX, 1952.
- Khevenhiller, F, Annales Ferdinandei, oder Wahrhaftige Beschreibung, Kaisers Ferdinandi..1573-1637, 12 vols, Leipzig 1721.
- Klein, P, De Trippen in de 17e eeuw, Assen 1965.
- Kleyntjens, 'Militaire betrekkingen tusschen Zwitserland en Holland', De Navorscher, 89, 1940.
- Kleyntjens, J, 'Les Suisses dans l'armée néerlandaise du XVIIe au XXe siècle', Revue Militaire Suisse, 97, 1952.
- Knuttel, W, De Toestand der Nederlandsche Katholicken, I, Hague 1892.
- Kolman, R, De Reductie van Nijmegen 1591, Groningen 1952.
- Kooperberg, L, 'Een muiterie in den Spaanscher tijd', BVGO, 5, V, 1918.
- Kroeber, C, 'The Mobilization of Philip II's revenue in Peru 1590-6', EcHR, (2), X, 1957/8.
- Kuypers, F, Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Artillerie, 4 vols, Nijmegen, 1870-4,
- Lefèvre, J, Spinola et la Belgique 1601-1627, 1947.
- Lejeune, J, La Formation du capitalisme moderne dans la principauté de Liège au XVIIe siècle, Liège 1939.
- Lennel, F, 'Le siege de Calais par les Espagnols 1596', Annales de L'Est et du Nord, I, 1905.
- Lloyd, H, The Rouen Campaign 1590-2, Oxford 1973.
- Lossen, M, Der Kölnische Krieg, 2 vols, Gotha/Munich/Leipzig 1882-97.
- Maddens, K, 'De crisis op het Einde van de XVIIe eeuw in de kasselrij Ieper', Rev.Bel.Phil., 39, 1961.
- Maddens, K, 'De crisis op het Einde van de XVIIe eeuw in de kasselrij Kortrijk', Versl.Med.Leiegouw, I, 1959.

- Maddens, K, 'Het Uitzicht van het Brugse Vrije op het Einde van de XVIIe eeuw', Ann.Soc.Em.Br. XCVII, 1960.
- Male, J-P van, Geschiedenis van Vlaanderen van het jaar 1566 tot de Vrede van Munster, ed. Putte, F, Bruges 1843.
- Malo, H, Les Corsaires Dunkerquois, vol. I, 1912.
- Malou, J-B, (ed), Chronique du Monastère d'Oudenburg, Chroniques, Soc. d'Em. Bruges, Bruges 1840.
- Malowist, M, 'Les Produits des Pays de la Baltique dans le commerce international au XVIIe siècle', Revue du Nord, 42, 1960.
- Markham, C, The Fighting Veres, London 1888.
- Marsollier, J, Histoire de Henry de la Tour d'Auvergne, Duc de Bouillon, Paris 1719.
- Massarete, J, La Vie martiale et fasteuse de Pierre-Ernest de Mansfeld 1517-1604, 2 vols, 1930.
- Mattingley, G, The Defeat of the Spanish Armada, London 1959.
- Meerendonck, L van de, 'Het klooster op de Eikendonk te den Dungen', Bijd.Gesch.Z.N., II, 1964.
- Messiaen, L-J, Histoire chronologique, politique et religieuse des seigneurs et de la ville de Comines, 3 vols Courtrai 1892.
- Moer, A van der, 'Het Gebruik van de Nederlandse macht ter Zee,' Marine Blad, 65, 1955.
- Mollema, J, Geschiedenis van Nederland ter Zee, 4 vols, Amsterdam 1938-42.
- Montpleinchamp, J Bruslé de, Histoire de l'Archiduc Albert, 1870.
- Moreau, E de, Histoire de l'église en Belgique, vol.5, Brussels 1952.
- Motley, J, The United Netherlands, 4 vols, London 1860-7.
- Muller, P, De Staat der Vereenigde Nederlanden in de jaren zijner wording 1572-94, Haarlem 1872.
- Muller, S, Geschiedenis der Noordsche Compagnie, Utrecht 1874.
- Nouaillac, J, Villeroy, Secrétaire d'état et ministre, Paris 1908.
- Oestreich, G, 'Der Römische Stoizismus und die Oranische Heeresreform', Hist.Zeit., 1953.
- Oldewelt, W, 'De Hollandse imposten en ons beeld van de conjunctuur tijdens de republiek', 47e Jaarboek, Genootschap Amstelodamum, 1955.
- Oman, C, History of the Art of War in the 16th Century, London 1937.
- Overdiep, G, De Groninger Schansenkrijg. De Strategie van Willem Lodewijk, Drente als strijdtoneel. Groningen 1970.
- Parker, G, 'Spain, her enemies and the Revolt of the Netherlands', P&P, 1970.
- Parker, G, The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road, Cambridge 1972.
- Parker, G, 'War and Economic Change : the economic costs of the Dutch Revolt', War & Economic Development, ed. Winter, J, Cambridge 1975.
- Parker, G, 'The Dutch revolt and the polarization of international Politics', TvG, 89, 1976.
- Parker, G, 'Why did the Dutch revolt last 80 years ?' TRHS, (5), 26, 1976.
- Parker, G, 'The "Military Revolution" 1560-1660 - A myth ?', JMH 48, 1976.
- Parker, G, & Schepper, H de, 'The Formation of government policy in the Catholic Netherlands under the Archdukes 1596-1621', EHR, 91, 1976.
- Pasture, La Restuaration religieuse aux Pays Bas Catholiques sous les Archiducs, Louvain 1925.
- Pater, J de, Maurits en Oldenbarnevelt in den Strijd om het twaalfjarig bestand, Amsterdam 1940.
- Pater, J de, 'De politieke geschiedenis van het Noorden', Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden, V.
- Paul, J, 'Die Nordische Politik der Habsburger vor dem dreissigjahrige Kriege', Hist.Zeit. 133, 1926.

- Philipsson, M., Heinrich IV und Philipp III. Die Begründung des französischen Uebergewichtes in Europa 1598-1610, 3 vols, Berlin, 1870-6.
- Pirenne, H., Histoire de Belgique, vols. III, IV, Brussels 1927, 53.
- Poel, S van der, 'Het Particularisme van Zeeland en de Convoyen en Licenten', Archief, Zeeusch Genootschap der Wetenschappen, 1929,
- Poirson, A., Histoire du Règne de Henri IV, 4 vols, 1862-7.
- Polain, E., 'Ernest de Bavière, Eveque et Prince de Liège, 1581-1612', Bull. Institut archéologique Liégeois, LIII, 1929.
- Pollentier, F., 'De Hervorming van de admiraliteit op het einde van de XVIIe eeuw met betrekking tot Duinkerken', Aän. Soc. Em. Br., XCVI, 1959.
- Posthumus, N., Nederlandsche Prijsgeschiedenis, I, Leiden 1943.
- Potter, F & Broeckaert, J., Geschiedenis van den Belgischen Boerenstand, Acad. Royale des Sciences.. de Belgique, XXXI, 1881.
- Potter, F., Ronse, E & Borre, P., Geschiedenis det stad en kastelrij van Veurne, 2 vols, Ghent 1873.
- Potter, F., Schets eener Geschiedenis van de stad Rousselare, Rousselare 1875.
- Potter, F., Geschiedkundige schets van de stad Blankenberghe, Ghent, 1886.
- Presser, J., De Tachtigjarige Oorlog, Amsterdam 1975.
- Raa, F ten & Bas, F de, Het Staatse Leger, 6 vols Breda 1911-15.
- Rahl, C., Les Belges en Bohême : Comte de Bucquoy, Brussels 1850.
- Redlich, F., De Praeda Militari : Looting & Booty 1500-1815, Wiesbaden 1956.
- Redlich, F., 'Military entrepreneurship and the credit system in the 16th and 17th centuries', Kyklos, X, 1957.
- Redlich, F., 'Contributions in the 30 Years War', ECHR, (2), XII, 1959.
- Redlich, F., The German military enterpriser and his workforce, vol. I Harvard 1964.
- Roberts, M., The Military Revolution, Belfast 1954.
- Rodriguez Villa, A., Ambrosio Spinola, primer Marques de los Balbases, Madrid 1905.
- Rodriguez Villa, A., 'Don Francisco de Mendoza', Estudios de Erudición Espanola, II, 1899.
- Rogge, H., 'Het diplomatiek belied van Francois van Aerssen in 1606', Geschiedkundige Opstellingen aangeboden aan Robert Fruin, Hague 1894.
- Roloff, G., 'Moritz von Oranien und die Begründung des Modernes Heeres' Preuss. Jahrb. 111, 1903.
- Sabbe, E., De Belgische Vlasnijverheid, vol. I, Bruges 1943.
- Schubert, H., 'The first cast-iron cannon made in England', Journal, Iron & Steel Institute, 146, 1943.
- Schubert, H., 'The superiority of English cast-iron cannon at the close of the sixteenth century', Journal, Iron and Steel Institute, 161, 1949.
- Schubert, H., Ferfer, J & Schache, G., Vom Ursprung und Werden der Buderus'schen Eisenwerke Wetzlar, 2 vols, Munich 1938.
- Schukking, W., De oude Vestingwerken van Nederland, Amsterdam 1947.
- Siccama, J., Schets van de diplomatieke betrekkingen tusschen Nederland en Brandenburg 1596-1678, dissertation, Utrecht 1867.
- Silberner, E., La Guerre dans la Pensée économique du XVIIe au XVIIIe siècle, Paris 1939.
- Sillems, J., 'Tabellen van Marktprijzen van Granen te Utrecht, 1393-1644', Verhand. KAW, new series III, 4, 1901.
- Simenon, G., 'L'organisation économique de l'abbaye de St. Trond', Acad. Royale de Belgique, 2, X, 1912.
- Siret, A., Ambroise Spinola, Antwerp 1851.
- Slicher van Bath, B., Een samenleving onder Spanning : Geschiedenis van het platteland van Overijssel, Assen 1957.

- Slingelandt, S van, Staatkundige Geschriften, 4 vols, Amsterdam 1784.
- Sluiter, E, 'Dutch Spanish rivalry in the Caribbean Area, 1594-1609', Hispanic American Historical Review, XXVIII, 1948.
- Smit, J, 'The present position of Studies regarding the revolt of the Netherlands', Britain & the Netherlands, ed. Bromley & Kossman, London 1960.
- 'Solières, episode de l'histoire de l'abbaye', Ann. Soc. d'Archéologie de Namur, VIII, 1863/4.
- Solms-Laubach, R von, Geschichte des Grafen- und Fürstenhauses Solms, Frankfurt am Main 1865.
- Steensgard, N, The Asiatic Trade Revolution of the 17th century, London/Chicago 1974.
- Steichen, (ed), Mémoire sur la vie et les Travaux de Simon Stevin, Brussels 1846.
- Stolp, A, De eerste Couranten in Holland, dissertation, Amsterdam, 1938.
- Sturler, J de, 'Documents diplomatiques et administratifs relatifs aux différends commerciaux et maritimes survenus entre les Pays Bas et la France 1599-1607', Bull. CRH., CIV, 1939.
- Swalve, E, 'De Zeeusche Zeeheld Joos de Moor', Nederlandsch Magasin, New series 39, 1860.
- Sypstein, J van, Bidragte voor de geschiedenis van het Nederlandsche artillerie-korps, Breda 1849.
- Terlinden, C, 'Le siège d'Anvers par Alexandre Farnese, 1584-5', Revue Generale 101, 1915.
- Teubner, F, Der Feldzug Wilhelms von Oraniens gegen den Herzog von Alba, 1568, 1892.
- Tex, J den, Oldenbarnevelt, 5 vols, Haarlem 1960-72.
- Tex, J den, 'Maurits en Oldenbarnevelt vóór en na Nieuwpoort', BeM, 1970.
- Verlinden, C, 'Hoe lang duurde de economische crisis in Vlaanderen onder Filips II?', BVGN, IV, 1949.
- Vlietinck, E, Het Oude Oostende en zijne Driejarige Belegering, Ostend 1897.
- Vries, J de, The Dutch rural economy in the Golden Age 1500-1700, New Haven/London 1974.
- Wagret, P, Polderlands, London 1968.
- Wanty, E, 'Le siège d'Anvers 1584-5', Bulletin Belge de Sciences Militaires, 1930.
- Wee, H van der & Cauwenberghe, E van, 'Histoire agraire et finances publiques en Flandre du XIVe au XVIIe siècle', Annales, 28, 1973.
- Weeveringh, J, Handleiding tot de geschiedenis der Staatschulden, 2 vols, Haarlem 1852.
- Wernham, R, 'Elizabeth and the Portugal Expedition in 1589', EHR, 1951.
- Wernham, R, 'The mission of Thomas Wilkes to the United Provinces in 1590', Studies presented to Sir H. Jenkinson, ed. Conway Davies, London 1957.
- Wernham, R, 'English Policy and the Revolt of the Netherlands', Britain & the Netherlands, ed. Bromley & Kossman, I, 1960.
- Wernham, R, 'Elizabethan War aims and Strategy', Elizabethan Government and Society, ed. Bindoff, 1961.
- Werveke, H van, Gand. Esquisse d'histoire sociale, Ghent 1946.
- Wijn, J, Het Krijgswezen in den tijd van Prins Maurits, Utrecht 1934.
- Wijnbeek, D, Het Turfschip van Breda, Assen 1941.
- Williams, P, 'Philip III and the restoration of Spanish government', EHR, 1973.
- Wilson, C, Queen Elizabeth and the Revolt of the Netherlands, London 1970.
- Woude, A van der, 'De Staten, Leicester en Elizabeth in financiële verwickelingen', TvG, 74, 1961.

ABSTRACT.

The emergence of the Dutch republic as an internationally accepted and viable state in 1609, after four decades of savage struggle, is generally recognised as an event of very great significance. The power of an imperial, centralising monarchy based on an essentially seigniorial system had been successfully challenged by a republic in which ultimate power lay with a flourishing urban bourgeoisie. The form of the war for the survival and independence of the United Provinces was dictated primarily by the specific and often unique features of this state. There was a process of continuous interaction between the military struggle, the interests of the predominant class, and the social stability and political legitimacy of the republic.

The strategic concepts which underlay the planning of war in this period have not been generally understood. Military historians have confined their attention to Maurice's "half way" stage in the "military revolution" and have dismissed the Netherlands war as a period of strategic bankruptcy. Other studies have tended to push the war, especially on land, into a separate category without seeing its connections with the developments within the republic.

The strategy of the combatants in the Netherlands was not casual and directionless, but was rather based on a sound grasp of the mechanics of warfare, the limitations imposed by the nature of the theatre of war, and above all by the fragility and strictly defined resources of the 16th century state. Thus, the high cost of the relatively small, professional army which served the United Provinces, and the inevitable predominance of siege warfare in a highly urbanised area, when the advances in the technology of fortification had caught up with the offensive powers of artillery, meant that battles were often not merely fruitless, but also self-defeating.

In these conditions, the offensive form of warfare involved extending control over towns and territory, and establishing the seat of war on hostile soil, to preserve the republic's territory and simultaneously - and systematically - destroy both the will and the means to resist of the loyal provinces. The ability of the Army of Flanders to launch the sustained offensive necessary for the military reconquest of the United Provinces was thereby seriously undermined.

The successful resistance of the rebels to often vastly superior forces has often been attributed to naval strength and the great rivers of the Low Countries. Largely as a result of the overwhelming superiority of Dutch naval power in the Netherlands itself, Spanish efforts at reconquest were directed at the landward frontiers, however. Here, despite the many fortified towns and the river barriers, the republic remained until the end vulnerable to a direct invasion which would carry a powerful Spanish army through the weakly defended and potentially disloyal outlying provinces into the heart of Holland itself.

The Rhine, Maas, Waal, Lek and Yssel could not by themselves prevent such an invasion, even when backed up by fortified posts as in 1606.

The real significance of the rivers was threefold. They provided crucial trade routes which neither side could economically afford to cut, but which were of greatest benefit to the side controlling them. They provided the means by which the republic transferred naval strength to the land, and permitted the cautious Dutch to take the offensive, while simultaneously limiting the range of offensive action. Of greatest long-term importance, however, was the role they played in preserving the heart of the republic from the devastating effects of continuous raids and incursions.

Alongside the major campaigns, there was the unending frontier war of raiding, plundering and devastation, conducted mainly from the frontier fortresses of both sides. Unlike the majority of full-scale operations, this was war directed at the very basis of power and authority of the enemy state. An impoverished countryside could pay no taxes, nor would its population remain loyal to a government unable to protect it. With the stabilization of the military frontiers and the establishment of the authority of the States General in the United Provinces at the time of Parma's diversion to France, this vicious struggle became fixed geographically and at the same time was firmly brought under the control of the developing Dutch state. The balance was turned heavily in favour of the rebels by Maurice's captures of 1590-94, which secured a defensible frontier for the most important provinces, Holland, Zeeland and Friesland, and simultaneously enabled them to force wide areas of especially Brabant and Flanders to pay regular 'contributions'. In very few areas were the southerners able to retaliate. Significant proportions of the republic's war costs were thus met by levies on the enemy - at least 10% in most years. By the same process, the richest of the southern provinces were systematically impoverished. The direct loss to Brussels became the direct gain of the Hague. A wide zone was created around the United Provinces which was disputed territory, offering a one-way flow of resources to the north and building for the republic a glacis which was too close to exhaustion to allow it to support for long a hostile army.

Victory in this form of war was an uninterrupted preoccupation for the leaders of the United Provinces. The damage they could see they were inflicting on the loyal provinces was a precise mirror for what would happen in the republic if ever the Spanish re-established themselves beyond the river lines. The limited restoration of agriculture, trade and industry which the Dutch 'contributions' system permitted in parts of Flanders and North Brabant was a pale reflection of the sustained growth which was possible in the rebel provinces shielded from the direct consequences of the war.

Given the nature of this conflict, it was inevitable that each of the rebel provinces should feel concern first and foremost for its own frontiers and

the protection of its own population. Whereas the centralised authority of the Brussels government gave to the rulers there relative freedom in determining their objectives, the maintenance of local autonomy in the rebel provinces, a right staunchly defended against all attack both external and internal, ensured that any province with influence or weight could frustrate any policy decided in the interests of the state in favour of a particular interest. This situation could not but influence both the goals and conduct of the war. The development of the republic was a continuous process of internal conflict between different provincial and sectoral interests, such that it became almost impossible to devise any long-term plans or assemble the means for a dramatic seizure of the initiative against the enemy.

Thus, while it seems that Oldenbarnevelt and other Dutch civilian leaders had the ultimate goal of reuniting the seventeen provinces at least until 1600, and probably 1603, the gulf between what they wanted and what the republic could actually achieve, because of its structure and its limited resources, was unbridgeable. The military leaders, Maurice and William Louis, never demonstrated the slightest faith that they could "free" the Spanish-held provinces. The operations launched with the hope of provoking a generalised revolt against the Brussels government, especially in 1600 but also in 1602, were totally opportunist efforts, which the Nassau princes were happy to abandon as quickly as possible.

In fact, the United Provinces had no single war aim. The aims expressed varied from interest to interest, and the most commonly followed interests were those of the maritime provinces, Holland and Zeeland. The dominant class in these provinces, the merchant bourgeoisie, ensured that total priority was given to the protection and extension of commercial activity. When Holland and Zeeland clashed, the whole state machine ground to a halt. But when the commercial interests were united on some issue, then no other province's pressing need would receive adequate attention. The requirements of the great Baltic-west trade route involved the republic in operations stretching from Brittany to Emden. At times of strong Spanish pressure on the landward defences, Holland especially was to be found devoting most of its attention to equipping fleets for distant expeditions.

Bourgeois control within the dominant provinces also entailed full civilian control of the war effort, and therefore a drive for the greatest possible economy, even when short-term savings meant larger long-term sacrifices. Only in the last decade before the truce did the republic's rulers recognise the need to maintain an army in the field even on the defensive.

The effects of the lack of any central authority to conduct a war of resistance against the centralised military power of the most powerful monarchy of the time were in reality partly lessened by the close cooperation between the

two stadhouders, the leadership of Oldenbarnevelt and the predominance of Holland within the generality. However, this very predominance was a major cause of friction between the provinces, several of which were too weak to challenge the States of Holland's wishes, but strong enough to sabotage their implementation, as happened on a number of occasions. The immediate concerns of a local seat of authority over any question of defence, customs duties, jurisdiction or taxation were the subject of a fight for priority against similar concerns of other towns or provinces. The most astonishing feature of the revolt of the Netherlands is not so much that the Dutch won, but that they managed to fight at all.

It is an unchallenged view that the rebel state was preserved by the ten year diversion of Spanish resources into the war in France. This period, 1588-1598, witnessed a growth of the Netherlands struggle into an international war which enabled the United Provinces to extend substantially their borders, improve their defences and increase massively their wealth. But despite this recognition of the importance to the republic of the French war, the Dutch leaders consistently pursued their purely local interests until the frontiers of Holland, Zeeland and Friesland were secured, by 1594. Thereafter, there was a significant relaxation of effort and a complete failure to capitalise on the potential of the Triple Alliance for destroying a shaky Spanish power in the Netherlands, despite the recognition of this potential by Maurice and Henry IV and the willingness of the former to engage in risky joint operations, notably in 1594-5. The State General generously met every demand placed on them by their allies, except those which they really needed, but which cost much money and effort.

The consequence was predictable. Henry IV extricated himself as quickly as possible from a war in which France carried the main burden, and from which it gained nothing. Too late, in 1597, did the republic realise the danger of isolation once more facing it, an isolation for which its own policies in the preceding years had been largely responsible. This was a further result of the control exercised by the provinces ruled by commercial interests, which saw the the war on land as an expensive diversion. .

The United Provinces were far stronger in 1598 than they had been in 1588. However, there were still glaring weaknesses in their defences, notably in the eastern provinces, recently reconquered, strategically very weak, and with a population of doubtful loyalty to their new masters. It was possible for the first major Spanish offensive for ten years in 1598 to march to the Yssel, and be prevented from crossing into the heartlands only by freak weather conditions. The Dutch leaders were only too well aware that despite the successes of the previous decade, the hardest tests were still ahead of them. The defensive successes of 1599 and the fruitless victory of 1600 were both campaigns in which there was a fine dividing line between survival and catastrophe, while the increasing isolation of the republic took its toll.

The crucial turning point in the war - the period which shifted the balance of forces sufficiently to make Brussels and Madrid aware that their resources were inadequate for victory - was not the 'ten years' but the siege of Ostend, 1601-4. For more than three years, the military resources of the Spanish were poured into the attack on this outpost of the United Provinces which could be replenished by sea. During this period, the Dutch were to add substantially to the defences of their other frontiers, and eventually, in 1604, obtain recompense for the loss of Ostend as a weapon against Flanders by the capture of Sluis. Both Henry IV and Elizabeth had interests to protect and ambitions to nurture in Flanders and were continually involved in providing material aid to the republic to enable it to defend Ostend, although, unlike the State General, the Nassau princes had recognised from the outset that the town was doomed and that the republic should capitalise elsewhere on the diversion it provided. The disproportion in the consumption of resources by the two sides was further increased by the fact that the Spanish decision meant that although they were on offensive, the war remained firmly and exhaustingly fixed in their own territory. Although the war costs of the United Provinces rose to two or three times the level of a decade earlier, the war was kept off Dutch territory, something which their isolation gave them no right to expect.

The significance of this became clear in the last two campaigns before the armistice of 1607. In these campaigns Spinola demonstrated how the United Provinces could have been defeated militarily, had sufficient resources remained to him to pursue the initial successes. The eastern frontier was ripped open. By using two armies, the marquis overcame the strategic stalemates of previous similar operations and paralysed the Dutch, reducing them to an impotent defensive. Misfortune and minor blunders alone prevented the breaching of the inner defences of the republic in 1606. Contemporary opinion held very strongly that had the financial resources of Spain not run dry in 1607, the United Provinces would have been reduced to a desperate position.

By 1607, the republic was also at the limit of its financial resources. Credit was shaky and morale low. For the first time in nine years, hostile forces were ravaging Dutch territory. Especially in the outlying provinces, popular discontent was growing and the fear of defections to the invader was not groundless. Large parts of the population regarded Holland as a hostile power. The populace of Holland, Zeeland and Friesland themselves showed no keenness to repeat the heroic sacrifices of the '70's. It is extremely doubtful that the defensive methods of 1572-6 would have been either applicable or effective in 1607. England and France were at peace and very unlikely to become reinvolved. The greater than ever wealth of the bourgeoisie of the maritime provinces could not be directly mobilized by the state for its own defence.

Thus the victory of the republic was far from inevitable. The new-born

Dutch state operated in the interest of the merchant class. The specific consequences of this development, especially provincial particularism and civilian control of the war effort, seriously weakened the struggle of this state for independence.