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COMMUNICATION

AN UNKNOWN POLICY PROPOSAL BY THOMAS HOBBES

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ABSTRACT. *An undated document survives, in Thomas Hobbes's hand, urging the royalist side in the Civil War to win over Robert Rich, the second earl of Warwick (the parliamentarian naval commander). By this means, Hobbes argued, not only would the royalists win the war, but also England would be defended against a Swedish invasion, which he expected to accompany or follow the Scottish invasion of the country. This communication presents the text of the document and gives reasons for dating it not to 1648 (when an attempt to win over Warwick was in fact made) but to late 1643 or early 1644. It also discusses the basis of Hobbes's concern with Scottish–Swedish relations, and his misinterpretation of Swedish policy. It comments on his estimate of Warwick's character, in the light of his earlier connections with him; and it briefly discusses both Hobbes's assumption in this document of the role of a counsellor to the king, and the interpretation of the nature of the Civil War that the document implies.*

Richard Browne went to Paris in 1641 as the diplomatic agent of Charles I, and remained in France throughout the interregnum.[1] Much of his correspondence from that period survives among the papers of John Evelyn (who married Browne's daughter Mary in June 1647); it shows Browne to have been a very active figure, zealous in the royalist cause, the recipient of news and information from many quarters, and the target of petitions, requests, and demands of many kinds.[2] One short document preserved among Browne's papers is in the unmistakable handwriting of Thomas Hobbes, who was himself a resident in Paris from November 1640 to December 1651; it is endorsed (by Browne) 'Proposition. E. of Warwick &ct. T. H.' This document, a policy proposal in which Hobbes urges the royalist side to win over the earl of Warwick (the

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[1] See G. M. Bell, *A handlist of British diplomatic representatives, 1509–1688* (London, 1990), p. 112; J. Peacey, 'Browne, Sir Richard, baronet, 1605–1683', in H. C. G. Matthew and B. Harrison, eds., *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (60 vols., Oxford, 2004), VIII, pp. 190–1.

[2] Browne's papers are now in the British Library (BL), MSS Add. 78189–78263. Some items of his personal correspondence were published in J. Evelyn, *Diary and correspondence*, ed. W. Bray (4 vols., London, 1859), IV, pp. 233–353.

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parliamentary naval commander), has not been published or discussed before. The full text of it is as follows.

It is not likely the Scots will depend on y^e^ will of the Parlam^t^ for the benefit they ayme at in this inuasion; and consequently there is no doubt but that they expect support from abroade; w^ch^ can be no other but the swedes; a people that want habitation, and besides the inuitation from the Scots, are in a manner beaten and driuen towards England by the Germanes.

And whether [whether *del.*] the Scots come in w^th^ them or without them, I cannot see any probable meanes to auoyd the ruine of the English nation vnlesse my L. of W. come to the ks party w^th^ the Nauy. If he were won to that, England were able both to recouer its peace w^th^in and [be able *del.*] to keepe out forraigners, or driue them out in a short time. It may be he has bene already sollicited. but I feare eyther he has not, or the offers haue not bene great enough.

First, because his estate has bene wasted, He must haue offers of that nature.

Secondly because he affecteth the prayse of being an able man to command and order people, he must haue offers of such employment as may entertayne that humor, and keepe vp his estimation that way.

Thirdly, because vpon all such as go ouer from one side to another there lyes a note of leuity, w^ch^ will be called by them he desertes trechery, he must be put in minde [of? *del.*] that the question now is not betweene the k. & y^e^ Parlament who shall gouerne England, but betweene the English nation on one side, and the Scotch and swedes on the other who shall possesse it. And that though whilest the businesse was but for reformation, he could not come of, w^th^out condemning his former acts, yet now when the English nation is in danger to [bee *del.*] fall vnder the power of the Scots, who haue alwayes enuyed vs, and the swedes that to make themselues roome would destroy vs, he may iustify his comming away, w^th^out condemning his former courses.

Fourthly it must be layd before him how much he obliges all [England *del.* > English], in sauing [it *del.* >them] from being extirpate, and in particular what honor he shall haue [for *del.*] in restoring the King; and that another Ea. of W. is renowned yet for [that *del.*] such kind of greatnesse.

Fiftly, he must haue meanes to allure and reward his officers soldiers and mariners, and of all this (in case he will vndertake it) effectuall and hearty assurance.

Sixtly if he desire pardons or other graces for his frends and kindred, it should not be denyed, (as the case stands).

I know not who is fitter to treate w^th^ him in this matter then the old Countesse of Deuonshire, both in respect of their frendship and affinity, and also because they liue not farre asunder about Douer.

My lady Deuonshire I thinke would not be auerse from any honorable employment that might bring honor and aduancem^t^ to her Brother and his sonne, [>the L. Bruce]. But by whom my lady Deuonshire should be treated w^th^all I cannot tell. It had need be carried very secretly. Howsoeuer if it should be knowne it would

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make the Parlam[t] party suspect one another, and be no dishonor to the king nor other hurt then foyling of the designe.[3]

This document does not bear any date. At first sight, it might seem to derive from the period in the late summer of 1648 when a serious attempt was indeed made by the royalists to win over Robert Rich, the second earl of Warwick, who was then lord high admiral of the parliamentary navy. At the end of August 1648, during the confrontation in the Thames Estuary between Warwick's fleet and the small royalist fleet commanded by Prince Charles, the prince tried to persuade the parliamentary admiral to return to his allegiance. In the words of a later account by one of his entourage, 'Tuesday night y[e] Prince sent a letter to Warwick by M[r]. Seymor to invite him in & joyne to settle y[e] Peace of y[e] Kingdome, to which hee makes y[e] Answer of a Traitor.'[4] Although that invitation was rebuffed, rumours that Warwick might be willing to go over to the royalist side persisted, being strengthened in November 1648 by a mischievous pamphlet issued in his name in which he appeared to threaten to do so if the treaty between king and parliament were not speedily concluded, with 'the restoring of the king to his just rights'.[5] The plausibility of such rumours sprang, it seems, from two considerations. One was the fact that Warwick's brother, the earl of Holland, had become one of the leaders of the royalist revolt in the

[3] BL, MS Add. 78205, fo. 108. Deletions in the MS are given here in square brackets with the annotation '*del.*' (but only deleted material amounting to entire words is recorded); interlinear insertions are given in square brackets with the symbol '>'; uncertain readings are followed by an italicized question mark. The nature of the deletions strongly indicates that Hobbes was composing this document as he wrote it. The document is a small folio that has been folded to make a bifolium (fos. 108–9); Hobbes's text is on fo. 108r–v, and the endorsement is on fo. 109v. I am very grateful to Hilton Kelliher and Timothy Raylor, who first notified me of the existence of this document, and to David Scott, who also brought it to my attention, and commented very helpfully on a draft of this article. I am also grateful to the two anonymous readers of this article for the *Historical Journal* for helpful comments and suggestions.

[4] Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Clarendon 31, fo. 243r (referring to Henry Seymour, one of the prince's courtiers). See also *Prince Charles his summons sent to the lord admiral to take down his standard and come under his highnesse obedience. And the earl of Warwicks answer* (London, 1648), pp. 1–3; E. Hyde, earl of Clarendon, *The history of the rebellion and Civil Wars in England*, ed. W. D. Macray (6 vols., Oxford, 1888), IV, p. 364 (XI.69); B. Capp, *Cromwell's navy: the fleet and the English revolution, 1648–1660* (Oxford, 1989), p. 36; C. T. Maples, 'Parliament's admiral: the parliamentary and naval career of Robert Rich, second earl of Warwick, during the reign of Charles I' (Ph.D. thesis, Alabama, 1975), pp. 224–5.

[5] *The declaration and resolution of Robert earle of Warwick, lord admirall for the king* (London, 1648), pp. 4 (quotation), 6; Maples, 'Parliament's admiral', p. 237. For Warwick's disavowal of this, see *The remonstrance and declaration of his excellencie Robert E. of Warwick lord high admirall of England; concerning the king, parliament, army and kingdome* (London, 1648). For evidence of the strength of such rumours, see for example the letter of 7/17 Nov. 1648 from a royalist officer in Kilkenny reporting 'that the Lord of *Warwicke* with his Fleet hath submitted to the Prince' (*House of Lords journal*, X, p. 629). As late as 29 Jan./8 Feb. 1649 the marquis of Ormonde (also in Kilkenny) was hopeful that Warwick would respond to an 'overture' (Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Report on the Pepys manuscripts, preserved at Magdalene College, Cambridge* (London, 1911), p. 249). See also R. Ashton, *Counter-revolution: the second Civil War and its origins* (New Haven, CT, 1994), p. 414 n. 179.

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spring and early summer of 1648.[6] The other was the fact that Warwick himself did favour the restoration of the king, albeit with his powers severely reduced on parliament's terms; at the beginning of 1647, he had been one of a group of presbyterian peers who had expressed a willingness to support Charles I's position if he accepted the 'Newcastle propositions' put to him by parliament in the previous year.[7] One royalist pamphlet of November 1648 quoted a letter from Warwick in which he declared that he was willing to support the restoration of Charles I, but only when the king 'shall be pleased to satisfie and confirme the Desires of his two Houses of Parliament'.[8] That, it seems, was the fullest extent of the pro-restoration feelings of someone who had, during the Civil Wars, been one of the most energetic commanders on the parliamentarian side.

While this aspect of Warwick's position in 1648 may seem to fit the contents of Hobbes's policy proposal, there are some details in Hobbes's text that make it impossible to date it to that year. The statement that the Swedes 'are in a manner beaten and driuen towards England by the Germanes' cannot apply to the very last year of the Thirty Years' War. At that time the Swedes had not been forced to make any retreats by imperial forces; they controlled large parts of Germany (and Bohemia), and indeed it would be several years after the treaty of Westphalia before all their garrisons there were withdrawn.[9] Even more strikingly, Hobbes's reference at the beginning of his text to the threat posed by a Scottish invasion cannot possibly fit the events of 1648; a Scottish army did cross into England in July of that year, but it consisted of 'Engagers' who were fighting for the royalist cause.

Instead, the document must relate to the previous occasion on which a Scottish army had crossed the border into England, on 19/29 January 1644. That army had come at the invitation of the English parliament, which had sworn the Solemn League and Covenant in order to obtain this vital military assistance from the Scots. (Hobbes's opening phrase, 'It is not likely the Scots will depend on y^{e} will of the Parlam^{t} for the benefit they ayme at in this

[6] Clarendon, describing the attempt to win over Warwick in 1648, writes that 'it was well known that the earl was privy to the engagement of his brother the earl of Holland, and had promised to join with him' (*History*, IV, p. 364 (XI.69)). Evidence to substantiate this is entirely lacking.

[7] J. G. Fotheringham, ed. and trans., *The diplomatic correspondence of Jean de Montereul and the brothers de Bellievre, French ambassadors in England and Scotland, 1645–1648* (2 vols., Publications of the Scottish History Society, XXIX–XXX (Edinburgh, 1898–9), I, p. 427.

[8] *A declaration of his excellency, Robert E. of Warwick, lord high admiral of England, concerning the uniting of the two navies and restoring of the kings majesty* (London, 1648), p. 2; cf. Maples, 'Parliament's admiral', pp. 238–9, noting that the authenticity of this letter is not certain.

[9] G. Parker, ed., *The Thirty Years' War* (2nd edn, London, 1997), pp. 168–9. The treaty transferred to Swedish rule two significant northern German territories, Vorpommern (western Pomerania), and the duchies of Bremen and Verden, as well as several towns and islands (J. Öhman, *Der Kampf um den Frieden: Schweden und der Kaiser im Dreissigjährigen Krieg* (Vienna, 2005), p. 208).

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inuasion', shows that the Scottish action was understood to be aligned in some way, at least initially or ostensibly, with the 'will' of the parliament at Westminster.) The natural reading of Hobbes's reference to 'this inuasion' would seem to be that Hobbes was writing not long after the news of the Scottish invasion had reached Paris (perhaps some time in February 1644); and this dating also fits the reference to the earl of Warwick's command of the navy, since it falls within the earlier period, from December 1643 to April 1645, when Warwick was lord high admiral.[10]

Hobbes's references to the Swedes are also more easily explicable on the basis of this dating. During 1642–3 a Swedish army under a skilful general, Lennart Torstensson, had conquered Silesia and Bohemia, defeated imperial forces in Saxony, and pressured Brandenburg into conceding a truce on Swedish terms. However, at the end of September 1643, Torstensson reduced many of his garrisons and began to withdraw his main forces from the Silesian region, marching them first northwards and then westwards, until, in the second week of December, they were at the Danish border. In fact, Torstensson was acting on confidential orders from the Swedish chancellor, Axel Oxenstierna, to attack Denmark; preserving secrecy about his intended movements was an essential part of the plan (Torstensson's own officers were not even informed of their destination until a very late stage of the march), and the invasion of Denmark which followed on 12 December did take the Danish authorities completely by surprise.[11] This movement away from the south-eastern German lands might have looked, even in retrospect, like a retreat forced on the Swedes by military circumstances in central Europe; so it is understandable that Hobbes described the Swedes as 'in a manner beaten and driuen towards England by the Germanes'.[12] If he wrote his policy proposal in February or March 1644, he would have been well aware of the attack on Denmark, a geopolitical coup which had been the subject of much comment. But it is possible that he nevertheless misunderstood its significance. On the basis of his assumption that the Swedes had been forced to abandon their earlier conquests by the 'Germanes', he may have supposed that the land-grab in Denmark was an

[10] He succeeded to the formal title in Dec. 1643, but had in effect been commander-in-chief of the navy since July 1642. The fact that Hobbes's proposal was given to Browne also supports this dating; in 1644, Browne would have been the natural conduit for transmitting suggestions to the royalist policy-makers in England (a situation that no longer applied in 1648).

[11] L. Tingsten, *Fältmarskalkarna Johan Baner och Lennart Torstensson såsom härförare* (Stockholm, 1932), pp. 235–44; K.-R. Böhme, 'Lennart Torstensson und Helmut Wrangel in Schleswig-Holstein und Jütland 1643–1645', *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für schleswig-holsteinische Geschichte*, 90 (1965), pp. 41–82, esp. pp. 41–7; P. Englund, *Ofredsår: om den svenska stormaktstiden och en man i dess mitt* (Stockholm, 1993), pp. 304–7.

[12] It is possible that Hobbes had also been misled by exaggerated reports, in the late summer of 1643, of an imperial victory over the Swedes in Moravia: the royalist English agent in Hamburg, James Averie, relayed this news to Richard Browne in a letter dated 15/25 Aug., adding that 'Feldmarshall Tortenson is sayd to be retreated wth his armie into Bohemia' (BL, MS Add. 78189, fo. 1v).

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attempt to compensate for that loss – not realizing that it was a pre-emptive strike planned by Oxenstierna against the growing power of the Danish state, which threatened to interpose itself as an arbiter in the impending European peace settlement.[13]

However, an alternative hypothesis might be that Hobbes wrote his policy proposal before the Scottish invasion of England, at a time when Torstensson's army was on the march, but when its destination was still obscure; Hobbes's presumption might then have been that the Swedish army was heading for England.[14] Such a dating of Hobbes's text – to late November or December 1643, after the army had turned westwards – would seem to fit the opening sentence of its second paragraph, with its apparent reference to the future: 'whether the Scots come in wth them or without them'. That Hobbes referred so definitely in his first paragraph to 'this inuasion' could be explained by the fact that in the final months of 1643 it was widely known that the Scots were preparing to invade England: the first steps towards raising an army had been taken by the Scottish Estates in July and August, the Solemn League and Covenant was sworn by the House of Commons on 25 September, and a formal military alliance between the Scots and the English parliament was completed on 29 November.[15] A possible difficulty with this hypothesis is that it requires Hobbes to have had rather accurate knowledge of the movement of Torstensson's army. The wording of Hobbes's proposal would, on this interpretation, imply that the details of this military development were already well known to Richard Browne and therefore did not need to be explained; yet Browne's despatches to the secretaries of state in England, which relayed much of the international political and military news that was available in Paris, contained no mention of Torstensson's manoeuvres until 5/15 January 1644, when Browne commented on 'the irruption of y^{e} Sweds into the King of Denmarks Territories'.[16] However, the surviving despatches from November and December 1643 may not be the only ones he wrote; so this point is not compelling. While the date of Hobbes's policy proposal cannot be conclusively determined, what can be said with confidence is that it was probably written at some time between November 1643 and March 1644.

[13] Richard Browne, on the other hand, was quick to grasp the underlying strategy, referring perceptively in his despatch of 19/29 Jan. 1644 to 'The retreate of the Sueds out of the Empire to invade Denmark, there to beginne a new Warre and frustrate that Kings Mediation in the [Generall Treaty *del.*] intended assembly at Munster' (BL, MS Add. 12184, fo. 253r).

[14] I am very grateful to one of the anonymous readers of this article for the *Historical Journal* for this suggestion.

[15] See C. S. Terry, ed., *Papers relating to the army of the Solemn League and Covenant, 1643–1647* (2 vols., Publications of the Scottish History Society, ser. 2, XVI–XVII, Edinburgh, 1917), I, pp. xx–xxiii; S. R. Gardiner, *History of the Great Civil War, 1642–1649* (3 vols., London, 1886–91), I, pp. 275–6.

[16] BL, MS Add. 12184, fo. 250r. This follows a sequence of despatches dated (in New Style) 13 Nov., 11 Dec., 25 Dec., 1 Jan. and 8 Jan. (fos. 237–49).

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As for Hobbes's larger argument, or surmise, about a co-ordination of strategies between the Scots and the Swedes: here too the historical context supplies some relevant details. While the motive attributed by Hobbes to the Swedes, a desire for *Lebensraum* in England, does seem highly improbable (and is perhaps most easily explained on the assumption that he misinterpreted their Danish campaign as a desperate quest for territory), the idea that there might be some Scottish–Swedish collaboration behind the scenes did rest on factual foundations. Many Scottish officers had served in the Swedish army; Alexander Leslie, the commander of the Scottish force that entered England in January 1644, had been a Swedish field-marshal, and had used his influence with Oxenstierna to gain arms supplies for the Scottish covenanters in 1638–9.[17] An envoy from the covenanters to Sweden in 1640, Colonel John Cochrane, had asked for armaments and had also been favourably received.[18] The military connections between Scotland and Sweden were the object of real suspicion on the part of some of King Charles's ministers during that period: in a debate in the House of Lords in April 1640, the chancellor of the exchequer, Lord Cottington, exclaimed (with almost Hobbesian paranoia about the Scottish–Swedish nexus): 'The Scotts are able to draw in the Goth and Vandalls and other great Armies; and when the Swedes are quiett for ought I know they may offer them the Crowne of England.'[19] And these connections did reinforce the inclination of Swedish policy-makers to pursue, after the outbreak of the English Civil War, a policy that was favourable to the rebels – especially the Scottish ones. At a major debate on Scotland in the Swedish Riksråd (council of the realm) on 14/24 June 1643, Oxenstierna argued that it would be harmful to Sweden's interests for Charles I to emerge victorious from his civil war, since he was both 'Catholic' and pro-Danish.[20] (Charles was the son of Anne of Denmark and thus the nephew of the Danish king, Christian IV; during 1642–3 Christian did send some weapons and supplies to the royalists in England, though the

[17] *Svenska Riksrådets protokoll*, Handlingar rörande Sveriges historia, 3rd ser. (18 vols., Stockholm, 1878–1929), VII, pp. 252, 274, 276, 278; S. Murdoch, *Britain, Denmark-Norway and the house of Stuart, 1603–1660: a diplomatic and military analysis* (East Linton, 2000), pp. 91, 102; A. Grosjean, 'General Alexander Leslie, the Scottish covenanters and the Riksråd debates, 1638–1640', in A. I. Macinnes, T. Riis, and F. G. Pedersen, eds., *Ships, guns and bibles in the North Sea and the Baltic states* (East Linton, 2000), pp. 115–38; A. Grosjean and S. Murdoch, 'The Riksråd debates, 1638–1640', documents 117 and 118, in C. Erskine, A. R. Macdonald, and M. Penman, eds., *Scotland: the making and unmaking of the nation, c. 1100–1707*, V: *Major documents* (Dundee, 2007), pp. 214–23, esp. pp. 214–16.

[18] *Svenska Riksrådets protokoll*, VIII, pp. 97–100, 158–60; A. Grosjean, *An unofficial alliance: Scotland and Sweden, 1569–1654* (Leiden, 2003), pp. 175–80; A. Macinnes, *The British confederate: Archibald Campbell, marquis of Argyll, c. 1607–1661* (Edinburgh, 2011), pp. 119–20.

[19] E. S. Cope and W. H. Coates, eds., *Proceedings of the Short Parliament of 1640* (Camden Fourth Series, 19, London, 1977), p. 77.

[20] *Svenska Riksrådets protokoll*, X, p. 192: 'det fuller skulle skada oss, där Kongen i Engelandh spelte mestare, efter han 1. är catholisk, 2. godh dansk'.

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overall quantity was small, and some were captured by parliamentarian forces.)[21]

Oxenstierna's main interest, however, was in getting Scottish – and, possibly, English – help for offensive actions against Denmark; for that reason it was decided at the meeting of the council of the realm in June 1643 to send an envoy to Edinburgh, to find out 'whether the Scots would be able to help us'.[22] For several years, Alexander Leslie, who corresponded with Oxenstierna, had been promoting the idea of a confederation between Scotland, England, and Sweden; the Swedish chancellor had been luke-warm about this idea, but in November 1643 the Swedish council of the realm did begin to discuss making a formal alliance with the Scottish and English parliaments.[23] Even before the official Swedish envoy reached Britain, a quasi-official 'agent' from Sweden, the Dutch merchant and Swedish mine-owner Louis de Geer, arrived in London at the beginning of March, seeking ships to support the Swedish navy and requesting that English and Scottish representatives be sent to Sweden.[24] On 4 April, the recently established 'Committee of both kingdoms' considered a 'letter from the Committee of both kingdoms residing in the Scotts' army concerning what correspondence was fit to be held with the Crown of Sweden' and recommended to the House of Commons that 'there be some persons in the nature of Agents from both kingdoms sent with all speed to the Swedes with instructions to maintain a good correspondence with the Crown, and such as may be an occasion of nearer alliance with the same'.[25] The events of March and April 1644 probably post-dated the writing of Hobbes's policy proposal; nevertheless, against this general background it is clear that his assumption about Scottish–Swedish collaboration did have some justification.[26] And what this suggests is that Hobbes had been taking quite a keen interest in British and European current affairs from his Parisian vantage-point.

Where Hobbes's skill as a political analyst seems to have failed completely is in his confident assumption that the earl of Warwick could be persuaded to come

[21] Murdoch, *Britain, Denmark–Norway*, pp. 121–4. Danish support for the royalists was regarded as a real threat by English parliamentarians; the first English news pamphlet about the Swedish attack on Denmark, printed on 30 Dec. 1643, was entitled *A relation of the entrance of the Swedish armie into the territories of the king of Denmark … wherein we may take notice of Gods providence in frustrating the king of Denmarks designe to assist our king against the parliament.*

[22] *Svenska Riksrådets protokoll*, x, pp. 192–3 (p. 193: 'om Skottarne skole kunna hielpa oss'). The envoy, Hugh Mowatt, received his instructions in Mar. 1644 (p. 465).

[23] Grosjean, *Unofficial alliance*, p. 200; Murdoch, *Britain, Denmark–Norway*, p. 126.

[24] J. R. Young, 'The Scottish parliament and European diplomacy, 1641–1647: the Palatine, the Dutch Republic and Sweden', in S. Murdoch, ed., *Scotland and the Thirty Years' War, 1618–1648* (Leiden, 2001), pp. 77–106, at p. 93.

[25] W. Douglas Hamilton, ed., *Calendar of state papers, domestic, 1644* (London, 1888), p. 95.

[26] Hobbes was not the only observer to assume close links between Scottish and Swedish policy: later in 1644, the London merchant Thomas Juxon apparently believed that the Swedish attack on Denmark had been instigated by the Scots in order to weaken the royalist cause (K. Lindley and D. Scott, eds., *The journal of Thomas Juxon, 1644–1647* (Camden Fifth Series, 13, London, 1999), p. 62).

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over to the royalist side. The earl's entire record, personal and political, suggested otherwise. He had been an opponent of the Laudian regime in the church, a leader of the 'godly' and a patron of many anti-Laudian and pro-presbyterian preachers.[27] He had resisted the Forced Loan in 1626, supported the Petition of Right in 1628, opposed the imposition of forest fines and ship money in the mid-1630s, and been an outspoken critic of royal policy in the latter part of that decade.[28] Warwick's military role had been vital even before the outbreak of the Civil War: his decision in July 1642 to enforce parliamentary authority over the fleet had shifted the entire future balance of the war against the royalists.[29] Thereafter, he had played an important part in raising troops in Essex and marshalling forces for the defence of London in the autumn of 1642; and, with the sole exception of his failure to relieve the city of Exeter in the late summer of 1643, his record as a commander of the parliamentary navy was one of energetic application rewarded by consistent success.[30] Nothing in Warwick's conduct could encourage the view that he was liable to abandon the parliamentarian cause. So why did Hobbes see that as a real possibility?

One important factor in Hobbes's assessment of the earl of Warwick's character must have been his own personal experience of him, more than twenty years previously. For when Thomas Hobbes became a member of the Virginia Company in 1622 at the behest of his employer and friend, Lord Cavendish (the future second earl of Devonshire), the earl of Warwick was one of the most prominent active members of that company. On six occasions between February and April 1623 both Warwick and Hobbes were present at meetings of the Virginia Company.[31] Both were also members of the Somers Islands Company (which was responsible for the Bermudas); the records of that company have not survived, but the Virginia Company records do mention one of its meetings, in February 1623, attended by Hobbes and Warwick.[32] While Hobbes joined the Virginia Company only in the summer of 1622 (and the starting-date for his membership of the Somers Islands Company is not known), it is clear that he must have taken a close interest in the affairs of both companies for several years before that; Lord Cavendish was actively involved, and Hobbes, as his secretary, would have been privy to much of the companies'

[27] B. Donagan, 'The clerical patronage of Robert Rich, second earl of Warwick, 1619–1642', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 120 (1976), pp. 388–419; W. Hunt, *The puritan moment: the coming of revolution in an English county* (Cambridge, MA, 1983), pp. 164–5, 193–4, 254, 259–60.

[28] Maples, 'Parliament's admiral', pp. 21–30; Hunt, *Puritan moment*, pp. 267–71; J. Adamson, *The noble revolt: the overthrow of Charles I* (London, 2007), pp. 30–5.

[29] Maples, 'Parliament's admiral', pp. 61–8.

[30] Ibid., pp. 98–121; C. Thompson, *The earl of Warwick's 'running army', the county of Essex and the Eastern Association, 1642–1643* (Wivenhoe, 1999).

[31] S. M. Kingsbury, ed., *Records of the Virginia Company of London* (4 vols., Washington, DC, 1906–35), II, pp. 244–5, 263, 293, 340–1, 364. On Hobbes's involvement see N. Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 53–79.

[32] Kingsbury, ed., *Records*, II, p. 46.

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business. The character and motives of the earl of Warwick would have been an object of particular interest, since it was Warwick who played a key role in splitting the Virginia Company into opposing factions – and who, by encouraging royal intervention in support of his own group, brought about the eventual dissolution of the company in 1624. Lord Cavendish was one of the leaders of the group opposed to Warwick; in May 1623, after Warwick had complained to the privy council that a document drawn up by Cavendish and others contained 'bitter and unnecessarie invectives and aspercions upon the person of the Earle of Warwicke', Cavendish was placed under house arrest.[33] Two months later, after Warwick had accused him of lying at a meeting of the court of the Somers Islands Company, Cavendish challenged him to a duel; both men were apprehended, however, before they could meet in the Netherlands to fight it out.[34]

Warwick's disagreement with what had been the ruling group in the Virginia Company arose at least partly from the fact that they had publicly rejected his attempt to use Virginia as a base for privateering against Spanish ships and settlements in the West Indies.[35] Between 1616 and 1640, Warwick devoted much of his time and energy to privateering; he had a large private fleet, and sometimes commanded expeditions himself. The target in almost every case was Spanish; Warwick was also a strong proponent of anti-Habsburg geopolitics (in relation to, for example, the defence of the Palatinate), and his enthusiastic involvement in a broad range of trading and colonizing bodies – including the Massachusetts Bay Company, the Amazon Company, and, most notoriously, the Providence Island Company, set up primarily to establish a base for anti-Spanish privateering operations – was an expression of his hope that an English imperial power could be developed to counteract the global power of the Habsburgs.[36] To any casual modern observer, it may seem that much of this grand vision should be discounted as a mere rationalization of a desire to get rich by plunder. The genuineness of Warwick's religious commitment was questioned by some contemporaries (notably Clarendon), and the precise nature of his beliefs has continued to puzzle modern historians.[37] That his religious views were somehow bound up with his sense of a national mission seems clear.[38] The precise mix of religious feeling, national ambition, and sheer self-interest is, however, hard to determine.

[33] J. V. Lyle, ed., *Acts of the privy council of England, 3 July 1621 to 30 May 1623* (London, 1932), p. 491.

[34] W. F. Craven, *The dissolution of the Virginia Company* (Oxford, 1932), pp. 308–10.

[35] W. F. Craven, 'The earl of Warwick, a speculator in piracy', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 10 (1930), pp. 457–79, at pp. 463–5.

[36] J. L. Beatty, *Warwick and Holland, being the lives of Robert and Henry Rich* (Denver, CO, 1965), pp. 81–97.

[37] Hyde, *History*, I, pp. 242 (III.27), 309 (III.146), II, p. 544 (VI.404); Beatty, *Warwick and Holland*, pp. 220–30.

[38] Hunt comments: 'Warwick equated Protestantism with national prosperity' (*Puritan moment*, p. 169).

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On these questions of underlying motivation, Hobbes's policy proposal of 1644 does not take a definite view. Hobbes's statement that 'whilest the businesse was but for reformation, he could not come of, wthout condemning his former acts, yet now when the English nation is in danger ... he may iustify his comming away' forms part of a passage explaining how Warwick could present his actions to others, in order to avoid the damaging charge of 'levity'; it does not necessarily mean that a devotion to the national interest would trump other motives in his mind, and indeed the whole document is concerned with providing him with other motives. A concern for the restoration of his personal wealth does feature on the list, and is in fact the first thing to be mentioned, but the treatment of it is rather perfunctory, as if it played no special role beyond what would be normal for anyone in Warwick's situation. Overall, Hobbes seems to regard Warwick as a man motivated by a desire for 'greatnesse', a strong sense of personal dignity and honour, and a desire to maintain his status as a leader of men and a protector of 'frends and kindred'. Some of this may reflect some Hobbesian assumptions (discussed briefly below) about the psychology of a certain kind of military leader and politician; but it may well be that this was an assessment of character based on personal knowledge and observation.

Personal knowledge was certainly the basis of Hobbes's comments on the other key figure in his proposal, the dowager countess of Devonshire. Christian Bruce, the daughter of one of the leading Scottish counsellors to James I (Edward, Lord Bruce of Kinloss), had married the future second earl of Devonshire in 1608, just a few months before Hobbes began work as the latter's tutor. Widowed in 1628, she had dispensed with Hobbes's services for two years but had then re-employed him throughout the 1630s.[39] He was thus well placed to know about both her passionate royalism and her devotion to the family of her brother Thomas, the earl of Elgin (whose son, Robert, would later become the earl of Ailesbury).[40] Hobbes also knew that she had long-standing friendly relations with the earl of Warwick and his family. She had been a close friend of Warwick's first wife: in July/August 1623, when the newsletter-writer John Chamberlain reported that her husband and Warwick were about to fight a duel, he added that 'in the meane time their Ladies forget not their old familiaritie but meet daylie to lament this misfortune'.[41] In 1632, her only daughter, Anne, married Robert Rich, the earl of Warwick's eldest son (hence the 'affinity' referred to by Hobbes); Anne died in 1638, leaving a son, also named Robert, to

[39] See T. Hobbes, *Correspondence*, ed. N. Malcolm (2 vols., Oxford, 1994), II, pp. 806–9.

[40] Robert, born in 1623, was touring continental Europe between 1642 and 1646. While his father was a moderate parliamentarian, Robert later became 'an active royalist conspirator', and, in 1659, he was the intermediary for a donation to Charles II from an unnamed woman who was probably his aunt Christian (T. F. Henderson, 'Bruce, Robert, second earl of Elgin and first earl of Ailesbury', revised by V. Stater, in Matthew and Harrison, eds., *Oxford dictionary of national biography*, VIII, p. 324).

[41] N. E. McClure, ed., *The letters of John Chamberlain* (2 vols., Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society, XII, parts I, II, Philadelphia, PA, 1939), II, p. 509.

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whom the countess of Devonshire was devoted.[42] Christian Cavendish seems also to have had close relations with Warwick's brother, the earl of Holland. A eulogistic biography of her, published ten years after her death, asserts that during the first Civil War she employed many 'earnest solicitations' to persuade him to come over to the royalist side; it also says that while staying at her brother's house at Ampthill in Bedfordshire, she 'had continual Correspondencies with such Persons, both in *England*, and *Scotland*, as she found would assist to the resettlement of the King', including the duke of Hamilton and the earls of Holland and Norwich.[43] There is other evidence to suggest that in the latter part of the interregnum she also held discussions with Colonel John Russell, one of the leaders of the secret royalist organization 'the Sealed Knot'.[44] Hobbes presumably did not have any direct contact with her; but the detail he gives of her residing near Dover at this time (a fact which does not emerge from any other records of her life) suggests that he had a well-placed source of information – possibly her son, the third earl of Devonshire, with whom Hobbes did maintain some contact in the 1640s, or perhaps her chaplain, Robert Gale, with whom Hobbes had previously been on very friendly terms.[45]

Personal acquaintance was probably also the basis on which Hobbes submitted his policy proposal to Richard Browne. It is very likely that the two men had got to know each other in Paris in the period 1635–6. Hobbes was there from the autumn of 1634 until late August 1635, and again between June and October 1636; Browne went to Paris in the early summer of 1635 as secretary to the ambassador, John, Viscount Scudamore, with whom Hobbes clearly did develop friendly relations.[46] In November 1644, when the marquess of Newcastle wished to send letters (from Antwerp) to Hobbes and some other English people in Paris, it was to Browne that he directed them, confident that Browne would be able to have them delivered; and Newcastle must have found, during his own stay in Paris between 1645 and 1648, that Browne and Hobbes were well acquainted, since in another letter to Browne from Antwerp in November 1651 he included the request: 'praye my seruice to M[r]. Hobbs'.[47]

[42] M. Sefton-Jones, *Old Devonshire House by Bishopsgate* (London, 1923), p. 132.

[43] T. Pomfret, *The life of the right honourable and religious lady Christian late countess dowager of Devonshire* (London, 1685), pp. 60, 72–3.

[44] D. Underdown, *Royalist conspiracy in England* (New Haven, CT, 1960), p. 191.

[45] Hobbes, *Correspondence*, I, pp. 8, 10 (n.), 120–1, 169–71; N. Malcolm and M. Tolonen, 'The correspondence of Thomas Hobbes: some new items', *Historical Journal*, 51 (2008), pp. 481–95, at p. 486.

[46] Hobbes, *Correspondence*, I, pp. 114–15. Jason Peacey writes that Browne went to Paris in 1636 ('Browne, Sir Richard'); but his papers include material relating to the beginning of Scudamore's embassy in 1635 (BL, MS Add. 78202; see also despatches by Scudamore in Browne's hand in BL, MS Add. 35097).

[47] BL, MSS Add. 78205, fo. 110r (and cf. fo. 117r); Add. 78199, fo. 48r (quotation). The 'long acquaintance' which, by 1651, John Evelyn said he had with Hobbes (J. Evelyn, *Diary*, ed. E. de Beer (6 vols., Oxford, 1955), III, p. 41) may have originated in Browne's residence in Paris.

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The strikingly casual, matter-of-fact way in which Hobbes's policy paper embarks on its argument might be taken as evidence of close acquaintance with Browne; there is no trace of the sort of explanatory preamble, establishing the writer's credentials, that would have been needed in a formal approach by a comparative stranger. But on the other hand, there may have been a covering letter for this document which has not survived. That the document is not signed by Hobbes could also have more than one explanation: perhaps he was just jotting down, at Browne's suggestion, the gist of something he had said in conversation, or perhaps he intended this paper to be forwarded by Browne to a superior policy-maker – possibly even the king himself – and did not want to be implicated if it should happen to fall into the wrong hands. (Whether any version of Hobbes's proposal was sent to England is not known; Browne's surviving despatches to the secretaries of state do not contain any mention of it.)[48]

For, however informally or indirectly, Hobbes was acting here as a would-be counsellor to King Charles. He may well have felt that he possessed some of the qualities required of a good counsellor:

> great knowledge of the disposition of Man-kind, of the Rights of Government, and of the nature of Equity, Law, Justice, and Honour, not to be attained without study; And of the Strength, Commodities, Places, both of their own Country, and of their Neighbours; as also of the inclinations, and designes of all Nations that may any way annoy them.[49]

And he would certainly not have felt that his rather humble status precluded him from giving such advice:

> Good Counsell comes not by Lot, nor by Inheritance; and therefore there is no more reason to expect good Advice from the rich, or noble, in matter of State, than in delineating the dimensions of a fortresse; unlesse we shall think there needs no method in the study of the Politiques, (as there does in the study of Geometry,) but onely to be lookers on; which is not so.[50]

It may also be noted that Hobbes's policy proposal was drawn up in accordance with his own strict stylistic rules for the formulation of advice to a ruler: it was written 'with as firme ratiocination, as significant and proper language, and as briefly, as the evidence will permit', and it eschewed all '*obscure, confused, and*

[48] BL, MS Add. 12184 (despatches to Lord Digby and Sir Edward Nicholas); nor is it mentioned in BL, MS Add. 78194 (Richard Browne, letters to Sir Edward Nicholas). If the proposal post-dated the Scottish invasion, Browne would have been quick to see that one of its premises, concerning the motivation of the Swedes, was false: see n. 13, above.

[49] T. Hobbes, *Leviathan* (London, 1651), p. 134. (The page-numbers of this edition are given in most modern editions.)

[50] Ibid., p. 184. The comparison with geometry here (a science studied by Hobbes) served, delicately but unmistakably, to make a self-regarding point.

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ambiguous Expressions, also all metaphoricall Speeches, tending to the stirring up of Passion'.[51]

As for the substance of the advice: besides the restoration of Warwick's estate, Hobbes located the earl's main springs of motivation in his liking for 'the prayse of being an able man to command and order people', his desire for 'honor' and 'greatnesse', his wish to benefit his 'frends and kindred', and his general need to be able to justify his conduct in the eyes of others. (The need for resources with which to win over the men under his command was also included, but this seems to have been much more a practical requirement than a matter of the earl's own motives.) Hobbes's distaste for the shallowness of much of this motivation is audible in phrases such as 'he affecteth the prayse' and 'such employment as may entertayne that humor, and keepe vp his estimation that way'; and the proposal that reference be made to Warwick the Kingmaker (Richard Neville, the sixteenth earl) suggests that Robert Rich (whose father had been given the revived earldom after its second extinction) would be moved by a rhetorical argument that rested on little more than the coincidence of their titles. Yet Hobbes's own analysis of human 'power' recognized that power founded in the imagination could be genuine power nonetheless, so long as those doing the imagining were many: 'Reputation of power, is Power; because it draweth with it the adhaerence of those that need protection.' Significantly, Hobbes went on in the next sentence of *Leviathan* to note: 'So is Reputation of love of a mans Country, (called Popularity,) for the same Reason.'[52] Hobbes had a particular interest in the nature of 'popularity'. In *The elements of law* he stigmatized it as the thing aimed at by ambitious demagogues, urging the sovereign to ordain 'severe punishments, for such as shall by reprehension of public actions, affect popularity and applause among the multitude'.[53] In *Leviathan* he twice associated it with military commanders, noting that popularity was the key to the success of Julius Caesar (who was 'set up by the People against the Senate, having won to himselfe the affections of his Army'), and observing that 'A Commander of an Army in chiefe, if he be not Popular, shall not be beloved, nor feared as he ought to be by his Army ... But this love of Souldiers, (if caution be not given of the Commanders fidelity,) is a dangerous thing to Soveraign Power'.[54] In normal conditions of sovereign rule, Hobbes argued, it was a mistake to think that one could 'buy with Money, or Preferment, from a Popular ambitious Subject, to be quiet'.[55] Clearly, normal conditions did not apply in England in 1644; but it can readily be understood that when Hobbes proposed offering the earl of Warwick 'such employment as may entertayne that humor, and keepe vp his estimation that way', he intended

[51] Ibid., p. 134.
[52] Ibid., p. 41.
[53] T. Hobbes, *The elements of law, natural and politic*, ed. F. Tönnies (London, 1889), p. 183 (II.ix.7).
[54] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 174, 185.
[55] Ibid., p. 183.

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the earl to be given, in the end, more the show of military power than the substance.

Finally, this policy paper is of interest because of the small shaft of light it casts on the question of how Hobbes interpreted the nature of the English Civil Wars. His misinterpretation of the Scottish invasion, especially in relation to the assumed link with the Swedes, has already been mentioned. With the benefit of hindsight, when Hobbes came to write *Behemoth* in the late 1660s, he omitted all mention of the Swedes in this connection, and observed merely that in 1643 the English parliament had 'sent to the Scots to hire them to an Inuasion of England'.[56] In his discussion of the hostility of the Scots towards Charles I's religious policies in 1638–9, however, he did emphasize one point that is a strong presupposition of his policy paper: that the Scots were a rival nation pursuing a policy inherently hostile to the interests of the English. 'I see', said the first speaker in his dialogue, 'that, from the emulation of glory between the Nations they might be willing to see this nation afflicted by Ciuill warre, and might hope by aiding the rebells here, to acquire some power ouer the English.'[57] In *Behemoth,* Hobbes twice mentioned the earl of Warwick, noting as he did so the importance of the fact that, at the beginning of the war, the navy was 'wholly' under his command; but he made no comment on the earl's personal or political motivation.[58] By the time he composed that work, Hobbes had come to believe that the roots of the rebellion were to be traced primarily to religious doctrines and their preachers: arcane theological disputations were 'the cause of all our late mischiefe', and the doctrine of the presbyterians was 'the very foundation of the then Parliaments treacherous pretensions'.[59] But during the period of the Civil Wars themselves, Hobbes was much more inclined to give a purely political (or politico-psychological) explanation of the origins of the conflict. In his refutation of Thomas White, written in 1642–3, he declared that the war in England 'had no other origin than the fact that certain wicked men, who were not called to counsel [*sc.* high office close to the king], and who thought that their wisdom was valued less fairly than it deserved to be, advised the citizens to take up arms against the king'.[60] (This chimed with the account Hobbes had given before the outbreak of the war, in *The elements of law,* of those who rebel against their sovereign because they are 'grieved' to find themselves 'postponed to those in honour, whom they think they excel in virtue and ability to govern'.)[61]

It is noteworthy that when Hobbes wrote his policy proposal in 1644, although the earl of Warwick had been a leading patron of presbyterian

[56] T. Hobbes, *Behemoth*, ed. P. Seaward (Oxford, 2010), p. 274 (fo. 60r); cf. also p. 253 (fo. 53r).
[57] Ibid., p. 145 (fo. 15r).
[58] Ibid., pp. 242 (fo. 49v), 255 (fo. 54r).
[59] Ibid., pp. 179 (fo. 27r), 214 (fo. 40v).
[60] T. Hobbes, *Critique du* De mundo *de Thomas White*, ed. J. Jacquot and H. W. Jones (Paris, 1973), p. 424 (fo. 439r): 'quorum nulla alia origo erat quàm quòd improbi quidam homines, qui ad consilium non vocarentur, rati sapientiam suam minus aeque aestimari, consuluerunt civibus arma inferre Regi'.
[61] Hobbes, *Elements of law,* p. 169 (II.viii.3).

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preachers, he made no mention of the earl's religious motives, whether real or apparent. Hobbes's phrase 'whilest the businesse was but for reformation' may at first sight appear to have a religious significance, and it is true that the term is used once in *Leviathan* in a religious context (referring to the Genevan church as 'that Church that hath presumed most of Reformation').[62] But other uses of the verb to 'reform' provide a closer match for Hobbes's usage in his policy paper. In chapter 17 of *Leviathan*, he writes that 'amongst men, there are very many, that thinke themselves wiser, and abler to govern the Publique, better than the rest; and these strive to reforme and innovate, one this way, another that way; and thereby bring it into Distraction and Civill warre'; and in chapter 30, he warns that 'they that go about by disobedience, to doe no more than reforme the Commonwealth, shall find they do thereby destroy it'.[63] As this policy proposal makes very clear, in late 1643 or early 1644, Hobbes believed that the war up until that time had been fought over the question 'betweene the k. & y^{e} Parlament who shall gouerne England'. He already had a psychological and political explanation of why some people had sought to 'reform' the government in such a way as to make themselves the real rulers of the country; his religious or theologico-political account of the ultimate reasons for the rebellion was yet to come.

[62] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 60. Even here the basic meaning is the general one, equally applicable to secular institutions, of improvement by re-modelling; cf., for example, the reference to the need for a 'Reformation of the Vniuersities' in *Behemoth*, p. 182 (fo. 28r).

[63] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 87, 177.

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