7

Peace proposed

Why then did the Rump begin negotiations with the States General in March 1653? Why were the English willing to treat with a nation which had perfidiously attacked them less than a year previously while an alliance was being discussed in Westminster?

There were, of course, many in England, even many supporters of the Rump, who opposed the war against their Protestant brethren. Almost as soon as newsmongers heard that Blake and Van Tromp had fought in the Downs, they began disseminating stories of an Anglo-Dutch rapprochement.[1] Though these stories were certainly exaggerations and mere fabrications, there can be little doubt that there was a significant sector of the English population hostile to the war. "There be thousands who mutter at the business," conceded the Hollandophobic Donald Lupton, "and seem to bear affection to" the Dutch cause. In the Rump itself there were frequent murmurings of discontent. "Parliament never meets," the Venetian resident reported in February 1653, "without accusations and reproaches being heaped on the authors of this war."[2] Hugh Peter, one of Cromwell's favorite preachers, was known to have written to Sir George Ayscue "desiring him to forbear engaging the Dutch in this unjust quarrel." Peter, in fact, was quite anxious to tell anyone who would listen that many in the United Provinces were anxious for peace. Though Peter was fiercely attacked for his activities in the summer, his very public rehabilitation by the Rump in January 1653 reveals a good deal about the temper of the House.[3] The

1 Intelligence from London, 8/18 July 1652, Bod., Clar. 43, f. 205; newsletter from London, 16/26 July 1652, Bod., Clar. 43, f. 215; *A Message Sent to the L. Admiral Vantrump* (London, 1652), Thomason: 16 July 1652, p. 4; newsletter from The Hague, 25 July 1652, PRO, SP 84/159, f. 128; *French Occurrences* , 26 July–2 August 1652, p. 80.

2 Paulucci to Sagredo, 13/23 February 1653, *CSPV*, p. 30; Bordeaux to de Brienne, 6/16 January 1653, PRO, PRO 31/3/90, f. 558; Bordeaux to Servien, 17/27 January 1653, PRO, PRO 31/3/90, f. 570; Bordeaux to de Brienne, 24 January/3 February 1653, PRO, PRO 31/3/90, f. 584r. See also Thomas Papillon to David Papillon, 7 October 1652, CKS, U1015/C1/4.

3 Newsletter from Westminster, 28 August 1652, Worcester College, Clarke MSS 24, f. 17v; Bordeaux to de Brienne, 6/16 January 1653, PRO, PRO 31/3/90, f. 558v; *Weekly Intelligencer*, 7–14 September 1652, p. 596 (Peter preaching before Cromwell); newsletter

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former Caroline courtier, and apocalyptic mystic, Sir Balthazar Gerbier was said to be plying "hard through the Provinces the business of accommodation; and tells them that the Lord General and soldiery are against a war with them." When rumors began to circulate that even Robert Blake was uncomfortable with the war, one of Whitelocke's correspondents complained "that too many faces here look towards [the Dutch] and are (I fear) too apt to take in an accommodation on base terms."[4] But these men and these sentiments had been unable to prevent war from breaking out; there was no reason to believe that they now had the political capital to compel the Rump to negotiate a peace.

Those who did support the war, however, must have been concerned by the early defeats of England's navy. By December Blake "was not able to do anything in opposition to the Dutch who range up and down the coast, land their men at pleasure for little plunders, and are entire masters now of the seas." There was talk that the Dutch had plans "to block up the English ships in the mouth" of the Thames. Van Tromp now claimed to be "Master of the Narrow Seas." Not surprisingly, the Dutch were said to "spurn at the least thoughts of any accommodation, unless it may be upon their own terms."[5] Hostile observers were convinced that the Rump would indeed now beg for peace. "They are at their wits' end, and ready to be overwhelmed by their own disorders and wants," the Royalist William Edgeman wrote gleefully. The knowledge that Providence was against them would surely make the Rump succumb to the inevitable. "It is the first signal loss they have undergone either by sea or land," Hyde explained after Van Tromp's devastating victory off Dungeness (30 November 1652), "and therefore likely to make a deep impression generally upon the people who are already alarmed and even half dead with prophecies."[6]

from Westminster, 29 January 1653, Worcester College, Clarke MSS 24, f. 112; for the most virulent attacks on Hugh Peter see *A New Hue and Cry after Maior General Massey and Some Others, Who by the help of Peters Keyes, Escaped from the Tower of London, August the 30, and is Thought to be Fled into Holland* (London, 1652), Thomason: 6 September 1652, especially p. 3. Hugh Peter's avid desire for peace suggests that though he might well have been "the new merchants' close collaborator" in some things, his commitment to the "quest for world power [and] the drive for commercial hegemony" was limited by other ideological concerns. The quotes are from Robert Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution* (Princeton, 1993), pp. 623, 639.

4 Letter to Bulstrode Whitelocke, 24 September 1652, Longleat, Whitelocke MSS XII, ff. 167–169.

5 William Edgeman to Sir Richard Browne, 21/31 December 1652, Christ Church, Richard Browne Letters Box D–L; Bordeaux to de Brienne, 23 December/2 January 1652/53, PRO, 31/3/90, f. 545r; *French Occurrences*, 6–13 December 1652, p. 224; *Mercurius Politicus*, 16–23 December 1652, p. 2102; *Mercurius Politicus*, 23–30 December 1652, pp. 2115–[2116]; newsletter from Amsterdam, 17/27 December 1652, Bod., Tanner MSS 53, f. 174r.

6 Hyde to Marquis of Newcastle, 8/18 January 1653, Bod., Clar. 45, f. 17r; *Mercurius Politicus*, 13–20 January 1653, pp. 2172–2173; *Mercurius Politicus*, 20–27 January 1653,

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However, instead of begging for peace on bended knee, the Rump redoubled its war effort. In December, January, and February the Rump strained every nerve to improve the pay of its seamen, the quality of its naval supplies, and the quantity and appropriateness of its men-of-war.[7] Most importantly, the government felt it necessary to rid the navy of "those wasps and drones who serve not but for filthy lucre," or, in Blake's words, those suffering from "baseness of spirit." By early January, the Navy Commission had been reformed and the new commissioners were busily dismissing unreliable commanders and replacing them with "godly able persons."[8] All of the evidence suggests that the reforms were remarkably successful. "Both soldiers and sailors are punctually paid and kept in good humor," remarked the Venetian resident. "They were diligent in the business," noted Bulstrode Whitelocke with approval; "the preparations for the navy and the war at sea with the Dutch went on with great vigor, and the Parliament were quick in it."[9] Clearly, then, it was not the prospect of military defeat which compelled the Rump to initiate negotiations in the spring of 1653.

The English fleet's first great naval victory of the war off Portland in late February 1653 dramatically altered the situation. In fact, it was only after Blake's victory had made the English "masters of the sea again" that serious discussions for peace began. The English conviction that God wished them to humble the proud Dutch had allowed them to "display extraordinary endurance." It was this belief that they were fighting on the side of Providence coupled with a steadfast defense of "the honor of England" which convinced most observers "that the enemy must make the first overtures." "This prosperity," the French ambassador wrote in reference to the battle, "does not stop the general and the other principle men, who were

p. 2191 (for similar reports circulating in the United Provinces); William Edgeman to Sir Richard Browne, 14/24 December 1652, Christ Church, Richard Browne Letters Box D–L; Hyde to Newcastle, 14 December 1652, BL, Loan MSS 29/235, f. 327r.

7 Charles Longland to Robert Blackborne, 27 December 1652, PRO, SP 18/26, f. 96r; Bordeaux to de Brienne, 20/30 December 1652, PRO, PRO 31/3/90, f. 535; Bordeaux to Servien, 20/30 December 1652, PRO, PRO 31/3/90, f. 538r; Paulucci to Sagredo, 5/15 February 1653, *CSPV*, pp. 24–25; Bernard Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, (Oxford, 1989) pp. 79–80.

8 Newsletter from Amsterdam, 17/27 December 1652, Bod., Tanner MSS 53, f. 174v; Blake to Commissioners of the Navy, 1 December 1652, BL, Loan MSS 29/241, f. 169r; Paulucci to Sagredo, 24 December/3 January 1652/53, *CSPV*, p. 2; Bordeaux to de Brienne, 23 December/2 January 1652/53, PRO, PRO 31/3/90, f. 545v; newsletter from Westminster, 15 January 1653, Worcester College, Clarke MSS 24, f. 104v. For summaries of the reforms see Whitelocke, *Annals*, January 1653, BL, Add. 37345, f. 253v; and *Weekly Intelligencer*, 28 December–4 January 1653, pp. [727–729].

9 Paulucci to Sagredo, 29 January/8 February 1653, *CSPV*, p. 20; Whitelocke, *Annals*, January 1653, BL, Add. 37345, f. 253r. For a belief that the reforms improved the quantity and quality of the seamen see T. Smith, P. Pett, and Francis Willoughby to Committee of the Navy, 21 March 1653, PRO, SP 18/34, f. 109r.

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themselves the cause of the war with Holland, from speaking of sending ambassadors to treat for peace."[10]

Fortunately, the Dutch were well poised to take advantage of this change in English sentiment. Since the middle of December the constant entreaties for peace by both the English and Dutch merchant communities had been supplemented by the presence in London of Lieutenant-Colonel Dolman, an Englishman in Dutch service. His very presence in England struck fear in the hearts of Royalists. "Lieutenant-Colonel Dolman's going for England," Edward Hyde wrote to his close friend and fellow exile Sir Edward Nicholas, "troubles me more than Gerbier's coming into Holland and twenty knaves more." Not only was Dolman "a man of parts," but he was "a great Parliamentarian and friend of St. John's." It was almost certainly through Dolman's mediation that the States of Holland were persuaded to write the Rump indicating a willingness to treat for peace.[11] Nevertheless it is important to note that despite Dolman's powers of persuasion and his excellent connections, it was only after the English had received news of the victory off Portland that any move toward peace was made.

In the middle of March the Rump received a letter from the States of Holland, delivered by the secretary of the republican statesman Pauw. In it the Dutch were at pains to emphasize that they were "in no wise constrained by any other consideration" than their "pious zeal" and their concern for "the great effusion of blood of the Household of Faith" to approach the English. But they were sure that the war was "a remarkable punishment from the just judgement of God irritated by the many sins of the people." It was clear from their geographical proximity, their common religion and the many evidences of "divine grace" towards both nations, that they ought to be obliged to "love, unity, and reciprocal care, to procure each other's good at home, and mutual luster abroad."[12]

[10] *Mercurius Politicus*, 10–17 March 1653, p. 2301; Paulucci to Sagredo, 29 January/8 February 1653, *CSPV*, p. 21; Paulucci to Sagredo, 5/15 February 1653, *CSPV*, p. 25; Paulucci to Sagredo, 20 February/2 March 1653, *CSPV*, p. 33; Paulucci to Sagredo, 27 February/ 8 March 1653, *CSPV*, p. 35; Paulucci to Sagredo, 12/22 March 1653, *CSPV*, p. 42; Paulucci to Sagredo, 19/29 March 1653, *CSPV*, p. 48; Bordeaux to de Brienne, 24 February/6 March 1653, PRO, PRO 31/3/90, f. 615r; Bordeaux to de Brienne, 3/13 March 1653, PRO, 31/3/90, f. 620r.

[11] Bordeaux to de Brienne, 23 December/2 January 1653, PRO, PRO 31/3/90, f. 545 (on mercantile entreaties for peace); Hyde to Nicholas, 10/20 December 1652, Bod., Clar. 44, f. 146v; Hyde to Nicholas, 1/11 January 1653, Bod., Clar. 45, f. 10v; Hyde to Lord Rochester, 18/28 February 1653, Bod., Clar. 45, f. 103v; Aitzema, "Selections," Bod., Rawl. C734, f. 74r (Dolman's friendship with St. John); newsletter from London, 13 May 1653, Bod., Clar. 45, f. 382v. One Royalist newsletter-writer credited Dolman and Hugh Peter as being "the instruments wholly employed" in initiating the discussions: newsletter from London, 15 April 1653, Bod., Clar. 45, f. 293.

[12] I have located two copies of this document: States of Holland and West Friesland to Parliament, 8/18 March 1653, Bod., Tanner MSS 53, f. 226; and States of Holland and West Friesland to Parliament, 8/18 March 1653, PRO, SP 105/98, f. 1; *Moderate Publisher*, 18–25 March 1653, p. 771.

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As soon as this letter from the States of Holland was received it was referred to the Council of State. Significantly, the men who considered the letter – Henry Marten, Algernon Sidney, Walter Strickland, Thomas Scot, Dennis Bond, and Bulstrode Whitelocke – were men who had played large roles in the decision to go to war in the summer of 1652. That they decided to refer the letter to the full Rump for debate reflects a change in sentiment among some of the Council.[13]

The subsequent debate in the Rump was fierce indeed. Although it was eventually decided that the letters received from the States of Holland were "plausible" and that "there should be a speedy and civil answer returned," this did not reflect any consensus. Marchamont Nedham, while admitting that the letter indicated that Dutch "stomachs are not so high," complained that "it speaks not at all in direct terms any desire of peace, nor any acknowledgment of wrong done, or the like." Bulstrode Whitelocke "saw little hopes to effect" the peace. Edward Hyde, always a keen political observer even though observing from a great distance both ideologically and physically, thought the peace "should be no easy matter."[14] Consequently, that the Rump responded at all to the letter from the States of Holland represents a victory for conservative Protestant opinion in the House. Although the Venetian resident Paulucci may have been too precise when he credited "the Presbyterians, who are of the same creed as the Dutch" with persuading the Rump to act, he probably captured the tenor of the debate. It is certainly not insignificant that the Rump selected Toby Bonnel, a merchant with Presbyterian sympathies and Dutch family connections, to deliver their response to the States of Holland and the States General.[15]

Nevertheless the letters sent to the United Provinces do not reflect a complete victory for the peace party in the Rump. Although the Rump did

[13] *CJ*, 22 March 1653, p. 270; *CJ*, 24 March 1653, p. 271; *CJ*, 29 March 1653, pp. 272–273; Whitelocke, *Annals*, March 1653, BL, Add 37345, f. 268; newsletter from Westminster, 22 March 1653, Worcester College, Clarke MSS 24, f. 129v; Paulucci to Sagredo, 2–29 January/February 1653, *CSPV*, p. 21 (claiming continuity of ploicy-making personnel).

[14] Bordeaux to de Brienne, 14/24 March 1653, PRO, PRO 31/3/90, f. 627r; Bordeaux to de Brienne, 24 March/3 April 1653, PRO, PRO 31/3/90, f. 631v; *A Perfect Account*, 9–16 March 1653, p. 912; Robert Blackborne, to Captain Badiley, 14 March 1653, *CSPD*, p. 213; newsletter from London, 18 March 1653, Bod., Clar. 45, f. 204r; newsletter from London, 25 March 1653, Bod., Clar. 45, f. 205r; newsletter from Westminster, 26 March 1653, Worcester College, Clarke MSS 25, f. 1v; newsletter from Westminster, 29 March 1653, Worcester College Library, Clarke 25, f. 2; Paulucci to Sagredo, 2/12 April 1653, *CSPV*, p. 54; Nedham to [Whitelocke?], 22 March 1653, Longleat House, Whitelocke MSS XII, f. 50; Whitelocke, *Annals*, BL, Add 37345, f. 269v; Hyde to Nicholas, 18/28 March 1653, Bod., Clar. 45, f. 119v.

[15] Paulucci to Sagredo, 12/22 March 1653, *CSPV*, p. 42; day's proceedings, 30 March 1653, *CSPD*, p. 242; newsletter from the Hague, 14/24 April 1653, Bod., Clar. 45, f. 284r; Aitzema, "Selections," Bod., Rawl. C734, f. 76r. For Bonnel's background and ideology see: Toby Bonnel's "Statement," 7 November 1653, Bod., Rawl. A8, p. 97; Toby Bonnel to John Johnson, 2 November 1659, CUL, Add. MSS 4, f. 39.

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express its hope for "a good understanding and a firm union between the two States," the language of its letters made clear that peace at any cost was not desired. The English, the Rump felt compelled to remind the Dutch, had done everything to avoid war, "being deeply sensible of the effusion of so much Christian blood as would necessarily follow." But, the Dutch had recalled their ambassador Pauw "without giving any plain and clear answer" to the terms then offered by the Rump. Consequently all future negotiations must "proceed upon the same grounds, as formerly they offered" – grounds which assumed that the Dutch were in the wrong, and compelled them to offer compensation. The Dutch were being asked to "acquiesce in the issues of Providence, whereof they have had so gracious experience." Perhaps even more important than the language of the letters was their destination. One letter was sent as a response to the States of Holland and West Friesland; but a second letter was sent to the States General to initiate formal proceedings between the two sovereign bodies.[16]

Why had the English felt compelled to apply to the States General? Why was the advance from the States of Holland insufficient to begin negotiation? The answer to these questions lies in the perceived origins of the Dutch letter.

The English were concerned to establish whether the peace feelers only represented the inclinations of a small grouping within the Dutch polity. The Rump was well aware that most of the Dutch provinces were "very jealous" lest Holland "should hold any treaty apart (underhand) with England." A private letter from the provincial States of Holland, initially addressed to Lieutenant-Colonel Dolman, hardly served to allay these fears. It was common parlance in diplomatic circles that the letter was the scheme of the arch-republican Lord Nieupoort "who without any public order writ the letter into England." Though the Rump's scrutiny of the letter, and its interrogations of Dolman, were able to dispose of this apocryphal story, concern remained lest the feelers were "brought on with so much indirect proceedings, and so contrary to the foundation and constitution of that government." The States General did "in truth know nothing of the business." "It's said," reported a correspondent to the *Mercurius Politicus* from Holland, "that some of this very province were not consenting to it. But for certain the rest of the provinces appear no way satisfied with their sending, and it was for a while denied by those of Holland themselves." These circumstances seemed to mask some devious plotting. "The design of that letter is only to feel our pulses," opined one of Bulstrode Whitelocke's

[16] Parliament to States of Holland and West Friesland, 1 April 1653, PRO, SP 105/98, ff. 4–5; Parliament to States General, 1 April 1653, PRO, SP 105/98, f. 5. I am not here implying that Dutch sovereignty did in fact lie in the States General, only that this was where the English perceived it to lie.

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more skeptical acquaintances.[17] No wonder, then, that the Rump opted to make the most public of responses to the States of Holland's letter.

Why did the English believe that the States of Holland had made this covert approach to the Rump? How, in short, did they understand the workings of Dutch politics? The English political nation, in fact, knew quite a lot about the workings of Dutch politics. Most importantly, it knew that the United Provinces were torn by deep ideological divisions. "Our several interests, fashions, religions, and adversaries, are like so many cross winds and waves," explained one newsbook correspondent from the United Provinces, "this appears in the blue books and black mouths in every street and corner, which you must wonder the less at, if you remember your own scene in your late war." Just as support for the monarchy divided the English in the 1650s, so support for the Stadholderate delimited the parties in the Netherlands. "Still the thing called Stadholder and Captain General is the bone of contention that we are gnawing upon, and snarling about," wrote one observer. "The States themselves have had some hot contesting, whether they shall admit the young Prince of Orange, or not for their chief," reported the *Weekly Intelligencer*; "some are violent for it, and some as violent against it." These party divisions, the English were well aware, were reflected in the Dutch attitudes toward the war. "The Hollanders are in a great distraction, and exceedingly divided," ran one well-publicized report, "petitions upon petitions are presented to the States General for a compliance with England, yet those that were most forward in promoting the present war ... show themselves as high as ever."[18]

The English knew quite well that "those that were most forward in promoting the present war" were in fact the adherents of the House of Orange. "The Orange [party] are for a war," testified one political commentator, "they say it is impossible to make a good and lasting league with you, but that it is better for them to join with France to help the king." "If Orange shall ride us again, which is in no wise unlikely," warned the *Mercurius Politicus*, "look then for an endless war betwixt the Republics, and the espousing all quarrels, causes, and interests that shall crush yours." Orangist propagandists frequently accused "the States of Holland and good

[17] *Mercurius Politicus*, 3–10 February 1653, pp. 2121–2122; Hyde to Rochester, 8/18 April 1653, Bod., Clar. 45, f. 276r; William Edgeman to Sir Richard Browne, 9/19 April 1653, Christ Church, Richard Browne Letters, Box D–L; William Edgeman to Richard Browne, 16/26 April 1653, Christ Church Browne MSS, Box D–L; Hyde to Nicholas, 15/25 April 1653, Bod., Clar. 45, f. 291r; Hyde to Taylor, 8/18 April 1653, Bod., Clar. 45, f. 271r; newsletter from The Hague, 21 April/1 May 1653, Bod., Clar. 45, f. 306v; *Mercurius Politicus*, 7–14 April 1653, pp. 2369–2370; letter of Dutch news addressed to Whitelocke, 25 March 1653, Longleat House, Whitelocke MSS XIII, f. 52r.

[18] *Mercurius Politicus*, 1–8 July 1652, p. 1713; *Mercurius Politicus*, 9–16 September 1652, p. 1875; *Weekly Intelligencer*, 17–24 August 1652, pp. 567–568; newsletter from The Hague, 25 July 1652, PRO, SP 84/159, f. 127; *A Perfect Account*, 8–15 June 1653, p. 1014; *Moderate Publisher*, 10–17 June 1653, p. 1091.

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Hollanders" of "correspondence with the Council of State," of "confederacy with the common enemy in obstructing the maritime and naval affairs," in short of "betraying our state to the Spaniard and English." The result was that "any who harbor thoughts or do but wish an accommodation with the English, are accounted enemies to the State of Holland."[19]

Not surprisingly, this belligerence of the Orangists grew out of their ideological predispositions to monarchy and absolutism. Orangist presses were spewing forth tracts, like *Clamor Regii Sanguinis ad Coelum,* defending divine right monarchy and others, like *Hollandts Vloeck*, "upbraiding England with Royal Murder." Orangist clerics were preaching up "absolute, arbitrary, sovereign" power, clothing the Princes of Orange "with kingly robes, and royal titles and prerogatives." The English knew quite well that William II had aspired "to a higher degree of sovereignty over those provinces than he or his predecessors [had] ever enjoyed." So it was hardly surprising that his son's followers, who denounced their republican opponents as "Arminians, traitors, no better than the meanest of the vulgar," aimed "to have an eminent head, qualified with full power, and this to be the young prince; that he be made general and Stadholder out of hand." Once a Prince of Orange regained control of the military he would be absolute "for he that hath the sword, plays Rex and doth what he will."[20]

Detestation of the English Commonwealth and support for an absolute monarchy at home, led the Orangists, naturally enough, to espouse the Stuart cause. "The ministers and people rail extremely against the present government in England," ran one report from the Netherlands, "saying they ought wholly to join with the king against his rebels."[21] There was every reason to believe that this pressure would soon take effect. From the moment the Dutch ambassadors left London in July 1652 there were persistent rumors that the Dutch would adopt the Royal cause. The Orangists "have long cried up the taking in of the Stuarts' interest," the *Mercurius Politicus* informed its readers, as "the only remedy for the distempers and misfortunes of these lands." After the battle off Portland, the Cavaliers were certain the Dutch would invite them to join forces. By the

[19] Intelligence from Holland, September 1653, Bod., Rawl. A6, pp. 55–56; *Mercurius Politicus*, 26 August–2 September 1652, p. 1843; newsletter from United Provinces, 8/18 July 1653, Bod., Rawl. A4, p. 138; *The Declaration of the States of Holland, Concerning the King of Scots* (London, 1653), Thomason: 16 June 1653, pp. 7–8; *Mercurius Politicus*, 5–12 August 1652, pp. 1791–1792; *Weekly Intelligencer*, 2–9 November 1652, p. [658].

[20] *The Moderate Publisher*, 18–25 March 1653, p. 768; *Mercurius Politicus*, 28 October–4 November 1652, p. 1986; *Mercurius Politicus*, 18–25 November 1652, pp. 2027–2028, 2031; *Britania Triumphalis* (London, 1654), Thomason: 28 April 1654, pp. 36–37, 42–43; *Dutch Intelligencer*, 15–22 September 1652, pp. 17–18.

[21] Newsletter, 25 March 1653, Longleat House, Whitelocke MSS XIII, f. 52r; *Faithful Post*, 25 March–1 April 1653, p. 687; *Mercurius Politicus*, 24–31 March 1653, p. 2333; Whitelocke, *Annals*, BL, Add. 37345, f. 269r.

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last battle, Hyde wrote to John Kent the Royalist resident in Venice, "the Dutch are instructed how necessary it is for them to join with the king, that they may carry on the war against the rebels prosperously."[22] While the Orangists were campaigning for the States General to support Charles II, they were themselves doing everything they could to aid British Royalists. The rebels in Ireland and Scotland, the Venetian Paulucci informed his colleague in Paris in March 1653, were "being aided by the Dutch as well as by a crowd of other malcontents."[23] In the spring of 1653, then, no one in England could doubt the close ties between Orange and Stuart.

While the strength of the States party, the good Hollanders, rested in the Province of Holland, Orangism was thought to be prevalent everywhere else. "Orange's arms are set up again by the Zeelanders," commented one newswriter in disbelief, "will any man pity these slaves, that will pin the badge of their vassalage upon their breasts and foreheads."[24] Friesland, which still had a member of the House of Orange–Nassau for Stadholder, was known to be firmly Orangist. Gelderland "stands much affected to the House of Orange." Indeed, when the States General mooted the possibility of making "our young tender Orange twig Stadholder" the only opposition came from Holland, "the other Provinces being most of them mean and mercenary, were for it tooth and nail." Not surprisingly it was these same Orangist provinces which were "hot for [war]" and threatened that any peace with England will "go nigh to cause a breach of the union."[25] Even the heart of Holland, Amsterdam, which had valiantly resisted William II's

[22] Newsletter from The Hague, 25 July/4 August 1652, PRO, SP 84/159, f. 128r; *A Letter Sent from the States of Holland to the King of Scots*, (London, 1652), Thomason: 27 July 1652, pp. 3–4; *Mercurius Britannicus*, 9–16 August 1652, pp. 12–13; *A Perfect Account*, 18–25 August 1652, p. 686; *French Occurrences*, 16–25 August 1652, p. 90; Hyde to Sir George Carteret, 27 August/5 September 1652, Bod., Clar. 43, f. 292; *Weekly Intelligencer*, 19–26 October 1652, pp. 640–641; letter from The Hague, 4/14 November 1652, Bod., Clar. 44, f. 26; *Mercurius Politicus*, 4–11 November 1652, p. 2004 (quoted in text); *A Perfect Account*, 10–17 November 1652, p. 784; Edgeman to Browne, 21/31 December 1652, Christ Church, Browne MSS, Box D–L; Edward Massey to Charles II, 2 January 1653, Bod., Clar. 45, f. 4; Hyde to W. Curtius, 4/14 March 1653, Bod., Clar. 45, f. 154; Hyde to Joseph Kent, 11/21 March 1653, Bod., Clar. 45, f. 173r; Paulucci to Sagredo, 2/12 April 1653, *CSPV*, p. 54. Royalist optimism in March was duly reported in the London press. See *Mercurius Politicus*, 10–17 March 1653, p. 2306.

[23] Paulucci to Sagredo, 19/29 March 1653, *CSPV*, p. 49; *French Occurrences*, 25 October–1 November 1652, p. [180]; *Weekly Intelligencer*, 9–16 November 1652, p. 661.

[24] The literature for Zeeland's Orangism is too vast to be given full justice here. I provide only a sample: *Weekly Intelligencer*, 7–14 September 1652, p. 595; *Mercurius Politicus*, 26 August–2 September 1652, p. 1843; *Mercurius Politicus*, 2–9 September 1652, pp. [1858–1861]; *A Perfect Account*, 8–15 September 1652, p. 712; *French Occurrences*, 5–12 July 1652, p. [64]; *French Occurrences*, 7–14 September 1652, pp. 124–125; newsletter from the United Provinces, 19/29 August 1652, Bod., Clar. 43, f. 275.

[25] *Mercurius Politicus*, 8–15 July 1652, p. 1731; *Weekly Intelligencer*, 7–14 September 1652, p. 594; *A Perfect Account*, 27 April–4 May 1653, p. 965; *A Perfect Account*, 20–27 July 1653, p. 1062; news from the Dutch Ambassador in Paris, 30 July/8 August 1652, Bod., Clar. 43, f. 229; Peterson to Coopman, 12 November 1653, Bod., Rawl. A8, p. 107.

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assault in 1650, was rumored to be "most desirous" of a restoration of the Prince of Orange. "We have a very strong party in Holland," wrote that most cautious of Royalist observers Sir Edward Hyde, "who are so wise to discern that there can be no possibility for them to enjoy an equal and a lasting peace with the rebels of England."[26]

A mere assessment of Orangist political capital in the States General would, the English knew, vastly underestimate that party's power. Driven on by Orangist clerics, "the rabble," "the common sort," "the Boers" were overwhelmingly in favor of restoring to the young Prince of Orange to all of his father's powers. "The common sort here (as in all the world)," sneered the *Mercurius Politicus*, "are taken with the gaudiness and gaiety of a thing called a prince and a court" seemingly ignorant that through "knavery, treachery, and folly, the public interest goes to wreck." "Many of the Boers in every province are wheeled about," agreed the *French Occurrences*, "and cry [the Prince of Orange's] interest up so high, that they have entered into a protestation to live and die with him, and moreover have caused sundry papers to be fixed upon the city gates, wherein are these words NO PRINCE, NO STATE."[27]

What made Orangist Anglophobia so threatening, and any hopes of peace so tenuous, was the Orangist complexion of the Dutch fleet.[28] The Dutch Vice-Admiral and naval war hero Van Tromp was known to be "a devoted vassal to the Orange interest and family." In fact Van Tromp went into every battle flying an "Orange flag and bloody pendants." Van Tromp's Orangism translated directly into disdain for the English Commonwealth and support for the Stuart cause. The English press was quick to report that he had "declared for the Royal interest." In July Van Tromp was said to have protested "his innocency from having any design or intention to strike at the royal fort of monarchy" promising instead to "augment the splendor of the crown in its full orient brightness." After the Dutch defeat off Portland Van Tromp stormed into the States General furious at the half measures of his superiors. "If they did not think of another way of managing the war the English would be too hard for them," Van Tromp

[26] *A Declaration of the Hollanders Touching the Late King, and the Commonwealth of England* (London, 1652), Thomason: 23 July 1652, p. 5; Hyde to Taylor, 30 October/9 November 1652, Bod., Clar. 44, f. 23.

[27] *Weekly Intelligencer*, 9–16 November 1652, p. 668; *Mercurius Politicus*, 1–8 July 1652, p. 1713; *Mercurius Politicus*, 22–29 July 1652, p. 1767; *Mercurius Politicus*, 5–12 August 1652, p. 1792; *Mercurius Politicus*, 30 September–7 October 1652, p. 1923; *Mercurius Politicus*, 18–25 November 1652, p. 2035; *Mercurius Politicus*, 28 April–5 May 1653, p. 2411; *Dutch Intelligencer*, 1–8 September 1652, pp. 1–2; *French Occurrences*, 15–22 November 1652, p. 206; *A Perfect Account*, 6–13 October 1652, p. 736; newsletter from The Hague, 17/27 June 1653, Bod., Rawl. A3, pp. 284–285.

[28] The politicization of the Dutch fleet has been previously noticed by Charles Wilson, pp. 65–66; Herbert H. Rowen, *John de Witt, Grand Pensionary of Holland, 1625–1672* (Princeton, 1978), p. 192.

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declared; clearly the States General "ought to seek occasions by diversions, by sending relief to Scotland and to Ireland, and that if the king's flag had been up in his fleet, they had beaten the rebels' power." So fierce was Van Tromp's commitment that rumors circulated that he was "sacrificed to the English" at the Texel by the States of Holland, since he would "stand in their way" to prevent any peace which did "not stand with the interest of the Prince."[29]

Van Tromp's great antagonist in the Dutch fleet, opposing him on every issue of strategy and patronage, was Witte De Witt. De Witt was "zealous against the interest of the House of Nassau," having "declared for the Loevesteen Heeren, that is for them of Amsterdam and Holland against the Prince of Orange." The *Mercurius Politicus* went so far as to call the Vice-Admiral "a factor and brother" of the "best patriots, De Witt, Keysar, Bicker, Pauw, Stellingwerf and their adherents." Though De Witt had briefly taken over supreme command while Van Tromp was in disgrace – "screwed in much against the Zeelanders' minds" according to one purveyor of news – by the late autumn Van Tromp had become "the man of men again."[30]

De Witt's displacement no doubt reflected the sentiment of the Dutch fleet. The Dutch seamen, it was well known, "stand altogether inclined to Admiral Van Tromp, who is more a creature of the Orange party." Each rumor of De Witt's reinstatement in command was accompanied by threats that "many of the men and captains will not fight." This was not mere professional preference. Each naval riot – whether about strategy or material deficiencies – was accompanied with cries "for a governor and a prince." Entire Dutch naval squadrons were seen "to have set up the King of Scot's colors," expressing "great good will toward the Scottish king." When one Dutch man-of-war captured an English merchant ship in the Sound, its men taunted the English with cries of "king murderers and blood

[29] *Faithful Scout*, 15–22 July 1653, p. 1091; *The Full Particulars of the Last Great and Terrible Sea-Fight Between the two Great Fleets of England and Holland* ... (London, 1653), Thomason: 4 August 1653, p. 7; *Several Proceedings*, 30 June–7 July 1653, p. 3119; *A Declaration of the L. Admiral Vantrump Concerning The King of Scots, and the Parliament of England* ... (London, 1652), Thomason: 25 June 1652, pp. 4–5; *French Occurrences*, 5–12 July 1652, p. 62; *French Occurrences*, 19–26 July 1652, p. 67; Hyde to Rochester, 11/21 March 1653, Bod., Clar. 45, ff. 169v–170r; Edgeman to Browne, 12/22 March 1653, Christ Church, Richard Browne Letters, Box D–L; Peterson to Coopman, 29 July/8 August 1653, Bod., Rawl. A4, p. 332; Peterson to Coopman, 4 August 1653, Bod., Rawl. A5, p. 44.

[30] Peterson to Coopman, 4 July 1653, Bod., Rawl. A4, p. 92; Peterson to Coopman, 12/22 August 1653, Bod., Rawl. A5, p. 140; newsletter from the United Provinces, 19 June 1653, Bod., Rawl. A3, p. 307; *Mercurius Politicus*, 5–12 August 1652, p. 1791; *Several Proceedings*, 7–14 April 1653, p. 2923; newsletter from The Hague, Amsterdam and Middleburgh, 3/13 September 1652, Longleat House, Whitelocke MSS XII, f. 162r; *Mercurius Politicus*, 4–11 November 1652, pp. 1997–1998.

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hounds."[31] The Dutch seamen were likely encouraged in these sentiments by the large numbers of British political exiles serving in the fleet.[32] In this situation, then, it was hardly surprising that in the early summer of 1653 reports were circulating that "part of the navy, if not all, that are in Zeeland will in a short time declare for the Prince." In early July, the *Faithful Post* was sure that the Dutch "navy hath declared for the Prince of Orange."[33]

The English were thus well aware of the power of Orange. They knew that the Orangist party in the Netherlands was committed to monarchy, to the House of Stuart, and to the evisceration of their Commonwealth. They also knew that Orangists were in control of the government of the majority of the United Provinces as well as the command of the fleet.[34] In the context of this political situation in the Netherlands, a political situation which had the greatest possible repercussions on Anglo-Dutch relations, it is hardly surprising that the Rump approached the letter from the States of Holland with a good deal of trepidation.

Fortunately for England, the good Patriots, the republican party in the United Provinces, were not about to succumb to the power of Orange without a struggle. Edward Hyde knew that there was a strong party in the Netherlands made up of those "who either upon old grudges, or upon new jealousies of the last Prince of Orange, improved by his design upon Amsterdam, are implacable enemies to that family, and consequently are apprehensive of anything which may contribute to the advancement of that House, which they conceive the restoration of the King of England would

[31] *Mercurius Politicus*, 7–14 April 1653, p. 2369; newsletter from Amsterdam, 12/22 August 1653, Bod., Rawl. A5, p. 138; *Weekly Intelligencer*, 19–26 October 1652, p. 642; *Mercurius Politicus*, 2–9 September 1652, pp. 1860–1861; *Another Bloudy Fight at Sea Between the English and the Dutch* (London, 1652), Thomason: 30 July 1652, p. 6; *Mercurius Politicus*, 4–11 November 1652, p. 2003; *Faithful Post*, 8–15 April 1653, p. 705; John Tully to Richard Bradshaw, 27 April 1653, PRO, SP 82/9, f. 64r. *Moderate Intelligencer*, 27 June–4 July 1653, p. 72 provides an excellent iconographic description of one Dutch ensign, replete with ideological significance: "They have erected and set up the prince's standard at the Texel, being a black and bloody ensign, half checker'd, and the remaining part as white as snow, wherein is set forth the lively portraiture of the King of Scots and the Prince of Orange, with two helmets, three crowns, encompassed with a wreath of thorns, and the black rampant lion, and the white rose." The Dutch navy was said to seize only Parliamentarian merchants, while letting Royalists go free: newsletter from United Provinces, 19/29 August 1652, Bod., Clar. 43, f. 275.

[32] Newsletter from United Provinces, 3/13 September 1652, Longleat House, Whitelocke MSS XII, ff. 162–163; *Mercurius Politicus*, 9–16 September 1652, pp. 1876–1877; *French Occurrences*, 20–27 September 1652, p. 138; *A Great and Terrible Fight in France* (London, 1652), Thomason: 12 November 1652, TT: E681(8), p. 6.

[33] Newsletter from Amsterdam, 16/26 June 1653, Bod., Rawl. A3, p. 273; *Several Proceedings*, 23–30 June 1653, p. 3101; *Mercurius Politicus*, 23–30 June 1653, p. 2545; *Faithful Post*, 28 June–5 July 1653, p. 1076.

[34] At least one Dutch commentator remarked on how "well informed" the English Council of State was. Its members knew "of all the circumstances to the very least which did happen ... and all the particulars we debated here, not without glosses." Beverning to De Witt, 17/27 June 1653, Bod., Rawl. A3, p. 279.

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infallibly do." This opposition to the House of Orange, though entrenched, reflected ideological differences rather than desire for raw political power. "They of Holland," explained the *Mercurius Politicus*, "are at large against a Stadholder, and have thrown off all thoughts of admitting any new Lord, being so happily relieved by an unexpected divine hand from the former; for that they conceive such a course cannot stand with the good and safety of the provinces, and that it would prove a prejudice to the Union." Indeed the States party was so strongly committed to the republican cause that it "had rather fall to England than a Stadholder." When the Orangist provinces, led by Zeeland, led a desperate push to make the Prince of Orange Captain General in the autumn of 1652, Holland had steadfastly declared its commitment "to remain in the present constitution and order, as well as in relation to the civil government as military, without any alterations." It was this successful show of defiance which convinced at least one knowledgeable political observer that they would not easily be dislodged. "If Holland prevail in this particular against the inclination of all the rest," Edward Hyde complained to his friend Edward Nicholas, "it will be a measure for us to make a judgement of all the rest of their proceedings, and they will give the law as well in all other matters."[35]

Just as the Orangists blamed the States party for Dutch military defeats, so the republicans blamed their adversaries for the outbreak of the war. The States party was confident, wrote one of Thurloe's intelligence gatherers, "that they that have made this disjunction and breach with England, to get up the interest of the Prince of Orange, have been the causes of all this misery." In private debate, the States of Holland averred "how pernicious the English war was for this state, as ruining their commerce, and totally exhausting their treasures in such sort as they shall hereafter be able to find no possible means of redress." Consequently "the grave and sage people," "the good Patriots," "the moderate party," in short "the ruling and wiser part of Holland, which province you know hath most power and most credit, and I may add wisdom too," "do wish with all their hearts that there were a firm peace with England." Friendly observers gladly noted that the States party desired peace "with all their souls," while the Royalist Hyde glumly observed in the spring of 1653 that the republican party "was still . . . obstinate for peace."[36] It was

[35] Hyde to Taylor, 31 October/10 November 1652, Bod., Clar. 44, f. 23v; *Mercurius Politicus*, 21–28 October 1652, p. 1968; *Mercurius Politicus*, 11–18 November 1652, p. 2012; *Mercurius Politicus*, 18–25 November 1652, pp. 2035–2036; *Mercurius Politicus*, 9–16 December 1652, p. 2082; newsletter from United Provinces, 3/13 September 1652, Longleat House, Whitelocke MSS XII, f. 163r; letter from The Hague, 21/31 October 1652, Bod., Clar. 43, f. 351v; Hyde to Nicholas, 10/20 December 1652, Bod., Clar. 44, f. 146v.

[36] Newsletter from United Provinces, 19 June 1653, Bod., Rawl. A3, p. 307; newsletter from The Hague, 7/17 April 1653, Bod., Clar. 45, f. 263v; *A Perfect Account*, 8–15 September 1652, p.709; *A Perfect Account*, 20–27 April 1653, p. 960; *Mercurius Politicus*, 1–8 July 1652, p. 1714; *Mercurius Politicus*, 26 August–2 September 1652, p. 1841; *Weekly*

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the political power of the States party, then, which blocked any support for the Stuart cause. It knew that if Charles Stuart "were taken in, he and his young nephew, and his sister, would soon have an opportunity to wield the affairs of this state, and over-top them." "Nothing keeps us from all we desire," whined one Royalist, "but the disaffection of Holland."[37]

It was no doubt the political power of the States party which persuaded the States General to respond to the public letters from the Rump. "For their parts, they will yet contribute most willingly all that may make and serve for the advancement and accomplishment of so pious and Christian an union," the States General declared, and to that end "they are ready to enter into conference and negotiation."[38] Unfortunately, on the very day that John De Witt and his colleagues compelled their Orangist counterparts to approve this letter to initiate discussions with the English Commonwealth, Oliver Cromwell and the army dissolved the Rump.

Intelligencer, 29 March–5 April 1653, p. 798; letter to Dolman, 17/27 June 1653, Bod., Rawl. A3, p. 290; Hyde to L'Estrange, 27 May/6 June 1653, Bod., Clar. 45, f. 441r; Edgeman to Browne, 30 April/10 May 1653, Christ Church, Browne MSS, Box D–L; C. d'Aerssen de Sommelsdyck to Charles II, 16/26 December 1652, Bod., Clar. 44, f. 204; *Several Proceedings*, 7–14 April 1653, p. 2922; letter to Sir Alexander Hume, 30 January/9 February 1653, Bod., Clar. 45, f. 64v; *Moderate Occurrences*, 29 March–5 April 1653, p. 2; *Moderate Occurrences*, 26 April–3 May 1653, p. 40; *Several Proceedings*, 28 April–5 May 1653, p. 2964.

37 *Mercurius Politicus*, 27 January–3 February 1653, pp. 2206–2207; Aitzema, "Selections," Bod., Rawl. C734, f. 75v; newsletter, 25 March 1653, Longleat House, Whitelocke MSS XIII, f. 52v; Hyde to Nicholas, 8/18 January 1653, Bod., Clar. 45, f. 18r; Hyde to Rochester, 8/18 April 1653, Bod., Clar. 45, f. 276r; *A Perfect Account*, 30 March–6 April 1653, p. 935; *Mercurius Politicus*, 21–28 April 1653, p. 2394.

38 States General to Parliament, 20/30 April 1653, PRO, SP 105/98, f. 6.

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