



Student
Notes

Key topic 2: Challenges to Elizabeth at home and abroad, 1569–88

1 Plots and revolts at home

- The reasons for, and significance of, the Revolt of the Northern Earls, 1569–70.
- The features and significance of the Ridolfi, Throckmorton and Babington plots. Walsingham and the use of spies.
- The reasons for, and significance of, Mary Queen of Scots' execution in 1587.

2 Relations with Spain

- Political and religious rivalry.
- Commercial rivalry. The New World, privateering and the significance of the activities of Drake.

3 Outbreak of war with Spain, 1585–88

- English direct involvement in the Netherlands, 1585–88. The role of Robert Dudley.
- Drake and the raid on Cadiz: 'Singeing the King of Spain's beard'.

4 The Armada

- Spanish invasion plans. Reasons why Philip used the Spanish Armada.
- The reasons for, and consequences of, the English victory.

How did Walsingham use spies?

In 1573 Sir Francis Walsingham became Elizabeth's Secretary of State. He developed an impressive international system of spies.

He had spies in every county and important town in England. Some were trained agents, but some were ordinary people who were paid for information, which effectively turned ordinary people in to spies on their neighbours. By 1580, he was building up an impressive network in Europe too.

He also used ciphers (a secret way of writing in code) to hide his plans to catch those plotting against Elizabeth.

Other informants were captured priests, such as John Hart, who agreed to be a spy in return for his life in 1581. Given that 6 priests had been tortured and executed in 1580, this is not surprising.

Walsingham also used agent provocateurs (agents who go undercover within a suspected gang in order to uncover threats) to discover traitors. Even nobility was spied on.

Walsingham did not agree with torture because he thought it might make people feel sorry for Catholics. Evidence suggests he only used it in extreme situations.

	The Revolt of the Northern Earls 1569	Ridolfi Plot 1571
What Happened	<p>The earls of Northumberland and Westmorland were angry that they, both Catholics, had lost power in Elizabeth's court. The plan was to raise rebel forces from their lands and take control of Durham, then march to London.</p> <p>They succeeded in this and celebrated Mass, but, in September 1569, Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester, had decided to inform Elizabeth of the plot.</p> <p>Philip II had promised troops from Spain but they failed to show up and the revolt failed when it tried to march to London and kill Elizabeth, putting Mary, Queen of Scots on the throne instead. Mary was supposed to marry the Duke of Norfolk.</p> <p>Elizabeth had managed to raise an army of 14000 men and 450 were executed as a warning, including Northumberland.</p> <p>However, Elizabeth released Norfolk, much to her Privy Council's annoyance, and kept Mary prisoner for 14 more years.</p>	<p>Ridolfi was one of the Pope's spies.</p> <p>In March 1571 he left England to discuss the plot with the Pope, Philip II of Spain and The Duke of Alba, situated in the Netherlands.</p> <p>The plan was to murder Elizabeth, put Mary, Queen of Scots on the throne and marry her to the Duke of Norfolk. He had a letter from the Duke of Norfolk agreeing, and Philip II told Alba to prepare 10 000 men to help.</p> <p>Sir William Cecil uncovered the plan and showed it, with evidence, to Elizabeth.</p> <p>Norfolk and Mary's death warrants were signed and Norfolk executed, but Elizabeth refused to set a date for Mary.</p>
Significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was the first, and most serious rebellious act by English Catholics against Elizabeth I. It prompted harsher treatment of Catholics. For example, Elizabeth set up the Council of the North which effectively curbed Catholicism in the North. It ended the influence of the Percy and Neville families. The treason laws became harsher and the definition of treason became wider. The revolt encouraged the Pope to excommunicate Elizabeth and issue the Papal Bull. This meant that English Catholics were now always going to be under suspicion as they now had two "leaders" who were at odds with each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plot reinforced the threat caused by Mary and the Catholics. It also reinforced the threat of Spain to England, especially with the Duke of Alba based in the Netherlands. Because of the threat from Spain, Elizabeth focussed on improving relationships with France.

	Throckmorton Plot 1583	Babington Plot 1586
What Happened	<p>This plot planned for the French Duke of Guise, the cousin of Mary, Queen of Scots, to invade England, overthrow Elizabeth and free Mary. Catholicism would be restored and Philip II would provide financial support. The Pope approved this plan.</p> <p>Francis Throckmorton was to act as a go-between with Mary.</p> <p>Sir Francis Walsingham, Elizabeth's Secretary of State , uncovered the plot in 1573, finding incriminating evidence in Throckmorton's house.</p> <p>Throckmorton was arrested in November 1573, tortured and eventually executed in May 1574.</p>	<p>This plot encouraged Catholics to rise up against Elizabeth in 1586. The plan was to kill her, for the Duke of Guise to invade England with 60 000 men and put Mary on the throne. The Pope and Philip II supported the plot.</p> <p>Anthony Babington wrote to Mary with details of the plot, but the letter was intercepted by Walsingham, and all 6 Catholics involved were arrested. The six were hanged, drawn and quartered in October 1586.</p> <p>Mary was finally tried by the Privy Council and found guilty. Elizabeth hesitated, but eventually signed the death warrant and Mary was executed on 8th February 1587.</p>
Significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It showed the possible power of Spain and France if they combined against England. • Throckmorton's papers included a list of Catholic sympathisers in England, making the Catholic threat seem even more real. • Life became harder for Catholics. Many fled England and up to 11 000 were imprisoned, under surveillance or house arrest. • 1585, a law was passed making helping a Catholic punishable by death. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships with Spain were now completely broken and the English were helping the Dutch plots against the Spanish. Elizabeth's position was now even more dangerous. • The government became even more determined to crush Catholicism, with 300 arrests in north London alone and 31 executions of priests. • Mary's execution ended any hope of replacing Elizabeth with a Catholic heir.

What happened to Mary, Queen of Scots?

Mary, Queen of Scots, execution: A new Act for the Preservation of the Queen's safety had been passed in 1585. It stated that, in the event of Elizabeth's assassination, Mary was to be barred from the succession. Action could only be taken against Mary after a commission had investigated, held a trial and found her guilty.

The evidence of Walsingham: was enough to ensure Mary, Queen of Scots' execution in October 1586 under the Act.

The threat of Spain: it was becoming clear that Philip II was a major threat and planning an attack. In January 1587, there were rumours that Spanish troops had landed in Wales and Mary had escaped.

Mary's execution: removed a major threat to Elizabeth but gave Philip another excuse to invade.

Mary's execution: Elizabeth was worried about executing Mary and removed herself from it by blaming others, who had taken the death warrant in secret.

What was Elizabeth's foreign policy?

Foreign Policy Aims:

1. Developing and improving trade to benefit England's economy.
2. Protecting England's borders.
3. Protecting the English throne.
4. Avoiding war, which would cost a lot of money and could lead to Elizabeth losing the throne if any rebels supported the enemy.

Why was Spain a problem?

Commercial rivalry.

English merchants were beginning to explore new markets and make new trading partners. They went to Russia, Hamburg, China, Persia, India and Turkey. There were also huge profits to be made in the **New World** (America, officially discovered in 1492).

However there were problems:

- Spain controlled the Netherlands, England's main route to European markets. Antwerp was particularly important to English trade in the Netherlands.
- Spain controlled much of the New World where there were valuable, new trading opportunities.

There were valuable new crops such as sugar cane and tobacco, and huge amounts of silver, however, Florida, the Caribbean, Mexico, Panama, Chile and Peru were all claimed by Spain.

Spain insisted on a licence being bought from them in order to trade. Many English merchants ignored the rules and traded illegally, some times even attacking Spanish ships or ports. These were called **privateers**, like pirates but they had the support of the government. An important example was Francis Drake who stole gold and silver from the Spanish. This greatly angered Philip II in Spain.

What was the significance of Drake?

1. Drake's actions against Spain and her colonies, along with his claim to land in North Carolina, made it clear that England did not accept Spain's dominance of the New World.
2. Drake's circumnavigation gave England a national hero and gave a statement to the rest of the world about England's seafaring strength.
3. Drake boosted the crown's finances at a time when Spain was a growing threat to England.
4. Elizabeth's public knighting of Drake also sent a powerful message to Spain.

How did this affect international relations?

In the 1500s, most major European powers were rivals. They would make alliances with other nations when it was beneficial and break alliances when they were no longer useful.

England was not as wealthy or powerful as Spain nor France. Luckily, Spain and France competed to be the strongest European power and Elizabeth used this rivalry to her advantage. Both countries used England as an ally against the other.

France wanted to be allied with England as it was nearly completely surrounded by Spanish territory.

Spain wanted to be allied with England so that the English fleet could protect its ships sailing to the Netherlands.

However, from 1567, these Spanish ships were sailing with troops and resources to help the Duke of Alba stamp out Protestantism in the Netherlands. This alarmed Elizabeth.

Why was Elizabeth's relationship with the Spanish Netherlands complicated?

Elizabeth was reluctant to help the Dutch rebels because:

1. If she seemed to agree that it was okay for people to rebel against their monarch, Catholics in England might think it was okay to rebel against her, especially if Philip supported them.
2. If Philip invaded, he would have the backing of the Pope which would encourage English Catholics.
3. The Pope's backing would mean that France might side with Spain.
4. This would be costly and England's finances were not as strong as Spain's.

Instead, she chose to help them indirectly by trying to make Spain to return the Netherlands to how they had been governed under an agreement from 1548, giving the Dutch self-government.

She did this in several ways:

- She unofficially encouraged the Dutch to resist the Spanish.
- By allowing Spanish shipping and colonies to come under attack from English privateers.
- By pursuing friendly relations with France.
- By encouraging others to fight the Spanish in the Netherlands.

In the 1570s, Elizabeth offered the promise of a marriage to the heir to the French throne, the Duke of Alencon. She was hoping to frighten Philip of Spain in to giving their independence back.

When it didn't, she used her influence to encourage the Duke to fight the Spanish in the Netherlands. This was a risky strategy because, if the French became too powerful, they might take control of the Netherlands.

The **Spanish Fury** and the **Pacification of Ghent**, 1576:

By 1576, the Spanish government in the Netherlands was bankrupt because the cost of war was too great. The Spanish forces finally mutinied after months without pay, rampaging Antwerp in November 1576.

This was known as **The Spanish Fury**.

The Protestant and Catholics, in all 17 provinces, united together against Spain. They drew up the **Pacification of Ghent** which demanded:

- All Spanish troops were expelled.
- The restoration of political autonomy.
- An end to religious persecution.

Elizabeth sent a loan of £100 000 to help the Dutch rebels, and agreed to send an expeditionary force if necessary.

Philip II sent his brother who agreed to all of the terms.

It seemed to Elizabeth like a victory,

Was this a missed opportunity?

Despite Elizabeth's optimism, 6 months later the Spanish sent a new army to attack the Dutch. Elizabeth hired a mercenary, John Casimir, and gave him money to raise an army of 6000 English and Scottish volunteers to help the Dutch.

This meant she technically remained neutral and was not at war with the Spanish. However, this plan backfired when the mercenaries attacked Catholic Churches. This made Dutch Catholics make peace with Spain.

In 1578, it looked as though the Dutch could actually win, if Elizabeth helped.

However, Elizabeth hesitated and the Dutch asked the French Duke of Alencon instead. By 1579, things were worse. Philip of Spain had sent in the Duke of Parma to lead the Spanish army. He was an excellent commander and soon the Spanish were in control again.

The Duke of Alencon came to England in October. Elizabeth agreed to give him £70 000 for support in the Netherlands.

The Duke of Alencon returned to the Netherlands but failed again.

The Privy Council start to discuss direct action in the Netherlands.

Whilst they are still discussing, the French Catholic League sign the **Treaty of Joinville** with Philip to secure his help against French Protestants.

1580

1581

1582

1583

1584

1585

The Spanish gained Portugal along with it's empire and naval forces. This brought new strength and wealth.

The Duke of Alencon returned to France.

The Duke of Alencon dies and the Protestant Rebel Leader in the Netherlands, William of Orange, was assassinated.

The French King signed up to the French Catholic League's aim of ridding France of Heresy. This effectively made France and Spain allies against Protestantism.

What was the war with Spain, 1585-88?

Because of the Treaty of Joinville, in June 1585, Elizabeth signed the Treaty of Nonsuch with the Protestants, effectively putting England and Spain at war.

England financed 7400 English troops who would work with the rebels' government. She chose her long-term favourite, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester to lead them.

She also ordered Drake to interrupt and spy on Spanish shipping and raid colonies. This didn't achieve much but it really angered Philip II, who vowed to invade England by the end of 1585.

Elizabeth was still hoping to negotiate with Spain and so still did not really take the support seriously; she didn't give Leicester enough men, money or supplies. Despite the navy support, this was a failure.

In January 1586, Leicester accepted the title of Governor General of the Netherlands. Elizabeth was furious as it looked as though she was getting rid of Philip II.

In the summer of 1586, the English forces only managed to slow down the Duke of Parma's troops, however they did managed to capture some forts around the town of Zutphen.

In January 1587, one of the key forts was lost when an English captain and an English governor went over to the Spanish side. This lost a lot of the Dutch's trust.

Leicester was called back in 1586 but returned in 1587. He still didn't have enough money, supplies or men, but managed to stop the Duke of Parma taking deep-water port, Ostend.

What were the reasons for lack of success, 1585-87?

Elizabeth was never fully behind the rebels. She always hoped to negotiate with Spain and never sent enough troops, money or supplies.

Leicester and Elizabeth had different aims. He wanted to free the Netherlands from the Spanish. She wanted to return to how the Netherlands had been governed before 1546.

Relations between the English and the Dutch leaders were poor because of Elizabeth's lack of commitment,.

What was the singeing of the the King of Spain's beard by Drake in 1587?

On the 19th April 1587 Sir Francis Drake entered the harbour of Cadiz on the Spanish coast and led a pre-emptive strike on the Spanish fleet, destroying a number of ships and their supplies, and causing the planned Spanish attack on England to be postponed for over a year.

Drake referred to this successful attack as “Singeing the King of Spain’s beard”.

Why did Philip send the Armada?

Religion-

To get rid of Protestantism, as did the Pope, who offered a reward.

Politics-

The Treaties of Joinville and Nonsuch made invading England legal. If successful, the Spanish empire would be bigger.

Anger:

Drake had annoyed Philip, as had Elizabeth's support for the rebels in the Netherlands.

Circumstances-

Spain was strong because it now had Portugal in it's empire as well as the successful Duke of Parma in the Netherlands.

What was Philip's plan?

- 130 ships
- 2400 guns
- 30 000 men
- Commanded by Duke Medina Sidonia
- Sail to the Netherlands to meet The Duke of Parma and his fleet.
- Together sail 27 000 troops to Kent.
- Parma would march with the troops to London.
- Get rid of Elizabeth for a Catholic government controlled by Spain.

Why did the Armada fail?

Elizabeth had been making 24 lighter, faster galleons for years.

The Spanish did not have enough cannon balls.

The English cannon were better organised to fire more often from further away.

Drake's raid on Cadiz meant that the Armada was delayed a year and was sent with quickly put together resources because of the amount that Drake had destroyed.

By the time they fought the English, 10 weeks after setting sail, the remaining Spanish food was rotting in the barrels.

The two fleets struggled to communicate and so did not meet up at the right time.

The Duke of Parma's ships were all small and hard to load.

The English saw the Armada coming.

The English chased the Spanish up the channel, after the Battle of the Isle of Wight, rather than having more battles.

On 6th August, the English sent **fireships** in to the Spanish fleet at Calais. The Spanish panicked.

The Spanish were still confused during the Battle of Gravelines 8th August, and still without the extra ships from the Netherlands.

How important was the Armada?

Elizabeth looked strong and was able to say that God favoured Protestants.

The English felt strong and proud – this gave them the confidence in the world as a naval power.

Elizabeth felt more able to make important decisions and was less hesitant.

Because the Spanish Armada was destroyed by harsh weather as it headed north, Spain was much weaker.

The Anglo-Dutch alliance became stronger.

Increased Naval power meant the English could trade and explore more easily.