I From Commercial Competition to Strategic Rivalry to War: The Evolution of the Anglo-Dutch Rivalry, 1609-52

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The increasing recognition that systemic power distributions and related variables are theoretically incomplete and empirically usable to account for much of the variance in the outbreak or expansion of international conflict has led to a shift away from structural-systemic models in the quantitative-empirical study of international conflict. This shift includes a broader conception of the sources of conflict and greater interest in the impact of domestic structures and processes on international conflict behavior. It also defines the dependent variable to include militarized disputes as well as interstate war, and it involves an increased interest in the dynamic processes through which conflicts escalate from one level to the next. There has also been a shift to the dyadic level of analysis, in terms of explaining both bilateral interactions between states and the impact of dyadic interactions on broader systemic-level patterns (Bremer 1993).

One of the more visible dyadic-level research programs concerns enduring rivalries. This has been driven by the assumptions that: the history of a relationship has an important impact on current security policies and conflict behavior, that conflict behavior is inherently dynamic, that episodes of crises and wars cannot be treated as isolated data points, that states often learn from the behavior and outcomes of earlier crises and
wars, and that the dynamics of strategic interaction are different for rivalries than for other types of dyads. One basic hypothesis is that disputes between states with a history of intense conflictual interactions are more likely to escalate to war than are disputes between other states (Goertz and Diehl 1992: 1996).

Although the enduring rivalry research program is based on the premise that rivalries are inherently dynamic and evolve over time, much of the early work on rivalries utilized research designs that consisted of essentially static cross-sectional comparisons between enduring rival and other dyads. If the history of interactions matters, however, then the dyad should display different patterns of behavior at different stages of its evolution. For this reason the empirical demonstration that enduring rivalries behave differently than do other dyads should include longitudinal comparisons within a given dyad as well as cross-sectional comparisons across different types of dyads.1

The study of enduring rivalries has recently shifted from definitional issues and static comparisons to theoretical explanations of the evolution of rivalries. Our analysis differs from others in several respects. Most studies of rivalries conceive of rivalries as strategic and militarized competitions between states, downplay the role of the domestic factors, under- take large-N statistical studies of international rivalries since 1815, and utilize cross-sectional research designs that compare patterns of interactions within rivalries with those of non-rival dyads.2 Our broader definition of rivalry as a hostile, competitive relationship includes both commercial and militarized rivalries.3 We emphasize domestic economic and political as well as dyadic and systemic sources of behavior, and we undertake a longitudinal study of a single rivalry in an attempt to understand broader theoretical patterns.

The Relevance of the Anglo-Dutch Rivalry

The rivalry between England and the United Provinces of the Netherlands in the seventeenth century provides an excellent vehicle for the study of the evolution of international rivalries. The relationship between England and the United Provinces changed from a cooperative alliance involving English intervention in support of the Dutch in their revolt against Spain in the sixteenth century, to Anglo-Dutch commercial competition, to strategic rivalry, and then to three naval wars in 1652–54, 1665–67, and 1672–74. Although the Anglo-Dutch bilateral rivalry ended by the 1680s with cooperation against the growing French threat and with the personal union of England and the Netherlands under William of Orange, the commercial rivalry persisted for another century.

Our primary interest in the Anglo-Dutch rivalry derives from the fact that it was a commercial rivalry that escalated to a strategic rivalry and culminated in war. Wolf (1970, 37) describes the first Anglo-Dutch Naval War (1652–54) as "the first wholly commercial war in modern times," and Kennedy (1987a, 43) argues that "the Anglo-Dutch wars, more than any others fought by the British in the past four centuries, were trade wars." Nonetheless, the rivalry persisted for nearly a half-century as an adversarial but constrained competition without any violent interactions until the outbreak of the first naval war. Our basic question is why the commercial rivalry that had been competitive but peaceful for fifty years evolved into a period of intense warfare. Not all commercial rivalries become strategic rivalries, and not all strategic rivalries escalate to war.

Why did war break out in 1652 but not before? More generally, under what conditions are commercial rivalries most likely to escalate to strategic rivalries and to war?

These questions are important for contemporary policy as well as for theory and for history. The militarization of commercial rivalries was a frequent source of war in the seventeenth century (Howard 1976, ch. 3; Luard 1986; Holsti 1991), and it could again become important in the contemporary world, in which economic competition among advanced industrial powers is becoming increasingly salient. Although a great power war is highly improbable in the foreseeable future, one of the least unlikely of all the unlikely paths through which one might occur is through the militarization of a commercial rivalry, and it is imperative that we begin to understand the conditions and processes through which this scenario might come about.4 The Anglo-Dutch case offers one of history's classic examples of how this can happen.

There are other aspects of the Anglo-Dutch rivalry that further enhance its theoretical and policy relevance. The clash of economic ideologies between Dutch liberal internationalism and English mercantilism parallels contemporary theoretical debates between liberalism and realism. It also raises the question of the relationship between ideas and interests and whether ideas have an autonomous impact on policy. In addition, the asymmetry between Dutch economic power and English naval power provides an interesting lesson in the politics of asymmetrical military and economic power. As one Dutch diplomat stated on the eve of war, "the English are about to stack a mountain of gold; we are about to stack a mountain of iron" (Wilson 1978, 60).
This is also an interesting case for the analysis of domestic political structures and processes. Each side went through several regime changes, and this helps us to analyze how regime type and regime change affect rivalry. The role of domestic pressure groups is also striking, particularly on the English side, and some analysts regard the first and particularly the second Anglo-Dutch War as one of history's clearest cases of economic pressure groups influencing international decisions for war (Wilson 1978). Finally, the fact that the United Provinces was a highly decentralized federal republic and that England was ruled for a time by Parliament makes the first Anglo-Dutch War an interesting case of two institutionally decentralized political systems that went to war with each other. This has important implications for institutional theory, based theories of the democratic peace (Morgan and Campbell 1991; Russett 1993).

Our purposes in this study are descriptive, interpretive, and theoretical, and our method is primarily inductive. Our aim is not to test hypotheses on rivalry. Rather, we use those hypotheses to guide an interpretation of a key historical case, and we use the causal patterns uncovered in this case as a means of illustrating and refining existing theoretical propositions and suggesting new hypotheses. By examining the applicability of existing hypotheses in a single case, we can better understand the causal mechanisms that drive them and the contextual variables that might affect their validity. A detailed case study will also facilitate the exploration of the role of domestic variables that are often difficult to operationalize and measure across a large number of cases.

Because the Anglo-Dutch rivalry is rather unfamiliar to most political scientists, and because this is our first cut at this case, we must describe the rivalry in some detail before we can interpret it meaningfully or consider its broader theoretical implications. Thus, after a brief overview of some of the leading hypotheses regarding the origins and escalation of international rivalries, we describe the evolution of the rivalry from its origins up to the outbreak of the first Anglo-Dutch Naval War in 1652. We then interpret and explain the rivalry in terms of the hypotheses extracted from the theoretical literature. Finally, we relate these patterns to findings from the quantitative-empirical literature on rivalries and consider the broader implications of these patterns for a theory of rivalries.

Hypotheses on Rivalries

Because the theoretical literature on rivalries is relatively small, we must look to the larger literature on international conflict for hypotheses on the origins and escalation of international rivalries. Hypotheses on rivalry are not always congruent with hypotheses on the causes of war, however, and care must be taken in extracting these propositions. Here we can only briefly identify some of the key propositions, organized by levels of analysis (Waltz 1959), and leave a complete inventory and more detailed assessment of causal paths for another time.

Realist theories suggest generally that the dynamics of rivalries are a function of the distribution of power in the international system. More specifically, neorealist theory (Waltz 1979) implies that bipolarity is a sufficient condition for a rivalry among the two leading states in the system. The emergence of a hierarchically organized bloc or empire will dampen former rivalries within it, whereas the collapse of empires facilitates the reemergence of old rivalries. Rivalries can also emerge under multipolarity, but they are less likely to be sustained over time as the distribution of power and alliances shift. Balance of power theory implies that the formation of blocking coalitions against hegemonic threats takes precedence over all other foreign policy concerns, which implies that rivalries are least likely to persist or escalate if there is a third state that threatens to achieve a dominant position in the system.

One can also identify other systemic or dyadic-level hypotheses on the origins and escalation of rivalries. Recent research on the dyadic balance of power suggests that rivalries are most likely to escalate to war when the power differential between two rivals is narrowing and approaching the point of a power transition (Organski and Kugler 1980; Geller 1993). External shocks or changes in an interacting rivalry with overlapping membership can significantly affect the dynamics of a rivalry, and some argue that these factors are nearly necessary conditions for the origins and termination of rivalries (Goertz and Diehl 1995; Diehl and Goertz 1994). Conflicts over territory (particularly strategic territory) or scarce resources also facilitate the development of rivalries (Vasquez 1993; Chiossi and North 1975). Economic interdependence and increasing levels of trade may dampen the escalatory potential of rivalries because each side has a stake in cooperation to maintain the gains from trade (liberal theory), although asymmetrical economic interdependence may tempt one side to engage in economic coercion to exploit its advantages and may contribute to the escalation of a rivalry (realist theory).

Domestic variables can also contribute to the origins and escalation of international rivalries. Regimes of certain types may be less likely to become involved in rivalries with each other. Institutionally decentralized states have more checks and balances that might block escalatory actions,
but they also give parochial groups more opportunities to push for protectionist policies, which can lead to retaliatory measures, trade wars, and conflict spirals. Demands for protectionist pressures tend to increase during economic downturns and when mercantilist economic ideologies are popular. Social, political, and economic conditions that reduce the political security of elites in power—including economic downturns, ethnic conflict, and unpopular policies—more generally—create incentives for external scapegoating (Levy 1989a) and thus contribute to the escalation of rivalries. Regime change can lead to incentives for external scapegoating (and therefore to the escalation of rivalries) as a means of gaining legitimacy for the new regime and its leaders. The new regime can also bring to power a political elite with different beliefs about how best to deal with particular rivals. Once a rivalry begins, hard-line domestic pressures can contribute to entrapment in the rivalry, a conflict spiral, and a "lock-in" effect.19

There are also individual-level influences on the dynamics of rivalries. The intensity of a rivalry is a function in part of the beliefs of political leaders regarding the nature of international politics, the intentions of the adversary, and optimal strategies for advancing interests while avoiding costly wars. These beliefs can change in response to a structural change in the international system or dyadic relationship, to a regime change that brings to power new leaders with different beliefs, or to learning from historical experience in general and from the history of the rivalry in particular (Leng 1983; Levy 1994). The ideological or religious beliefs of political leaders and the personal relationships between leaders of adversary states can also affect the origins, evolution, and termination of rivalries.

The Anglo-Dutch Rivalry, 1609–52: A Historical Analysis

We divide this rivalry into five distinct stages: (1) 1609–21: the Twelve Years' Truce and the rise of Dutch economic supremacy; (2) 1621–47: the Dutch Spanish War and the expansion of English trade; (3) 1647–49: the end of the Dutch-Spanish War, Dutch economic recovery, and the establishment of the Commonwealth in England; (4) 1650–51: English naval expansion and the beginning of the strategic rivalry; and (5) 1651–52: the English Navigation Act, the conflict spiral, and the outbreak of war. Before we begin the historical analysis, however, it will be useful to summarize the political and economic context of the Anglo-Dutch rivalry, with particular emphasis on the complex political system of the United Provinces and the different economic systems of the two rivals.
rights and economic prosperity of the individual provinces and cities and feared the possibility that the House of Orange might come to control the republic. The stadtholder symbolically represented the need for central leadership and control. He also frequently urged the continuation of war against Spain and intervention in support of the royal forces in the English civil war (Moland 1966, 185–86), which the regents generally opposed.

The strength of the Dutch Republic derived from its trade, industry, and finance. By the 1620s the United Provinces had become the leading seafaring country in the world on the basis of its supremacy in the carrying trade between northern and western Europe, its leading role in the colonial trades, and the dominance of its fishing industry in general and the herring fisheries in particular (Israel 1995, ch. 14). By the mid-seventeenth century the fishing industry employed nearly a fifth of the population of the United Provinces (Wilson 1978, 34; Holsti 1991, 53), and by stimulating the Dutch shipping industry, the fisheries contributed significantly to the development of trade and naval power (Wilson 1978, 34; Israel 1989, 23–24; Wallerstein 1982). As Wilson (1978, 41) notes, the Dutch "had managed to capture something like three-quarters of the traffic in Baltic grain, between half and three-quarters of the traffic in timber, and between a third and a half of that in Swedish metals. Three-quarters of the salt from France and Portugal that went to the Baltic was carried in Dutch bottoms. More than half the cloth imported to the Baltic area was made or finished in Holland. The flow of colonial wares into European consumption was also to a large extent in their hands."

The commercial strength of the United Provinces reinforced the state’s financial power by increasing the reliability of its credit. After the outbreak of the revolt against Spain, the Dutch shifted commercial and financial activities from Antwerp to Amsterdam to escape Spanish control, and the Bank of Amsterdam soon became the principal money market in Europe (Wallerstein 1982, 95–96, 107). This access to easy credit was an important component of Dutch strength and staying power in wartime (Kenney 1987b, 68–69; Rasler and Thompson 1989, 99–100).

England was mainly an agricultural nation, and its world trade centered on the export of unfinished cloth and wool—the finest in Europe (Glamann 1974, 501)—which accounted for at least three-quarters of English export value in the early seventeenth century and which went primarily to northern Europe (Wilson 1984, 53, 69). Most English cloth was exported to Holland for finishing and dying, after which it was reexported back to England and throughout Europe; this process resulted in the loss of over one-half of the value added in cloth production for England (Wilson 1978, 29). The textile industry in Leiden began to grow rapidly in the late fifteenth century, and by the 1640s the Dutch had replaced the English as the leading suppliers of textiles to the Baltic (Israel 1989, 143).

The differing economies of England and the United Provinces left them vulnerable to external developments in different ways. Not only did England lose revenue to the Dutch for the finishing of raw cloth, but the fact that its prosperity rested primarily on a single commodity hindered England from adjusting to economic contractions and foreign competition. This situation had implications for state power. Although the woolen export trade contributed to a favorable balance of trade, the fact that the Dutch served as intermediaries in the cloth trade meant that the English cloth industry contributed little to the development of the English shipping industry or the navy (Wilson 1984, 38).

The United Provinces had its own vulnerabilities. Its prosperity depended on free trade and unobstructed navigation on the high seas and was therefore extremely vulnerable to any disruptions, including political interference or the outbreak of war. The Dutch shipping industry was also vulnerable because the principal fishing grounds (the "Great Fishery") lay off the British coast. The movements of fishing fleets in these grounds were carefully regulated through a series of edicts (Wilson 1978, 33), but these edicts were always open to challenge from England. More generally, as Kennedy (1987a, 51) notes, "The whole economy of the United Provinces had been built upon its role as a trader, transporter, middleman, producer of finished goods and financier, so that if its shipping was stopped its credit in the world would collapse and it would be ruined."

1609–21: The Twelve Years’ Truce

The conclusion of the Twelve Years’ Truce in 1609 brought a period of peace to the United Provinces and Spain for the first time in four decades. With peace came an economic boom that consolidated the Dutch position of primacy in global production, commerce, and finance and that set the stage for the Anglo-Dutch commercial rivalry (Wallerstein 1980, ch. 2; Kennedy 1987b, 68–69; Israel 1989, 12–79; Israel 1995, ch. 14).

The rivalry included a number of key issues. One concerned the distribution of the carrying trade in the Baltic and from northern Europe to the Iberian Peninsula. England had played the leading role in breaking the Hanse monopoly on trade in the Baltic and northern Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but a combination of technologies...
ical superiority in transport costs, better organization, and favorable political alignments allowed the Dutch win the race to take advantage of the decline in Hanse power (Stone 1947, 53–54; Israel 1989, 12–79; Conynebeare 1987, ch. 5; Rowe 1994, 30–32), something that England never accepted. A second issue was the increasing colonial competition between England and the United Provinces in southeast Asia and the Americas. A third issue concerned whether the English or the Dutch would perform the finishing process on raw English white cloth (broadcloth) for the purposes of export, and it was this that triggered an Anglo-Dutch trade war in 1615. A fourth issue concerned Dutch access to the fishing grounds off the English coast, which raised important questions regarding the freedom of the seas.

Disatisfaction over loss of revenue to the Dutch for the finishing of raw cloth led James I (1603–25) to ban the export of unfinished cloth in 1614 (Conynebeare 1987, 132). This led first to Dutch economic reprisals and a ban on the import of all dyed and dressed cloths and then to an English embargo on the export of wool to the Dutch Republic, which worsened the position of the English textiles industry in northern Europe and James’s own financial predicament. In 1617, after cloth exports had fallen by a third (Israel 1989, 118; Wilson 1984, 73), the Privy Council rescinded the original proposition, once again allowing the export of undyed and unfinished cloth to the United Provinces. This was not the last of the protectionist measures against the Dutch, however, and there were periodic bans on the export of wool and on the import of Baltic goods through Holland in the early 1620s (Conynebeare 1987, 132; Hinton 1959, 162–63), but none of these measures had significant consequences until the Navigation Act of 1651.

1621–47: Dutch-Spanish War and the Expansion of English Trade

While English resentment against the Dutch simmered, the breakdown of the Twelve Years’ War and the resumption of the Dutch-Spanish War ushered in a new phase in the Anglo-Dutch rivalry. The Dutch-Spanish War led to a Spanish embargo that isolated the Dutch from the Iberian and Mediterranean trade, precipitated a decline in Dutch commercial fortunes in Europe, forced the Dutch to restructure their international trade, and allowed England to regain some old markets from the Dutch. The Dutch had made the largest gains in the highly competitive Mediterranean market during 1609–21 (Israel 1989, 97–101, 122; Wallerstein 1982, 104), but this ended with the renewal of war. England was the principal beneficiary of the Dutch collapse and now dominated the trade in wool and colonial dyestuff from Spain to northern Europe (Israel 1989, 154). In a reversal from the earlier period, after 1621 the Dutch could obtain Spanish wool and Iberian dyestuff only from England (Israel 1989, 154), so that the Dutch were now dependent on England for supplying their profitable textile industry. In addition, there was no easily accessible alternative to Spain as the main source of silver, which provoked the bullion to support Dutch trade with the East Indies, and the Dutch turned to the Japanese for silver (Israel 1989, 130, 171).

The embargoes placed a stranglehold on the flow of trade between the Baltic and Mediterranean, and the number of ships making that voyage dropped from 1,005 in the 1614–20 period to only 52 in 1621–27 (Israel 1989, 136). The loss of its significant market share in southern Europe led the United Provinces to restructure its trade and promote economic expansion in other areas of the world, and it attempted to monopolize the Baltic and East and West Indian trade.

Following an agreement in 1619, the English and Dutch had worked together to stifle the Portuguese empire in the Far East, although the Dutch had continually used their superior capability in the region to corner the lucrative spice market. This growing distrust exploded in February 1623 with a Dutch rubber-stamp trial and death sentences for ten Englishmen charged with plotting to blow up a Dutch fort (Israel 1989, 176). The “Ambon Massacre” incited a great outcry in England and provided a symbol of Dutch hostility for later generations.

With England’s prosperity growing, in 1635 Charles I (1625–49) chose to revive the king of England’s claim as the exclusive sovereign of the “British Seas,” which referred to the bodies of water surrounding the British Isles, usually including the coastal waters from the North Sea, the English Channel, and the Dover Straits (Fulton 1968). The doctrine of maritime sovereignty and “honors of the flag” required a traditional salute, lowering the topsail, and striking the flag for any vessel entering an English ship in the British Seas. Charles’s claim coincided with the publication of Mare Clausum Seu Dominium Maris, which John Selden had written at the behest of James I to provide a historical and legal justification of his claims and to counter Grotius’s treatise Mare Liberum in 1608 (Wilson 1978, 35–38). The English insistence of their right to sovereignty of the seas and the continual search and seizure of Dutch shipping posed a serious threat to the Dutch fishing industry, to the principle of the freedom of the seas, and hence to the continued prosperity of the United Provinces.
Charles made some efforts to enforce his claims as lord of the seas, and English ships occasionally confronted Dutch fishing vessels in a few minor incidents. But Charles’s efforts, like those of his predecessors, were generally unsuccessful because of the absence of a navy strong enough to enforce those claims, and as a result Charles failed to prevent the Dutch from getting a firm foothold in English trade and shipping (Wilson 1978, 54). The impotence of the English navy was dramatically demonstrated in the Battle of the Downs on October 21, 1639, where an English naval contingent stood idle by while Admiral Tromp’s Dutch fleet decimated a Spanish fleet that had sought protection in the home waters of its English ally.

England’s weakness on the seas derived from administrative inefficiencies and from the ongoing political struggle between the Parliament and the king that prevented James and then Charles from raising sufficient capital to outfit and maintain a substantial fleet. The economic burden of the ongoing war with France led to an escalation of the political struggle, and Charles dissolved Parliament in 1628 and ruled without it for the next eleven years. The end of the wars with France (1629) and Spain (1630) reduced some of the financial burdens on Charles, but this was insufficient. Charles instituted Ship-money in 1634, an ancient law that held seaports as partially responsible for the maintenance of the national fleet, but his extension of the law to landlocked towns met with fierce opposition. Charles was forced to recall Parliament (April–May 1640) to meet the financial strains of the first and second Bishop Wars (1639–40) and the Scottish seizure of English territory, but Parliament impeded Charles’s efforts to raise the armed forces necessary to suppress the Irish rebellion that erupted in the fall of 1640.

Thus by 1640 Charles was confronted by the English navy’s inability to enforce the sovereignty of the seas, the humiliation at the Battle of the Downs and the mutual recognition by England and Spain that the other was not a reliable ally, the ongoing difficulties in raising money at home, the Dutch seizure of Brazil from Spain, the Portuguese declaration of independence in 1640, the Scottish seizure of territory during the Bishop Wars (1639–40), and continuing domestic unrest. These problems led Charles to reverse course in his foreign policy in 1641 by marrying his daughter Mary to William II, the prince of Orange and son of Frederick Henry. Charles believed that the marriage would promote peaceful relations as well as economic cooperation with the Dutch, reduce the need to enforce ancient English legal claims to the Narrow Seas, and free Charles to concentrate on the increasingly troublesome domestic political situation.15

Evolution of Anglo-Dutch Rivalry

The growing rift between Parliament and the crown was reflected in the split between the Royalists and Independents in the House of Commons. By the summer of 1642 both sides were raising money and forces for a civil war, which started in October. Northern and west-central England generally supported the king, whereas East Anglia, London, and the south supported Parliament. Charles left London, and Parliament continued to pass ordinances but without the seal of the crown. The war continued until the decisive battle of Naseby in June 1645; Charles surrendered to the Scottish army in May 1646, thus ending the first Civil War (Ashton 1979; Hirst 1986).

1647–49: Economic and Political Restructuring

The termination of the Dutch-Spanish War and of the long Spanish embargo led to a total transformation in the Dutch and English economies and a reversal in the relationship between them. This is not surprising given that the United Provinces had three times the shipping capacity of England and more total shipping tonnage than England, France, Spain, Portugal, and the Germanies combined (Wallenstein 1981: 102). The Dutch, free from the constraints of war, reclaimed their dominant role in the Mediterranean and elsewhere and enjoyed a period of unprecedented prosperity. The Spanish flow of silver was quickly rerouted from England to Amsterdam (Israel 1989, 200). Whereas Spain was England’s most important trading partner in the 1630s, providing a market for a large number of English textile products while English ships hauled the bulk of Spanish wool exports, by 1650 the United Provinces had recouped 80 percent of the Spanish wool export (Israel 1989, 200). This reversal in the balance of trade in favor of England, whose commercial prosperity during the previous two decades had been based on the impact of the Dutch-Spanish War and the Spanish embargo on the Dutch trade system, saw its own trade collapse once those favorable military and political conditions had changed. Con- tractions in English trade helped to trigger a general depression from 1649 to 1651 that struck England especially hard in the context of the second Civil War (Israel 1989, 199; Wilson 1978, 54; Cooper 1970, 235). As Jones (1966, 47) argues, "relatively, the English position had never been worse; all the gains which had been made in the years before 1642 had been wiped out."

The second Civil War, which followed Parliament’s renunciation of allegiance to the king in January 1648 and rebellions in Kent and South Wales two months later, was simultaneously a war between Scotland and England, a war between the Royalists and the Roundheads of Parliament,
and a war between the moderate Presbyterians who sought reconciliation with the crown and the Independents under the leadership of Cromwell and the New Model Army. Cromwell defeated a Scottish invasion of England led by Charles in the summer of 1648. After Charles was seized by the army in early December, a hundred or so moderate members of Parliament were blocked from entering the House of Commons (Pride's Purge). This began the "Rump Parliament" (or the "Rump"), and the execution of Charles I followed a month later.

1649-51: English Naval Expansion and the Beginning of the Strategic Rivalry

Domestic turmoil continued, and the army suppressed Royalist uprisings in Ireland and Scotland, defeated a Scottish invasion under Charles II as the newly crowned "king of the Scots," and waged a naval campaign against the king's supporters and privateers to block external support for Royalist forces. At the same time, Parliament was fighting an undeclared naval war against France. France itself was going through a period of internal crisis (the Fronde) and a continuation of its war with Spain. While openly assisting the Royalists and receiving Charles II as a welcomed guest, France issued in August 1649 an edict prohibiting trade with England. This was to be enforced until (among other things) Charles was restored to the throne (Korr 1975, 12). France then placed an embargo on English cloth (Cooper 1978, 235). Parliament quickly retaliated with its own embargo on wines, wool, and silk from France, fearing that France was going to assist the Stuarts and reintroduce Catholicism back into England (Korr 1975, 13). Thus began a six-year Anglo-French maritime conflict that saw both sides seizing goods and ships and that directly affected the Dutch, who had become the neutral carriers for both. The new Commonwealth was denied diplomatic recognition and greeted with hostility throughout Europe. Confronted with these internal and external pressures, Parliament's first priority was to consolidate its position at home and abroad, gain foreign recognition, prevent foreign intervention, and protect the trade and shipping that provided the economic foundation of the new regime and its success in the civil war (Groenveld 1987, 554; Jones 1966, 29). The goals of the Rump Parliament were reflected in the Council of State's orders to the navy in February 1649: destroy the Royalist fleet under Prince Rupert; prevent any foreign interference, which meant policing English waters to enforce the sovereignty of the seas and to intercept potential supplies to Royalists in Ireland; and finally, protect English shipping and fisheries (Capp 1989, 60).

The Rump's new policy rested on the central assumption that a revitalized navy could be a key instrument that would bring honor and prestige to the new regime and persuade other governments to come to terms with the new ruling body in power. To this end the Commonwealth embarked in March on a significant expansion and restructuring of the entire English Navy. Between 1649 and 1651 it had doubled the size of the navy by building 41 new vessels, consuming more than half the government's total income in the process, and it added 150 more ships over the next decade (Marcus 1961, 136–37; Kennedy 1987a, 46).

The Commonwealth's shipbuilding program paid huge dividends. For the first time since the emergence of the United Provinces 1579, the English had between 1649 and 1664 obtained a level of relative parity or held a clear preponderance in numbers of warships (Modelski and Thompson 1988). This "New Model Navy" would help to consolidate the gains of the civil wars and provide the Commonwealth with the necessary international leverage to gain legitimacy. The existence of a war fleet that equaled that of the Dutch instilled a new confidence in Parliament and a more assertive foreign policy, as the Rump was determined to protect its trade and shipping interests and to regain the commercial position that it had lost (Wilson 1978, 52; Capp 1989, 72).

The dramatic increase in the size of the Royal Navy was driven by the influence of domestic interests as well as by external strategic interests. London merchants sat on key committees of Parliament, and consequently merchant interests became closely linked with parliamentary interests and exerted considerable influence over both foreign and maritime affairs (Groenveld 1987, 548, 559; Marcus 1961, 130, Farnell 1964; Wilson 1984, ch. 8; Capp 1989, 50–51; Holsti 1991, 63).

The decades-old Anglo-Dutch economic rivalry was exacerbated by the escalation of the ongoing strategic dispute over England's claim to the sovereignty of the seas and by a new political dispute that derived from the possibility of a claim by the House of Orange to the throne at a legitimate Stuart heir after Mary's marriage to William. These two issues created an explosive mixture and transformed what was primarily an economic rivalry into a struggle between English strategic-political interests and Dutch commercial-navigation interests. The larger parliamentary fleet began to enforce more strictly the English claim to sovereignty of the seas. This was driven in large part by the Rump's external and internal security concerns and particularly by the need to interdict external support for the Royalist cause. Successful interdiction would deprive the Royalists of badly needed men and materi-
als, reduce the threat from Scotland and Ireland, and reinforce the symbol of English supremacy at sea, which would in turn bolster the internal and external legitimacy of the Rump (Marcus 1661, 131; Rowe 1978). Parliament's increasingly aggressive foreign policy and extralegal means that it adopted in the search and seizure of Dutch shipping created growing resentment in the United Provinces. Because it was difficult to determine whether a ship was heading for Royalist destinations, mere suspicion was sufficient for search, and this led to a number of incidents. Still, the Dutch tried to accommodate concerning the 'honors of the flag.' Their rules of engagement were that a Dutch captain should attempt to avoid an English vessel, but if that were impossible, he was to render the salute but retain the right to answer force with force if necessary (Groenewald 1987, 547–50).

Disputes over trade and the honors of the flag were exacerbated by other events and by the failure of diplomatic efforts. Seeing the execution of Charles as the beginning of a period of stable government after years of civil war, the English were surprised and resentful at the hostile reaction of Europe and particularly of the Dutch (regents as well as Orangists). In May 1649 Royalist sympathizers assassinated Doria, a member of an English diplomatic mission to The Hague that aimed to establish diplomatic relations between the Commonwealth and the United Provinces. Stadholder William II's failure to take action against the perpetrators infuriated the English, and after further failed diplomatic efforts, Parliament expelled Joachimi, the Dutch ambassador, in October of 1650.

In the meantime there was a political crisis in the United Provinces. William had known that the regents would try to undermine his authority and was eager renew the war with Spain as soon as possible. After the regicide he considered an attack against the new English regime but was opposed by the regents, who called for a reduction in military spending by two-thirds, playing on the popular belief that war was inimical to trade and prosperity. William responded by touring the leading cities of Holland with a contingent of four hundred troops in an attempt to intimidate the town councils into rejecting the proposed cutbacks. He was coldly received, blocked from entering Amsterdam, and faced a new challenge to his constitutional authority as stadholder to determine policy for the Dutch Republic. The sentiment in Holland was captured by the comment in the Estates of Holland that "in peace, at any rate, there is no need for a stadholder" (Malan 1966, 322).

William retaliated by imprisoning six members of the estates and ordered William Frederik, his cousin and the stadholder of Friesland, to attack.
The negotiations were also affected by two other intervening events. In March 1651 Admiral Tromp was instructed to sail to the Isles of Scilly, formally request the islands' governor to release all ships and crews being held in their ports, and use force if only if his request was denied (Rowen 1978, 55–56; Groenveld 1987, 563). Parliament saw Tromp's expedition as an attempt to capture the islands and use them as potential trading bases and dispatched Admiral Blake to protect English interests, but the incident did not escalate further (Groenveld 1987, 563).

At the same time, the Dutch Republic concluded a treaty with Denmark, which granted special and exclusive rates for Dutch ships passing through the Danish sound in return for 140,000 guilders. London protested this as a Dutch attempt to capture the Baltic market and deny it to others. The Dutch stood firm, for they viewed the Baltic as the most central of all their markets for their trade and prosperity, and "they were prepared to go further towards war to maintain their advantage here than perhaps anywhere else" (Wilson 1978, 51).

It was at this time—in response to economic and political pressures, the failure of negotiations to resolve the gradually escalating conflict with the Dutch, and the failure of its diplomatic effort to establish some form of alliance or political confederation in particular—that Parliament passed the first Navigation Act on October 9, 1651. This act required that merchandise imported into England come directly from the country of origin and that it be transported in English vessels or in ships of the country of origin. No goods from Asia, Africa, or America could be imported in foreign ships. No salted fish or related products could be imported other than those caught by English ships and prepared by English fishermen. The Navigation Act aimed to stimulate English shipping and trade, cut into the Dutch position of economic dominance, establish England as the new economic center of western Europe, strengthen the navy and thus the capability to enforce English sovereignty of the seas, and respond to the demands for protection from increasingly powerful merchant and shipping interests at home (Wilson 1978, 52–58; Farrell 1964; Kennedy 1987a, 46–47). Strategic, economic, and domestic political considerations were all involved and difficult to disentangle.

The Navigation Act triggered enormous hostility in Holland, which sent another mission to try to repeat the act and negotiate a general agreement with England. As a sign of good faith and prudent statesmanship, the States of Holland persuaded the States-General to stop all merchant convoys from leaving Dutch ports for England during negotiations to avoid any incident that might further disrupt the already strained relations between the two parties. This effort was undercut by the English Council of State's insistence that negotiations could not resume until the Netherlands paid in full reparation claims for all the wrongs Englishmen had suffered at the hands of the Dutch in Greenland, the East Indies, Brazil, and elsewhere over the preceding three decades (Wilson 1978, 58). These English demands for reparations were a humiliating slap in the face for the Dutch, who felt that any concessions on this matter would seri­ously undercut both their bargaining position and the principle that guaranteed the right of neutrals in wartime.

The tensions in these negotiations were exacerbated by increasingly frequent incidents at sea. Parliament's newly created naval power led to an expansion in the domain over which it claimed the title of sovereignty of the seas (beyond the narrow seas) and to increasingly aggressive actions by English admirals. The Rump's intention to enforce a claim to the sovereignty of the seas in the Atlantic as well as in home waters was demonstrated in early 1652 when an English frigate off the Barbary Coast fired at three Dutch warships and forced them to drop their topsails in salute (Carp 1989, 76). Incidents such as this were increasingly common, and following 1647 the quantity and value of shipping losses to the United Provinces had grown at an alarming rate, as suggested in table 1.1. By 1652 the practice of search and seizure had reached an intolerable level, and all the seizures of Dutch ships were by parliamentary action.

In March 1652, in an atmosphere of increasing tension, the United Provinces outfitted an additional 150 ships "intended solely for the defence and preservation of free navigation and commerce." The Dutch leadership carefully selected its captains and issued prudent orders about

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ship Losses</th>
<th>Monetary Loss (in guilders)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1647</td>
<td>10 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1649</td>
<td>25 (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1649</td>
<td>41 (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1650</td>
<td>61 (51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1651</td>
<td>140 (126)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1652 (June- July)</td>
<td>106 (106)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>383 (325)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*The two figures in this column represent the number of ships seized and brought into port and the number of ships seized by parliamentary forces above.*
saling English warships to avert any incidents (Greenfield 1987, 565). Although Dutch ambassadors tried to reassure the English as to the defensive aims of their actions, the Dutch greatly underestimated the consequences of their own actions and failed to anticipate English perception of the Dutch military buildup as a hostile and aggressive action.

England responded by reviving all its old claims, including the sovereignty of the British seas. They demanded that the Dutch pay tribute for fishing, concede "honors of the flag," and relinquish their claim to the right to carry belligerent goods under the protection of a neutral flag (Wilson 1978, 58-59). Both sides undertook preparatory military measures. In May 1652 Admiral Tromp was issued orders to maintain open trading routes, especially the English Channel waterway, to secure the safe passage of the Spanish Silver Fleet and the homeward-bound Dutch East Indies Fleet later that summer (Padfield 1979, 188; Wilson 1978, 59).

On May 29, on the way to Calais and attempting to avoid an English fleet, Tromp encountered Dutch warships and found that the English admiral Blake had just stopped and searched a Dutch convoy. Tromp charged course and headed toward Dover, where he ran into Blake's fleet. Accounts of what followed differ, but apparently Tromp lowered his top-sails halfway but did not strike his flag. Blake's shot over his mast sparked a two-hour battle (Wilson 1978, 59). The English suffered six casualties, but the Dutch received the brunt of the battle losses, including two thirty-gun warships. In the past this would have been taken as a minor incident, but now the stakes were higher and the incident led to a significant escalation of the crisis.

The English viewed this as an unprompted attack in their home waters. In addition, some members of Parliament saw the imminent war with the Dutch as a means of bolstering their own political support (Wilson 1978, 59). In the United Provinces, however, the States-General and particularly the acting grand pensionary, John De Witt, were eager to find a way out of war and were willing to treat the battle off of Dover as an "unexpected accident" (Rowen 1978, 69). De Witt argued that the fault was Blake's but offered assurances to England that the States-General would reprimand Tromp if it could be established that he had been the aggressor (Rowen 1978, 68). Tromp had been instructed to strike the flag when necessary and to resist search only if attacked.

Paw, the grand pensionary, went to England in early June in an attempt to reassure the English of Dutch intentions and secure an agreement, but the English Council of State insisted that reparations were a prerequisite for further negotiations. In a response to Paw, they stated that the extraordinary preparations of 150 sail of men of war without any visible occasions . . . [and] the Instructions given by your said superiors to their commanders at sea, do find too much cause to believe that the Lords of the States-General of the United Provinces have any intention by force to usurp the known rights of England in the seas, to destroy the fleets that are, under God, their walls and bulwarks, and thereby expose this Commonwealth to invasion at their pleasure, as by their late action they have attempted to do. (Padfield 1979, 190)

After the English rejection of Paw's proposals, the Dutch perceived that further concessions would be diplomatically humiliating, economically costly, and politically risky at home. Public anger was rising, and the Orangists were eager for a war that they believed would allow Charles II to return to England and the young prince of Orange, William III, to assume his father's office. De Witt, the acting grand pensionary, feared that further concessions might lead to a resurgence of the Orange Party (Wilson 1978, 60). Paw and the other commissioners were recalled, and on July 6, 1652, the States-General ordered Tromp to take more aggressive actions against English ships of war and merchants (Padfield 1979, 191; Rowen 1978, 69-70).

The point of no return had been crossed. Parliament declared war on July 31, 1652, and the States-General reciprocated on August 2, condemning the Navigation Act, rejecting the English claim to maritime sovereignty, and denouncing "the present government of England as being drunk with the success within the country and losing all sense of measure" (Rowen 1978, 70). After nearly four decades, the commercial rivalry had finally escalated to war in spite of the best efforts of the Dutch leadership to avoid it.

Naval battles began within two weeks of the declaration of war and continued for a year. De Witt became grand pensionary in July 1653, and Cromwell became lord protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland in December 1653. By this time both were eager to negotiate a peaceful settlement to consolidate their leadership positions at home. The Treaty of Westminster was signed on April 4, 1654, bringing the war to an official end.

Although the military outcome of the war favored England, Cromwell's terms of peace were quite lenient, and the Treaty of Westminster failed to resolve the underlying disputes that had led to the war. Cromwell did not insist on a Dutch validation of English claims to the narrow seas or of the rights of neutrals concerning search and seizure, anticipating that any Dutch concessions on these vital issues would last only as long . . .
English military superiority (Capp 1989, 84). Instead, fearing an Orangist revival and its political implications for England, Cromwell demanded that the States-General accept the Act of Seclusion and agree never to appoint a prince of Orange as stadtholder or captain-general. With protests from the other provinces, Holland accepted this demand (Rowen 1978, ch. 11). Economically, although English traders made some short-term gains, these were quickly negated as the Dutch swiftly reclaimed any lost economic ground (Israel 1989, 210–13; Padfield 1979, 233; Wilson 1978, 77).

Theoretical Summary

The first Anglo-Dutch War was a bilateral war that grew out of a dyadic rivalry. Systemic balance of power considerations had little direct impact on the rivalry or on the causes of the war. As Kennedy (1987b, 62) argues, "whatever the aims of each belligerent, [the war] had little to do with the general European balance." We should note, however, that the multipolar distribution of power and absence of a threat of hegemony did provide the conditions that allowed the English and the Dutch to focus on each other.

Although the rivalry was not directly driven by balance of power considerations, it was profoundly affected by other outside developments. Although the literature on external shocks and changes in intersecting rivalries focuses primarily on military and diplomatic dimensions (Diehl and Goertz 1994), in this case external shocks and intersecting rivalries played a critical role in shaping the economic context of the rivalry and in determining the rival states' relative access to key trade routes and markets.

The intersection of the Anglo-Dutch and Dutch-Spanish rivalries was especially important. The Dutch revolt against Spain and the beginning of the Twelve Years' Truce created the conditions for the rapid expansion of the Dutch economic system and the beginning of the Anglo-Dutch commercial rivalry. The outbreak of the Thirty Years' War in Germany was a key external shock that led, in combination with other factors, to a renewal of the Dutch-Spanish War. This led in turn to the isolation of the Dutch from the Iberian and Mediterranean trade, a reversal in the Anglo-Dutch dependency relationship, the rise of English prosperity in absolute and relative terms, and an increased assertiveness in English foreign policy. Similarly, the death of Frederick Henry provided a shock that combined with domestic pressures within the Dutch Republic to bring an end to the Dutch-Spanish War, which had important economic consequences: a rapid recovery of the trade routes and markets the Dutch had lost to England a quarter-century before, the reassessment of their position of economic dominance, and economic contraction and then depression in England in 1649–51.

Another intersecting rivalry that affected the Anglo-Dutch War was the Anglo-French rivalry. Although the major escalation in the Anglo-French economic rivalry did not begin until Colbert's tariff of 1664, the initiation of earlier tariffs in 1644 and again in 1649 led to an unclerared naval war between the Commonwealth and France and thereby to a search and seizure of neutral Dutch ships by the English navy. This interruption of Dutch trade with France led the States-General to outfit an additional 150 ships, which led to a rapid escalation of the Anglo-Dutch conflict spiral. The importance of the Anglo-French conflict is suggested by Jones's (1966, 49) comment that "the immediate cause of the [first Anglo-Dutch] war originated in the undeclared war being waged against France.

As noted earlier, many historians argue that this was a case of a commercial rivalry that led to war. Thus Wolf (1970, 37) describes the First Anglo-Dutch War as "wholly commercial," and Kossmann (1964, 288) describes the Second Anglo-Dutch War as a "purely commercial war" in which "no political element exercised any influence." Few if any wars are "purely commercial," however, for access to navigation and trade routes raises important issues relating to strategic territory and reputational interests. As Kennedy (1987a, 48) argues, "Motives of prestige, power and profit are hard to disentangle in any period, but they seem particularly closely connected in the seventeenth century.

Although the basic issue was England's desire for a larger share of world trade and belief that any increase must come at the expense of the United Provinces, the Dutch perceived this not only as an economic issue but as one of national survival. Thus Rowen (1978, 71) argues, "The Dutch depended on the sea for their very livelihood, while the English were still a predominantly agrarian people who practised for profits of trade but did not need them to survive." Similarly, Holsti (1991, 57) notes that for the Dutch, access to ocean territory was not just a question of providing more advantageous conditions for solving its security problem; it was "core interest," vital for national survival. As Kennedy (1987a, 51) argues with respect to the war itself, the Dutch "were fighting for their economic lives."

This inseparability of commercial and strategic territorial issues is implicit in Luban's (1986, 104) argument that "both the first two Anglo-
Dutch wars were primarily about rights to trade and fishing (even the other issues in those wars—rights in the North Sea and piracy—were closely related). Kennedy (1987a, 58) is even clearer: this was "a quarrel about who should rule the waves and reap the commercial benefits of that privilege...and the naval and economic aspect was the dominant one."

Finally, Holsti (1991, 51-54) argues that "commercial and navigation competition and rivalry...were sufficient conditions explaining the outbreak of violence" in the three Anglo-Dutch wars.48

These conflicts of interest between England and the United Provinces with regard to commerce and the freedom of the seas were reinforced by diagnostically opposed economic ideologies. The Dutch commitment to economic liberalism and the principle of the freedom of the seas, as articulated by Grotius in Mare Liberum in 1608 and by Pieter de la Court in Het Interest van Holland in 1662, contrasted with English mercantilism as articulated in 1635 by John Selden in Mare Clausum Sea Dominum Maris and in 1664 by Thomas Mun in England's Treasure by Forsoigne Trade (Wilson 1978, ch. 2). The mercantilist view held that the world's total wealth was limited and that the added prosperity of one state must necessarily come at the expense of another.

Whether these contrasting economic ideologies had an independent causal impact or derived primarily from the conflicting interests themselves is an interesting question for further study, but on the surface it appears that ideas were more the reflection of conflicts of interests (in conjunction with the structural constraints in the international political economy) than an independent source of those conflicts.49 It was not coincidental that export-oriented English merchants such as the Merchant Adventurers were much less zero sum in outlook than others, or that the Dutch protected their trade where they faced serious competition. Nor were the Dutch always consistent in supporting the doctrine of the freedom of the seas. As Sir George Downing stated at the time, "It is mare liberum in the British Seas but mare clausum on ye coast in Africa and in ye East Indies" (Wilson 1978, 118).49

The mercantilist doctrines expounded in the political tracts of the day exacerbated English public and merchant opinion by reinforcing the common English belief that England's economic troubles could be traced directly to the Dutch, and through this domestic political path mercantilism further intensified the rivalry. In the words of one English merchant, "The trade of the world is too little for us two; therefore one must down." (in Maland 1966, 330).

Evolution of Anglo-Dutch Rivalry

The combination of commercial competition and strategic territory was a necessary condition for war, but contrary to Holsti, it was not sufficient, because it does not explain why the commercial rivalry was transformed into a strategic rivalry in the late 1640s, why that began to escalate in 1649-51, and why it led to open warfare in 1652, but not before.

To explain the escalation of the strategic rivalry and the outbreak of war, it is necessary to supplement interstate commercial competition and strategic territory with the dyadic balance of power and several domestic political factors.

A primary reason the war did not occur earlier in the commercial rivalry was that England did not possess the naval capabilities to challenge the Dutch militarily until the late 1640s. This English naval inferiority derived from both economic and domestic political considerations. England's vulnerable position in the international economy and its exclusive reliance on the export of cloth provided a weak foundation for military potential, and the domestic instability generated by long-standing disputes between king and Parliament limited Charles's ability to raise sufficient funds to build a viable navy.

The Commonwealth's rapid naval buildup in 1649 was designed to help enforce the doctrine of the sovereignty of the narrow seas, block external support to the Royalists, and generally enhance the legitimacy and stability of the revolutionary regime. It led to a more assertive foreign policy, increasing challenges to the Dutch and additional incidents at sea, and disruptions of attempts to resolve the growing conflict through diplomatic means. Thus the growth of English naval power and the change in the dyadic balance to a condition of parity was a necessary condition for war.

There were also critical domestic issues with strong international linkages that arose in the mid- to late 1640s and that contributed significantly to the escalation of the conflict. These included the civil war in England, external aid to the Royalist cause, the need of the newly installed Commonwealth to enhance its external legitimacy and internal security, the belief that the enforcement of the ancient claims to the seas and fisheries was a useful means to these ends, the growing domestic influence of protectionist groups in the Commonwealth, and fears of possible claim to the Stuart crown by the House of Orange.

The importance of sovereignty of the British seas involved internal political as well as external strategic and reputational considerations for England. Although Parliament needed to enforce the sovereignty of the
narrow seas to interdict external support for the Royalists and to promote English trade at the expense of the Dutch, it also saw the issue of sovereignty of the seas and honors of the flag as adding prestige, stability, and legitimacy to the new ruling regime both at home and abroad through a "rally round the flag" or diversionary effect (Luard 1986, 105).

Questions of legitimacy interacted with the issue of dynastic succession, as Parliament’s concern for legitimacy was heightened by the possibility of a dynastic claim on the English crown from the House of Orange deriving from the marriage of Mary Stuart to William II. These concerns were central in the spring 1651 negotiations and continued into the peace negotiations at the end of the war. Cromwell, who believed that he needed to end the war to secure his own domestic position, feared that a continuation of the war against the United Provinces could be self-defeating even in victory because it would lead to a shift in power to the Orangists, who would then support the return to power of Charles II (Kort 1975). This political-dynastic issue was combined with a religious one, for Cromwell hoped that by ending the war against the Dutch, he might be able to enlist the Dutch in a Protestant alliance against Spain (Crabtree 1973).

Charles I invoked the sovereignty of the seas doctrine in the mid-1630s but was unable to enforce it because he lacked a strong navy or the resources to build one. The issue of the freedom of the seas changed little over the next fifteen years, but the domestic political context changed significantly. The decisive event was the outbreak of the second Civil War in March 1648, which culminated in the execution of Charles I and the establishment of the Commonwealth. This regime change coincided with the beginning of an economic depression in England that was precipitated by the loss of English markets to the Dutch after the end of the Dutch-Spanish War in 1647.

The regime change also contributed to an increase in the influence in Parliament of shipping and merchant interests, most of which were protective and anti-Dutch. At the same time, the combination of an ailing economy and strong external economic competition from the Dutch and increasingly from France generated incentives for these economic interest groups to demand protectionist pressures. In the words of one historian, "The victory of Parliament in the civil wars represented the victory of those 'progressive' groups—merchants and shippers, the navy, industrial entrepreneurs and workers—whose interest most directly conflicted with those of the Dutch... and who used the power of the state to advance their own interests" (Jones 1966, 46). Moreover, the fragile basis of the domestic support of the new Commonwealth gave the new regime more incentives to placate these domestic pressures.

The proximate cause of the war was the protectionist Navigation Act, which was an effort to advance both the economic and strategic interests of the state and the private interests of domestic commercial groups, as well as a response to the Dutch refusal to accept the English proposal of a political alliance. The Navigation Act triggered a conflict spiral that was fueled by each side’s misperceptions of its rival’s intentions and of the consequences of its own actions. Actions by each to protect its interests only increased the other’s confidence that the first was bent on aggression, and diplomatic missions broke down in the face of misperceptions and domestic pressures.

The Dutch attempted to manage the escalating crisis through conciliatory actions, but they were frustrated by English intransigence that was reinforced by hard-line opinion in England. The Dutch leaders could go only so far, however, for they knew that Dutch prosperity depended on the freedom of the seas and feared that further concessions might lead to a resurgence of the Orange Party and a centralization of power that would be inimical to provincial and merchant interests.

Although misperceptions fueled the conflict spiral and perhaps determined that the war would occur in 1652 rather than later, the primary causes of the war must be traced to the incompatibility of English and Dutch commercial and strategic territorial interests. England wanted a greater share of the economic pie and believed that this could come only at the expense of the Dutch. As the English admiral Monck stated at the time, the basic issue was the fact that "the Dutch have too much trade, and the English are resolved to take it from them" (in Kennedy 1979a, 48). This conflict of interests was reinforced by domestic instability in England and the incentives this created for a hard-line foreign policy to boost the legitimacy of the new Commonwealth and to appease strong domestic protectionist pressures. War became a viable strategy for the English only after the growth of English naval power brought them to a condition of parity with the Dutch.

In the end, England demanded more than the Dutch were willing to give. As Rowen (1978, 71) concludes, "While it would have been madness for the Dutch to seek war with England, they had no choice but to accept it once the English made surrender of freedom of the seas the price of peace."
Conclusion

We have described how a commercial rivalry was transformed into a strategic rivalry that escalated to war through a combination of the territorialization of the seas, domestic pressures, and a changing dyadic balance of power. We have examined the causal paths underlying the militarization of a commercial rivalry in one particular case, but in the process we have raised a number of important theoretical issues relating to international rivalries.

Some of our conclusions reinforce the hypotheses or empirical findings advanced in earlier research on rivalries. Hypotheses regarding the importance of intersecting rivalries and independent external shocks (Diehl and Goertz 1994; Goertz and Diehl 1995) draw considerable support from this case, though here one rivalry affects an interconnecting rivalry primarily through its impact on the structure of trade in the international economy or on the effects of neutral shipping rather than through the balance of military power. The escalation of the rivalry to war is consistent with power transition theory and with growing empirical evidence in support of the power preponderance hypothesis (Organski and Kugler 1980, Levy 1989b), for the expansion of the English navy to a position of approximate parity with that of the Dutch was a necessary condition for the rivalry to escalate to war.49

One of the distinctive contributions of this study has been its emphasis on the role of domestic variables in the evolution of international rivalries. We have given particular emphasis to the domestic political insecurity of elites and to the protectionist pressures from domestic commercial interests. These factors tempt political leaders to adopt hard-line foreign policies as a means of bolstering their internal support and appeasing domestic protectionist pressures that grow stronger as the economy weakens. Internal regime changes affect international rivalries by creating additional sensitivity to questions of internal and external legitimacy and by altering the strategic beliefs held by political leaders and the internal distribution of power in the government, which can change the preferences and strategies that state leaders adopt against external rivals.

Another distinctive contribution of this study is our focus on commercial rivalries, which is a new addition to the literature on international rivalries. Commercial rivalries are important for both international political economy and for international security, and the militarization of commercial rivalries is one of many paths through which strategic rivalries might originate and escalate. The interrelationships between economic interests and strategic interests in the evolution of rivalries is a key question that has received relatively little attention in the literature (Thompson 1995; Rowe 1994). This study clearly shows that the relationship is mutual and reciprocal and that domestic variables significantly affect it. One hypothesis that emerges from this study is that the demands for protectionist pressures are likely to increase during periods of economic hardship, a pattern that is repeated in the period leading up to the second Anglo-Dutch Naval War (Levy 1995).

Clearly, more needs to be done in the study of the relationship between commercial rivalries and international security. At the theoretical level, we need to develop a conceptual framework for the analysis of the militarization of commercial rivalries, identify key variables and their interrelationships, and construct testable hypotheses. At the empirical level, we need to define the concept operationally and generate a data base of commercial rivalries that will facilitate the systematic testing of such hypotheses. It will also be useful to conduct controlled comparisons of a modest number of cases to see which of these patterns are replicated elsewhere and which are more idiosyncratic, to develop more finely tuned causal mechanisms linking these variables, and generally to refine these hypotheses for further testing.49 Large-N and small-N studies are not mutually exclusive, and it is through a combination of both that we can best advance our understanding of international rivalries.
4. Note that there are striking similarities between the patterns outlined here and those suggested in Friedman and Leder's (1991) hypothetical account of the escala-
tion of the U.S.-Japanese economic rivalry in The Coming War with Japan.

5. Holsti (1991, 52) notes that the Anglo-Dutch wars were "among the first in
which representatives of fishermen, traders, and manufacturers demanded that
the state employ military force to resolve outstanding commercial/navigational disputes." Jones (1996) gives more emphasis to political and strategic considerations.

6. Although the United Provinces probably satisfies the criteria for a democratic
republic in the 1660–72 period, England probably falls short, even in period of par-
liamentary rule (1649–53). A significant number of moderates elected to Parliament
were forcibly excluded by Pride's Purge in 1648, and neither side perceived the oth-
er as democratic (West 1994). See also Jones 1996

7. For an analysis of the subsequent evolution and termination of the rivalry, see

8. This section builds on Levy 1989a.

9. This hypothesis fits Thompson's (1995) category of "positional" rivalry, as
distinct from a more issue-specific "spatial" rivalry.

10. Strategic territorial issues are distinct from more general territorial issues
and are inseparable from strategic interests (Holsti 1991, 57; Laufer 1986, 103).

11. Recent empirical research on this question is inconclusive as to which ten-
drivers dominate (Polacheck 1980; Barbieri 1996; Oesch et al. 1996; Mansfield 1994).

12. See Braumoeller and Rubin 1985 on entrapment, Jervis 1978 on conflict spirals,
and Nieh's conclusion to this volume on lock-in effects.

13. Holland was by far the largest province in terms of population and paid 58
percent of the federal revenue.

14. This "Cockayne Project" was proposed by a London alderman and promi-
nent member of the Eastland Company (an exporter of finished and dyed cloths)
and was designed to undercut the rival Merchant Adventurers, which exported un-
finished cloth.

15. Part of the problem was that Cockayne's new company was undercapitalized
and technologically less efficient than the Dutch, and it could not handle all the
unfinished cloth produced in England. The Dutch had also had the foresight to pur-
chase a large amount of raw cloth before the implementation of the ban, apparently
with the cooperation of the Merchant Adventurers (Wilson 1978, 28–30; Comyns
1987, 132).

16. The outbreak of the Thirty Years' War in 1618 led many in the United Prov-
inces to favor intervention on religious grounds, and this was reinforced by a polit-
ical victory of the hawkish Orangists led by Maurice. But the key factor leading to
the war was the Spanish demand that the Twelve Years' Truce could continue only if
the Dutch allowed freedom of worship for the Catholics, opened the Schelde, and
evacuated the East and West Indies. The last point in particular was not negotiable,
and the Dutch declaration of war had wide public support (Gel 1961, 84; Malan
1966, 186–92).

17. Historians generally interpret the marriage as a dynastic maneuver by Fre-
drick Henry to better position the House o' Orange in Dutch politics (Gel 1969, 13–
39; Guernsey 1987, 542–44).
31. Possible cases of commercial rivalries might include Venice and Genoa in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Venice and the Ottoman Empire in the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries, Venice and Portugal in the sixteenth century, England and France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, France and the Netherlands in the seventeenth century, England and Spain in the early eighteenth century and possibly before. Britain and Russia in the nineteenth century, England and Germany in the late nineteenth century, and the United States and Japan in the twentieth century. Many of these were explored at an April 1995 conference on great power rivalries organized by William Thompson at the University of Indiana. For the purposes of a controlled comparison, however, it would be necessary to identify additional cases of commercial rivalries that did not escalate to war.

References
